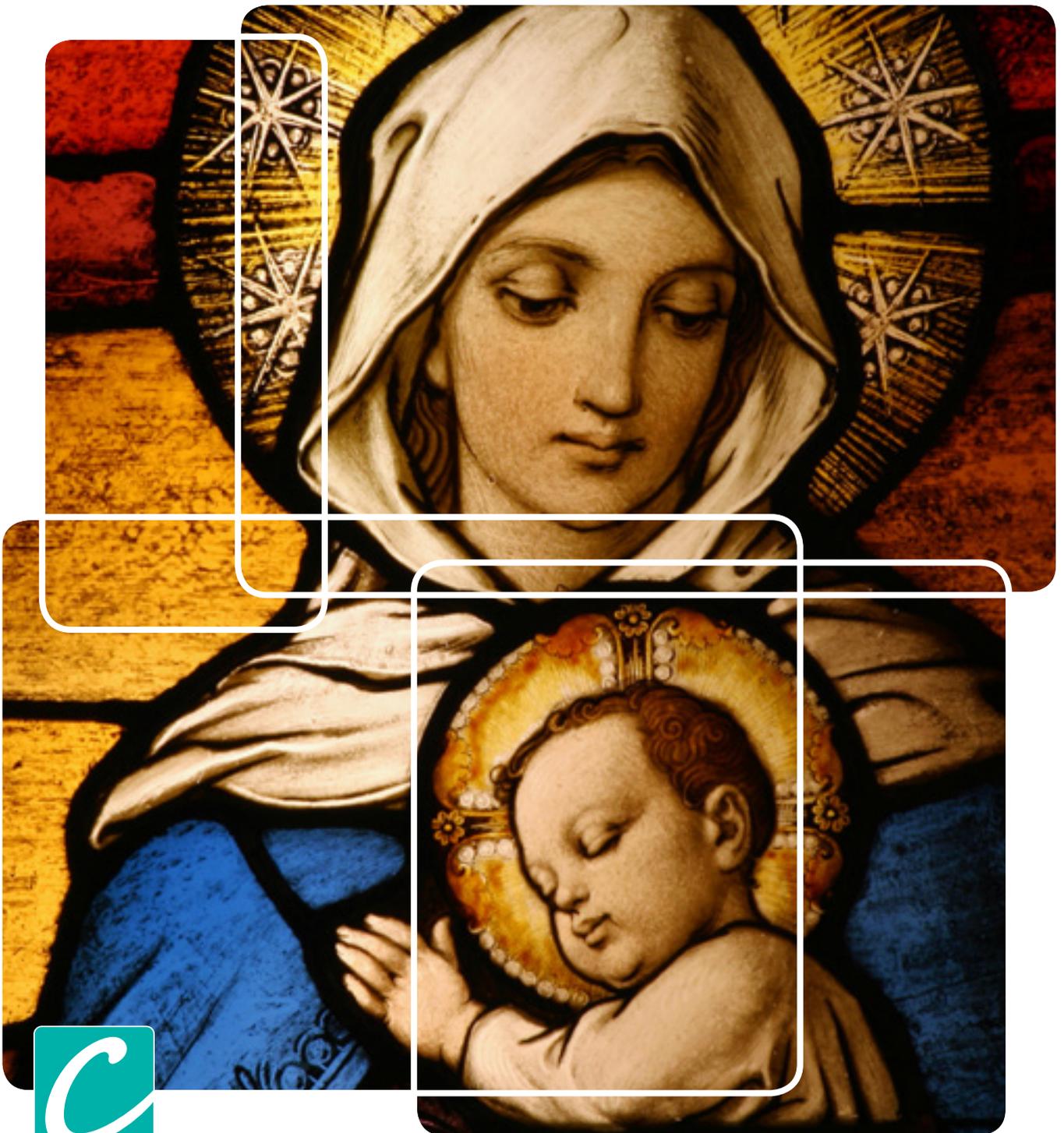


# Connect

*A newsletter for supporters of CatholicCare*

## Substance abuse and the road to recovery

- A Christmas reflection - Family Law win -



SUMMER 2017

# From the Acting CEO

*“Standing in the rain,  
Knocking on the window,  
Knocking on the window  
On a Christmas Day.  
There he is again,  
Knocking on the window...”*

These words by well-known composer, Sydney Carter, express the dilemma for Christians, especially acute at Christmas time.

Our heads filled with stories of strangers in need being turned away, our hearts carrying resonances of experiences of rejection, how do we respond when a stranger calls?

Google Maps tells me that the fastest route from Nazareth to Bethlehem is two hours and three minutes by car. The same map shows rugged hills for the entire journey. Mary and Joseph, on foot, were not so lucky. Whatever journey the stranger has made to our door, the fact is, that it is our door.

Christmas is a time to look at how we are responding from two levels. How do we respond to the needs of those around us, in our own circle of family, friends and associates? And how can we support CatholicCare to respond to the great range of needs of people excluded from our society?

CatholicCare is committed to welcoming those who are excluded and on the margins of society. The feature story in this edition explores the issue of substance abuse and its effects on both the individual and the community. People facing these problems may also experience rejection by those around them. However, the team at CatholicCare will do everything we can to connect them to society and give both them and their family hope.

Who is knocking at our window this Christmas? Could it just be someone with Good News for us?

We have some great news about the appointment our new CEO. Ms. Netty Horton commences as CEO of CatholicCare in November, and we welcome her as she begins this important leadership position. (Read more about Netty on the next page.)



The appointment is an important milestone in our journey of continuing to search out areas of growth, enhance current services and create opportunities for partnerships within the sector and beyond.

Netty's appointment follows the departure of Sheree Limbrick as Deputy CEO, who has now joined Catholic Professional Standards as their new CEO. Sheree departs after seven years at CatholicCare and we wish her well in her new role.

We hope you enjoy reading about the work that you have helped support, in our new look magazine. We welcome your thoughts and feedback on what you think of the new design.

As another year closes, we would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our supporters. You are enabling us, as we hope that we are enabling you, to reach out with hospitality to those knocking on our window. We wish you a blessed and wonder-filled Christmas Season.

Tony Newton  
Acting Chief Executive Officer

## About us

Relationships are at the heart of why CatholicCare exists. We help people to build positive relationships, and repair connections when needed. CatholicCare is the social service agency of the Archdiocese of Melbourne and the Diocese of Sale. We provide a range of counselling, education, community and pastoral services. We support all people regardless of their religious belief or background. Our vision is for a stronger, more resilient and inclusive society - where everyone can reach their potential and enjoy 'life to the full'.

### Child Safety is Paramount

CatholicCare actively works to listen to, empower and protect children, and has zero tolerance for child abuse and neglect.



CatholicCare acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands and waters of Victoria, and pays respect to Elders past and present.



# Christmas reflection

Hi everyone,

I just wanted to send on my best wishes for the upcoming Christmas season.

While it is a time of celebration, it is also a time that carries much complexity.

Yes, it is a celebration of the birth of Jesus and all that this means. For many, while the theological dimension is not necessarily to the fore, there is however the importance of coming together as family and friends. And yet, even in all of this, life is not always so straight forward.

The good news that comes with the Christmas message, peace and goodwill to all, kind of jars with the deeper sensibilities that we possess as our relationship with the world around us is often marked by fear, war, terror and the many layers of human brokenness.

Love is born  
With a dark and troubled face.  
When hope is dead  
And in the most unlikely place  
Love is born.  
Love is always born.



Our outreach and ministries take us to especially difficult places of the heart. For many in our midst, Christmas brings with it a poignancy and nuance of emotions as some of us are acutely aware of significant others who are no longer with us; or of relationships that have broken down; of things not being quite as “perfect” as the hype that is forced upon us at this time.

And yet there is a universality to the Christmas message that can speak to us all; captured so simply and beautifully by a reflection from Leunig (below left).

And so I leave with you my hope and wish for us this Christmas and New Year:

*May Christmas be a glimpse of new life  
Of the hope filled fragility that it gives birth to  
And may the New Year see this new life  
take shape and form*

Christmas blessings to you all and a happy and safe New Year.

Paul Zammit  
Senior Manager Pastoral Services

## Welcoming our new CEO



By the time this Connect newsletter is hitting mailboxes, Netty Horton will have taken up her role as the new Chief Executive Officer of CatholicCare.

Netty has an MA in Public Policy, is a Churchill Fellowship recipient, a Graduate of AICD, and has had vast community and not-for-profit experience. Her previous positions include:

Territorial Social Programmes Director for the Salvation Army, Southern Territory, General Manager of Community Services at St Vincent de Paul's Aged Care & Community Services, and CEO of Council to Homeless Persons. Netty is also currently a member of the Federal Aged Care Sector Committee.

“We are delighted to welcome Netty to the organisation,” said John Sheldon, Chair of CatholicCare. “Her wealth of experience, combined with outstanding leadership skills and a passion for social justice, will be invaluable as we work towards achieving our vision for a stronger, more resilient and inclusive society.”

## Christmas is just the beginning

The summer school holidays can be a wonderful time of building family connections and taking time out from the usual routines. They can also be a time of fraught feelings and frustration. CatholicCare offers a booklet of stimulating ideas and activities designed to help primary-school-aged children and their parents or carers to grow in their sense of family by creating, exploring and celebrating together. We are calling the booklet “Christmas is just the beginning” with the intention that the caring and joy of Christmas continues through the school holidays well past Christmas day.

You may receive your copy of the pdf by emailing our Community Engagement Coordinator at [jeff.wild@ccam.org.au](mailto:jeff.wild@ccam.org.au) or download from our website [www.ccam.org.au/christmasactivities](http://www.ccam.org.au/christmasactivities). We would love to hear your stories of how you use the booklet. Please feel free to contact Jeff so we can share your school holiday adventures.



# Substance abuse and the road to recovery



Each year around 40,000 Victorians struggle with dependence on alcohol and other drugs, resulting in long-term – and sometimes fatal - consequences. But that is only part of the story, as CatholicCare discovers daily through its work supporting families who are living with the ripple effects of addiction.

In North Richmond, just one suburb away from CatholicCare's East Melbourne office, a new safe injecting room is scheduled to open in early 2018. It will be the second one in Australia; a desperate response to an entrenched heroin problem that resulted in the overdose deaths of 34 people in the local area last year alone.

Earlier in the year, the Victorian Government announced an increase in drug rehabilitation beds; part of its \$81million plan to tackle the burgeoning ice epidemic.

This investment couldn't come sooner for the emergency services, hospitals and police at the frontline of a war zone fuelled by alcohol and drug abuse. Nor for the despairing family members and friends who are also deeply affected when a loved one is battling addiction.

Because substance abuse doesn't just effect the individual; it is literally tearing families apart.

A report by Alcohol/Drug-Involved Family Violence in Australia (ADIVA) in 2016 showed that across Australia alcohol was a factor in a third of family violence incidents. In FY15, the Crime Statistics Agency found that 6,224 incidents of reported family violence were directly related to alcohol abuse; a further 7,453 incidents recorded alcohol as a likely factor.

For the many children in these families, the effect of living in an unpredictable environment filled with fear and tension can lead to significant emotional and psychological trauma that is carried long into their future. Sadly, statistics show that domestic violence can also become a learned behaviour, perpetuating an intergenerational cycle of violence.

Since 2000, CatholicCare's Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) Family Service has been helping hundreds of people to deal with not only the immediate emotional impacts of drug use, but to get to the heart of what caused the behaviour in the first place.

*'CatholicCare programs focus on equipping family and friends with the skills to encourage and care for the client as they work through their addictions.'*

'Many of our AOD clients have experienced severe trauma or childhood neglect,' says Chris McNamara, Senior Manager of CatholicCare's programs in Barwon and Melbourne's North West.

'The absence of a positive role model, along with the influence of peers who are facing similar problems can make the journey to recovery a long and difficult one. It is important to have a strong network of support, and as such, CatholicCare programs focus on equipping family and friends with the skills to encourage and care for the client as they work through their addictions.'

'It is one of the key strengths of our program.'

CatholicCare's Alcohol and Other Drug Family Service offers a range of specialist counselling, support groups and community education programs for individuals and families supporting someone through substance abuse. The services are currently based in Epping, Footscray and Wyndham Vale.

Staff see many cases where substance abuse has resulted in family breakdown culminating in a court-mandated counselling process. Counselling sessions focus on getting both parents to think and act in the best interests of the children, minimising conflict through the ensuing separation.

They also see many complex cases; with clients often requiring support for multiple issues, including mental health issues, financial hardship, unstable or unsuitable housing, and legal matters, along with Family Law and Criminal Law issues.

‘When we work with clients presenting with complex problems, we usually see that these are interconnected,’ says Chris. ‘The path where one problem repeatedly snowballs into the next is extremely hard to navigate. By working with a client to slowly unravel those problems they see that things can change. At CatholicCare we refer many clients to our other specialist programs, and to external agencies, depending on what they need. Our focus is always on getting our client back on their feet, regardless of who provides the service.’

*‘It is important to have a strong network of support’*

This wraparound service is fundamental to CatholicCare’s work and a key driver for success. Their approach is one that strengthens a person’s ability to build positive relationships which is key to breaking the cycle of abuse and building resilience to walk the difficult path to recovery.

And for many clients like the one below, it is a path they no longer take alone.

‘I am now on the journey of recovery. I feel well equipped knowing I have [CatholicCare] and my husband walking with me – I feel that I have a guide helping me to watch and listen to myself and strive to keep things in tow as much as I can. I know I am not perfect and the process of recovery will have its hiccups and it’s the way I learn from my mistakes that is important.’

~ CatholicCare client.

If you, or someone you know, needs assistance in dealing with substance abuse, please contact us at 03 9287 5555 or visit our website [www.ccam.org.au](http://www.ccam.org.au)

Want to help? If you would like to find out more about how you can support our Alcohol and Other Drug services, please contact our Donor Relations team on 03 9287 5517 or donate using the donation form at the back of this newsletter.



- In 2016, about 8.5 million people (or 43%) in Australia aged 14 or older had used an illicit drug in their lifetime.
- Hospital admissions for alcohol related dependencies climbed by 10% in FY15 from the previous year; a trend that has continued for the last 5 years.
- In FY17, CatholicCare’s AOD programs delivered 290 cases of counselling and support.
- 70% of AOD clients came from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

# A win for parents and the Family Law system



Late last year, CatholicCare was funded by the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department to manage the Post Order Support Pilot, an Australian Government initiative aimed at helping separated families experiencing high conflict over parenting arrangements.

In a win for both separated parents and the Family Law system, CatholicCare's Dandenong and Geelong offices were engaged to support families in resolving their disputes with less reliance on the family court, effectively filling the gap in providing post parenting order and agreement support services to separated families.

Parents who participated in the pilot program were assigned a Post Order Support Worker - a family counsellor with knowledge of the experience and impacts of post separation disputes and skills and experience in: family systems theory; developmental psychology; the effects of family violence; parental estrangement and; conflict resolution techniques.

"It was wonderful to help parents stay away from court or avoid going back to court for parenting matters. Parents have the power to be their own judge and decide together what is best for their children", said Lylia Pham, Post Order Support Worker at CatholicCare Dandenong.

*'I feel good once I walk out of here...it is not normal for a man to go to counselling...therapy is not something we talk about, I feel and remain calm when I have to deal with court after going to these sessions.'*

"Supporting parents to develop the tools to strengthen their communication, co-parenting relationship and bring their focus on to the emotional and developmental needs of their children has been the main focus of the pilot program", said Debbie Moore, Senior Post Order Support Program Practitioner and Family

Counsellor with CatholicCare at the Geelong Family Relationship Centre.

Asked about the demand for the program, Anne Vranisan, CatholicCare Manager, Family and Relationship Services said, "There was a flurry of referrals in the final months, which meant staff were busy making sure parents were able to complete the program and receive their certificates. The pilot was unique in that we were able to try something a little different from our current approach in the Parenting Orders Program and we can use this experience to inform our on-going practice."

While we await formal evaluation of the program by the Centre for Family Research and Evaluation, there has been substantial learning from the Post Order Support Pilot in trying new approaches. We expect to use this in our post separation practice and will work together to formalise these service developments over the coming months.

*'Everything I have learned has been helpful. It gave me another look at everything. It has helped my relationship with my daughter and with my new partner. It has also helped my new partner to understand the situation we are in and how he can support my daughter.'*

CatholicCare wishes to gratefully acknowledge funding received from the Commonwealth Attorney General's Department to manage the Post Order Support Pilot - An Australian Government Initiative.

To the wonderful staff in Dandenong and Geelong who provided hours of one-on-one support to parents who were court ordered to attend this pilot, and the fabulous staff supporting our family counsellors to ensure the program functioned effectively – THANK YOU!

# Snapshot of achievements FY2017



## Thank you

A big thank you to all the school students, volunteers, Parishes and donors who supported our CatholicCare Sunday Appeal during August. A special thank you to the Parishes who made our volunteers feel so welcome - this year we saw over 30 volunteers, including school students, reach out and speak at over 93 Masses across both Melbourne and Gippsland.

As our biggest appeal for the year it raises not only much needed funds but also gives the opportunity for connection with the community.

Thank you to all who have contributed.

Right: Antonietta & Ally from Genazzano FCJ College receiving their certificates after speaking at local Parishes as part of CatholicCare's Sunday Appeal.





# Stella is looking forward to spending Christmas with her mum.

With your support, CatholicCare can help Stella's mum to keep her promise.

**Alcohol and drug abuse can tear families apart. With your donation, CatholicCare can help people to beat addiction and mend relationships.**

Please send to: CatholicCare, PO Box 196, East Melbourne, Victoria 8002

### My Details:

Mr / Mrs / Miss / Dr / other \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Suburb: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### I would like to make a donation of:

\$25     \$50     \$75     \$100     \$125     \$150

Other donation amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Cheque     Mastercard     Visa

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We are committed to protecting your privacy. Gifts of \$2 or more are tax deductible. Contact CatholicCare at T: 03 9287 5555

Please make your cheque payable to CatholicCare or donate online at [www.ccam.org.au/donate](http://www.ccam.org.au/donate) ABN 42 795 179 778

Thank You!