

CatholicCare

WESTERN SYDNEY AND THE BLUE MOUNTAINS

YEAR IN REVIEW

2019-2020



CONNECTING OUR COMMUNITY



CatholicCare

WESTERN SYDNEY
AND THE BLUE MOUNTAINS

CatholicCare Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains is the Diocese of Parramatta's social welfare agency that exists to do Christ's work in the community.

CatholicCare provides professional care and support through the Church to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged members of the community, regardless of faith, religion, gender, ethnicity, age or socio-economic background.

Our aim is to be the face of Christ and make a positive difference in the lives of those who need our support, and to help them find joy and purpose in life.

OUR HISTORY

The organisation that was to become CatholicCare was established in the 1940s. It was the idea of four Sydney women who dreamed that the poor and anyone in distress could receive professional care from the Catholic Church.

They wrote to the then-Archbishop of Sydney, Cardinal Gilroy, suggesting that a Catholic welfare organisation be established, and the Catholic Welfare Bureau was born. When the Diocese of Parramatta was created in 1986, the welfare arm became Centacare Parramatta and in 2017 was renamed CatholicCare Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains.

Today, CatholicCare Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains reaches thousands of people in the community each year through the work of more than 200 committed staff and volunteers.

Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work and live. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

PHOTO: Garden crew supported employee Zac.



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Bishop Vincent's message

The work of CatholicCare Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains is very dear to my heart. In so many ways it enables us to carry out the work of Christ.

Our 'Good Samaritans' at the coal face, open their hearts and minds, and reach out their hand to those who are vulnerable and suffering in our community. They create a space for people to belong and heal as part of a community. Pope Francis has taught us that no one is saved alone, as an isolated individual, but God attracts us looking at the complex web of relationships that take place in the human community.

Throughout this report you will see example after example of the many relationships helping to heal lives, give hope and enable human flourishing. You will see people focusing on others as a whole human person and you will see solidarity, kindness and love.

I trust you will also see an organisation that is progressive and bold, yet humble and unwavering from its reason for existing - to show the compassionate face of Jesus to all.

While these are challenging times, our staff have found the strength to be strong for our community and to adapt to new ways of providing care and support that significantly impacts the lives of many. And our leaders have led with clarity and conviction. My deepest thanks and blessings to you.

MOST REVEREND VINCENT LONG VAN NGUYEN OFM CONV
BISHOP OF PARRAMATTA



Episcopal Vicar for Social Welfare

This past year has been incredibly challenging for all of us. COVID-19 has changed our lives in so many ways and many people have found themselves in very difficult situations. Parents, brothers, sisters, friends and many members of our community have lost jobs, some have lost loved ones, and others have been required to give up their homes. We have been isolated from friends and family, and forced to adjust to a world we have not known before.

Times such as these highlight and remind us of the critical importance of the work of CatholicCare. Throughout the pandemic, our staff have continued to provide care and support to those who reached out for the first time, and those we continue to support.

Within our own organisation and in our communities, we all have heard many touching stories that show the strength and love we have for each other, and how willing people are to help others in need. From such trying times, wonderful experiences can emerge. We want to share these stories with you to bring a message of hope during these times.

Since my appointment as Vicar for Social Services in June 2020, I have been delighted to meet our staff and learn about the services offered to our community of Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains. An organisation can only serve its community through its people and we are privileged to have such committed and caring staff.

I offer my deepest thanks to all of our staff for continuing your work to be the

compassionate face of Christ through such trying times and at all times. I look forward to supporting you in your work in the years to come and working together to reach more people in our community.

Finally, I would like to recognise the Very Reverend Fr Peter G. Williams, who was Vicar of Social Services for 9 years before my appointment. Fr Peter holds the work of CatholicCare very close to his heart and I know he will continue to show a keen interest in our work and the support we provide to the community we serve.

Peace in Jesus.

VERY REV LUIS FERNANDO MONTANO PP
EPISCOPAL VICAR FOR SOCIAL WELFARE



This has certainly been a year none of us will forget or likely experience again.

The COVID-19 pandemic required us all to dig deep to adjust and carry on in a very different way. It was incredibly tough at times and certainly not on anyone's agenda for 2020. But we are incredibly proud of the way our organisation responded to the situation to maintain and even increase support for clients.

Our staff responded quickly and confidently to transition to working from home, and introducing online and telephone support to make sure those vulnerable members of our community could continue to access the support they needed to manage and care for themselves and their families. Of course, some of our services are essential and staff continued to see clients in person while practising social distancing and hygiene measures. There are many examples of staff going above and beyond to ensure they could continue to support vulnerable clients. One such example is the work of our Houses to Homes team who isolated themselves from friends and the community to ensure they could continue to see their young mothers in person during their pregnancy, birth and after the arrival of their newborn.

Staff and clients were incredibly resilient throughout what was immense change to our 'normal' and adjusted incredibly well to what became known as our 'new normal.' You can read more about how we responded to COVID-19 throughout the report.

While change can be uncomfortable, it gave us the opportunity to test things we may have wanted to try for some time, and as a result we have more flexible service delivery options to offer clients and more flexible working arrangements for staff. We sincerely thank all of our staff and clients for your patience, resilience and strength throughout the pandemic.

Of course, before the pandemic arrived on our shores, our services strengthened and grew and you will also read about our pre-pandemic work throughout the report.

At the beginning of 2020, our management and staff began looking at the strategic direction of the organisation for the coming years and after extensive consultation, we launched the organisation's strategic plan for 2020-2023. The plan will guide us for the next three years with a focus on integrating into our local

communities, prioritising gaps in community services and partnering with our clients to journey beside them. As part of this process we invited our staff to take part in developing the organisation's values. With honesty and openness, staff created our values to guide how we work and engage with those we serve in our community. On page 51 of this report you can read our values and goals and how we plan to make it happen. We thank everyone for their involvement in this process and their commitment and engagement in bringing it to fruition.

We would like to acknowledge Sister Vivienne Keely, who finished as Executive Director of CatholicCare Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains in November 2019. Sr Vivienne started with CatholicCare as the Director of Mission in 2017 and shortly after took on the role of Executive Director.

She led the organisation through a challenging period and provided direction and leadership to ensure service delivery was maintained. We thank her for her service and wish her all the very best for the future.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge our staff for their incredible passion for their work and the people we serve. We are frequently in awe of the lengths which you go to ensure your clients have the support they need, when they need it. The work that you do positively changes and impacts lives.

And to our clients – thank you for choosing us to journey alongside you as you work towards your goals, whether that be continuing to live independently, providing a safe and nurturing home for your family, finding work that you love, or living comfortably in your new country.

We are here for you.



PAUL MCMAHON
ADVISORY COUNCIL CHAIR



PETER LOUGHNANE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted society across the globe in a way none of us could ever have imagined. It tested us in many ways and required us all to dig deep to respond and adjust to what became a 'new normal'. Our response focused on the safety of our staff and clients, while ensuring the people in our community who needed our support the most still had access to our services.

MARKETING CAMPAIGN

To ensure people who needed our support didn't fall through the gaps during COVID-19, we launched a marketing campaign across social media and local newspapers. Whether they were an existing or new client, the campaign, 'We may be isolating, but you are not alone', encouraged people to contact us. The campaign promoted our counselling services and support from disability service coordinators, social workers, psychologists and community outreach workers.

CHANGES DURING THE PANDEMIC INCLUDED:

- Introduced strict hygiene and social distancing measures
- Essential services such as All Saints of Africa, Aboriginal Catholic Services, Family Day Care, Family Support, Intensive Family Preservation Services and Houses to Homes continued to provide face-to-face support to clients, with hygiene measures in place
- Food packages and essential items were provided and delivered to clients
- The majority of our staff transitioned to working-from-home arrangements
- Offices of non-essential services were closed with services such as counselling delivered online via Zoom where appropriate
- Staff developed an exercise video for older Australians to continue their workouts from home
- Updated our website with COVID-19 related information for clients <https://ccss.org.au/covid19/>
- Kept staff connected via video conferences and staff meetings using Teams
- Made 'COVID-19 infection control training' mandatory for all staff
- Provided free influenza vaccine for staff
- Developed working-from-home guidelines
- Promoted self-care tips to staff.

8000 Hours of care

to elderly residents

27

Supported employees

94

Volunteers

More than 4000

Clients

300+ 'drop in'

Clients each month

HIGHLIGHTS

- Maintained all services during the COVID-19 pandemic by successfully transitioning to online counselling and support groups where suitable
- Houses to Homes supported and housed more than 100 young families, providing 4718 instances of assistance to sustain tenancies and avoid tenancy eviction this year, a 25 per cent increase on the previous year
- The number of Aboriginal Catholic Services clients receiving food parcels doubled during COVID-19
- Our Family Support Service supported 600 families, providing more than 9000 instances of care
- Family Day Care provided continuity to children and families throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The service experienced a minimal reduction in clients (10 per cent), in comparison to centre-based childcare (up to 80 per cent)
- Our Commonwealth Home Support Program, Neighbour Aid and Community Visitors Scheme teams provided more than 8000 hours of care to elderly residents, helping them to live independently on their own or feel less isolated when living in a residential care facility
- Our chaplains provided more than 11,000 hours of pastoral care to hospital patients and correctional centre inmates
- Our Problem Gambling team was awarded a grant to develop a program to educate parents and children about the safe use of technology and screen time
- Raised more than \$15,000 to support people affected by the bushfires.



OUR SPECIALISED SERVICES

PHOTO: Disability Support Services client Cynthia (pictured left) with support worker Janelle says she would feel isolated without the support of CatholicCare.

CHAPLAINCY SERVICE



Chaplaincy, also known as pastoral care, was introduced to CatholicCare in March 2017. Chaplains provide spiritual and emotional support for patients and inmates, their families and staff in the seven hospitals and three correctional centres throughout the Diocese of Parramatta.

Our 15 chaplains (5 priests, 4 religious and 6 lay chaplains) work alongside others involved in the care of patients and inmates. It is an inclusive ministry available to all faiths.

Our chaplains adjusted to COVID-19 visitor restrictions to hospitals and correctional centres by introducing Zoom and Facetime visits along with phone calls and emails to support patients and inmates.

When visitors were allowed, chaplains working in hospitals adhered to strict infection control protocols while seeing patients, including patients with COVID-19.

This Year:

- Chaplains provided more than 11,000 hours of pastoral care
- Requests for pastoral care from correctional centre inmates increased during COVID-19 due to additional anxiety from reduced contact with family
- Work began on the development of a 40-hour training program for volunteers in collaboration with chaplaincy managers of Broken Bay, Sydney and Parramatta Diocese.



CHILDREN

FAMILY DAY CARE

Over more than 40 years, CatholicCare's Baulkham Hills Family Day Care has established itself as the premier provider of family day care services in Sydney's Hills District and surrounds.

The not-for-profit Family Day Care is the largest organisation of its kind in the district and surrounding areas, catering for around 350 children on any given day.

Its 51 educators cover an area from Rouse Hill in the north to Parramatta in the south, from Cherrybrook in the east to Schofields in the west.

Children are cared for in small groups – the maximum is four under school age and three over – in a home environment.

This Year:

- Services were maintained during the pandemic to support working parents
- Staff developed and delivered an extensive range of resources and strategies to support educators and families throughout the pandemic
- Support meetings and training with educators were held via video conferencing
- Staff transitioned to working from home and used daily Microsoft Teams meetings to maintain communication during COVID-19
- During COVID-19, the service received two relief grants from the Commonwealth Government – the Early Childhood Education and Care Relief package, and the Transition Funding package.

MAMRE CRECHE

Born from the need to offer childcare to the children of Sudanese Refugee women enrolled in English classes, the CatholicCare Creche at Mamre Gardens is now a thriving early learning centre.

From humble beginnings in the staff room, the creche now operates three days a week from its own dedicated building, offering care for up to 20 children aged 0 to 5.

Funded by the Department of Social Services, the Creche offers an Early Childhood Educational Program based on the Early Learning Years Framework for babies (0 to 2 years), toddlers (2-3 years) and pre-schoolers (4-5 years).

The Creche receives funding from the Irish Famine Memorial.

This Year:

- Due to COVID-19, the Creche closed during Term 2 and re-opened with reduced numbers in week three of Term 3
- Staff transitioned to working from home and used weekly Zoom meetings to maintain communication during COVID-19
- During this time, staff participated in online training and updated the programming system
- Regular contact was kept with all families and a survey gave families the opportunity to give feedback about the service performance.

HOME INSTRUCTION FOR PARENTS OF PRESCHOOL YOUNGSTERS (HIPPY)

Giving our children the best start to school and a love of learning is the aim of HIPPY Emerton.

Building on the bond between parents and their child, HIPPY supports parents to play an active role in preparing their child for success in school.

With the help of home tutors, parents teach their child literacy and numeracy skills using play-based, educational activities. Home tutors are usually parents who have been through the two-year program with their child and subsequently trained as a tutor. Training aims to prepare the tutors for employment after two years as a tutor.

With a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, refugees and people with English as a second language, HIPPY supports 25 families each year.

This Year:

- More than 200 people attended the 2019 graduation ceremony for 21 children
- Families visited the Golden Ridge Animal Farm, giving children a hands-on interactive farm visit.

‘SUPERMUM’ TO THE RESCUE

Two mothers are better than one, especially if the extra one is a ‘supermum’.

That’s the experience of mother-of-three Kylee Peachey, who found a ‘second mum’ for her children through CatholicCare’s Family Day Care service.

The busy professional now raves about the benefits of having children cared for and taught in small groups in a home environment rather than a centre or pre-school.

She values the personalised attention, often one on one, provided by a skilled educator, saying it helps advance children’s development in all areas, including concepts of numeracy, literacy, creativity and socialisation.

And she raves even more about the educator, May, who has looked after all of her children – Jaxx, 7, Willow, 5, and Kai, 2 – at her Kellyville home.

“May is like my children’s second mother,” she said. “She treats them like her own children.”

“She is the most calming, nurturing person and always speaks in a lovely, gentle voice. The kids will do whatever she asks. She must have some superhuman power.”

Mrs Peachey said family day care proved a saviour for her as a busy working mum.

“As soon as I walked in I thought, ‘This is it’. It’s like buying a house. You know straight away it’s right for you. I wouldn’t want my children going anywhere else.”



PHOTO: ‘Supermum’ May with Kai.

SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

CatholicCare's Disability Services give people with disability greater independence and confidence at home and in the community.

As a registered National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) provider, we support clients to achieve their goals, whether they want to find a job, learn to cook or do a sport. Our support workers also help clients with personal care and daily living activities around the house and in the community.

Our vision is to give people living with a disability, their families and carers peace of mind by providing a holistic service.

This Year:

- CatholicCare supported 99 National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) clients. Of these clients:
 - 45 received support coordination
 - 53 received plan management to manage their NDIS funding and ensure they were accessing the right services to achieve their goals
 - 37 received home care for support with personal care, help at home, community access, respite and life skills development
 - 11 took part in the day program
- CatholicCare's Garden Services employed 27 people with disability.

COMMUNITY VISITOR'S SCHEME

Reducing loneliness and enriching the quality of life of elderly people is the aim of the Community Visitor's Scheme.

Funded by the Commonwealth Government, the scheme supports volunteer visits to elderly people living in residential care facilities who are lonely or isolated from family and friends.

CatholicCare has 28 volunteers who make fortnightly visits to 30 residents across six aged-care facilities. Volunteers and residents share stories, go for a walk together, read and play cards, helping to reduce social and health risks associated with loneliness and isolation.

This Year:

- Volunteers were recognised for their work with a Christmas lunch and gift during National Volunteer Week
- Visits to residential aged-care facilities were stopped or reduced during COVID-19, but some volunteers still kept in touch with cards and letters to residents. Visits resumed as restrictions eased and were allowed.



GARDEN SERVICES

Everyone deserves the opportunity to gain meaningful employment. CatholicCare's Garden Services employs 27 people with disability giving them their own wage, the opportunity to learn new work and social skills and gain independence.

Supported workers are employed as maintenance and garden crew providing services such as garden care, mowing and hedging to residential and commercial customers. Staff work with supported workers to set goals and match their skills to their interests.

This Year:

- Our coordinator and garden supervisors worked with two teams of supported employees – an 'external crew' providing garden maintenance at private homes and commercial businesses and an 'internal crew' that maintains the grounds at Mamre House as well as growing plants to sell to the community
- We introduced COVID-19 measures including social distancing, temperature checks, face masks and hand sanitiser stations to keep staff safe.

PHOTO: Garden crew supported employees.

COMMONWEALTH HOME SUPPORT PROGRAM (NEIGHBOUR AID)

Neighbour Aid this year celebrated 30 years of supporting its elderly clients to continue to live in their own homes and remain socially connected.

Five staff and 30 trained volunteers support more than 160 people over 65 living in Blacktown with a range of activities that enable them to live independently in their own home, stay active and connected with their friends and community.

Neighbour Aid is funded by the Commonwealth Home Support Program and the Diocese of Parramatta.

This Year:

- Due to COVID-19, regular face-to-face visits were replaced with phone support — We delivered groceries to clients or taught them how to safely order groceries online
- We received a grant from Musculoskeletal Australia (MSK) through the Sport Australia 'Move it AUS-Better Ageing' initiative to provide a regular group-gentle-exercise program for local older people so they can enjoy the physical, mental and social benefits of regular physical activity
- We worked with a fitness instructor to film exercise classes and deliver them to clients at home so they could continue to exercise during the pandemic
- Emergency funding was received to buy a tablet and mobile phones to support clients at home to stay in touch with family and friends during COVID-19, and to buy essential items online.



LIVING INDEPENDENTLY AT 92

Maureen Jessop moved into her Blacktown home well before Elizabeth II became Queen and, like the world's longest-serving current monarch, she's still there.

It's the only home she has known in her adult life, and after more than 70 years she has no plans to move.

What enables the spry, cheerful 92-year-old to stay there, apart from her own fierce sense of independence and the support of a loving family, is CatholicCare's Neighbour Aid.

Maureen (Pictured above) looks forward to the fortnightly visit from her support worker Julie, who takes her shopping and to medical appointments.

"Julie looks after everything; she's tremendous," she said. "I often think I could leave my shopping to Julie; she knows what I want. I'd hate to have to do it on my own."

The former hairdresser considers it "extremely important" to remain in her house.

"I've got completely used to the area, even though it has changed so much. As you get older you get a bit more set in your ways. You don't like to move."

FAMILY AND RELATIONSHIP SERVICES

Helping couples and families to have better relationships, navigate difficult life circumstances and get the best outcomes after a separation is the focus of CatholicCare's Family Relationship Services.

The team takes a child-focused approach to its family law and family relationship counselling, parenting groups and support groups for families, parents and their children. Counsellors also work with clients experiencing domestic violence.

Our Solo Parents Service offers grief and loss counselling and support groups to adults and children who have lost a loved one or who are experiencing a difficult separation or divorce.

This Year:

- Staff strengthened their relationship with the local Aboriginal community at Mount Druitt
- We successfully moved a number of programs to an online format during COVID-19, including 'Bringing Baby Home' and 'Keeping Kids in Mind'
- Staff held an online education seminar about annulments in the Catholic Church
- We collaborated with the Wesley Community Legal Service to develop a series of family law seminars.

GAMBLING AND FINANCIAL COUNSELLING

CatholicCare's Problem Gambling Counselling service supports people and their families who have been negatively impacted by gambling. Identifying triggers, underlying issues and learning how to maintain change are some of the strategies taught.

Family members can learn how to cope with gambling behaviours and self-care.

Financial Counselling provides support, information, and advocacy to enable people in situations of financial difficulty to gain financial sustainability. People and their family members affected by problem gambling are given priority for this support.

This Year:

- Problem Gambling received funding from the Office of Responsible Gambling to develop its 'Off Screen & Smart Play' program to educate parents and their children on the healthy use of technology and screen time
- We offered a student placement in financial counselling.

FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES

Many of our clients seek support with their most important role in life – parenting.

Our Family Support team works with parents who have children aged 18 and under in Blacktown and Penrith, and with youth up to the age of 25.

With a child-protection focus, the team supports parents and children collaboratively so children can live in a safe and nurturing environment.

Among our services are home visits, advocacy, counselling, child safety, domestic violence, drug and alcohol use. Our Intensive Family Preservation Service works with families referred from the Department of Communities and Justice at risk of having their children removed.

This Year:

- Our Intensive Family Preservation Service carried more than the required caseload of four families at a time — We supported five Aboriginal families and three culturally and linguistically diverse families and all of the children remained in the care of their families. For five of these families, Department of Communities and Justice closed their case
- Where possible, we moved to online support during COVID-19, and when face-to-face visits were essential for very vulnerable clients, staff practised physical distancing.



SINGLE MUM'S PRAYERS ANSWERED

Life was fraught for Lucy, a single mum who had escaped from domestic violence but was having trouble coping with her young daughter and the demands of everyday life. She was far away from her native land, flat broke and had no job, no permanent home, no family nearby and no friends.

Her daughter seemed to be all she had, but their relationship was tense; there were lots of tears and lots of disagreements. Lucy didn't know where to turn.

Now she feels she has turned her life around, along with her daughter's. She is smiling and happy again.

The 38-year-old has somewhere to stay in western Sydney; she has food and shelter.

She is studying and hopes to work at the end of her three-year course. Her daughter is happier at school, happier with her mum and happy that she is still in contact with her father.

Lucy attributes the turnaround to her faith, and to the Family Relationship Services of CatholicCare.

"I feel like my prayers were answered," she said. 'We were living in a garage and I didn't know what to do.'

When she approached the student counsellor at her daughter's primary school she was referred to CatholicCare, and that's when her personal nightmare started to turn around.



CatholicCare helped her arrange assistance from Centrelink, found her a modest but clean two bedroom and organised food from the OzHarvest charity, along with aid in cooking so she could prepare her own healthy meals.

A case worker started helping her and her daughter deal with the emotional turmoil in their lives, the mental upheaval that so often accompanies domestic violence, broken marriages and a financially precarious existence.

"Slowly, steadily, we are getting somewhere. I feel so different. We have a nice life. We have received really practical help, as well as help with emotions and with healing."

"CatholicCare has been sitting with us, listening to us, and that means a lot."

PROJECT ELIZABETH

Project Elizabeth supports new parents who are finding the challenges of a newborn baby overwhelming.

The team also supports parents who are expecting a baby and those who have lost a child.

Support includes counselling, practical help at home, group work and parenting strategies.

Project Elizabeth is funded by the Diocese of Parramatta and the New South Wales Department of Health.



PHOTO: Project Elizabeth clients and new parents Sharen and Dale with their baby boy Jackson.

HOUSES TO HOMES

FOR MORE THAN 30 YEARS, CATHOLICCARE'S 'HOUSES TO HOMES' SERVICE HAS BEEN ASSISTING YOUNG MOTHERS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS TO GET BACK ON THEIR FEET.

Young women aged 16 to 24 who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, and who are pregnant or have a baby, are referred to the service to live in the Houses to Homes transitional housing with support.

Staff work with these young women to access the right care and support they need to safely care for their baby and themselves, and rebuild their life.

One of the most critical roles of the service is to assist clients to develop the necessary parenting skills to care for their baby and build confidence as a mum.

This Year:

- Houses to Homes staff sourced and delivered food, nappies and formula to mothers and babies during the COVID-19 lockdown, provided additional support online to mothers experiencing anxiety or who had lost jobs due to the pandemic
- Staff provided additional support to new mothers after they were discharged from hospital – hospital stays were shortened due to the pandemic
- We supported clients to attend online counselling, parenting and mothers' groups, and online living skills training
- We were successful in advocating for the Rent Choice Youth Housing Subsidy for five clients who are studying and/or working
- Staff attended the 2019 Parramatta Street Feast event to engage with rough sleepers and vulnerable people attending the lunch at Prince Alfred Park.

YOUTH REZOLUTIONS

The Youth Rezolutions program supports vulnerable young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Through case management, one-on-one and group mentoring and training programs, young people have the opportunity to build life skills that will help them to avoid homelessness, transition to independent living or return home, and get back on their feet. The service offers transitional accommodation.

Youth Rezolutions is funded by the NSW Government and jointly operated by CatholicCare and SaintsCare.

BREAKING THE CYCLE OF HOMELESSNESS

“We want to break the cycle of homelessness and see our clients succeed”.

Houses to Homes staff said there was no greater satisfaction than to see clients on ‘the other side, looking healthy, happy and enthusiastic about life’. The service assists young mothers experiencing homelessness to get back on their feet.

“It’s not unusual for women to come to us with nothing more than a plastic bag filled with their belongings,” Manager Louise, a registered nurse and midwife, said. “So we have to start from scratch. Often they have no family or friends to stay with, and so finding them safe, affordable housing is our number one priority along with making sure they feel safe and have all the basic necessities.”

The team works with a number of agencies to access safe, appropriate long-term housing.

Staff work closely with their clients to help them develop parenting skills and important life skills, such as cooking, budgeting, looking after a home and maintaining a tenancy. Staff make sure their clients have access to physical and mental healthcare, education, employment, financial and emotional support.

“When we first meet a client, we spend a lot of time getting to know them and building trust. Quite often they have come from very difficult situations and we need them to feel that they can talk openly and honestly with us so we can help in every way possible.”

“We give clients the foundations to establish a safe, supported and happy life on their own,” Louise said.



ABORIGINAL CATHOLIC SERVICES

Aboriginal Catholic Services is a drop-in centre led by Aboriginal people for Aboriginal people, in Emerton.

A range of support is available at the centre including help with domestic violence, health clinics, mentoring early release prisoners and people on probation and parole.

Many of CatholicCare counselling services - individual, family, financial, problem gambling - are also offered in the Emerton centre.

This Year:

- We continued to see our clients face-to-face at their home observing COVID-19 safety measures and offering drop-in times at the centre
- The number of clients attending the drop-in centre increased as a result of other services in the area closing during COVID-19
- Phone contact with clients also increased during the pandemic
- The number of clients receiving food parcels doubled during COVID-19.

ALL SAINTS OF AFRICA

Established in 2013, All Saints of Africa supports culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) families, particularly Sudanese and African migrants and refugees.

Staff run activities and cultural education for young people and their families to help them settle into life in Australia.

Support includes enrolling children in school, help with homework, support groups for mums, accommodation and language support and referral to other services.

This Year:

- The service received funding from the Irish Famine Foundation to facilitate a project for the CALD communities to deliver information sessions about:
 - Remembering a Lost Childhood
 - Exploring childhood in 21st Century Australia
 - Understanding and communicating the different roles and responsibilities of the family unit in Australia
 - Drug and alcohol addictions
 - Understanding family law.
- The program was facilitated by the CatholicCare staff, with 36 participants, and will continue to be delivered.

SPRINGWOOD DROP-IN CENTRE

CatholicCare's Drop-In Centre at Springwood was established in 2014 following the bushfires that devastated the local area.

Since then the service has grown and now provides a range of mental health and community-based programs responsive to community needs and goals. Activities include a community garden, reading groups, technology help and a range of counselling services.

Clients are supported through both the drop-in centre and community programs which include informal chats, information, food, referrals and support. Approximately 300 clients accessed supports through the drop-in centre every month.

This Year:

- Established a check-in phone call service for isolated and vulnerable clients to make sure they are okay and escalate any concerns
- Delivered services online or in person with COVID safety measures in place to continue to support our community. A creative youth competition showcased young people's creativity in the face of adversity
- Obtained a grant to buy iPads for clients to access video counselling and other services.





AUSSIE CHRISTMAS “MIRACLE” FOR IRAQI REFUGEES

“
*This is all about bringing
them into a community
at a personal level.*”

PHOTO: Celia Vagg (left) with Angelina.

After fleeing war-ravaged Iraq, then enduring nine years in limbo in Jordan while seeking asylum, an Australian Christmas “miracle” awaited single father Yousif and his daughter Angelina.

Yousif, now 35, and his 12-year-old daughter Angelina arrived on Christmas Eve in 2018 and were warmly welcomed into their Blue Mountains community, right from the moment they were picked up at Sydney airport by Faulconbridge residents Mark and Merran.

At last they were secure in the knowledge that this was no fleeting visit - it was the start of their new life in their newly adoptive country, and they were here to stay.

Since then they have been ushered into their new world with many helping hands and hearts. They have received assistance in finding their own home, a school, a job; they’ve been invited to play dates, afternoon teas and dinners; they’ve been ferried to appointments, sporting clubs and after-school activities, and helped with red tape involved in setting up life from scratch in a new land.

“As a refugee (asylum seeker in Jordan) you cannot work and you cannot study,” Yousif said. “You do nothing. You are living for an unknown future, just sitting there and waiting for a miracle to happen. I praise God that he brought me to the Blue Mountains.”

The “miracle” that followed their acceptance as refugees by Australia was all part of a major initiative known as ‘Refugee Welcome’ by CatholicCare to make newcomers feel welcomed as loved members of the community.

Celia Vagg is the coordinator of CatholicCare’s Springwood Drop-In Centre, where Yousif and Angelina have been regular visitors.

“This is all about bringing them into a community at a personal level; inviting a refugee family to be supported by a church community rather than be reliant on other organisations,” Celia said.

“Seeing Yousif and Angelina and the community around them is just beautiful, and such a privilege to be part of.”

TOTAL STAFF 166

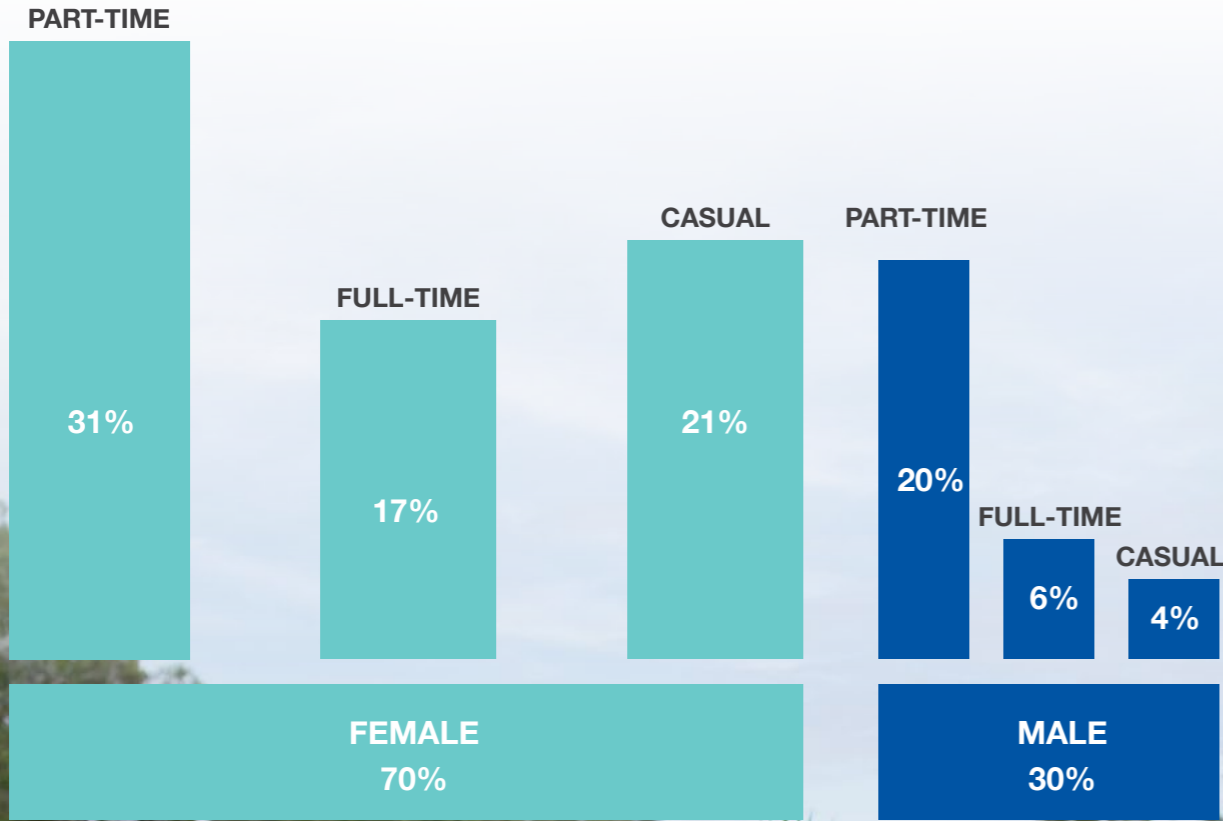
TOTAL GENDER BREAKDOWN 70% FEMALES AND 30% MALES.

14 MANAGERS

10 female, 4 male
(11 full-time, 3 part-time)

152 STAFF

106 female, 46 male
(27 full-time, 83 part-time, 42 casual)



LENGTH OF SERVICE

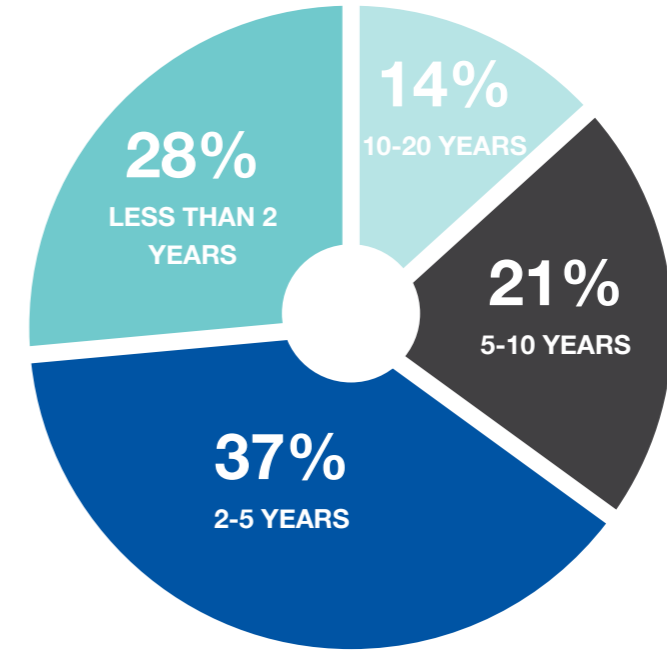
LONGEST CURRENT SERVICE: 28.2 YEARS

AVERAGE LENGTH OF SERVICE

5.7 Years

AGE SPREAD

20 to 81 Years



STAFF SATISFACTION SURVEY

CatholicCare staff were invited to participate in a staff engagement survey. Sixty-six per cent of staff responded to the survey.

Of significance:

- Almost 80 per cent of respondents felt their work gave them a sense of accomplishment
- Almost 70 per cent of respondents know what is expected of them when it comes to work goals and objectives
- 55 percent of respondents believe their work is valued by the organisation.

During the year we introduced a number of new communication tools in response to staff feedback.

- Monthly update from the Executive Director
- Stories about five staff were written and shared across a number of platforms
- An external quarterly newsletter was introduced to showcase the services and staff to our community
- Regular all staff meetings with the Executive Director and senior managers
- Staff participation in the creation of values and strategic plan.



“
I like to think that we hold hope for people who can't see it themselves - and when they are ready, we can give their hope back to them.”

RITA CHATER, SOLO PARENTS SERVICES

Rita Chater joined CatholicCare as a Grief Counsellor in 2013, working under Sister Eileen Quade in Solo Parents Services. Since January 2016, Rita has been coordinating and running the service. This service provides counselling support for people who are divorced, separated or bereaved. Rita says this type of work isn't easy, but it is uniquely rewarding and meaningful.

“I work with adults and children who are dealing with various degrees of grief and loss, often associated with very traumatic circumstances. It's a privilege to sit with someone and be invited into a space which is profoundly sacred and private. People often share thoughts and feelings with us that haven't been expressed to anyone else. I feel humbled to journey with people at these difficult times in their lives.”

Rita is passionate and committed to her work for two simple, yet powerful reasons: the passion she has for the work she does, and the belief that she holds hope for those who have lost it. In her early days as a grief counsellor, one client's story stood out to her; his words becoming her inspiration for her work in this field.

“We began running a support group for young widowed men and women. From the group's beginning, one gentleman came to every session, he joined shortly after the sudden, tragic death of his wife. At first, it was very difficult for him to be in the group. However, over time, we noticed small changes in him, his sense of humour and smile returned. After the second year in the group, he said to me, 'Rita, after my wife died, I couldn't see any hope, but with the help of you, and the other group members,

I could carry on each month. Now, I can see light at the end of the tunnel, I can see hope for the future. Thank you for carrying the hope for me until I could carry it myself.' I saw the light and hope in his eyes. It was a profound moment.”

Throughout the years, Rita has journeyed with many people whose lives are torn apart through the loss of a loved one, divorce or immense trauma. It can be easy to wonder, “Is there hope?”, but the words that man shared with Rita many years ago are alive in her heart.

“I like to think that we hold hope for people who can't see it themselves - and when they are ready, we can give their hope back to them.”

“It's wonderful to witness clients experiencing change and transformation in their lives. It's not all difficult work. We have many opportunities to share laughter and have fun with our clients and staff at CatholicCare Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains. I have learned a lot about life, love and loss from the people I meet. This work has made me realise how precious life is. Cherish every moment and appreciate those who are dear to you.”

RAFA GODO, ALL SAINTS OF AFRICA

Rafa rises to every occasion. No case is too complex; no challenge too great. For the past decade, she's served as a Support Worker in our Family Support program.



I love human beings; I'm dedicated to serving the community. Our clients need us when they're most vulnerable. They know we work with everyone and we don't judge people.

In her role at CatholicCare's All Saints of Africa, Rafa works with families and individuals to overcome a myriad of obstacles. On any given day, she could be advocating for a client to obtain financial assistance, running a family relationship support group or organising after-school tutoring.

For Rafa, her role is about embracing people of all backgrounds and supporting them through sometimes difficult and dark times. Dedication and commitment, she says, can bring life-changing outcomes for people in need.

"I love human beings; I'm dedicated to serving the community. Our clients need us when they're most vulnerable. They know we work with everyone and we don't judge people."

As a refugee who arrived in Sydney from Sudan, Rafa and her partner know exactly how it feels to need sanctuary.

Rafa and her partner fled the bloodshed of the Second Sudanese Civil War when she was pregnant with her son in 2004. After escaping to Egypt, the couple applied for asylum in Australia.

"Coming to a new country is always difficult - the language, the culture... but at the end of the day, I found Australia to be a good country. I knew my children would have a much better education; a better life. It was very difficult, but after some years, we managed to settle."

Arriving in Australia, Rafa enrolled in Nirimba TAFE to study community services; a natural step, as she had worked in human services in Sudan.

"Back home in Khartoum, I worked with the community as a public health educator in the displacement camps. Many people were dying from diseases contracted due to poor sanitation. I taught life skills through song and dance, helping people learn about hygiene. By the end of the program, 80 per cent of the community was using correct hygiene practices."

After graduating from TAFE in 2008, Rafa joined CatholicCare and began educating other refugees about life in Australia and connecting them to our services. Rafa shares the story of how she helped a client claim support she was entitled to, and so desperately needed.

"A woman suffering domestic violence came to me for help. She was struggling to communicate with staff at an office for people seeking financial assistance. She had visited every day for weeks to ask why money hadn't gone into her account."

With patience and quiet passion, Rafa discovered that her client needed to provide financial documentation for her application to be approved. After showing her client how to add her payslip to her file, the client soon began receiving payments.

"I was very disappointed in how this woman had been treated. You can't treat people like that just because of a language barrier. That's wrong. We must always focus on getting to the bottom of any problem - no matter the barriers. It's not easy for the client, but nothing will be too hard if we persist."

Sherrie joined CatholicCare in 2018 as a tutor with HIPPY Emerton, a home interaction-based education and parenting program for families. This year, she began a traineeship as an Aboriginal caseworker, with the Family Support Program. Sherrie will be a qualified Aboriginal caseworker by the end of 2022.

“My role is to help those who are struggling – whatever they’re facing,” Sherrie said. “It could be anything from helping people cope with mental health, navigate child custody issues, teaching parenting skills, or helping someone find their purpose in life. The number one thing I teach, however, is self-care. I help my clients understand how to support themselves so they can be strong for their loved ones. You can’t help others if you haven’t taken care of yourself first.”

Sherrie’s perspectives are shaped by her own life experiences.

“I grew up in a rough family. My mother had schizophrenia and my father was an alcoholic. I was partially deaf until I was 16. I didn’t know any better; I was happy. I had several operations over the years to restore my hearing and after my last operation at 16, I could hear again. Being partially deaf had affected my learning, but as a teenager, I taught myself to read and write for the first time.”

As Sherrie picked up a pen and paper, her sister, Sarah, was by her side.

“Sarah and I were really close. Sarah helped me learn to read – we read the bible together eight times, scripture by scripture.”

Sherrie’s restored hearing gave her a new mechanism through which she could interpret the world. However, she discovered a reality she only wanted to withdraw from.

“Being able to hear took a toll on me. That’s why I consumed drugs and alcohol. I wanted to escape.”

Lost in a dark place, it was her sister’s shared words of scripture that presented the seeds of Sherrie’s faith in herself, and in God.

When, in 2016, Sarah tragically passed away, Sherrie was devastated.

“My sister was everything to me. Sarah had helped me turn my life around. It took a while before I realised that Sarah’s work was something I could do too.”

Around Christmas Eve, 2017, Sherrie lay in bed with her two young children, crying and praying. The small room contained her family’s only possessions: a mattress and an esky. In this moment of need, Sherrie prayed for the opportunity to help others; a chance to continue her sister’s work.


Sherrie lifted herself up and walked with her children to their local Holy Family Church. Sherrie noticed the Aboriginal CatholicCare Social Services Centre behind the church where she was collecting a Christmas hamper.

“A lady named Linda offered me another hamper; a Christmas hamper filled with toys. We got talking and she signed me up for a HIPPY Program, explaining to me there was an opportunity for some work with HIPPY Emerton. I couldn’t believe it; my prayers had been answered. I was overwhelmed with tears.” Sherrie now feels happy and settled.

“Now, we have everything we could ever ask for – and more,” she said. “It’s the first time I’ve recognised that I have a gift to support others. I have a clean slate where I can help others to understand how to make changes. I couldn’t be more proud.”



LEX DIGNAM, FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS



If you grew up in a family business, there's a good chance you've experienced the conflict between sticking with your roots and being called to explore a new path. Lex Dignam can empathise. At 18, he deviated from his family's wood heating company to enrol in a psychology degree. Yet, when his brother needed a hand with the business, Lex did a career backflip and spent the next 12 years in heating installation, roof sheeting and carpentry.

True to his nature, he still found time to connect with those around him over the years, doing his best to chip away at the tradie's unspoken rule: 'Don't bring your problems to work.'

"Most of the guys I worked with were purely focused on the job at hand. But I always felt I had a calling to do something else. I'd be on the roof with them, trying to solve all of their problems, seeing if they were OK and if they wanted to have a yarn."

By the time he was 30, Lex had achieved many of his goals in life. Yet at work, he felt burnt out and stagnant.

When the time was right, Lex enrolled in a Bachelor of Applied Social Science Counselling, and while it was incredibly difficult studying as a mature age student, he was determined to see it through. During his final year, Lex was delighted to be offered a placement with CatholicCare Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains in Emerton.

"I underwent extensive training at uni but putting that theory into practice was a huge eye-opener. Initially, I was working predominantly with Indigenous clients, in a predominantly Indigenous community. Being in a minority was a big learning experience for me – I felt a bit out of my depth. But over time, I realised I had to earn that sense of feeling welcome; I couldn't just expect it. I needed to recognise that I had plenty to learn from others. In time, I opened my eyes and my ears."

Having overcome some initial cultural barriers, Lex found he was able to truly connect with his clients to offer them support

and guidance during some of the most challenging times of their lives. He's quick to explain that it's not all about finite, happy endings.

"Much of our work is about a process as opposed to a single outcome. It's often a cycle. I worked with one couple who had their kids removed because of drug use and related issues. Over time, they made great progress and their kids were returned to them. Then they fell into drug-use again, and the kids were again removed. It's tough. Being removed two or three times is massive for kids. The parents understand why. We stay on this journey with them."

Despite the challenges, Lex is clearly driven by an unwavering belief that change is possible.

"It's about truly believing in anyone's capacity to change. I work hard not to make a negative judgement about my clients. If you construct a positive judgment around someone, it benefits the counselling. You can build rapport. And when kids are reunited with their parents who really have made a change for the better... it's all worth it. You know that those kids are no longer facing the same sort of neglect. These moments always stick with me."

Lex has now worked as a Family Relationship Counsellor at CatholicCare for more than six years.

"Counselling is the hardest work I've ever done. But it is incredibly rewarding. I feel very privileged to travel with people who allow me into their lives."

ROSIE'S STORY

When Rosie Bililis started volunteering at CatholicCare's Neighbour Aid, little did she know that at 74 years old she'd be reaching the milestone of almost three decades of service.

The mother of two started volunteering with Neighbour Aid in Blacktown in 1992 supporting elderly people with shopping, travel to medical appointments, outings and exercise. Her volunteer position supports the work of the trained social support workers who assist the elderly to continue living independently in their own home.

"I have been blessed with such wonderful clients throughout my time volunteering for Neighbour Aid," she said. "I didn't expect to make it to almost 30 years of service, and I certainly would not have come this far without the support of my lovely colleagues at CatholicCare."

At one stage Rosie supported four clients in the program. She now visits two ladies at home which includes going out into the garden or for a walk.

One of Rosie's fondest memories was with a regular client who didn't want to go outside in the sun.

"It was quite difficult to encourage her to get her daily dose of sunshine," she said. "So I told her that there might be a cheque from the Prime Minister in her letterbox, and off she went, outside to check her letterbox – in the sunshine!"

Volunteering has played an important role in Rosie's life.

"I moved to Sydney from the Greek Islands on my own in 1966, and I wish to thank Australia for letting me be a part of their country," she said. "I learnt to speak and read the English language through reading the newspaper and interacting with others, including visiting nursing homes."

Rosie's love of helping others was shaped by her mother, granddaughter and late husband.

"My mother played an important role in shaping how I help others, teaching me that no matter our colour, religion or nationality, we are all under the same umbrella and we all must love and help each other," she said.

"The skills and education I had received in my volunteering role for Neighbour Aid helped me significantly when my husband became ill," she said. "I now have a 12-year-old granddaughter who has a disability, and my experience helps to care for her as well. You learn to love, care and accept people the way they are."

**IN 2020 WE HAD
94 VOLUNTEERS**



The skills and education I have received in my volunteering role for Neighbour Aid helped me significantly when my husband became ill.

GOVERNANCE

PETER LOUGHNANE

Executive Director

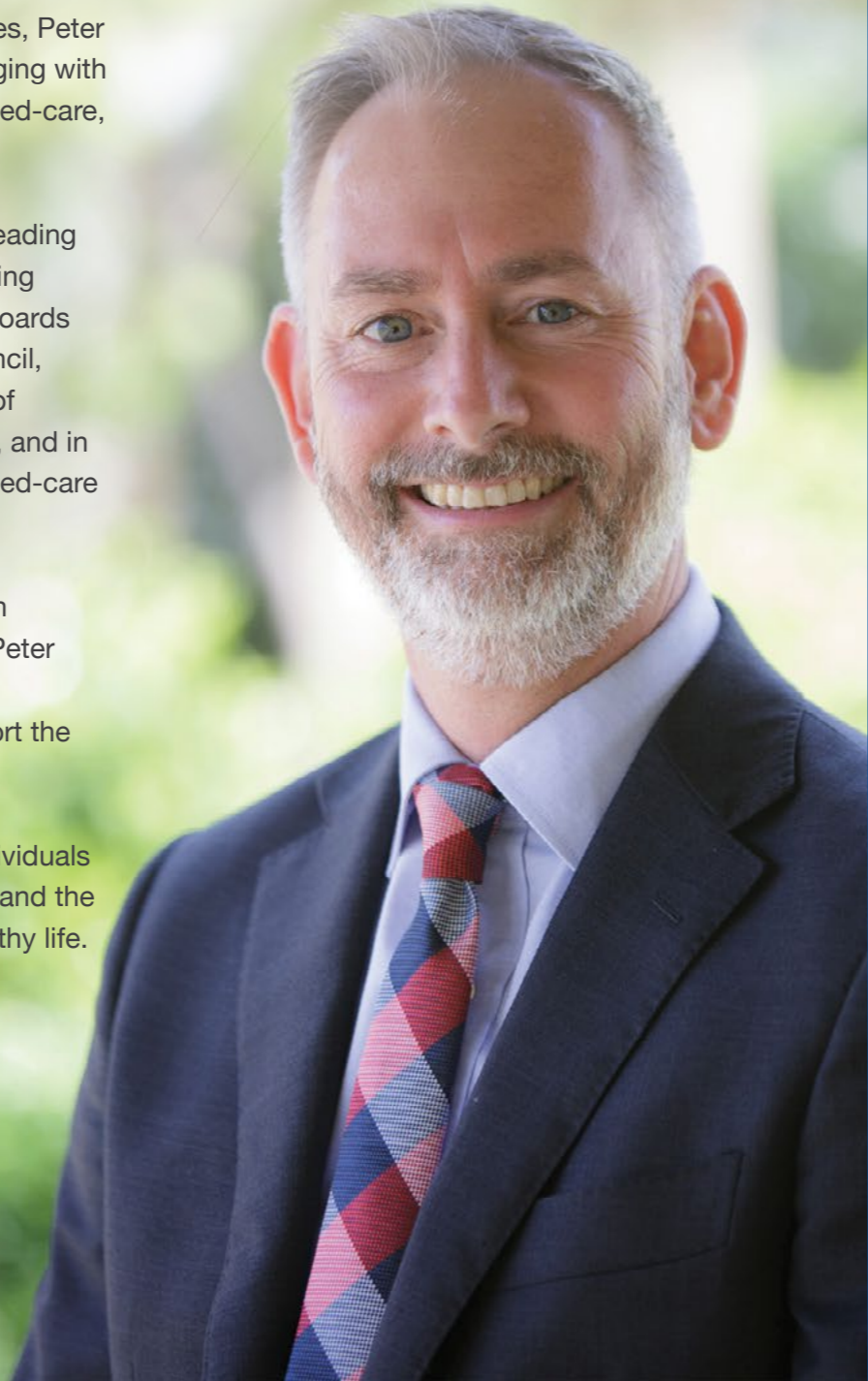
BHlthSc (Occupational Therapy), Grad Cert of Applied Finance & Investment, Grad Cert Accounting, Grad Cert Change Management.

With a passion for leading not-for-profit organisations and connecting communities, Peter joined CatholicCare in January 2020 bringing with him more than 15 years' experience in aged-care, community and disability services.

Throughout his career Peter has been a leading voice for change for minority groups, having served on multiple community-services boards including Multicultural Communities Council, the peak organisation serving the needs of multicultural residents on the Gold Coast, and in leadership positions for social service, aged-care and disability organisations.

Through nurturing a strong alignment with the values and mission of CatholicCare, Peter leverages his expertise in organisational change and strategic leadership to support the organisation's sustainability and growth.

Peter's goal is to continue to connect individuals and families within their local community and the services they need to live a safe and healthy life.



ADVISORY COUNCIL



PAUL M^cMAHON, CHAIR

BA PGDip Mgt

Paul was appointed Chair of the CatholicCare Advisory Council in March 2019. The former Chief Executive Officer of Southern Cross Care New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory, Paul has more than 30 years' experience in the social services sector particularly aged care. He is a passionate leader and advocate for aged-care and social services clients. Prior to his appointment at Southern Cross Care he was the Chief Executive of Thomas Holt Villages and has held senior appointments across Uniting Care Ageing and the Department of Health and Ageing. He is a former board member of Mercy Health Aged Care Central Queensland and the Sisters of St Joseph's Aged Care. Since retiring in 2018, Paul spends his time doing voluntary work, reading, and following the cricket and football.



MOST REVEREND VINCENT LONG VAN NGUYEN

OFM Conv

Bishop Vincent was appointed as the fourth Bishop of Parramatta in May 2016. Nationally, he serves as the Chair, Bishops Commission for Social Justice, Mission and Service. Prior to his installation as Bishop of Parramatta, he served as the Auxiliary Bishop of Melbourne. During that period, he was Episcopal Vicar for Justice and Peace and for Social Services and was Chair of the Catholic Education Commission (Victoria). In his early years of service, Bishop Vincent studied in Rome and later returned to serve as Assistant General in Rome, responsible for the Asia-Oceania section of his Order. He has served as parish priest in Kellyville within the Diocese of Parramatta and Springvale in Victoria before being elected Superior of the Order of Friars Minor Conventuals in Australia.



VERY REV PETER G. WILLIAMS VG

Fr Peter is the Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia for the Diocese of Parramatta. He is the former Episcopal Vicar for Social Welfare having relinquished his responsibilities with CatholicCare in June 2020. On 19 March 1992, Fr Peter was ordained a Catholic priest and has held appointments in many parishes in the Diocese of Parramatta - most notably as parish priest of St Oliver Plunkett's Parish in Harris Park (1998-2004), and Dean of St Patrick's Cathedral Parish in Parramatta (2004-2006).



VERY REV LUIS FERNANDO MONTANO EV
BPhil STB

Fr Fernando is the Parish Priest at St Bernadette's in Castle Hill. In June 2020 he was appointed as the Episcopal Vicar for Social Welfare and became a member of the CatholicCare Advisory Council. Fr Fernando studied a Bachelor of Philosophy in Mexico City before working in Hong Kong where he studied a Bachelor of Sacred Theology. He arrived in Australia in 2006 to take the position of Chinese Chaplain for the Diocese of Parramatta and Assistant Priest at St Monica's in North Parramatta. In 2008 he became the Parish Priest.



VERA VISEVIC
BTh BLaw BEc

A partner at Mills Oakley law firm, Vera specialises in not-for-profit and social enterprise law. She has more than 25 years' experience acting for numerous charities, religious and not-for-profit organisations. Vera provides a full suite of commercial services to not-for-profit clients, including protecting commercial arrangements through drafting services agreements and reviewing grant and other government agreements. Vera's expertise ranges from assisting clients with governance and fundraising issues to the establishment of charitable trusts and funds.



PETER BELLMAN
DipAcc

Peter is the former Head of Finance for CatholicCare Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains. He has more than 45 years' experience in finance working in private industry and across public and private health in New South Wales. Peter is currently the Finance Manager for the Education Centre Against Violence.



SUE WALSH
M Ed Leadership, Growth Coach, OTL Facilitator

Sue is a System and School Learning Consultant and has led a system of schools, 45,000 students and 5,000 teachers as the Deputy Executive Director of Schools and Director of Learning for the Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta until 2019. Sue's work in Australian schools and systems has resulted in requests to present workshops and keynotes at national and international conferences. In 2018, Sue graduated from Cambridge University's Advanced Leadership Program. Sue serves on a number of boards and advisory committees.



GEOFF OFFICER
EMBA, GAICD

Geoff has served as a non-executive advisory board member, chief executive officer and company director with more than 15 years board level experience and 24 years as a company executive, commercial human resources consultant and practitioner. Geoff is currently the Chief of Operations and Finance (Diocesan Financial Administrator) for the Catholic Diocese of Parramatta. He is a Director of the Catholic Diocese of Parramatta Services.



LYN AINSWORTH
MStrat HRM LLB BA GradDipMgt (Arts) GradDipEd

Lyn is the former Executive Director of CatholicCare Diocese of Broken Bay. She has more than 20 years' experience in executive leadership in the not-for-profit sector, working with leading organisations including House With No Steps and the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children. Lyn has been a strong advocate for human rights in a range of spheres. She currently serves on the Board of Holdsworth Community and is a legal practitioner of the Supreme Court of New South Wales.



HELEN EMMERSON
BAppSc, RN

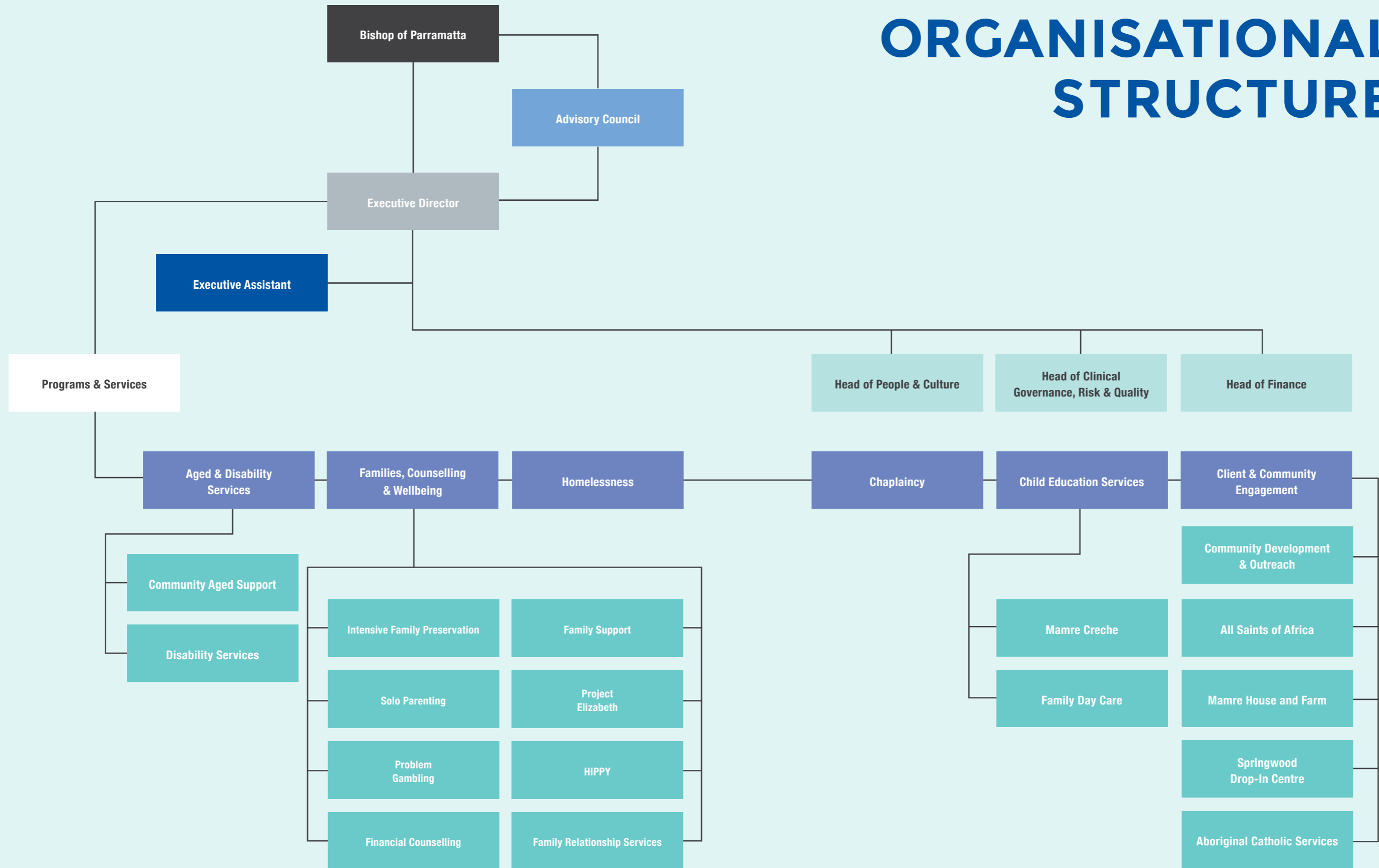
Helen is the Chief Executive Officer of Southern Cross Care (New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory) and has more than 20 years' experience in aged-care and disability services in both Australia and the United Kingdom. Skilled in healthcare management, performance management, strategy and business planning, Helen has a comprehensive background in clinical care, operations and leadership that drives her to implement innovative ageing services



PETER O'BRIEN
BTh MHRM

The Director at Liminalspace Consulting, Peter is an executive coach and organisational consultant. He has more than 30 years' experience in the New South Wales social and community services sector with non-government organisations. He has served in many roles from family support worker and program coordinator to executive manager providing leading edge training, early intervention and intensive child protection services to young people, vulnerable families and communities.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



STRATEGIC PLAN

CATHOLICCARE DEVELOPED ITS STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2020-2023 THIS YEAR.

The title of our plan ‘venturing into the deep’ directly reflects Bishop Vincent’s episcopal motto, Luke’s Gospel (5:1-11), and our need to be bold and brave in a climate that demands nothing less.

Over the next three years we will step out of our comfort zone to ensure we are a sustainable organisation that is here, always, for those who need us.

Our plan, developed in consultation with our frontline staff, outlines our desire to integrate into our local communities so that more people can reach us; prioritise gaps in services so we can support people holistically; and to be a partner with our clients, meeting them where they are in life to walk by their side, every step of the way.

As we begin this journey - ‘venturing into the deep’ - with much excitement, we remain focused on our why; our reason for coming to work each day — to be a part of a caring community, inclusive of the most vulnerable, so that we can all live with joy and purpose.

OUR MISSION

CatholicCare exists to show the compassionate face of Jesus to all.

Our mission is to be a strong and visible provider of care for all in the Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains with a special concern for the poor and disadvantaged.

OUR INSPIRATION

**WE ARE A UNIFIER,
CONNECTING PEOPLE
AND FAMILIES WITH THEIR
COMMUNITY SO THEY MAY
LIVE WITH JOY AND PURPOSE.**

HOW WILL WE DO THIS?

We will build on our strengths of community development and case management to ensure gaps in services and opportunity at individual, family and community levels are not missed.

This enables us to work with people to understand their purpose in life, support them, and create opportunities for services and community to come together.

WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS BY:

- Working with people to understand their needs and purpose in life towards a common good
- Providing coordinated support and opportunities for meaningful connection to the community through solidarity
- Valuing cultural diversity by recognising the human dignity of every individual
- Striving for a community where no one feels alone or isolated to unite people and communities, in solidarity
- Supporting people at all stages of life to manage difficulties and rediscover their strengths through subsidiarity and participation.

OUR 3 GOALS



WE ARE INTEGRATED INTO OUR LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Our strategies to achieve this:

- Increase community-based activities that foster connection and purpose in life
- Cultivate and share stories online and in the media, from our work and our people, with the broader community
- Leverage networking and partnerships with other organisations and our Diocese to increase local knowledge and supports
- Expand service offerings in aged-care and disability services
- We grow where there are services that align with our foundation of practice
- We will seek opportunities for acquisition and asset investment.



WE PRIORITISE GAPS IN COMMUNITY SERVICES NEEDS

Our strategies to achieve this:

- We grow in response to community need
- We invest in resources that address community need
- Increased engagement, consultation and collaboration with key communities including parishes, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and refugee communities
- We will conduct systematic market opportunity assessments
- We will engage in research in emerging social justice and community issues to better focus our work
- We will seek opportunities for acquisition and asset investment.



WE JOURNEY BESIDE PEOPLE TO ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS

Our strategies to achieve this:

- Provide opportunities, activities and experiences that sustain peoples' purpose in life
- Our practice framework is strategic; providing a clear rationale for how we deliver our services
- Program and service development incorporates both 'client design principles' and informed research
- Build our organisational and staff capability.

OUR MEASURES

HOW DO WE KNOW IF WE'VE ACHIEVED OUR GOALS?

IMPACT

Purpose in life measures; >95% client retention; impact on community.

SAFETY AND SAFEGUARDING

Full compliance with safeguarding standards.

GEOGRAPHIC SPREAD

Services operating across the whole Diocese.

QUALITY

Exceeding in accreditation — we encourage an environment of continuous improvement.

PEOPLE

Benchmarking to be conducted with comparable organisations for staff engagement and staff turnover.

FINANCIAL

We are a sustainable organisation.

OUR VALUES

With honesty and openness, our staff have created our values to guide how we work and engage with those we serve in our community.

WE EMBRACE EVERY JOURNEY

with gratitude and love.

For our clients, the community and each other.

This value is fundamental to our work and the way we work together and is lived each day through the following individual values.



WE ARE AVAILABLE

with an **open mind and heart**



WE ADVOCATE

with **patience and passion**



WE BUILD TRUST

with **integrity and respect**



WE PERSEVERE

with **resilience and belief**

CatholicCare's Mission, Inspiration and Values are informed by Catholic Social Teaching. The principles of Catholic Social Teaching frame our work in attending to the needs of all people, with a focus on the vulnerable and disadvantaged, regardless of faith, religion, gender, ethnicity, age or socio-economic background. The principles are human dignity, the common good, solidarity, subsidiarity and participation.

PARTNERSHIPS AND SUPPORTERS

KEY FUNDING AGENCIES AND PARTNERS



DIOCESE of PARRAMATTA



Australian Government
Department of Social Services

Australian Government
Department of Health



MAJOR DONORS

AUSTRALIAN YOUTH FOUNDATION | ERIC STORM TRUST | VERA VISEVIC
GREAT IRISH FAMINE COMMEMORATION COMMITTEE INC | DIOCESE OF PARRAMATTA
PARISHIONERS | CATHOLIC CHURCH INSURANCE | INAGH FOUNDATION | NRMA
CATHOLIC EDUCATION DIOCESE OF PARRAMATTA

We sincerely thank all of our donors for their generous support.

PEAK MEMBERSHIPS



WHERE ARE WE LOCATED?



- Gambling & Financial Counselling
- Family Relationship Counselling
- Family Support Services
- Drop in centres
- Aged Care Support & Blacktown Neighbour Aid
- Disability Support (NDIS)
- Gardening Services
- Family Day Care Services



CatholicCare Western Sydney and The Blue Mountains provides services to clients from a variety of locations across the region. In addition to our centres and offices, our staff see clients in the community and in their homes.



CatholicCare

WESTERN SYDNEY
AND THE BLUE MOUNTAINS

**CATHOLICCARE WESTERN SYDNEY
AND THE BLUE MOUNTAINS**

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