

2022 - 2023 YEAR IN REVIEW



## MAKING PROGRESS TOGETHER

One step at a time

One day at a time

One challenge at a time



### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS

Catholic Care acknowledges that we walk on the traditional lands of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We pay our respects to them, especially to their elders past and present, and recognise the continuing gift of their cultures to the life and spirit of Australia.



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

We provide 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.

This Year in Review will outline the work our people did to help others in need, detail our strategy and values, and more about our People as well as our governance structure to ensure we can continue to further the mission of the Church.

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## MESSAGE FROM BISHOP VINCENT

Dear sisters and brothers,

During a year where thousands across our Diocese were impacted by the cost-of-living crisis we now find ourselves in, I have never been prouder of the services and accompaniment that Catholic Care Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains provide to those who need it.

Last year was a difficult year. From natural disasters to war ravaging in the Ukraine and Gaza and the failed referendum on enshrining an Indigenous Voice to Parliament. These events create anxiety, confusion and a sense of helplessness in many. Some of these events also have a direct impact on many people, and Catholic Care has been there to help.

Last year Catholic Care helped settle refugees fleeing Gaza and the Ukraine. They have supported our Indigenous communities and helped countless people who simply need someone to care for them, or to listen to them.

They also helped in what can be considered to be the 'small' things to many – providing groceries to people who are struggling, giving shelter to people living on the streets, or helping those who are the victims of domestic violence which is still a scourge on our society.

I do not doubt that we have many Good Samaritans here in the Diocese but witnessing them in action through Catholic Care serves as a beacon of hope for all of us. Our dedicated team, as the compassionate face of Christ, engages with the community, lending an open ear and fostering a secure environment for healing to commence.

Our frontline workers continue to devote themselves to the ethos of 'going into the deep.' Inspired by Pope Francis' emphasis on synodality and walking the path of Christ with all God's people, I take pride in our collective commitment to demonstrate that no one needs to traverse life's journey alone.

**Most Reverend Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM Conv  
Bishop of Parramatta**



## MESSAGE FROM THE EPISCOPAL VICAR OF SOCIAL WELFARE

Dear brothers and sisters!

The end of a year and the beginning of another is a time to stop and reflect on the historical moments we are living in. At the beginning of this year and as we present this annual review there is an urgent need to look around and contemplate under the eyes of faith which are the challenges that we have to face to continue to be messengers of hope to those around us.

As I write this short message, the words of Jesus resound in me "Peace, I leave you; my own peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid" (John 14:27)

This peace is the first gift of the Risen Lord that he gives to his disciples. In biblical language, the concept of 'peace' refers to wholeness, total health, total welfare. Although bible scholars say that the world peace can be used in many ways, they agree that true peace implies a good relationship with God, with our neighbor and with ourselves.

Our mission as disciples is to create the bridges, the strategies and the atmosphere to create true peace in our world and in our society.

Amongst us, there are many who find it hard to experience this beautiful gift of peace due to many challenges like the high cost of living, the need to leave their countries due to poverty, persecution and war, the violence they experience in their daily lives, the worries of an uncertain future, the frustration of not being heard or understood due to their background

and skin color and so on. There are many situations which attack and affect our inner peace daily.

In his message for the Word Day of Peace on the First of January 1968 Pope Paul VI, now a saint of the Church said that "Peace cannot be based on a false rhetoric of words which are welcomed because they answer to the deep, genuine aspirations of humanity, but which can also serve, and unfortunately have sometimes served, to hide the lack of true spirit and of real intentions for peace, if not indeed to mask sentiments and actions of oppression and party interests. Nor can one rightly speak of peace where no recognition or respect is given to its solid foundations: namely, sincerity, justice and love in the relations between states, and, within the limits of each nation, in the relations of citizens with each other and with their rulers; freedom of individuals and of peoples, in all its expressions, civic, cultural, moral, and religious; otherwise, it is not peace which will exist - even if, perchance, oppression is able to create the external appearance of order and legality - but an unceasing and insuppressible growth of revolt and war." He continues saying that "Peace is not pacifism; it does not mask a base and slothful concept of life, but it proclaims the highest and most universal values of life: truth, justice, freedom, love."

Our efforts at Catholic Care are directed to be messengers and agents of peace in Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains, these efforts are hopefully reflected in this annual report, and to quote Saint Paul VI again "if you want peace, work for justice". This is the idea that thrives our efforts at Catholic Care Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains. May the Risen Lord continue to grant us the strength to work tirelessly for the peace that only He can give us.

Peace in Jesus

**Very Rev Luis Fernando Montano Rodriguez  
Episcopal Vicar for Social Welfare**



# 2022 -2023 IN FOCUS

2022 – 2023 was another big year for Catholic Care Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains and the people we have the privilege to accompany as they traverse some of the most challenging moments in their lives.

As the world started to return to a 'post-covid' state, the need for care and assistance from the communities we serve did not waver. We continued to provide support across our five key programs: Aged Care, Family Support, Community Engagement, Chaplaincy, and Disability Services, and focused on maintaining and growing our government funding to provide for the increasing number of people who require our help.

We launched new programs – from tech help to sewing classes and women's circles – that saw our connections to the community grow.

**Our people embrace journeying together with our clients, so we can make progress together. We see that in the breadth of services that make a real impact on people's lives:**

- Providing rental properties with furniture and essential items to homeless single mothers
- Employing people with a disability unable to find work
- Supporting people on temporary visas
- Providing groceries to hundreds of people through our drop-in centres at Emerton and Mamre House
- Alleviating loneliness in the elderly through regular visits to their homes
- Listening with the ear of the heart to people in prison and hospital
- Sitting down to have a cuppa and chat with people who just need human connection
- Counselling services for people suffering through grief, addiction, or troubling times
- Family day care services and more.



## OUR HISTORY

Catholic Care traces its roots back to the 1940s when it was conceived by four visionary Sydney women. Their aspiration was to ensure that the impoverished and those in distress could access professional care provided by the Catholic Church.

Taking their idea to then-Archbishop of Sydney, Cardinal Gilroy, they proposed the establishment of a Catholic welfare organisation. Thus, the Catholic Welfare Bureau was inaugurated. With the creation of the Diocese of Parramatta in 1986, the welfare arm evolved into Centrecare Parramatta, undergoing a subsequent name change to Catholic Care Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains in 2017.

In the present day, Catholic Care Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains impacts thousands in the community annually. This is made possible by the dedicated efforts of over 100 staff and volunteers committed to the organisation's mission.

**NO ONE NEED JOURNEY ALONE. WE CAN MAKE PROGRESS TOGETHER.**

We embrace every journey with gratitude and love.

89

EMPLOYEES

7

FUNDING PROVIDERS

16

SERVICES

50

FAMILY DAY CARES

4

DROP-IN CENTRES

15

CHAPLAINS

We also had a change in leadership, with our new Executive Director, Jason Oldridge commencing in February 2023. We farewelled Peter Loughnanne at the end of 2022 after three years of leading Catholic Care during the turbulent covid years.

We also farewelled two Advisory Council members – Sue Walsh and Peter O'Brien and thanked them for their many years of service and welcomed Dr Rodger Austin to our Council.

We received support from two major fundraising campaigns by the Diocese of Parramatta's Catholic Foundation.

Our people are at the heart of everything we do and we are so proud of how they embrace every journey with gratitude and love.



# OUR MISSION AND STRATEGY

Catholic Care'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 of human dignity, the common good, solidarity, subsidiarity and participation, underpin all our work.



*No mother or child should go without basic needs like housing. We strive to be part of the solution.*

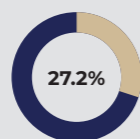
*- Katrina Marsh on Empowering Young Mums*

## OUR PEOPLE AND VALUES

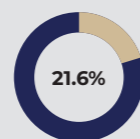
Last year, our people created our values to guide how we work and engage with those we serve in our community. In our second year, our values have become the cornerstone of every interaction we have. We embrace every journey with gratitude and love. For our clients, the community and each other. This value is fundamental to our work and is lived each day through the following four individual values.



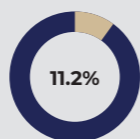
## EMPLOYMENT STATUS:



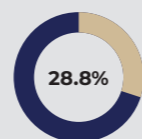
Full-Time



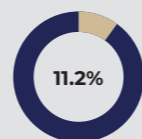
Part-Time



Casual



Volunteers



Supported employees

# HOW WE SUPPORT?

## AGED CARE

Whatever your age, you will never be invisible to the people at Catholic Care. Our range of support aims to keep you living independently in your own home for as long as possible, while staying connected with your friends and community.

## CHAPLAINCY

Providing spiritual and emotional support, our chaplains work with patients and inmates, their families and staff in the seven hospitals and three correctional centres throughout the Diocese of Parramatta.

## FAMILY SUPPORT

No matter what issue your family might be facing, Catholic Care is there to help. From helping young pregnant women navigate their pregnancy to family day cares to get a good start to every child's education to counselling services, parenting education workshops and more.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Our drop-in centres provide a safe place for people to belong and connect with others. They are a place to go, a place to be, a place to get information, join a group and be connected.

## DISABILITY SERVICES

Our disability support team help people facing living, learning and other obstacles. We help people set goals and achieve them, and build a brighter future.



## AGED CARE

As our population continues to age, Catholic Care will be here to support more people to live independently in their own home as long as possible. We also aim to enrich lives by helping to reduce loneliness and keep people connected.

Our Commonwealth Home Support Program assists older people at home through meal preparation and shopping assistance to home maintenance and respite for carers.

Our Community Visitors Scheme aims to reduce loneliness through fortnightly visit to residents at aged-care facilities.

## CHAPLAINCY

In the six hospitals and four correctional centers across the Diocese of Parramatta, our chaplains have played a vital role in providing spiritual and emotional support. This inclusive ministry, catering to individuals of all faiths, involved a team of 15 dedicated chaplains who worked collaboratively with patients, inmates, their families, and the staff.

Our chaplains seamlessly integrate into the broader care network, ensuring a holistic approach to wellbeing for those under their compassionate guidance.

**12,000 HOURS**  
of Pastoral Care

**Hospitals:** Blacktown, Westmead, Mt Druitt, Children's Hospital at Westmead, Nepean and Cumberland

**Correctional Centres:** John Moroney, Parklea, Emu Plains and Dillwynia

**168 CLIENTS & 5315 HOURS OF SERVICES**  
provided to the elderly living in their own Home

**1419 HOURS**  
Domestic Assistance

**2869 HOURS**  
Social Support Group

**213 HOURS**  
Home Maintenance

**598 HOURS**  
Social Support Individual

**142 VISITS**  
Elderly in Aged Care  
(Community Visitor Scheme)

**216 HOURS**  
Personal Care

## Fr Dado's Story

One of our hospital chaplains, Fr Dado says God leads him to wherever he is needed in the hospital.

"In my ministry, I am open to any possibility, because along the way I might meet staff who want to talk or share. I may receive a call from a social worker asking me to bless a baby who is stillborn. I may get a call from one of the parishes to visit a parishioner who is in hospital."

He says no two days, or two patient visits, are the same.

"Sometimes people just want to share how they feel or just say hello. It could sometimes be a sacramental visit – a request for anointing or hearing confession. At times, a hospital stay could also be a point of conversion.

"Whenever you are sick in hospital, you have plenty of time on your hands and sometimes people reflect on life or their own spirituality, or their being Catholic. Sometimes I meet people who haven't been to Church in a long time. It's totally different – there is no visit that is the same."

# FAMILY SUPPORT

Catholic Care's comprehensive family services have provided vital support to thousands of families facing diverse challenges. From providing affordable Family Day Care to helping women and children flee domestic violence situations, our programs offer stability and help foster new connections within their community.

Our pivotal Houses 2 Homes programs helped numerous pregnant girls or young parents aged 16 – 25 years escape homelessness and find a new life.

Simultaneously, our parenting support program has offered guidance and assistance to new parents navigating the overwhelming challenges of caring for a newborn, ensuring they receive essential support during this significant life transition.

At our creche, a thriving early learning centre, children of Sudanese refugee women engaged in English classes on Catholic Care's grounds have received dedicated care and educational support. Our HIPPI program for parents of four-year-olds from Aboriginal and non-English speaking backgrounds is a way to give children the best start to school possible.

Our counselling services were heavily used. From family and financial counselling to gambling and grief counselling. We also provided the following group activities:

## Our Group Activities

- Monthly Stepping Beyond group
- Monthly Bereavement group
- Bereavement support Program (6-week, one-off)
- Mass for those Bereaved by Suicide (one-off)
- Post-separation parenting program (once each school term)
- Parenting program twice each year (Circle of Security)
- Gambling & Gaming educational workshops & webinars to High school students in Blacktown LGA

## IN 2022-2023, WE SUPPORTED:

### 207 FAMILIES

to avoid the child protection system

### 93 YOUNG WOMEN

with children escaping domestic violence

### 14 WOMEN

who have needed assistance adjusting to pregnancy or have lost a child in pregnancy

## COUNSELLING:

### 3279 HOURS

of services provided to families and/or children

### 683 HOURS

Family Law

### 434 HOURS

Financial

### 1164 HOURS

Problem gambling



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Catholic Care's drop-in centres have provided a welcoming refuge for individuals seeking connection and a sense of belonging. These centers serve as inclusive spaces, offering not just a physical location, but also a place where individuals feel accepted and can engage with others authentically.

In Emerton, the Aboriginal Catholic Care community centre has offered cultural support, literacy classes, information, and a vibrant cultural art group. Meanwhile, All Saints of Africa in Blacktown has supported culturally and linguistically diverse families in their settlement journey in Australia.

Our Springwood drop-in centre has created a friendly environment where clients can engage in conversations, join reading or wellbeing groups, improve their technological skills, or seek support for mental health concerns. Additionally, our newest addition, Mamre House and Farm, has provided diverse opportunities such as English classes, computer courses, seniors' day clubs, craft clubs, and the simple pleasure of enjoying a cup of tea amidst the tranquil farm surroundings.

**972** DROP-IN CLIENTS

Aboriginal Catholic Care, Emerton

**381** DROP-IN CLIENTS

Mamre House



## Groups

- Springwood Community Garden Wed & Sat working bees: 20 p/wk
- Springwood tech help: 3 sessions p/wk
- Springwood Shared Reading: 10 p/wk
- Springwood Women's Circle: 6 p/wk
- Springwood exercise classes: 8 p/wk
- Blackheath Kitchen garden working bees: 5 p/wk
- Mamre seniors day club: 20 p/wk
- Mamre craft group: 11 p/wk
- Mamre English classes: 15 p/wk
- Literacy class Emerton: 9 p/wk
- Aboriginal Art group Emerton: 10 p/wk

Approximately 117 clients attending groups (not captured in drop-in numbers)

### New groups in 2023:

- Tech help Emerton
- Sewing classes Mamre
- Women's Circle Blackheath



# DISABILITY SERVICES

Our disability support team helped people to overcome obstacles on their journey. As a registered NDIS provider, we provide a holistic, whole-person approach at home and in the community. We help people whether they need employment, want to learn how to cook, need support with personal care or want to play support.

Our Mamre Garden Service employs more than 15 people living with a disability, giving them their own wage, the opportunity to learn transferable skills and gain independence.



# GOVERNANCE ADVISORY COUNCIL



**Jason Oldridge**

Jason joined Catholic Care in February 2023 with over 20 years' experience leading high-performing teams within financial services and community organisations. Jason was the CEO of Family Spirit, a NSW foster care and adoption agency that seeks safe and caring homes for vulnerable children. He also has considerable experience working with vulnerable families in a variety of settings including housing, aged care, disability, children, and youth services. He holds a Bachelor of Social Sciences, a Graduate Certificate in Counselling, and a Diploma of Governance. As a local to the Diocese of Parramatta, Jason brings a wealth of knowledge, as he was born, raised and currently resides in the Diocese. He has a passion for making a positive difference in the lives of vulnerable and disadvantaged members of the Western Sydney and Blue Mountains communities.



**Angela McKay, Chair**

Angela is the Chief Executive officer of the Juvenile Arthritis Foundation of Australia and has more than 20 years' senior leadership experience with a diverse background spanning not-for-profit and for-profit organisations in the charity, professional services, consumer goods and aged care sectors.



**Paul McMahon, Immediate Past Chair**

Paul is a passionate leader and advocate for aged care and social services clients. He is the former Chief Executive Officer of Southern Cross Care New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory, and has more than 30 years' experience in the social services sector.



**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



**Very Rev Luis Fernando Montano EV**

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 Catholic Care Advisory Council.



**Dr Rodger Austin**

Rodger is an experienced canon lawyer working with individuals within the Catholic Church, diocesan bishops, agencies, parishes, and religious institutes for over 50 years, and is the Advocate for the Ecclesiastical Regional Tribunal of Sydney.



**Peter Bellman**

Peter is the former Head of Finance for Catholic Care 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.



**Geoff Officer**

Geoff is the Chief of Operations and Finance (Diocesan Financial Administrator) for the Catholic Diocese of Parramatta. He has more than 25 years' experience as a company executive, commercial human resources consultant and practitioner.



**Helen Emmerson**

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.



**Vera Visevic**

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.

# PARTNERSHIPS AND SUPPORTERS

## KEY FUNDING AGENCIES AND PARTNERS



## MAJOR DONORS

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

- Australian Youth Foundation
- Catholic Church Insurance
- Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta
- Diocese of Parramatta
- Eric Storm Trust
- Great Irish Famine Commemoration Committee Inc
- Inagh Foundation
- NRMA
- Parishes and Parishioners
- Parramatta Catholic Foundation
- Vera Visevic

Catholic Care Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains acknowledges the support from staff within Risk, Property, Communications and IT from the Diocese of Parramatta.

## PEAK MEMBERSHIPS



## OUR LOCATIONS



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

Catholic Care 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.



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 **We embrace every journey**  
with gratitude and love.