



# ANDREWS CENTRE

## ENDEAVOUR MINISTRIES

2-6 Hanna Drive, Endeavour Hills, 3802

Telephone 03 9700 4944

Fax 03 9700 0822

ABN 70 891 996 288

## ANNUAL REPORT 2021

As we enter our 28<sup>th</sup> year of operation, it is quite amazing to reflect on all that has been achieved despite the many challenges along the way – fires, floods, pandemics to name a few! I remain truly grateful and humbled by the generosity of the many individuals and organizations whose support has enabled us to do so much to help the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our community. 2021 has been a very challenging year for us all but, despite all the mandated lockdowns limitations, we have been able to continue operations by adapting our services to function within the pandemic restrictions.

At the end of March this year Covid19 meant all our psychologists and counsellors ended up having to provide all counselling services online from home. Whilst this was difficult for many to adjust to, it at least allowed this service to continue and it certainly proved to be absolutely vital that it did so! Meanwhile the Andrews Centre remained open to provide necessary emergency food relief and financial help to many in need.

### EMERGENCY RELIEF



This has been the biggest year we have ever had with the demand for emergency relief soaring largely due to Covid 19 affecting many who rely on work to survive and who are not eligible for any government payments when they are not able to work, including international students, families from New Zealand and many refugees awaiting decisions on whether they will be allowed to stay in Australia. Others, of course, have suffered significant loss of income and reliance on Centrelink payments makes it very difficult to make ends meet.

Meanwhile there are a large number of families and individuals who struggle day to day because the pensions they rely on do not adequately meet their expenses. Any unforeseen expense – even a car repair or a fridge breaking down – means they do not have enough to pay rent or utility bills! It is a constant struggle, especially when rental payments eat up anything from 50% to 80% of their income! For many individuals on Jobseeker Allowance, the only affordable accommodation is a boarding house.

Through our “Responsible Rescue for Families in Housing Stress” program we have at a cost of supported 000 families and individuals this year to keep a roof over their heads and to maximise their limited income to avoid the prospect of eviction in the future. Moneys have also been spent supporting the homeless with temporary accommodation in motels and helping homeless families who have found accommodation with rent in advance and/or moving expenses. We take this opportunity to thank Danks Trust, Peter and Lyndy White Foundation and all those who have supported this very important area of our ministry.

Many financially disadvantaged people have continued to seek our support for unexpected expenses such as car repairs, upfront specialist fees, medical or pharmacy expenses. Only this week we donated a wheelchair to an elderly lady whose own chair had broken. The Centre has also been able to supply, shower chairs, wheelie walkers and crutches to those who would otherwise incur the cost of trying to hire



them!!

There has also been deliveries of beds and other furniture items as well as providing a steady flow of doonas, blankets and sheets to those moving into new accommodation

School expenses continue to be a huge stress on low income families, so the Andrews Centre has helped many families to afford books, uniform and camp fees. We have also provided through the No Interest Loan scheme for families to acquire the compulsory lap top computers at a rate they can afford to repay over the year. The Op Shop has also helped families with good quality school items such as uniform and school bags etc

This year we have had over 0000 appointments for emergency relief. We have provided in the main food vouchers and food hampers. There are also many who require help with prescriptions or travel expenses. Sometimes we provide families with generous food hampers and then need to follow it up with a Cabcharge so that they can get their hamper home! Thanks largely to the work of Sue – our inhouse chef!- helped also on occasion by Pam, Catherine and Karen, we have also been able to provide nutritious cooked meals to many who come for food help and who are not really eating properly because they are on their own or homeless or in a boarding house where it is difficult to cook their own meals. The meals are cooked, packaged in freezer/oven proof bio-degradable containers and handed out as needed or requested. They are a hit with many of our boarding house residents!!

A significant help to many families this year has been our steady supply of laundry and baby products including such things as nappies, wipes, baby bath, shampoo and conditioners, sanitary pads, cleaning products (including hand sanitizer), toothpaste, face creams, body wash, deodorant, tissues, toilet paper and laundry powder. This Christmas over 100 families received a separate hamper just with many of these items included. Share the Dignity also provided baby packs and 45 beautiful handbags and teenage backpacks full of toilety items for families in need. There were many happy

mothers and teens as a result!! Thanks to the Endeavour Hills Neighbourhood Centre, we also had some beautiful baby and toddler knits to give away.

We are very grateful to the many organizations and individuals who helped keep us stocked with food and laundry products. This included food from Endeavour Hills Uniting Church, Narre Hills Community Church, Glen Eagles Secondary College, Emerson School, and Share the Dignity.

Thanks to City of Casey, we also had a good supply of hand sanitizer, thermometers and masks to keep us safe and operational through the most difficult months.

### CHRISTMAS HAMPERS AND TOYS

This has been the best year ever for the number and size of the hampers and toys given out at the Centre. Thanks to the financial support of the Andrews Foundation, and additional hampers from Crossway Baptist, St Paul Apostle Catholic Church and Maranatha Christian School , hand bags from Share the Dignity as well as supplies from many others who have helped to stock our hampers we have given out a record 00000 hampers and toys. Some mothers who came to collect their “goodies” were just overwhelmed and in tears because the Christmas they thought they were not going to have was happening after all!! It was a real privilege to share their joy! One mother of 7 children came in to collect toys and hamper with the widest grin on her face! She has struggled through the pandemic because her husband has been stranded for nearly 2 years overseas after attending a family funeral. We have sought to help her through this time but it has been really tough for her. She shared the double source of her joy. Her husband has returned and her son has just heard he was Dux of his school and received a scholarship from Melbourne University to study medicine! The toys and hamper were just icing on the cake!

### MONDAY MEALS

The pandemic did not stop the work of The Monday Meals team situated at St James Church hall in Dandenong! This year they have been providing around 140 meals per week and these have included a vegetarian option for those of other cultures who do not eat meat. Because of Covid19 restrictions, they have not been able to have people sitting at tables but have very effectively improvised to allow the service to continue. They have even managed to keep going when they lost their kitchen facilities at the church hall for a period of time and had to use alternate smaller ovens in their parish Centre! Every week there has been a long line of eager and hungry guests suitably distanced from one another, waiting their turn to pick up a packaged meal and dessert which they can eat in the garden areas around the church or take home. The local police and Dandenong Rotary continue to lend their support to the team ably led by Rob and Roslyn Daniels. Reverend Graeme and Jane Peters who have worked tirelessly alongside them and the rest of the team and have also managed to gain the funds to transform the old St James’ tennis court into a modern basketball and games court for young people and the meals participants to enjoy some recreation after the meal. Reclink, are back on board helping out at the meals and providing recreation activities for the guests after the meals. City of Greater Dandenong helped with the supply of fresh vegetables and fruit as did a parishioner from nearby St Mary’s church. The fruit was given out each week for the guests to take home.



The “shower truck” supplied by Crossway Baptist continues to be a feature of the Monday Meals Program. Homeless individuals can enjoy a shower and shave before they sit down for their two course lunch!!

## CHRISTMAS LUNCH

What an amazing event. With Christmas carols in the background booming from outdoor speakers and tables dispersed around a large area of the beautiful St James' gardens, people were sitting down to a scrumptious selection of traditional Christmas fare including roast turkey, pork and ham, potatoes, carrots and other vegetables. There was a lovely vegetarian curry on offer to those who wanted an alternative to this. This was followed by pavlova with fresh cream and strawberries. All the guests received a hamper to go home with!

## EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION

Covid19 has led to a significant increase in the incidents of family violence which, unfortunately, has also meant a number of families breaking up and many mothers and children seeking alternate accommodation. With our four emergency housing units, we have provided shelter to six such families this year.

The wonderful "good news" story for this year has to be the story of one of the families in our emergency accommodation who were left destitute after being abandoned by the man who married the mother and brought her and her two daughters here from overseas. There were many legal battles required to gain her some income and to ensure that she and her girls could stay in Australia. Thanks to the kindness of two lawyers, one barrister, one social worker and one psychologist – all of whom worked pro bono to support her – she won her case and has been granted a visa to be allowed to work and to stay in Australia. She has been learning English at the Centre all year and her daughter has had a recent promotion at Macdonalds

With the purchase of the Andrews Centre in 2020, we were forced to sell three of our emergency accommodation units. Fortunately all three were purchased by "friendly buyers" willing to let us continue to use these units for families in need. Thankfully we have been able this year to buy back one of the units. Our thanks to Alan Lesich who has provided ongoing maintenance at all these units and to John Hurst who kindly repaired our damaged roof at Unit 3!

In total Endeavour Ministries has spent **\$127,183.00** directly providing emergency relief this calendar year.

## NO INTEREST LOANS

There have been many families helped this year through the No Interest Loans scheme this year. Many low income families from the local secondary school can only afford the required laptop computer through this scheme where they are able to pay for the purchase through a fortnightly deduction from the Centrelink payment. The scheme also provides many with the opportunity to purchase necessary whitegoods at a reduced rate through their partnership with the Good Guys. Car repairs and registration costs as well as medical and educational expenses can also be covered under the scheme up to the value of \$1500.00 A new Step Up program has now been introduced to allow families to apply for loans to purchase a car – something which will be a great help for many struggling families. Thank you to Bill Matthews who organizes the majority of the loan applications at the Centre.

## LOAN CARS AND LOAN SCOOTER

Our faithful blue Corolla continues to help families who desperately need transport but whose own car has broken down. It is currently helping a low income family whilst they seek a replacement for a car written off following a car crash. For five

months the Honda Civic has helped a single mother attend classes and transport her child to Childcare. The car is now being used by a single mother with Lupus who needs transport to get her children to school and to attend many specialist appointments. Unfortunately the electric scooter has “died” so that the elderly lady has had to find an replacement.

## OP SHOP

There is a steady flow of donations to the Op Shop which has meant the shop has been able to supply people with good quality clothing, books, shoes and other household items. Although it was forced to close for a significant period of time over the past 12 months, it has still provided some valuable funding (000) towards the work of The Andrews Centre.

Because the shop now operates at the Andrews Centre, we have been able to call upon them on many occasions to help families or individuals with clothing when there is an emergency situation such as a house fire or a domestic violence situation where a mother has been forced to leave in a hurry and no longer has much clothing for her children. Others needing good clothes for job interviews or work clothes or shoes for starting a particular job have been able to source these from our little shop! We have also been able to make special crockery and cutlery packages for those individuals moving into a boarding house in need of these essentials.

The volunteers who run the shop do an amazing job under the leadership of Liz McLennan and Peg Clarke and we are truly grateful for their most valued contribution.

## COUNSELLING

2021 has been a very challenging year for all our psychologists and counsellors. Never before have we had to turn away so many simply because we could not hope to meet the demand for our services. Our current psychologist waiting lists are anywhere between 6 to 12 months. Newspapers attest to the toll Covid lockdowns have had on the mental health of people of all ages and we have certainly seen an unprecedented rise in the demand for our psychology services. To go some way towards responding to this demand we have sought to gain the services of another psychologist but there simply are none available. Everywhere in Victoria there seems to be the same shortage of counselling and psychologist services. At the same time, unfortunately, we lost the services of one of our long serving psychologists due to ill health and she will be very sadly missed. Two very welcome additions to our counselling staff over the past year are Amorell Blom and Coral Barker. Both come highly qualified and have proved any important available option for some of those referred to us by doctors but unable to secure a psychologist appointment anywhere near to when they need it! The Centre has underwritten the cost of a number of these clients either in whole or in part to ensure that financial barriers do not prevent the most financially struggling from getting the help they need. Counselling is not covered under Medicare, so that the cost of each session is \$50.

Young people have largely struggled as the pandemic has lengthened and the psychologists have observed a loss of hope. With every lockdown that gets extended there is a loss of belief that we will ever get out of this. The time lines keep changing. Nothing is certain. With all this uncertainty people cannot make plans, they cannot look forward to things. For young people who have had their formals/ celebrations/ concerts/ planned events rescheduled many times and finally cancelled, the sense of hopelessness is growing. There is a realization that they are missing out on so much of their significant events.

Anxiety appears to be heightened in most clients due to the uncertainty of life and the lack of normal interactions that can help people feel valued and accepted. On top of all the above the psychologists continue to see clients for a whole range of issues including:-

- Trauma for issues including sexual abuse, family violence, parent suicide, loss of siblings
- Grief and loss
- Adjustment issues
- Eating disorders
- Anxiety (social anxiety, general anxiety, school pressure, specific phobias, PTSD)
- Depression
- Bipolar Disorder
- Autism
- Suicidality and self harm
- Bullying
- Low self esteem
- Social skills
- Anger management and emotional regulation
- Borderline Personality Disorder
- Parenting Support
- Family breakdown and/or domestic violence
- Drug and alcohol issues
- Chronic illness
- Learning disabilities / adult ADHD
- Workplace bullying
- Unemployment
- Grief
- Mental breakdown
- OCD

All the psychologists have commented during lockdown on the impact of sheer loneliness on many. "People's loneliness has been tenfold, particularly for people living on their own. They become desperate for a regular appointment as it is a human connection that they are allowed to have!" Sometimes the elderly are fearful to even use their bubble and their care giving supports as they don't want to get into trouble or get fined."

The lockdown situation has impacted people on a variety of levels – social, emotional, economic and even spiritual. Many have really struggled with not being able to attend church or take communion, for example. Others have experienced greatly heightened fear, anxiety and depression. People have also experienced a deterioration in their level of manageability and self care. Buried grief and trauma have re-surfaced because of their isolation. Incidents of domestic violence has increased significantly and family counselling has been really important to help families work through issues threatening to lead to breakdown and abuse.

The Centre continues to provide psychological assessments for people who might not otherwise be able to afford this service. They are key to many children receiving the help they need to get appropriate government funded aides in the classroom or gaining access to the right schools or NDIS funding at home. The current lockdowns have made this service particularly difficult because it is not something that can be done through Telehealth

The beauty of the particular context of counselling at the Andrews Centre is the way it is integrated with a whole range of other services relevant to our clients. Those in our emergency accommodation are also able to access counselling. This is particularly relevant when taking into account that most of our residents are victims of domestic violence.

### SUPPORT GROUPS

Al Anon is regarded as an essential service supporting the families of alcoholics in our community. They have faithfully met every week this year without a break and provide a vital support to many who live with a family member battling alcohol addiction.

Unfortunately we have not been able to run two other groups planned for this year, which will now be run in 2022. These include the Social Skills program for upper primary students called 'Keys to Connect' and a new program for teenagers who struggle with social connection entitled 'Peers'.

### LEGAL ADVICE



Noel continues to also provide a very important link with the counselling ministry as his advice is often very empowering to people who are overwhelmed and not sure what to do in difficult situations such as family breakdown, accident, family disputes, tenancy issues, financial pressure including potential bankruptcy etc

### COMMUNITY GARDEN

Despite Covid19 restrictions limiting how often The Community Garden team can meet, we have continued to produce a healthy crop of summer and winter vegetables and fruit. Unfortunately we lost our two chooks at the end of this year due to a very athletic fox or feral cat eluding our barriers!!

Both Gleneagles Secondary College and Maranatha Christian School have undertaken to grow vegetables in the garden this year to support the Endeavour Ministries' meals program. We are very grateful for their support. .

### OTHER COMMUNITY GROUPS

"Victory in Jesus" is once again using the main area for their Sunday meetings now that restrictions have been eased.

It remains to thank the many individuals and organizations who donate to the work of Endeavour Ministries either by volunteering, direct financial giving, donation of food, laundry products, bedding or items for the shop. It is amazing how much has been achieved thanks to the generosity of so many in our wider community. I am humbled and awed by your giving!

*We acknowledge with thanks the following organizations who have provided valuable funding to support the work of Endeavour Ministries Inc in 2021*

*The Andrews Foundation, Danks Trust, Peter and Lyndy White Foundation, Share Trust, Share the Dignity, Endeavour Hills library and Neighbourhood Centre, Kogo, Heavenly Joy*

*Churches including Endeavour Hills Uniting, St Matthews Anglican, Victory in Jesus, Narre Hills Community Church, Crossway Baptist and St James Church Dandenong*

*Schools including Gleneagles Secondary School, Maranatha Christian School, Chalcot Lodge Primary School and Emerson School*

*We acknowledge with gratitude the support of City of Casey, Federal Government, and State Government*

