

**CONGREGATION OF CANBERRA CITY
2014 ANNUAL MEETING AND ANNUAL REPORT**

**REPORT FROM UNITINGCARE CANBERRA CITY MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE**

The UnitingCare Canberra City Management Committee met ten times during 2013/14. Members of the Committee are Anne Butler (chair), Campbell Macknight (secretary), Graeme Lowe (Treasurer), Ivan Roberts, Terry Birtles, Stella Naimet, Hepi Ma'ilei, Margaret Watt and Karyn Walker. Chris Stokman (EMC Director) also attends the Management Committee meetings.

At our February meeting we agreed to recommend to the Church Council that Hepi Ma'ilei be appointed to the Management Committee. This was approved by Council and we welcomed Hepi to our meeting on 27 March. We noted the importance of the relationship between the EMC and the Toe Talatalanoa Congregation and that Hepi's appointment will ensure that these ties continue to remain strong.

The committee agreed on a suitable form of words to add to emails and letters to acknowledge the traditional owners. The following words have been used by the EMC since April 2014:

We acknowledge the way the traditional owners have cared for this land from time immemorial and commit ourselves to building more just ways of living together with the First Peoples of this land.

Management Committee meetings

The Management Committee has met with the following during the year:

- At our 17 October meeting we met with members of the Mission and Evangelism Conference from the NSW/ACT Synod to discuss the work of the EMC.
- At our meeting on 15 May 2014, we met with Glentin Yin and Vlad Aleksandric from Medicare Local ACT who spoke about the primary health care service to be established at the EMC (see further comment below).

As required by our contract with the ACT Government, the committee continued to work through *Raising the Standard* to assist us in ensuring that our governance arrangements are appropriate.

Staffing

Our Director, Chris Stokman, has been a constant source of strength and leadership throughout the year. The Committee is very grateful for her hard work and dedication, the efficient way she manages the EMC and the concern and sensitivity she shows our guests. We have also been fortunate that John McDonald has continued to occupy the position of Referral Officer. John also has a great concern for our guests and is very popular with them. As indicated in last year's report, the second Referral Officer position was filled in August 2012 by Jenny McGee and Tom Loveday on a job share basis. Tom resigned in July 2013 to undertake full-time study and due to financial constraints, he has not been replaced. Jenny has chosen to reduce her hours to 7 per week to help balance work/family considerations.

Two long standing and experienced casual employees (Nic Watson and Nicci Haynes) continue to share the operation of the coffee cart. We are fortunate to be able to enlist Nic at short notice to fill in during the drop-in period.

They are ably assisted by a team of enthusiastic and hardworking volunteers. A number of volunteers retired from volunteering this year (Hepi, Karen and Peter, Rod, Jane, Verity, Lachie, Chloe and Sam). The Committee is very appreciative of their long and dedicated service to the EMC. We have been fortunate to recruit a number of new volunteers to help fill the gaps left by those retiring.

The total number of volunteers supporting the EMC during the year was 42 (this is the actual number of people who have covered shifts and helped make up food packs over the twelve month period). Most people do one shift per week, with a few doing one shift per fortnight. All new volunteers undertake initial one on one training with the Director.

The new staffing arrangements have worked well, with the use of volunteers for three of the weekly drop-in sessions being particularly helpful in supplementing the reductions in paid staff.

This has not been an easy year for the EMC and the Committee is very conscious of the demands that are made on our loyal staff. They have stood up magnificently during the year and we are very grateful to them and proud of them.

Prequalification process for ACT government grants

As mentioned in last year's report, the Early Morning Centre was required to undertake an extensive pre-qualification process in order to qualify for funding from the ACT Government in 2013/14. Cat McKay with support from Graeme Lowe and Chris Stokman prepared much of the material, drawing in particular on our policies and procedures manual and financial accounts. We submitted our application in October 2013 and were delighted to be advised by the ACT Government that we have qualified for funding for the next three years.

ACT Government funding

We indicated in last year's report that, on 5 June 2013, we had received a funding offer from the Community Services Directorate for the period 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2016. For 2013/14 we received \$206,446 (a reduction of 15 per cent on the 2012/13 level) and for 2014/15 and 2015/16 we will receive \$188,015 (a reduction of 23 per cent). In our letter of acceptance of the new arrangements, we made it clear that reduced funding would mean some changes to our services and these have been reflected in our reduced staffing arrangements as outlined above.

We signed the new funding agreement in December 2013 and the Management Committee has been through the agreement carefully to ensure the EMC is positioned to meet our commitments.

Activities

The EMC continues to serve a hot breakfast each weekday morning from 7.30am-8.30am and operates as a drop in centre from 9am-11.30am (Monday-Thursday) and 9am-10.30am (Friday). The outside coffee cart remains an important aspect of the breakfast session.

In 2013/14, 8700 guests received breakfasts, a decline of 9 per cent from 2012/13; 5970 attended the drop-in centre, a decline of 8 per cent since 21012/13.

The total number of showers taken during the year was 537, an increase of 10 per cent since 2012/13 and the laundry was used on 161 occasions, an increase of 48 per cent. As at end August 2014, 100 guests were registered to use the mail box, an increase of 32 since last year. More detailed statistics for 2011/12-2013/14 are in the Appendix.

Emergency food packs, scripts and some clothing are provided and newspapers, computers, lockers and the telephone are used regularly as well as PO Box 99 for a mailing address.

The EMC continues to work closely with a range of service providers who visit the EMC on a regular basis. These include:

- Outreach workers from the Street to Home program for homeless people managed by the St Vincent de Paul Society.
- Centrelink with visits each Tuesday
- the Big Issue vendor support (occasionally)
- ACT Legal Aid (fortnightly)
- Street Law (fortnightly)
- ACT Health 'mini' health checks (fortnightly)
- Supportive Tenancy Service (ad hoc)
- Partners in Recovery (weekly)

The agreement with the ACT Dental Health Program to accept some of our guests in need of urgent dental care continues to be very beneficial.

Ongoing activities include art, footy tipping competition and the Jumpin' Gateway Singers.

The Safe Shelter program at St Columba's Uniting Church has continued this winter and there is good mutual support between the EMC and Safe Shelter.

A second very successful Homeless Connect event was held at CCUC on 8 August 2013. Our Director played a major part in organising this event.

Several barbecues were held during the year all of which were enjoyed by our guests and others attending.

- On 19 September 2013, Lend Lease provided a BBQ breakfast as part of their Lend Lease Community Day program. This was the fourth year that we have been recipients of this program.
- A social inclusion barbecue sponsored by Andrew Leigh MP and his volunteers was held on 26 November 2013. This was a very successful event with about 40 people attending including EMC guests, staff and volunteers, Management Committee members, and staff from SVDP Street to Home program, Red Cross Roadhouse, Street Law, Supportive Tenancy Service and Lifeline.
- Our Christmas party was held on Thursday 19 December 2013. It was a very cheerful occasion and our thanks go once again to Tim Gavel for arranging sponsorship of hams and chicken for the occasion. Thank you also to the Mercy Foundation (the community arm of St Mark Coptic Orthodox Church, Kaleen) for once again providing the desserts and to the volunteers from the Canberra City and Toe Talatalana Congregations for helping out on the day. Members of ACT Housing's Social Housing and Homelessness team also volunteered on the day and had a great time serving lunch to our guests.
- A footy tipping barbecue on Tuesday 18 March 2014 where Tim Gavel organised for four people from the Raiders' Club to attend.

For the third year, the Big Issue held their vendor Christmas Party at the EMC on the afternoon of 9 December.

During the year, our Director continued to engage with other community groups to provide information about the EMC and to understand how we can work with others in the community sector. She regularly attends meetings of Joint Pathways, ACT Shelter, and Who's New on the Streets (the regular SVDP Street to Home meeting).

On 28 August 2013, she attended a forum organised by ACT Legal Aid and other legal services aimed at 'Targeting Need – Making Connections'. On 31

March 2014 she spoke at the ACT Shelter Forum about the EMC's experiences with mainstream services, particularly Centrelink, Legal Services, Supportive Tenancy Service, First Point, ACT Housing and the proposed medical clinic.

Training

Chris Stokman and Jenny McGee successfully completed the Certificate IV in Mental Health with Train4Life.

Chris completed the necessary training to become the EMC Food Safety Supervisor which is required under legislation.

John McDonald attended the Free Smoking Care Training on 1 April 2014. It is planned that he undertake the QUIT trainer program in Melbourne which will equip him to be a trainer/supporter for guests wishing to stop smoking.

EMC staff (Chris and John) and volunteer Robyn attended Street Law's 'How to Spot a Legal Issue' training on 27 November 2013. The training was held at the EMC and included participants from Supportive Tenancy Service, First Point, Woden Community Service and the Red Cross Roadhouse. The EMC participants found the training to be very valuable particularly in relation to tenancy problems which is relevant to some of our guests in terms of sustaining their tenancy.

Chris attended 'Engaging Our Mob' on 11 April 2014 which was aimed at community workers wanting to improve their skills in working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander peoples.

Chris, John and Jenny attended a service visit to Havelock House at the invitation of the new Havelock Housing Corporation Manager who gave a good run down on the method of operation and a tour of the whole facility.

Our Director prepared a very useful sheet entitled *Volunteer Information and Reminders* which was distributed to all volunteers in January/February. It set out information about the management of breakfasts, food handling, boundaries and confidentiality and working with vulnerable people checks.

Use of EMC by other organisations

At its March meeting the Management Committee decided that the EMC could potentially be available at certain times for use by other organisations. This followed discussions between our Director and the Ted Noffs Foundation about the use of the EMC space following the civic fire that destroyed their premises. The Ted Noffs Foundation commenced using the EMC in May 2014 for its Take Hold Program. The space is used by them three afternoon a week and occasionally in the evenings.

Medicare Local

Following an application from Medicare Local ACT and the EMC, the Chief Minister, Katy Gallagher, wrote to the chair of ACT Medicare Local, Dr Rashmi Sharma and the Director of the EMC on 24 January advising them that ACT Health will provide funding totalling \$28,000 towards the establishment of a primary health care service at the EMC. This includes funding for the fit-out and equipment (\$14,000), a grant to the participating practices for provision of up to two hours per week of General Practice/Nurse Practitioner services for one year (\$12,500) and training of volunteers (\$1,500). The Chief Minister added a hand written note:

I look forward to seeing this service operational and hear about its success! Congrats.

The Medical Clinic got off to a good start in April/May when five free flu vaccination sessions were organised for our guests. The Clinic was formally launched on 22 July 2014 by the Chief Minister.

We recognise what a wonderful facility the Medical Clinic is for our guests. The only downside is that ACT Community Health Nurse, Maree Sullivan, will no longer be visiting us to provide mini health checks. Maree finished at the end of June. She has been of great service to our guests and we miss her.

Friends of the EMC

When it became apparent in 2013 that the ongoing government funding to the EMC would be reduced, the Management Committee decided to establish a fundraising support group to be known as Friends of the EMC. Although this group became active in late 2013, it was not formally launched until 19 February this year. To our delight, Tim Gavel - a well-known ABC sports reporter - accepted our invitation to be the inaugural Patron of the Friends. As well as being our key speaker at the well attended launch, Tim has also enjoyed promoting the Friends in his various circles, bringing us new donors through his personal representations, including bread donated by Brumbies Bakery in Ainslie three times a week.

The Friends of the EMC has grown steadily and now numbers around 50 regular donors. Some donate fortnightly through their work, some monthly and some yearly. All donations are valued and help to support EMC services. As well as being encouraged to support the EMC financially, Friends have been invited to several functions. All Friends would have received invitations to the 2013 Christmas lunch, the launch of the Friends in February and the recent opening of the Primary Health Care Centre by the ACT Chief Minister. As well Friends are sent a copy of the Annual Report and updates on EMC activities. We are constantly looking for new ways in which to promote the Friends and would encourage existing Friends to talk about the EMC and promote its activities and outreach to their family, work colleagues and friends.

Contributions and Grants

Because of our reduced funding allocation, we have applied for a number of one-off grants to fund specific activities. We received a grant of \$2,000 from Hands Across Canberra to cover the cost of our shower facility for 12 months. This includes the linen service, shampoo, soap etc. We received a grant of \$5025 from the Norman and Florence Price Memorial Trust for food packs.

We have been fortunate to receive contributions from Rotary, Canberra Milk, Lifeline Australia, Bakers Delight (through St Simon's Anglican Church, Kaleen), Mercy Association (the community arm of the Canberra Coptic Church in Kaleen) and Adra Op Shop as well as assistance from the St Columba and St Ninian congregations. Tim Gavel has organised donations of 6 loaves of sliced bread three times a week from Brumby's in Ainslie. Tim picks these up and delivers them to us.

We have subscribed to the Our Community website at the NGO rate of \$150 so we can monitor grants to the community sector.

Vale

Two of our long standing guests, Lindsay and Tim died during the year. We were pleased to be able to host afternoon tea at the EMC after Lindsay's funeral. Lindsay and Tim were very much part of our community and we miss them.

Conclusions

Once again it has been an interesting and challenging year for the EMC. Our breakfast and drop-in numbers have declined slightly from last year. However use of our facilities such as the showers, laundry and mailbox has increased quite significantly. We are inclined to think more people sleeping rough are coming to the EMC which may be one reason why use of these facilities has increased.

A highlight of the year has been the opening of the Medicare Local Clinic which is very much valued by our guests and we appreciate the support of the Chief Minister and ACT Health.

We continue to seek opportunities to work constructively with other organisations. One example is the assistance provided to a very distressed guest which resulted in the EMC working closely with ACAT, Housing ACT and the Supportive Tenancy Service. Support is continuing with this guest who now has a much stronger and open engagement with each of these services. This has resulted in a more positive tenancy future for her as well as support for her work towards a drug free life.

Finally, we have been pleased with our efforts to attract additional funding for the EMC from private sources, particularly through *Friends of the EMC* which continues to attract members. Our thanks go to our patron, Tim Gavel, and to Margaret Watt who is convenor of the Friends.

In conclusion, I would like to thank my fellow committee members and the EMC staff. We have all worked hard during the year and there is much to show for these efforts.

Anne Butler
Chair
27 August 2014

APPENDIX

Early Morning Centre: July 2011-June 2012

Month	Breakfast (including takeaway)	Per cent male	Drop-in Centre – number attending	Shower	Laundry
July	672	85.7	125	n/a	n/a
August	730	83.9	186	n/a	n/a
September	833	88.1	286	n/a	n/a
October	684	87.2	242	n/a	n/a
November	702	83.1	261	n/a	n/a
December	649	90.2	211(a)	n/a	n/a
January	675	91.0	203(a)	n/a	n/a
February	795	86.4	571(b)	53	7(c)
March	796	91.0	533	44	(d)
April	761	82.3	398	23	8
May	793	83.1	412	35	9
June	546	79.3	426	39	7
TOTAL	8636				

(a) Drop-In Centre was closed for two weeks from Monday 26 December 2011

(b) Counting methodology amended

(c) Counting commenced in February 2012

(d) Washing machine out of order for all March

Early Morning Centre: July 2012-June 2013

Month	Breakfast (including takeaway)	Per cent male	Drop-in Centre – number attending	Shower	Laundry	Crisis Food Packs
July	711	82.6	547	31	5	132
August	731	83.2	712	31	6	133
September	796	79.8	398	23	8	147
October	771	76.9	642	30	4	175
November	857	82.8	709	37	12	141
December	761	82.2	390	31	7	93
January	826	85.1	475	37	11	145
February	778	86.5	618	38	13	134
March	863	84.5	496	43	13	163
April	897	84.1	490	59	12	154
May	904	78.2	594	69	12	167
June	708	77.0	419	59	6	120
TOTAL	9603		6490	488	109	1704

Early Morning Centre: July 2013-June 2014

Month	Breakfast (including takeaway)	Per cent male	Drop-in Centre – number attending	Shower	Laundry	Crisis Food Packs
July	788	77.1	494	53	8	134
August	798	76.1	464	59	5	105
September	793	79.6	469	38	12	104
October	759	79.2	538	68	25	166
November	787	78.6	566	48	18	177
December	661	82.5	362	27	9	101
January	666	80.8	420	45	12	120
February	684	79.7	479	55	11	120
March	699	78.5	511	58	21	159
April	715	77.6	536	28	16	141
May	695	78.4	554	26	14	126
June	655	80.8	577	32	10	136
TOTAL	8700	79.0	5970	537	161	1589`

Mail box: As at end August 2012, 51 guests were registered to use the mail box.
As at end August 2013, 68 guests were registered to use the mail box.
As at end August 2014, 100 guests were registered to use the mail box.