

**CONGREGATION OF CANBERRA CITY
2015 ANNUAL MEETING AND ANNUAL REPORT**

**REPORT FROM UNITINGCARE CANBERRA CITY MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE**

The UnitingCare Canberra City Management Committee met eleven times during 2014/15. Members of the Committee at the end of June 2015 were Anne Butler (Chair), Campbell Macknight (Secretary), Graeme Lowe (Treasurer), Terry Birtles, Hepi Ma'ilei, Margaret Watt and Kylie Travers. Chris Stokman (EMC Director) also attends the Management Committee meetings. We were sorry to lose three of our members during the year – Rev Ivan Roberts, Stella Naimet and Karyn Walker. We are very appreciative of the contributions they made to the Management Committee. Two new Board members joined during the year, Hepi Ma'ilei and Kylie Travers and we were also pleased to have our supply Minister Rev Betty Stroud attend for two months. We are about to lose our long standing member Terry Birtles who is retiring. Terry has been with us since the EMC was just a thought bubble. He was instrumental in obtaining initial funding and has worked very hard since then to put the EMC on a sound footing.

During the year there was discussion about expanding the number of Board members, including the desirability of having an additional member with knowledge of the community sector. We developed a list of the skills and experience that we thought were desirable for Board members and assessed our own skills against these. Two new members, Carrie-Ann Leeson, who is the CEO of Lifeline ACT, and Alice Ferguson, who is a member of St Columba's Uniting Church and chairs the Safe Shelter Management Committee joined the EMC Management Committee in early 2015/16.

At our meeting on 21 August 2014 we met with Gerald Franks, managing director, community services from the Canberra Men's Centre who described the work of the centre. In discussion, various common interests and complementarities were identified.

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.

During the year there was also a focus on ensuring all staff and volunteers had Working with Vulnerable People cards.

Our brochure and contact cards were redesigned and have been useful in publicising the work of the EMC.

Staff and Volunteers

It has been a difficult year for our staff and we are grateful to our Director, Chris Stokman, who has worked very hard and to great purpose throughout the year. We are very appreciative of her steadfast loyalty to the EMC and for the sensitivity and concern she has for our guests. Staff absences during the year have created strains but she has managed to keep the EMC functioning despite these problems.

John McDonald has continued to occupy the position of Referral Officer. It has been a hard year for him with the death of his wife, Trish McDonald, and some serious health issues that he has had to manage. All of us, including our guests, have been very concerned for John over this period. Our Director, in particular, has been a great support to John.

A very moving memorial service was held for Trish at Canberra City Uniting Church on 16 October. Trish made a significant contribution to Canberra through her various roles in working for vulnerable people. She was well known to many of our guests who were most distressed at hearing of her death. The church was packed with Trish's family, friends, work colleagues and representatives of Canberra's welfare community.

Jenny McGee, our second referral officer, has worked 7 hours per week (except in school holidays) and our two long standing and experienced casual employees (Nic Watson and Nicci Haynes) continue to share the operation of the coffee cart. This year in particular we have been fortunate to be able to call on Nic to cover absences during the drop-in period.

The EMC could not operate without our wonderful volunteers who turn up at 7am each weekday morning to prepare the breakfasts. One long term volunteer, Hepi Ma'ilei, retired this year. We have been fortunate to recruit a number of new volunteers to help strengthen our volunteer team.

The total number of volunteers supporting the EMC during the year was 30 (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.

Being a small organisation, we do not have great flexibility to cover staff absences. We are conscious of the need to manage this risk and have developed better contingency plans which we will implement in 2015/16.

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).

She was also involved in the following:

- Speaking to the Canberra City and ToeTalatalanoa congregations on 3 August 2014 about the work of the EMC, including the recently opened mini clinic.
- Attendance at the National Homelessness conference at the Gold Coast from 10-12 September 2014 which she found very rewarding.
- Attendance at a presentation by the Doma Group/Servcorp on 12 November 2014. At this presentation the EMC received of a cheque for \$2000 as well as 10 swags. These funds were part of the Group's Great Minds annual fundraising event.
- Attendance at the annual Hands Across Canberra lunch on 21 November 2014.
- Attendance at the Joint pathways annual planning day on Tuesday 17 March 2015.
- Speaking at a Women in Touch meeting on 11 May 2015 to explain the work of the EMC.
- A meeting with Northside Community Services Common Ground Case Management team to discuss their role when Common Ground opens and how we might work together.

John McDonald attended the QUIT smoking trainer program in Melbourne on 10 November 2014. He gained some valuable insights and is now in a better position to support those guests who wish to give up smoking.

Funding

We indicated in the 2012/13 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.

In 2014/15 our total income was \$243,992 made up of the core grant of \$201,060 (which includes cost of living and award adjustments), donations and other fund raising of \$36,088 plus some sundry items. Total expenses were \$249,755 resulting in a deficit at June 2015 of \$5,763.

We are very grateful for the continuing support we have received from the ACT Government both in terms of funding and in the interest they have shown in our work.

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 2014/15, 9001 guests received breakfasts, an increase of 3.5 per cent from 2013/14; 6160 attended the drop-in centre, an increase of 3.2 per cent since 21013/14.

The total number of showers taken during the year was 530, a decline of 1.3 per cent since 2013/14 and the laundry was used on 119 occasions, a decrease of 26.1 per cent. As at end August 2015, 96 guests were registered to use the mail box, a decrease of 4 since last year. More detailed statistics for 2011/12-2014/15 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. At end August 2015, 96 guests were registered to use the mail box.

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)
- Partners in Recovery (fortnightly)

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 Mental Health Consumer Network conducted a five week program from 28 October 2014 for consumers (people with a lived experience of mental health) on self advocacy. Three guests participated and the Director had positive feedback from them about the value of the course and how they feel that the skills gained will help them in future interactions with others.

On 10 November 2015 the EMC supported a guest to hold a Memorial service for her partner Lindsay to remember him 12 months after he died.

After a number of years of support from us, one of our guests became an Australian citizen at a ceremony in April 2015. He is very proud of his citizenship certificate which John McDonald laminated for him.

Andrew Leigh MHR sponsored a barbecue on 1 July 2014, providing food and volunteers. The BBQ was much appreciated by our guests. He sponsored another BBQ on Tuesday 7 April 2015 to welcome the start of our footy tipping competition. Tim Gavel, our patron, also attended and invited Alan Tongue from the Raiders. Our guests enjoyed the occasion very much.

Our annual BBQ to conclude the footy tipping season was held on Monday 17 November 2014.

Our Christmas lunch was held on Thursday 18 December 2014 and feedback from our guests was very positive. We received great support either through donations or help on the day. We would like to thank in particular our patron Tim Gavel, Bronwen Fagen, Yarralumla Uniting Church, Canberra City Uniting Church, the Jumpin' Gateway Singers, staff from the Social Housing and Homeless Section and other volunteers as well as the great work done by our own staff.

Housing ACT Minister Yvette Berry helped out at breakfast on Monday 13 April 2015 and her interest in the EMC is very much appreciated.

Safe Shelter

Safe Shelter recommenced operation for the winter on three nights a week from Tuesday 28 April and will continue through to 1 October 2015. The Safe Shelter operates from St Columba's Uniting Church and there is good mutual support with the EMC with Safe Shelter referring any guests they have to the EMC for breakfasts, showers and other services. Our Director has undertaken a number of training sessions for their volunteers. She notes the value of Safe Shelter but that there is an urgent need for similar arrangements for women and couples.

Use of EMC by other organisations

Because their premises were destroyed by the Civic fire, the Ted Noffs Foundation commenced using the EMC in May 2014 for its Take Hold Program. The space is used by them three afternoons a week and occasionally in the evenings. They hope to move back to their rebuilt premises before Christmas 2015.

Early Morning Centre Primary Health Care Service (formerly Medicare Local)

This service continues to operate every Wednesday with a doctor or practice nurse attending. Flu vaccinations were provided for a four week period from mid April. The service is extremely popular with guests and many attend who would otherwise not be willing to visit a normal medical practice. It was initially funded for a trial period of 12 months but unspent funding meant it could continue to operate until November 2015. ACT Health has now agreed to extend funding until November 2016. An evaluation has been undertaken

which we understand was very supportive of the service. Once the final report becomes available the EMC Management Committee will consider whether there are any issues which we need to address.

Friends of the EMC

The number of Friends of the EMC continues to increase. Friends are provided with a copy of the Annual Report and are usually invited to one or two events each financial year so membership is not onerous. Friends are also sent a reminder towards the end of the financial year to remind them that this is a good time to make a donation if they prefer to donate annually. As well as individuals, we have been pleased to welcome some new corporate Friends. We are starting to be known in the city!

During 2014/15 Friends were invited to two major events. Firstly, on Tuesday 22 July 2014 we were pleased to welcome the ACT Chief Minister, Katy Gallagher, to launch the Primary Health Care Centre at the EMC. This event was held in the EMC and was followed by a light lunch and an opportunity to talk to staff and have a look around the centre. The launch received very positive media coverage and all who attended were very pleased that our guests are now able to receive medical advice at the EMC on a weekly basis. This clinic is a welcome addition to the services already offered by the EMC.

Secondly, on Friday 14 November 2014 the Management Committee for the Early Morning Centre invited all Friends, supporters, volunteers and staff to a well-attended "Thank you" lunch. This lunch was held in the Riley Hall. It was kindly sponsored by the Tongan community, complete with a roast pig. It provided an opportunity for us to thank everyone for their support and encouragement and to give an update on the highlights of the year and talk about plans for next year. The Tongan women volunteers opened the lunch with a song and the Jumpin' Gateway Singers closed the event.

The Management Committee is very grateful to all our Friends for their ongoing support, particularly their financial contributions. Some Friends choose to donate regularly such as monthly, quarterly or yearly. This is much appreciated as it allows for certainty in planning and budgeting. However donations on a more irregular basis are also very welcome. Some Friends also call in with freshly baked cakes and other food during the morning drop-in centre and these delights are always warmly received.

A banner and T-shirts were designed and ordered during the year and were on display at our morning tea on 7 July 2015 to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the EMC. There will be more detailed coverage in the 2015/16 annual report.

Contributions and Grants

Apart from donations through the Friends of the EMC, we have been fortunate to receive contributions from:

- Brumby's (18 loaves of sliced bread per week picked up from Ainslie by our patron, Tim Gavel)
- Capitol Chilled Foods (22 three litre bottles of milk per week)
- Bakers Delight (through St Simon's Anglican Church, Kaleen)
- Australian Institute of Company Directors (excess catered food delivered for morning tea)
- Rotary
- Lifeline Australia
- Adra Op Shop

St Ninian's and St Columba congregations continue their welcome support.

We were very pleased to receive a donation during the year of \$10,000 from the estate of the late Roger Smith.

The second of two Centenary number plates donated by Canberra CBD Ltd was sold through Hands Across Canberra for a total of \$1,500

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

Evaluation

During the year we considered a number of possible consultants to undertake an evaluation of the EMC. In July 2015 we engaged Rebecca Vassarotti Consulting to undertake the evaluation. Rebecca has considerable experience in social policy and in the community sector, including CEO of the YWCA in Canberra. It is expected the evaluation will be completed in September 2015.

Social media

Kylie Travers prepared a report on social media which was discussed at some length at our meeting on 9 June. Consideration of the practicalities and potential of Facebook raised the issue of the role of the EMC and to whom social media should be addressed. This will be pursued further in 2015/16.

Conclusions

It has been another interesting and challenging year for the EMC. Our breakfast and drop-in numbers have increased by just over 3 per cent from last year. However use of our facilities such as the showers, laundry and mailbox has declined slightly (particularly use of the laundry).

From about March 2015 we noticed that there was an increase in the number of people attending the EMC. We believe some guests are new to Canberra, whilst others are new to the EMC. There also appeared to be an increase in the numbers attending who were sleeping out. We were not aware of any reasons for this increase – there did not seem to be a pattern. Some people mentioned not being able to go to other States for a number of reasons, mainly related either to the justice system or the mental health system.

We are pleased that more people are using Safe Shelter to sleep overnight and we would like to strengthen our relationship with the Shelter in 2015/16. As mentioned above, there is still no temporary accommodation of this kind for women or couples. There are a couple of women who come regularly to the EMC who are rough sleepers and they are a cause for concern for us.

In 2015/16 we will assess the impact that closure of the Braddon flats has on our numbers and our operations.

As indicated above, personal issues have impacted on our staff and this has resulted in a heavy workload for our Director. We are putting in place arrangements for 2015/16 which should help to mitigate this problem and we will monitor this closely.

On the positive side we have been delighted with the success of the Early Morning Centre Primary Health Care Service. This has been very well received by our guests and we are grateful to ACT Health for extending funding until November 2016.

We are continuing to manage within budget. Additional funding from private sources and through *Friends of the EMC* has been of assistance here. Our patron, Tim Gavel, is an ongoing marvel in this regard and Margaret Watt has done a great job as convenor of the Friends.

Thank you to my other committee members. Graeme Lowe, as Treasurer, and Campbell Macknight as Secretary ensure that we continue to operate smoothly and efficiently. Thank you also to Hepi Ma'ilei for her thoughtful contributions at meetings and the organisation of our catering efforts for fundraising activities and Kylie Travers for her enthusiasm and insights into social media and marketing.

We look forward to 2015/16 with new Board members to provide us with different insights into our operations. An important focus will be consideration of new directions following receipt of the evaluation report due in September 2015 and consideration of social media issues.

Finally thank you to our volunteers and staff members. Our staff have been loyal and hard working through a difficult year and we are very proud of them.

Anne Butler
Chair
3 September 2015

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`

Early Morning Centre: July 2014-June 2015

Month	Breakfast (including takeaway)	Per cent male	Drop-in Centre – number attending	Shower	Laundry	Crisis Food Packs
July	741	84.4	467	30	10	132
August	703	79.8	524	9	3	128
September	841	84.5	553	31	6	139
October	761	80.2	487	25	6	120
November	666	73.8	493	30	5	127
December	707	78.3	383	39	7	92
January	740	81.0	423	39	9	104
February	664	84.2	553	31	6	139
March	795	82.9	602	104	21	164
April	832	83.0	552	63	15	143
May	783	85.0	552	68	15	107
June	768	86.1	571	61	16	141
TOTAL	9001		6160	530	119	1536

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.
As at end August 2015, 96 guests were registered to use the mail box.