

**CONGREGATION OF CANBERRA CITY
2016 ANNUAL MEETING AND ANNUAL REPORT**

**REPORT FROM UNITINGCARE CANBERRA CITY MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE**

The Early Morning Centre (EMC) is a community hub supporting Canberra people who are experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness or social isolation. It is proudly assisted by the Australian Capital Territory Government.

The EMC aims to provide a warm safe space with friendly people responding to individuals and their needs. We respect the privacy and dignity of all participants, staff, volunteers and our guests.

The objectives of the EMC are:

- **Provide quality environment**
to provide a safe and caring environment for our guests where they are encouraged to interact with others
- **Provide appropriate support**
to provide practical assistance and emotional support for our guests
- **Encourage healthy eating**
to provide nutritious breakfasts for our guests and healthy take-away food packs and encourage guests to pursue healthy eating and drinking choice

The EMC is governed by the UnitingCare Canberra City Management Committee which met nine times during 2015/16. Members of the Committee at the end of June 2016 were Anne Butler (Chair), Campbell Macknight (Secretary), Graeme Lowe (Treasurer), Margaret Watt, Luti Laipoto, Carrie Leeson and Alice Ferguson. Chris Stokman (EMC Director) also attends the Management Committee meetings. We were sorry to lose three of our members during the year – Terry Birtles, Hepi Ma’ilei and Kylie Travers. Terry had, of course, been with us since the beginning and we are very appreciative of the important contributions he has made over the years. Acknowledgement of his commitment was made at the morning service on 1 November 2015 followed by a magnificent morning tea provided by the Toe Talatalanoa Congregation to show their appreciation of Terry. We also benefited from the enthusiasm both Hepi and Kylie brought to the Committee, with Hepi helping in particular with our fund raising activities and garnering the support of the Toe Talatalanoa Congregation and Kylie bringing significant knowledge and experience to our discussions about social media. Three new members joined during the year, Carrie-Ann Leeson, CEO of Lifeline Canberra, Alice Ferguson of St Columba’s who is also chair of that Congregation’s Safe Shelter Management Committee and Luti Laipato who replaced Hepi.

At our June meeting we welcomed Julie Porritt, Executive Director, Service Improvements and Coordination, Capital Health Network. Julie said the Network had evaluated the services it provides through the EMC and believes them to be highly successful. They would like to consider other services in our space and were actively reviewing the services across Canberra.

Staff and Volunteers

Our staff, under the direction of Chris Stokman, have worked hard during the year to care for our guests and to contribute to and implement changes arising from the evaluation report of the EMC (see below). Once again, staff absences have created strains on occasions but Chris has managed to continue our services during these periods.

John McDonald has continued to occupy the position of Referral Officer. Jenny McGee, our second Referral officer, resigned as of 4 August due to health problems. She was replaced on 11 January 2016 by Sarah Hill.

Our two long standing and experienced casual employees (Nic Watson and Nicci Haynes) continue to share the operation of the coffee cart. Once again this year, we have been fortunate to be able to call on Nic to cover absences during the drop-in period.

The EMC continues to be supported by a dedicated team of volunteers. 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.

Community Hub

Our focus this year has been to develop the EMC as a community hub with services provided both by the EMC in its own right and through other service providers who visit the EMC on a regular basis. Our Director is also a member of a number of community forums and other outreach activities.

Activities

The EMC offers the following to guests:

- A hot breakfast each weekday morning from 7.30am-8.30am. There is an outside coffee cart during this period and take away breakfasts are also available. The breakfasts are primarily run by volunteers who arrive at 7am to prepare breakfast and leave about 8.45am after washing up and tidying the Centre. Currently there are 30 volunteers. Volunteers are rostered on one day a week or one day a fortnight. All staff and volunteers have Working with Vulnerable People registration and the EMC is a registered food provider, with associated legal requirements.
- A community hub from 9am-11.30am (Monday-Thursday) and 9am-11am (Friday). Staff provide support and referral services to guests during this period. Hot and cold drinks are offered. Guests are encouraged to relax and

interact with each other e.g. by playing guitars, playing cards, chatting about the events of the day.

- Ongoing activities include art, an NRL footy tipping competition run each year by one of the guests and the Jumpin' Gateway Singers.

The following services are available after the breakfast session:

- showers
- laundry
- newspapers
- telephone
- computers including internet
- emergency food packs
- scripts
- mailing address through the EMC PO Box
- lockers
- some clothes

Bread for guests to take away is delivered once a week by St Simon's Anglican Church, Kaleen.

The EMC seeks to work closely with a range of service providers who visit the EMC on a regular basis. Our aim is to expand these services. Those currently available 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)
- Medical Clinic each Wednesday in partnership with Capital Health Network, with support provided by the Interchange General Practice and the National Health Cooperative. Once again flu vaccinations were offered to guests from April 2016. The ACT Government has agreed to fund this service for a further twelve months from November 2015.
- Orange Sky laundry which sets up outside the EMC each Monday morning
- Hairdressing (this is provided by a professional hairdresser, Martine, who comes every 5-6 weeks. Guests have given great feedback about this service).

There is an agreement with the ACT Dental Health Program to accept some of our guests in need of urgent dental care.

Vouchers are available to purchase clothes from ADRA in Lonsdale Street.

In 2015/16, 9551 guests received breakfasts, an increase of 6.1 per cent from 2014/15; 6185 attended the drop-in centre, an increase of 0.4 per cent since 21014/15.

The total number of showers taken during the year was 476 compared with 530 in 2014/15 and the laundry was used on 167 occasions compared with 119 occasions in 2014/15. As at end August 2016, 86 guests were registered to use the mail box compared with 96 guests in 2014/15. More detailed statistics for 2011/12-2015/16 are in the Appendix.

On Tuesday 11 August 2015, Street Law provided a talk to guests about traffic fines and different options for payment. This talk was held very informally during the normal Street Law attendance time and guests who attended found it useful to them. On 8 March 2016 they conducted a brief talk about accessing superannuation early. On 15 March they met with staff to talk through their Legal Health Check which provides guidance on possible questions to ask guests that may indicate a legal issue Street Law could support them with. Street Law will continue with informal talks for guests every couple of months.

Once again Lend Lease sponsored a breakfast for our guests on 17 September 2015.

Our Christmas lunch was held on 17 December 2015. We received great support from a range of people including our patron Tim Gavel, Bronwyn Fagan, Yarralumla Uniting Church, Canberra City Uniting Church, St Mark's Coptic Church, Nicole Lawder with her family and staff, Social Housing and Homeless Section staff, the Jumpin' Gateway Singers, staff and other supporters.

A barbeque was held in March 2016 to mark the start of the NRL season and our footy competition.

A memorial service was held in the Early Morning Centre during March for one of our guests who died after being the victim of a violent attack. We decided to hold the service as guests as well as staff and volunteers were finding it difficult to say goodbye. Our Minister, Rev Elizabeth Raine conducted a very sensitive and caring service and our Director received quite a lot of feedback from guests about how valuable they found the service and how it really helped them.

On 24 March 2016 St Mark Coptic Church provided a cooked sit down lunch for our guests which was very well received by guests. They also donated about 60 food packs.

A mosaic project commenced in June 2016. It is held each Friday morning. Kim Grant is the mosaic artist facilitator and she has been able to source supplies through donations from Rivoland Tiles and Trend Tile.

Use of EMC by other organisations

The EMC is open to allowing other organisations to use its premises. 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. Although they have now returned to their own premises they continue to use the EMC on some afternoons.

Outreach by staff

During 2015/16, 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:

- Meeting with Argyle House staff (who manage Ainslie Village) on 3 August 2015 about current vacancies and their assessment and intake processes;
- Facilitating a Lifeline ACT development program of approximately two hours for a group of telephone counsellors on 6 August 2015. The session was a facilitated discussion about the EMC and vulnerable people.
- Training for Safe Shelter volunteers.
- Attending Hands Across Canberra Workshop on 30 October 2015.
- Attending Practise Talking Conference, Wednesday 25 November 2015. This was a network of ACT community sector workers, ACU and ACT Government with the theme 'What Works? Co-location, Collaboration and Integration'.
- Attending Uniting Church and Uniting Community Development Faith and Justice Forum on 4 June.
- Meeting the consortium that was the successful tenderer for the One Human Services Gateway. The contract starts from 1 July 2016 and we are hopeful of having a productive relationship with the new providers.

In addition, our Director is on the Safe Shelter Management Committee operated through St Columba's Church.

Safe Shelter

Safe Shelter recommenced operation for the winter on three nights a week from Tuesday 26 April 2016 and will continue through to 29 September 2016. 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.

Funding

We received \$216,725 as a grant from the ACT Government Community Services Directorate for the period 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016. This was supplemented by generous donations from Friends of the EMC and other public donations totalling \$45,500 plus a contribution from City Church of \$10,000. Our largest cost is for staff salaries followed by food and consumables for breakfasts, cleaning and general administration. We finished the year with a small surplus of \$650. Clearly we would not be able to sustain the work we do without the financial contributions from our supporters.

We have now signed an agreement with the ACT Government for a further three years of funding at the current level adjusted for inflation. We are very grateful for the

continuing support from the ACT Government both in terms of funding and in the interest they have shown in our work.

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 2015/16 Friends were invited to several events. On Tuesday 7 July 2015 we were pleased to welcome the ACT Minister for Housing, Yvette Berry, to a special morning tea to celebrate 10 years of operation of the EMC. This event received very positive media coverage and one of our regular guests, Jodie, who had been a guest on our first ever day of operation was very happy to be interviewed.

On Tuesday 4 August 2015 the EMC was the nominated charity for two Music at Midday concerts at the Canberra Theatre. As well as collecting donations (\$2,800) from those attending, we had an information stall and received a number of inquiries about our work. On Saturday 21 November we invited Friends and supporters to "Jazz in the Garden". The entry fee covered the music and a lavish afternoon tea. We raised \$1,500 as the weather was kind and all who attended had a wonderful time.

In February 2016 we participated in Community Day at the National Multicultural Festival. Again this was an opportunity for us to share information about the EMC and its work. Then on Sunday 26 June 2016 we held our first ever Bunnings Sausage Sizzle at which we raised \$1,050 and learnt a lot about cooking sausages in subzero temperatures. We hope to make the sausage sizzles regular events. As well as raising money, this also provided an opportunity for community engagement about homelessness in Canberra.

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 opening hours and these delights are always warmly received. We also appreciate the work of Friends who advocate on behalf of the EMC and remind others that this need exists in Canberra.

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.

Evaluation of EMC

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. The evaluation was completed in September 2015 and the October Board meeting, which was attended by Rebecca, was devoted to considering the recommendations and their implementation. The evaluation report was also the focus for our planning day on 16 March 2016.

The main findings were:

Strategy and governance: This was generally strong but there was some scope for strengthening our documentation and making more explicit the work currently being undertaken.

Funding and financial management: Expenditure had been kept under control in the face of rising costs. We need to develop a fundraising strategy.

Service model: The model was working well but the language in our documentation did not capture what was currently being delivered. Rather than being described as a 'drop-in centre', the EMC was a community hub for services. It was recommended we explore the introduction of additional services both provided by the EMC and by outside providers and also explore opportunities for guests to contribute to the service planning and implementation.

Service model: Develop a specific service model (community hub) based on findings of the evaluation. Explore the provision of additional services. Explore opportunities for the guests to contribute to the service planning and implementation.

Operational management: Update the operational policy and procedure manual with an emphasis on emergency procedures. Explore opportunities to engage volunteers outside of breakfast service.

Relationships/engaging with support services: Importance of maintaining relationships with other services and extending these services.

Service agreement with ACT Government: Management Committee invests time in preparing for the negotiation of the next service agreement with the ACT Government.

A summary of the recommendations was provided to City Uniting Church Council, Friends of the EMC, volunteers and guests.

The Management Committee accepted in principle all the recommendations of the evaluation. It has been a standard agenda item for Management Committee meetings and many of the recommendations have already been implemented, including completion of a governance manual and updating of the policy and procedures manual with a separate attachment covering emergency procedures. Some additional services and activities have been introduced and relationships with other service providers maintained and strengthened. As noted above, great strides have been made on the fund raising strategy.

The main issue still to be finalised is training for staff and volunteers in the new procedures, particularly the emergency procedures. We need to continue with the development of additional services, including from outside providers and implementation of the fundraising strategy.

Conclusions

At the beginning of the financial year, we were uncertain about whether the closing of public housing in the area would impact on guest numbers. However our breakfast numbers have increased by 6.1 per cent this year and attendance at the community hub after breakfast has increased by 0.4 percent. Use of the showers has declined but use of the laundry has increased.

We have continued to live within our budget. This has been assisted by generous donations from Friends of the EMC and other public donations totalling \$45,500, an increase of nearly \$10,000 from last year, plus a contribution from City Church of \$10,000. We continue to be strongly supported by our wonderful patron, Tim Gavel, and Margaret Watt, as convenor of the Friends of the EMC.

We are also very grateful for the regular donations made by our supporters, particularly of bread and milk.

The outreach services at the EMC are well received by our guests. Of particular importance are the Early Morning Centre Primary Health Care Service and the Centrelink services, both provided once a week. We are pleased that a hairdresser also attends every 5-6 weeks.

The Management Committee's focus during the year has been on the implementation of the evaluation report of September 2015 undertaken by an external consultant. We found the recommendations sensible and achievable. As a result we believe that our governance and health and safety procedures are now more robust. Our next steps are to ensure that, as necessary, all staff, volunteers and guests are trained in the new procedures. We have a fundraising strategy that

we will continue to implement and we will seek to extend guest services and activities provided by our staff and outside organisations.

Thank you to our volunteers and staff members. Our staff are professional, loyal and hardworking and show great concern and sensitivity to our guests. Staff absences during the year due to illness have created some strains and we are particularly grateful to our Director who has kept the EMC functioning despite these problems. Our volunteers are also critical to our work and we are very fortunate to have such a dedicated team.

Finally, thank you to my other Committee members who have all worked hard during the year. From the Committee's perspective, it has been an interesting and productive year and we look forward with optimism to next year.

Anne Butler
Chair
7 September 2016

ATTACHMENT**Statistical Reports
Early Morning Centre****Breakfasts (including takeaway): 2011/12 – 2015/16**

Month	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	Per cent male 2015/16
July	672	711	788	741	812	88.3
August	730	731	798	703	691	87.7
September	833	796	793	841	754	82.1
October	684	771	759	761	764	77.5
November	702	857	787	666	741	80.8
December	649	761	661	707	771	81.2
January	675	826	666	740	778	82.8
February	795	778	684	664	896	82.0
March	796	863	699	795	877	78.6
April	761	897	715	832	936	80.9
May	793	904	695	783	823	81.5
June	546	708	655	768	708	81.3
TOTAL	8636	9603	8700	9001	9551	

Attendance at hub: 2011/12 – 2015/16

Month	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
July	125	547	494	467	574
August	186	712	464	524	581
September	286	398	469	553	588
October	242	642	538	487	574
November	261	709	566	493	544
December	211 (a)	390	362	383	332
January	203 (a)	475	420	423	468
February	571 (b)	618	479	553	482
March	533	496	511	602	507
April	398	490	536	552	502
May	412	594	554	552	488
June	426	419	577	571	545
TOTAL		6490	5970	6160	6185

(a) Hub was closed for two weeks from Monday 26 December 2011

(b) Counting methodology amended

Other services/activities -2015/16

Month	Hub	Shower	Laundry	Choir (1)	Centre-link	Art	Crisis Food Packs	Doctor	Prescriptions	Legal (Street Law/Legal Aid)
July	574	48	14	43	40	0	129	24	1	6
August	581	37	12	27	36	0	131	17	1	10
September	588	45	10	32	38	0	127	19	0	3
October	574	44	18	31	32	0	126	17	1	2
November	544	19	14	21	47	4	100	21	0	3
December	332	12	11	21	38	2	77	16	1	4
January	468	55	20	30	0	2	116	16	0	0
February	482	47	23	33	35	4	123	21	1	2
March	507	52	17	23	42	4	138	25	0	6
April	502	12	2	28	33	4	139	24	1	5
May	488	57	10	28	33	4	166	24	0	5
June	545	48	16	33	31	4	125	23	1	6
TOTAL	6185	476	167	350	405	28	1497	247	7	52

(1) Most members of the choir are from Sing Australia. They meet each Friday and are joined by some EMC guests.