

# CONGREGATION OF CANBERRA CITY 2018 ANNUAL MEETING AND ANNUAL REPORT

## REPORT FROM UNITINGCARE CANBERRA CITY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The UnitingCare Canberra City Management Committee met eight times during 2017/18. In addition, two planning meetings were held with a consultant, Mia Swainson, engaged to develop a business plan for the EMC. Members of the Committee at the end of June 2018 were Anne Butler (Chair), Campbell Macknight (Secretary), Graeme Lowe (Treasurer), Paul Chalson, Margaret Watt (Convenor of Friends of the EMC), Carrie-Ann Leeson, Alice Ferguson, Rebecca Vassarotti and Richard Scott. Nicole Wiggins (EMC Director) also attends the Management Committee meetings.

### Funding

On 6 June 2017 the Chief Minister advised that an additional payment of \$450,000 over four years would be provided to the EMC 'to support the Centre's capacity to extend the hours of service, develop strategies to engage with vulnerable groups and undertake business planning and service delivery model planning.' A further letter of 31 July 2017 from the Minister for Housing advised that of this amount \$50,000 would be provided to enable the EMC to undertake further business planning to diversify its business model and develop strategies to engage vulnerable groups that are less likely to access free food services.

The trading result for the year was a profit of \$39,790 due primarily to the delay in recruiting the additional staff and the implementation of the extended hours of operation. The success of the Friends of the EMC program and a number of other significant donations have supplemented the government grant funds and enabled the EMC to increase its services.

### Extended Hours

As a result of the additional funding, on 30 October the EMC extended its closing time from 11.30am until 2pm. The Deputy Chief Minister, Yvette Berry, launched the extended hours arrangements on 20 November unveiling a new A frame sign for the EMC. The number of guests using the service into the afternoon has continued to grow with the additional activities and computers encouraging guests to use the service for longer hours.

### Staff and Volunteers

The additional funding has also enabled us to employ extra staff to support the extended hours. Sarah Hill, one of our Client Referral Officers resigned as from 21 July 2017. We were grateful for the excellent contribution Sarah made to the EMC. Following Sarah's resignation, we decided to advertise two part-time Client Services Officer positions. As a result, Jade Hudson commenced on 16 October and Wayne Capper on 30 October. John McDonald remains as our devoted third CSO and Nic Watson, our long standing and experienced staff member, continues to operate the coffee cart.

The EMC continues to be supported by a dedicated team of volunteers. The total number of volunteers supporting the EMC during the year was 44 for the breakfast shift and 3 for the community hub. All new volunteers undertake initial one on one training with the Director.

All staff and volunteers have Working with Vulnerable People registration and the EMC is a registered food provider, with associated legal requirements.

During the year, two CIT students were placed with the EMC for a period of 80 hours and 120 hours respectively as part of the Community Services Certificate.

## Guest numbers

Statistics of the number of guests using the EMC are in the attached tables. 10,080 breakfasts were served in 2017/18 (including take away breakfasts) and 11,544 visited the community hub after breakfast. Breakfast numbers have increased but there has been a significant increase in the numbers attending the community hub due largely to the increased hours introduced from January 2018.

## Outreach

One of the EMC's aims is to work cooperatively as part of the social welfare community in Canberra. Our Director keeps informed of what other agencies are doing and regularly attends meetings of Joint Pathways, ACT Shelter, and Who's New on the Streets (the regular SVDP Street to Home meeting). She has also attended the Northern Region Networking Interagency meeting. She meets with a range of other community organisations that provide services at the EMC or with whom the EMC might be able to work in partnership. In addition, she is on the Safe Shelter Management Committee. On 17 October 2017 she and an EMC guest attended the Housing Summit organised by the ACT Government to obtain input into the housing strategy being developed. The EMC has also participated in the ACT Homelessness Cohort study commissioned by ACT Housing.

## EMC Business Plan

As a result of the additional funding specifically for this purpose, much of the work of the EMC Management Committee this year and of the Director has been focused on the EMC business plan which was prepared by a consultant, Mia Swainson. Development of the plan involved significant consultation by Mia and our Director with guests, staff, volunteers, the EMC Management Committee and a wide range of outside organisations. The Committee is now working with our Director and EMC staff to implement the plan. The business plan groups proposed activities for the EMC round five strategies:

- Better experience of homelessness with access to essential services
- Better physical and mental health
- Better life skills
- Better social connections
- The EMC is a sustainable organization.

Progress in relation to the five strategies identified in the business plan is outlined below.

### Better Experience of Homelessness with Access to Essential Services

The EMC provides a number of services that enable guests to have a better experience of homelessness. We have continued to focus on developing 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. Services under this category provided to guests by the EMC include:

- Free food including hot breakfasts from Monday to Friday, light lunches on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, hot drinks throughout the opening hours and emergency food packs. Lunches commenced in January 2018.
- showers
- laundry
- newspapers
- telephone
- computers including internet
- scripts
- mailing address through the EMC PO Box
- lockers
- some clothes.

Services provided by outside organisations who visit the EMC on a regular basis include:

- Outreach workers from the Street to Home program for homeless people managed by the St Vincent de Paul Society.
- Centrelink which resumed on 31 October with visits each Tuesday
- OneLink (weekly)
- the Big Issue vendor support (occasionally)
- Street Law (weekly)
- 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).
- Vouchers to purchase clothes from ADRA in Lonsdale Street.
- ANU students who conducted a winter coats for the homeless project during May and June 2018
- Ozharvest which provides food for lunches.

**Safe Shelter:** Safe Shelter has expanded its operations to seven nights a week this year with St Columba's Uniting Church, the Salvation Army Citadel and All Saints Anglican Church providing accommodation. It commenced on 22 April 2018 and will continue through to 29 September. There were 454 guests in total for this winter after 16 weeks, i.e. 102 nights = 4.05 guests per night, compared with 259 guests over 80 nights last winter = 3.23 guests per night. There is excellent mutual support with the EMC with Safe Shelter referring any guests they have to the EMC for breakfasts, showers and other services, Monday to Friday. Our Director has undertaken a number of training sessions for their volunteers.

### Better Physical and Mental Health

- A Medical Clinic is held 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 May 2018. The Clinic is promoting Mental Health Plans for guests to enable them to access free psychologist services.
- An agreement is in place with the ACT Dental Health Program which accepts some of our guests in need of urgent dental care.
- CAHMA comes weekly to provide alcohol and other drug counselling, including quit smoking courses and nicotine replacement therapy sessions (NRT). CAHMA has provided NRT vouchers at 23 sessions this year.
- Naloxone-overdose response workshops were held on 14 occasions.
- Catholic Care counselling and case management commenced weekly services at the EMC on 27 November 2017.
- At its meeting on 18 January 2018, the EMC Management Committee agreed that syringe disposal containers should be installed in the toilets.
- As part of a regular reporting schedule, the Director presented a workplace health and safety report to the EMC Management Committee on 18 January 2018.
- A new optometry service commenced on 8 March 2018 and is held monthly.
- The hepatitis resource centre outreach service visited on 21 March 2018.
- Flu vaccines were available at the EMC medical clinic from April 2018.

### Better Life Skills

Hands Across Canberra provided a grant of \$8,300 for three new desktop computers and six new tablets. These were installed in October 2017. It is planned to have computer and mobile phone skill workshops in 2018/19.

### Better Social Connections

- Pets in the Park continued during the year with 10 events held in the plaza on Sundays. Volunteer vets and vet nurses attend. Rainbow Paws provide free pet food and free dog coats

and leads. A pet grooming service commenced in July. Three de-sexing clinics was held. Cats were able to be accommodated from the September event. A Blessing of the Pets service was held on 5 November prior to Pets in the Park.

- The art activity group is held each week with a couple of guests as regular participants.
- The guest library has been regularly re-stocked with books and continues to be popular with guests.
- An end of footy season bbq was held on 10 October 2017 with our patron, Tim Gavel and Alan Tongue attending to present vouchers to the winners of the footy tipping competition.
- An Anti-Poverty week bbq in conjunction with Street to Home was held on 18 October 2017.
- A current affairs discussion group hosted by Kim Hyung , a lecturer in Political Science at the ANU, commenced on 27 November 2017 and has been held 15 times since then.
- Our Christmas Party was held on 20 December 2017 with over 100 people attending. Teams of volunteers came along to help or provide food including Elizabeth Lee, MLA, with 4 of her staff, staff from the Social Housing and Homelessness Services - Community Services Directorate, members of the Egyptian Coptic Church and Green Hills. The Egyptian Coptic Church also donated around 80 food parcels and additional food was added to these from items that had been collected through donations to EMC. The regular guests were also given a \$20 Coles voucher which were collected through donations through the Church and EMC and also a number purchased using a \$1000 donation that was provided specifically for the Christmas party.
- The choir leader, Jim Jones, left in February 2018. We are sorry to see him go and we thank him for his care and support over a number of years. Wayne Capper, our Client Support Officer, has taken on responsibility for organising the choir.
- A start footy season bbq was held on 16 March 2018 with five raiders attending to help cook and serve.
- An Easter lunch and hampers were provided by the Egyptian Coptic Church on 28 March 2018. The Church continues to be a great supporter of the EMC.

### The EMC as a sustainable organisation

There are still funds available from the money allocated by the ACT Government for a business plan. We have therefore decided to engage another consultant to develop a funding strategy for the EMC to enable us to be more financially independent and sustainable.

**Friends of the EMC:** An important aspect of helping the EMC to become more sustainable is through Friends of the EMC. Friends now receive four updates on activities every year - Summer, Autumn, Winter and Spring. In November last year we were very pleased to host a fundraising concert "No Ordinary Life" which was presented by three terrific musicians: Rev Radhika Sukumar-White, Rev Claire Wright and Phil Fraser. The music was a great mixture of jazz, classics and contemporary hits and the lavish supper was enjoyed by all. Approximately \$2000 was raised to support extra activities at the EMC during the new extended hours.

Our popular "Jazz in the Garden" was held in April this year. For the third time Friends and supporters gathered in Donna Stewart's beautiful garden in Reid and enjoyed jazz played by Geoff Page and his charity band. As usual afternoon tea was a highlight and we were delighted to welcome some new attendees. This event raised approximately \$1500 for the EMC.

Our Patron Tim Gavel continues to work assiduously on our behalf, raising awareness of the issues of homelessness and the challenges faced by those in our community who are vulnerable and socially isolated. He is joined in this work by our three Ambassadors: Paul Powderly, Debbie Rolfe and Peter Barclay.

We are also fortunate to receive contributions and donations 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) which is delivered once a week
- Australian Institute of Company Directors (excess catered food delivered for morning tea)
- Rotary
- Adra Op Shop
- St Ninian's and St Columba's congregations.
- The ANU Students Union who provided a 'Winter Coats for the Homeless' coat rack
- GIVIT – the EMC made a request to GIVIT for a new microwave which was kindly donated by Road Boss Rally on 6 July
- Price Waterhouse Cooper donated \$500 following participation of the Director on a homelessness forum hosted by PWC
- Community Housing Canberra visited the EMC on 14 August 2017 and presented a check for \$1000 and approx. \$500 worth of food items.
- Country Women's Association
- North Belconnen Baptist Church
- OzHarvest <https://www.ozharvest.org/canberra/> .
- Hands Across Canberra
- Master Plumbers Fundraising Bowls Day where we received a cheque for \$2500
- Andrew Leigh MP
- Nicole Lawder MLA

To create further awareness of the EMC both with our guest population and the broader community, a new EMC brochure designed by Sarah Kentwell was produced in April. Sarah also produced a new EMC poster in June.

## Conclusions

This year has been very productive. As a result of the increased funds made available by the ACT Government we successfully extended our hours into the afternoon. This has resulted in a significant increase in guests with the lunch time meals three days a week being very popular. Our two new staff members have settled in well and the EMC now has a very cohesive and productive team. As noted in our last year's report, the closure of some public housing in the area does not seem to have affected our numbers.

We were very pleased with the business plan developed by our consultant, Mia Swainson. This took up much of the first half of the year with the second half being focussed on its implementation. We plan to continue implementation in 2018/19 with a special emphasis on life skills. The new computers obtained through Hands Across Canberra have been much appreciated and are fully used each day.

Thank you to our staff and volunteers who have all worked hard during the year. We continue to be supported by Friends of the EMC. Thank you once again to Tim Gavel, our patron and our three Ambassadors. The ABC may have lost a fine commentator but I am pleased to say Tim has agreed to continue in his role for the EMC. Finally my thanks to the other members of the Management Committee for their interest and commitment during the year.

Anne Butler  
Chair  
3 September 2018

## ATTACHMENT

**Statistical Reports  
Early Morning Centre**

**Breakfasts (including takeaway): 2013/14 – 2017/18**

<b>Month</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>Per cent male 2016/17</b>
July	788	741	812	n/a	729	81.3
August	798	703	691	829	957	80.3
September	793	841	754	844	860	80.6
October	759	761	764	768	899	79.5
November	787	666	741	894	918	76.8
December	661	707	771	774	750	79.2
January	666	740	778	794	930	80.1
February	684	664	896	698	854	80.4
March	699	795	877	981	796	77.3
April	715	832	936	848	840	85.7
May	695	783	823	949	888	79.0
June	655	768	708	837	659	81.2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8700</b>	<b>9001</b>	<b>9551</b>	<b>9216</b>	<b>10,080</b>	

**Attendance at hub: 2012/13 – 2016/17**

<b>Month</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2017/18</b>
July	494	467	574	n/a	730
August	464	524	581	625	753
September	469	553	588	654	703
October	538	487	574	652	807
November	566	493	544	785	948
December	362	383	332	593	708
January	420	423	468	571	908
February	479	553	482	631	1074
March	511	602	507	706	1102
April	536	552	502	624	1121
May	554	552	488	835	1395
June	577	571	545	698	1295
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5970</b>	<b>6160</b>	<b>6185</b>	<b>7374</b>	<b>11,544</b>

### Other services/activities -2017/18

Month	Hub	Shower	Laundry	Centrelink	Computer	Phone usage	Crisis Food Packs	Doctor	Prescription	Legal	OneLink	Choir
July	730	73	6	0	87	39	139	26	1	4	3	18
August	753	64	8	0	100	46	133	16	1	4	9	29
Sept	703	52	10	0	103	42	114	24	0	4	4	33
October	807	67	6	1	114	44	153	19	0	1	5	24
Nov	948	90	4	10	170	53	144	18	1	3	6	24
Dec	708	80	11	13	119	51	141	12	0	0	5	24
January	908	77	10	16	132	67	175	28	1	2	3	16
Feb	1074	129	17	14	158	64	147	34	1	7	0	30
March	1102	118	20	16	177	74	159	23	1	11	0	37
April	1121	99	15	13	189	76	172	13	0	7	0	42
May	1395	114	17	20	256	136	154	39	1	7	2	39
June	1295	63	16	11	199	97	173	28	0	4	4	41
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,544</b>	<b>1026</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>1,804</b>	<b>789</b>	<b>1804</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>357</b>

#### Lunches (commenced January 2018)

Jan 2018	336
Feb 2018	359
March 2018	539
April 2018	474
May 2018	591
June 2018	547

**Total            2846**

**At 31 August 2018, 81 guests were registered to receive mail through the EMC post box.**