

**CONGREGATION OF CANBERRA CITY
2019 ANNUAL MEETING AND ANNUAL REPORT**

**REPORT FROM UNITINGCARE CANBERRA CITY MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE**

The UnitingCare Canberra City Management Committee met eight times during 2018/19. Members of the Committee at the end of June 2019 were Anne Butler (Chair), Campbell Macknight (Secretary), Graeme Lowe (Treasurer), Paul Chalson, Margaret Watt (Convenor of Friends of the EMC), Alice Ferguson, Rebecca Vassarotti and Richard Scott. Katelyn Peek joined the Committee as an observer in September 2018 and Nicole Wiggins (EMC Director) also attends the Management Committee meetings.

Funding

In June 2019 the ACT Government exercised its option and extended the funding of the EMC for a further two years.

The trading result for the year was a profit of \$35,287 due primarily to the delay in the implementation of some new services and business development planning. The success of the Friends of the EMC program and some other significant donations have supplemented the government grant funds and enabled the EMC to maintain its expanded services.

The ACT Housing and Homelessness Directorate met with the Director and Board members on 30 October 2018 to discuss the EMC Annual Report. The Directorate gave positive feedback on the work being undertaken, including the extended hours, increased number of services provided and overall increase in guest numbers. Subsequently a written report was provided by the Directorate reflecting this positive feedback.

Extended Hours

As a result of the additional funding, on 30 October 2017 the EMC extended its closing time from 11.30am until 2pm. The number of guests using the service into the afternoon has continued to grow. Provision of lunches three days a week, additional computers and other activities appear to have encouraged guests to use the service for longer hours. Numbers attending the community hub during the year have increased from 11544 in 2017/18 to 15979 (an increase of 38 per cent).

Staff and Volunteers

There have been no changes to staff during the year. Regular staff meetings have been held to share information on guests' needs and discuss progress on the business plan. A surprise celebration morning tea was held on 28 September 2018 for John McDonald and Nic Watson to mark their 10 years at the EMC. Approximately 50 guests, volunteers and other supporters attended. John and Nic were both pleasantly surprised and appreciated the recognition of their efforts and commitment.

The EMC continues to be supported by a dedicated team of volunteers. The total number of volunteers supporting the EMC during the year was 56. New volunteers are welcomed on a regular basis and 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.

Guest numbers

Statistics of the number of guests using the EMC are in the attached tables. 9,644 breakfasts were served in 2018/19 (including take away breakfasts) and 15,979 visited the community hub after breakfast. Breakfast numbers have declined slightly (from 10,080 in 2017/18 but there has been a significant increase in the numbers attending the community hub due largely to the increased hours introduced from October 2017 and the introduction of lunches three days a week.

Outreach

One of the EMC's aims is to work cooperatively as part of the social welfare community in Canberra. Our Director works very hard to keep informed of what other agencies are doing and regularly attends meetings of Joint Pathways (which includes all the ACT homelessness services), 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, including the Red Cross Road House, ADCAS, Volunteering and Contact ACT and GIVIT. In addition, she is on the Safe Shelter Management Committee. The EMC has also participated in the ACT Homelessness Cohort study commissioned by ACT Housing. On 10 October 2018 the Director attended the Adult Mental Health Unit Agency Day where she showcased services provided by the EMC and discussed greater collaboration for mutual clients.

The director attended the Price Waterhouse Cooper (PWC) presentation and workshop on homelessness on Friday 30 November. A number of other services presented along with the EMC then a workshop was held to determine strategies that could assist with reducing the number of people experiencing homelessness and how corporations such PWC could contribute to these. A positive outcome was an offer by PWC to assist with marketing of the Homeless Connect event to be held in October 2019.

In addition, the Director

- Met with Keith Hamilton, CEO of Parramatta Mission on 19 November 2018.
- Attended the National Council of Women ACT Branch on 14 February 2019 to discuss the work of the EMC and issues associated with homelessness.
- Met with Canberra City Salvos on 11 February 2019 to discuss collaboration and mutual support.
- Met with the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment on 20 February 2019.
- Met with Kate Dawson of the Big Issue regarding the *Big Issue* using the EMC as a meeting space for vendors and as a means to recruit EMC guests as vendors.
- Met with Wendy Prowse from Beyond Bank on 6 March 2019. Wendy provided details on how Beyond Bank customers can nominate EMC as their designated charity when they have a savings account or take out a home loan. A percentage of the interest is given to the designated charity without any cost to the customer.
- Was interviewed on 2CC live radio on 12 March 2019 to promote the cooking class and other activities.
- Met with Caroline Le Couteur MLA on 28 May 2019 to discuss the new ACT Housing Strategy and the needs of people experiencing homelessness. There was discussion about the small group the Director has been involved with over the past year that is working on a proposal for a new crisis shelter. Caroline indicated that she

supported the proposal for more crisis beds and was interested in meeting with other group members to discuss.

Crawford School of Public Policy

The Director attended the ANU Crawford School of Public Policy Strategic Plan launch on 2 May 2019. The Crawford School has offered to work with the EMC over the next year to assist with fundraising activities. The Director then met with representatives from the Crawford School of Public Policy on 13 June 2019 to discuss potential fundraising activities. The Crawford School hold a number of policy forums throughout the year and as part of these will promote the EMC and provide attendees with a list of items for emergency food parcels along with a list of specific amounts of monetary donations, i.e. \$10 or \$50 and what these amounts will provide for EMC in terms of numbers of breakfasts, coffee and other items.

ACT Government Roundtable - Housing and Support Needs of People Leaving AMC

On 9 May the Director attended the ACT Government Roundtable on housing and support needs of people leaving AMC. The needs of people suddenly leaving AMC and those released on bail were discussed as these people often turn up at EMC with no money and nowhere to stay. There is no current plan in place to provide support or accommodation for people suddenly released on bail. Government and AMC representatives at the roundtable stated that they would try to find a solution to this problem.

EMC Business Plan

As a result of additional funding specifically for this purpose, much of the work of the EMC Management Committee last year and of the Director was focused on the EMC business plan which was prepared by a consultant, Mia Swainson. During this year, the Committee has continued to work with 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 mitigate the problems of being homeless. 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 provided to guests by the EMC itself 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.
- 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.
- The Centrelink Community Outreach Worker attends the EMC on an irregular basis.
- OneLink stopped attending the EMC on a regular basis due to low demand and staff shortages but recommenced in November on an irregular basis. The EMC is able to provide direct referrals to OneLink and guests can make appointments to meet with OneLink at the EMC.
- Street Law (weekly)
- Orange Sky laundry and shower van which sets up outside the EMC each Monday morning
- Hairdressing (this was provided by a professional hairdresser, Martine, who came every 5-6 weeks. Guests have given great feedback about this service. Unfortunately she was no longer able to come and we have been looking for alternative arrangements). In February 2019 the CIT provided vouchers for EMC guests to attend CIT to receive wash, cuts and style.
- Vouchers to purchase clothes from ADRA in Lonsdale Street.
- The winter coats for the homeless project conducted by ANU students commenced on 21 May 2019. The ANU students are attending the EMC each Tuesday fortnight until the end of winter.
- Ozharvest which provides food for lunches. A range of additional food is also provided for guests to help themselves.
- Community Options who provide furniture and other household goods to people who have acquired new accommodation.

Homeless Connect was held at the EMC on Wednesday 8 August 2018, 11am to 3pm. Over 30 services, approx. 45 volunteers and approx. 150 service users attended the event. The feedback received was extremely positive and there are plans to hold this as an annual event. The organising group continues to meet to plan next year's Homeless Connect to be held in October 2019 during National Anti-Poverty Week. Price Waterhouse Cooper representatives are assisting to organise the event

Safe Shelter: The distressing reality is that Safe Shelter is experiencing an ever-growing demand for its services. It is again operating for seven nights a week, two at All Saints Anglican Church, two at the Salvation Army Citadel and three at St Columba's Uniting Church. From its first week, beginning on 28 April, numbers have been consistently much higher, and by week 11 at 530 bed-nights reached more than twice the number at this stage in 2018 and more than three times the comparable number in 2017. There have been nights when the venues have been full and men have had to be turned away. There are 125 volunteers staffing the venues, made up of a healthy mix of returning and new volunteers. All are required to attend an induction or refresher course and the assistance of EMC staff with these courses is much appreciated. There continues to be excellent support between agencies with much mutual referring between the EMC and Safe Shelter. With no paid staff, the

financial requirements of Safe Shelter are relatively modest, but the support of the Canberra Rotary Club and other donors are gratefully acknowledged as making the service possible.

Permanent Safe Shelter: The director is meeting with a group that are coordinating development of the idea of a new permanent safe shelter. These meetings included additional representatives from: St Vincent De Paul, OneLink, YWCA and ACTCOSS along with the original group that consists of:

Richard Griffiths, Safe Shelter; Elaine Lollback, St Benedicts in Queanbeyan; Dr David Marshal, Rotary and Stuart Davis-Meehan, formerly from St John's Care. St Vincent De Paul have put a proposal to the ACT government to take over the CIT site in Woden. If this proposal is successful the site could be used for emergency accommodation for a number of different groups as it is a large campus and has many separate buildings. The group have decided to support the St Vincent De Paul proposal and have sent a letter to government stating this support.

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 2019. 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. The first mobile dental van clinic was held on 19 February with 5 guests using the service. The van will continue to visit weekly or fortnightly while there is demand.
- CAHMA normally comes fortnightly to provide alcohol and other drug information and case management, including quit smoking courses and nicotine replacement therapy sessions (NRT). In January 2019, CAHMA added an art and craft lesson to their outreach activities.
- Naloxone-overdose response workshops were held on 12 occasions during the year with a total of 122 guests attending.
- Catholic Care counselling and case management held its last day on 24 September 2018. They will no longer attend due to low numbers but they are willing for EMC to ring them as required.
- Catholic Care ASSIST Program began on 17 December 2018 with one guest using the service. The ASSIST program is a housing and homelessness service supporting people to find and maintain accommodation. It continued on an irregular basis during the year with a small number of guests attending.
- The EMC held a consultation session with guests on Wednesday 7 November 2018 to discuss the installation of needle and syringe disposal bins in the toilets. Most guests supported the idea with a small number having concerns that this would send a message that injecting drug use was being condoned. Guests were assured that the EMC still maintained a strict "no drug use on the premises" policy and that signs saying this would be placed next to the bins.
Three needle and syringe bins have been installed along with signs stating the reason for their installation is a harm reduction measure and that the "No Drug Use" on the premises rule has not changed. Staff have not received any negative feedback or complaints about the new bins.

- As part of a regular reporting schedule, the Director presented a workplace health and safety report to the EMC Management Committee at its September 2018 meeting and this will continue on a quarterly basis.
- The Optometry Clinic visited on 12 occasions during the year with a total of 47 guests using the service.
- On 5 November AIVIL attended the EMC to test a new hepatitis C training module with 20 guests who each received \$20 for participating. AIVIL provided the EMC with \$500 as a donation towards the Christmas party.
- Flu vaccines were available at the EMC medical clinic from April 2019.
- The director met with a representative from Feros Care on Friday 10 May to discuss the delivery of outreach to EMC. It was decided that Feros Care would provide outreach each Wednesday as it could be helpful for EMC guests to have access to NDIS information. Outreach started on Wed 29 May with no guests but attended the EMC on three occasions in June seeing a total of five guests.

Better Life Skills

Computers: Guests have been using the computers regularly with nearly all the computers in use for most of the day. The tablets are also used regularly by guests. During the year, Richard Scott and Ian Watt have assisted guests with computer enquiries.

Cooking Classes: The first cooking class was held on Tuesday 19 February 2019 with four guests participating. The class cooked Italian chicken. All the participants enjoyed the class that included kitchen safety with electrical equipment, knives and other sharp implements, hygiene that included correct hand washing procedures, preparation and cooking of food and then serving and sharing the dish amongst other guests. The nutritional qualities of ingredients were discussed at the beginning of the class and a satisfaction and feedback survey was completed at the end of the class. A further 9 classes were conducted during the year with a total of 37 guests participating.

Big Issue: Kate Dawson from *The Big Issue* attended the EMC for an outreach session on Thursday 14 March with one guest meeting with Kate.

Better Social Connections

- A World Hepatitis Day BBQ was held on 20 July 2018 in conjunction with the Hepatitis Resource Centre.
- Pets in the Park was held on nine Sundays during 2018/19 with a total of 230 pets attending. Rainbow Paws also attended along with the pet grooming service.
- The art activity group is held each week with 3-4 guests as regular participants. We are still seeking an art or craft group to visit and provide instructions or demonstrations of activities.
- The guest library has been regularly re-stocked with books and continues to be popular with guests. A new bookcase was purchase in October 2018 allowing more books to be displayed.
- An end of footy season BBQ was held on 28 September 2018 with our patron, Tim Gavel and Alan Tongue attending to present vouchers to the winners of the footy tipping competition. Approximately 50-60 guests attended.
- An Anti-Poverty week BBQ was held on 17 October 2018 with approximately 60 guests attending.

- A current affairs discussion group hosted by Kim Hyung, a lecturer in Political Science at the ANU, has been held on a regular basis, normally weekly.
- The Christmas Party was held on Wednesday 19 December 2018 with approx. 55 guests attending. The numbers were down on last year because there was a bus strike. Green Hills provided the main course; the Egyptian Coptic Church provided hampers and assisted with serving food; Elizabeth's Lee's Office provided and served desserts; Nicole Lawder and staff attended and assisted with set up and serving along with staff from Housing and Homelessness Services. Additional hampers were donated by the Canberra Muslim Community. Share the Dignity, a local charity that collects items needed for women, provided 40 handbags. The handbags contained a variety of items such as shampoo, conditioner, hairbrushes and extra treats including make-up, perfume and jewellery.
- The choir continues under the leadership of Wayne Capper, our Client Support Officer. He is trying to encourage more participants, particularly from the EMC.
- A BBQ on 19 March 2019 was hosted by Andrew Leigh with approx. 60 guests attending.
- An Easter lunch and hampers were provided by the Egyptian Coptic Church on 15 April 2019 with approx. 60 guests attending. The Coptic Church continues to be a great supporter of the EMC.
- A new bingo game commenced on 24 October 2018 with 6 guests participating. There are a range of small food prizes from which guests can choose. It is normally held fortnightly although there are sometimes insufficient guests for this to occur.
-

The EMC as a sustainable organisation

There are still funds available from the money allocated by the ACT Government for our business plan. We have therefore decided to engage a consultant to assist us with our funding strategy, specifically to assist in organizing a significant fundraising activity such as a "big breakfast". The aim of these activities is to make the EMC more sustainable financially.

A new EMC website which has been developed by Sarah Kentwell was launched on 4 July 2019. This will be of great assistance in publicising the work of the EMC, including fund raising activities. To create further awareness of the EMC both with our guest population and the broader community, Sarah also produced a new EMC brochure in April 2019 and a new EMC poster in June. 2019.

Friends of the EMC: An important aspect of helping the EMC to become more sustainable is through support of the Friends of the EMC. Friends continue to receive four updates on activities every year - Summer, Autumn, Winter and Spring. Thanks to our volunteer, Sarah Kentwell, this is a well presented and interesting e-newsletter that always receives favourable comments. Sarah also administers our Facebook page with its growing number of followers, and she designed and administers our new website. These activities all give us greater visibility in the Canberra community and have led to an increase in contacts and donations. 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 particularly grateful to Debbie for her donation of a defibrillator to the EMC.

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 (32 three litre bottles of milk per week)
- Australian Institute of Company Directors (excess catered food delivered for morning tea)
- Rotary
- ADRA Op Shop (vouchers provided for clothes). The EMC has been referring volunteer enquiries to ADRA in addition to the clothing and other donations that are referred to ADRA.
- 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
- Community Housing Canberra visited the EMC on 24 August 2018 to provide a food donation for emergency packs and present a cheque from funds raised from the BBQ during Homeless Connect 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
- Andrew Leigh MP
- Nicole Lawder MLA
- Hands Across Canberra
- East Canberra Rotary Club. At its dinner on 19 November 2018, a cheque for \$1200 was presented to the EMC from the sale of homeless gnomes at Floriade.
- Construction Control: The director attended a Construction Control event on 31 May 2019. The event was a fund raiser for the EMC and one other Canberra charity. Around \$45,000 was raised on the night with the EMC due to receive around half of this amount.
- The director met with staff from Community Options on 14 June 2019 to discuss their donation of 20 backpack beds for distribution to guests.
- Breaking the Cycle: Malcolm Leslie, an EMC volunteer, along with two friends undertook an across country bike ride from Perth to Tathra to raise funds for the EMC and to raise awareness of homelessness. On 21 September 2018, Malcolm's publicity company, the Canberra Times and WIN News attended EMC to conduct interviews and get footage of EMC and Malcolm and his bike. The EMC featured that night on WIN news and in the Sunday Canberra Times. The funds were raised through a charity website, My Cause, and nearly \$30,000 was raised. With the completion of the ride, on 1 November WIN News and the Canberra Times again visited the EMC and on 9 November a thank you morning tea was held for Malcolm and his friends.

Conclusions

This has been another successful year for the EMC. Breakfast numbers appear to have stabilised but the extension of hours into the afternoon has resulted in a significant increase in the number of guests using the community hub. We have made steps to improve the physical

and mental health of our guests. A doctor continues to attend once a week, drug and alcohol programs operate, there is an optometry clinic once a month and the mobile dental clinic has commenced operations. As noted above, a range of activities and life skills programs are enjoyed by our guests and we believe this assists in overcoming the social isolation which is experienced by many of them.

We continue to implement the business plan developed in 2017/18 and next year we propose to focus on developing the EMC as a sustainable organisation through some major fundraising activities.

We are fortunate to have dedicated and knowledgeable staff who are well supported by our volunteers. We are grateful for the support of our patron, Tim Gavel and our three Ambassadors as well as the Friends of the EMC. Finally, I would like to thank the members of the Management Committee for their ongoing commitment.

Anne Butler
Chair
1 September 2019

ATTACHMENT

**Statistical Reports
Early Morning Centre**

Breakfasts (including takeaway): 2014/15 – 2018/19

Month	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Per cent male 2018/19
July	741	812	n/a	729	769	82.3
August	703	691	829	957	919	82.0
September	841	754	844	860	737	79.1
October	761	764	768	899	741	75.2
November	666	741	894	918	733	78.5
December	707	771	774	750	671	78.3
January	740	778	794	930	841	80.4
February	664	896	698	854	772	81.9
March	795	877	981	796	735	82.7
April	832	936	848	840	863	82.0
May	783	823	949	888	1060	84.4
June	768	708	837	659	803	81.5
TOTAL	9001	9551	9216	10,080	9644	

Attendance at hub: 2014/15 – 2018/19

Month	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
July	467	574	n/a	730	1481
August	524	581	625	753	1540
September	553	588	654	703	1422
October	487	574	652	807	1450
November	493	544	785	948	1382
December	383	332	593	708	848
January	423	468	571	908	1198
February	553	482	631	1074	1303
March	602	507	706	1102	1323
April	552	502	624	1121	1125
May	552	488	835	1395	1531
June	571	545	698	1295	1376
TOTAL	6160	6185	7374	11,544	15,979

NB The community hub was open for an additional 3 hours from October 2017.

Other services/activities -2018/19

Month	Hub	Shower	Laundry	Centrelink	Computer	Phone usage	Crisis Food Packs	Doctor	Prescription	Legal	Lunches (a)	Choir
July	1481	110	16	15	210	246	172	22	1	1	666	47
August	1540	117	32	3	210	104	166	14	1	6	427	45
Sept	1422	89	14	5	189	111	186	27	0	2	518	39
October	1450	109	16	7	209	122	190	25	0	4	572	38
Nov	1382	183	15	3	183	90	175	17	3	4	603	42
Dec	848	70	28	5	154	80	107	13	0	1	375	14
January	1198	120	16	8	209	123	173	16	0	6	449	15
Feb	1303	107	17	5	224	123	186	23	1	7	478	35
March	1323	107	19	3	223	137	167	30	0	4	589	40
April	1125	121	16	8	179	152	206	36	3	7	434	27
May	1531	119	31	8	263	142	203	40	2	4	593	31
June	1376	134	45	0	248	266	197	19	0	4	485	27
Total	15979	1386	265	70	2501	1696	2128	282	11	50	6189	400
Total 17/18	11544	1026	140	114	1804	789	1804	280	7	54	N/A	357

(a) From September 2018 lunch numbers do not include second helpings i.e. the number attending lunch is counted.

In August 2019, 102 guests were registered to receive mail through the EMC post box compared with 81 in 2017/18..