



McAuley Community  
Services for Women  
A ministry of the Sisters of Mercy

OUR VISION:

**ALL  
HOME  
SAFELY**

**2017/18**  
ANNUAL REPORT



# A PLAN FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

This year marks 10 years since the establishment of McAuley Community Services for Women.

It was timely that we re-set our goals and objectives and developed a new Strategic Plan, which will guide our directions from 2018-2023.

## 1

OBJECTIVE ONE:  
**TO EXPAND ACCOMMODATION SERVICES, REGIONALLY AND NATIONALLY**

McAuley House has become an iconic hub that embodies our work. We will now take our proven integrated model to regional Victoria.

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## 2

OBJECTIVE TWO:  
**TO BUILD THE CAPABILITIES OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN THROUGH EDUCATION, HEALTH AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES**

It is important women and children are empowered to determine their own futures.

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## 3

OBJECTIVE THREE:  
**TO ADVOCATE FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN, IN PLACES WHERE THEY DO NOT HAVE A VOICE**

It is not enough to respond to women and children in need: we will advocate for change, identify gaps in services and speak up for women who are homeless and children who do not have a voice.

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## 4

OBJECTIVE FOUR:  
**TO DEVELOP AND TEST SOLUTIONS TO EMPOWER WOMEN TO REBUILD THEIR LIVES**

Our services are built on the insights gained from women and children we work with. We will continue to design and deliver innovative responses.

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## 5

OBJECTIVE FIVE:  
**TO BUILD OUR CAPABILITY AND CAPACITY TO DELIVER INTEGRATED SERVICES AND ADVOCACY**

To deliver on this five-year plan, we need the organisational capacity to expand and deliver. We will build our staff capabilities in areas such as innovation, partnership, advocacy and operations.

# SNAPSHOT OF OUR YEAR



**1375**

women and children  
supported over the  
past 12 months



## OUR 24/7 SAFE HOUSE

is now securely funded  
for the next four years



**151**  
WOMEN

who've experienced family  
violence and other challenges  
took part in our employment  
support program to find and  
keep jobs



**\$36,000**

raised by Green Acres golf club to  
support our services

## A NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

Sets a new path for  
the next five years





## VOLUNTEERS

supported our work  
across all programs  
throughout the year



## 'TASTE OF HARMONY'

We hosted a multicultural  
celebration featuring  
Western Bulldogs and  
North Melbourne players

## MEASURING OUR IMPACT

new ways to capture our  
data and evaluate outcomes  
have been developed



## 'SMARTY PANTS, KITTY OR TIGER'

We launched a book which brings to  
life the voices of women and children  
who have experienced family violence



## OVER \$100,000 OF DEBT WAIVED

We joined forces with WEstjustice community legal  
centre who helped alleviate the debt burdens of 24  
women who had experienced economic abuse

# OUR VISION: ALL HOME SAFELY

Women and children are safe, supported and empowered to achieve their highest potential: all home safely.

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## OUR VALUES

### **Community**

Women and children coming to McAuley feel that they belong and have the confidence to join other communities

### **Hospitality**

Everyone is met at McAuley as an equal and made to feel at home when they are there

### **Compassion**

McAuley will respect where women and children come from, and they will be heard and listened to with dignity

### **Justice**

Women and children have the right to live at home safely and free of fear

## OUR MISSION

Creating a world that enables women and children to participate in society on their own terms through innovative services, advocacy and a caring community ... so violence and homelessness can be eradicated

# CONTENTS

A plan for the next five years	1
Snapshot of our year	2
<b>OUR VISION: ALL HOME SAFELY</b>	<b>4</b>
<hr/>	
From the Chair	6
From the CEO	7
<b>SECTION ONE: ABOUT US</b>	<b>8</b>
<hr/>	
Our work in action	9
Our approach: All home safely	10
Services that fit together	12
All home safely: A tradition of supporting women and children	14
Anna's story	16
<b>SECTION TWO: OUR YEAR IN REVIEW: 2017/18</b>	<b>18</b>
<hr/>	
The women and children we support	19
Diana's story	20
McAuley Care: Keeping women and children safe from family violence	22
- What women tell us	23
- Economic abuse and help with legal problems	24
- 'Safe at home'	25
- Giving children a voice	26
McAuley House: Reconnection for women who have been homeless	28
Skills for Life: Wellbeing and independence	29
McAuley Works	31
Akanke: 'I knew I wasn't doing this by myself'	32
Court Support 4 Kids	34
Engage to Change	35
<b>SECTION THREE: OUR SUPPORTERS AND PARTNERS</b>	<b>36</b>
<hr/>	
Mandy's story	37
Corporate engagement	38
Fundraising and community engagement	40
Our volunteers	42
<b>SECTION FOUR: OUR ORGANISATION AND FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE</b>	<b>43</b>
<hr/>	
Advocacy	44
Thank you	46
Governance: Our Board	48
Our financial performance	50
Great ways to give	52
Our foundations	53
The Mercy Network	53



## FROM THE CHAIR SONJA HOOD

The words ‘All home safely’ are ones you will hear a lot from us over the next five years. It’s the title of this annual report, and a theme running through the personal stories of women and their journeys. They form the vision in our new strategic plan: a blueprint for our next five years.

They are words that would have struck a chord with our founder Catherine McAuley back in the 1840s, when in her brisk and practical way she set out to help the poorest of Dublin, the women and children. They were also the overriding goals of Regina Coeli and Mercy Care, two pioneering organisations in supporting women, whose histories came together 10 years ago to create McAuley Community Services for Women.

Our goal of ‘All home safely’ captures the essence of what we are all about. We aim to ensure that a woman’s experiences of family violence or homelessness do not become a cycle or something that defines her future.

‘Home’ should always be a haven and yet for the women and children supported over the past year, it has been anything but. Home, instead, has become a place of fear, sometimes shame, and anxiety. The fact that women need to ‘escape’ and ‘flee’ tells us that home is no longer a safe place.

Over the past year, the issue of women’s homelessness has been in the spotlight. It’s increasingly recognised that homelessness is more than the stereotype of a rough sleeper huddling under blankets in the city. It’s more likely to be a woman living in a car, or crashing on a friend’s couch, often with children in tow. Family violence is by far the dominant reason that she is without a place to feel safe.

We believe that we have answers and a template for how the cycle of family violence, homelessness, poverty and seemingly inevitable impacts on children can be prevented. The evolution of McAuley House over the past year is central to that vision. While it’s a fabulous

building, we always wanted it to be more. It’s becoming a place of welcome and connection, tackling social isolation, poverty, and trauma.

In 2017/18, the numbers of women and children we supported overall grew significantly. That growth occurred in our early intervention services: our employment support service McAuley Works, outreach support, and our innovative Court Support 4 Kids program.

Next year should also be an exciting one. Our new strategic plan commits us to expanding our services into regional Victoria. And for the first time in our history, our 24/7 safe house is fully funded by government for the next four years. The community support for its operation has been magnificent, but it is a relief to know that we do not have to scramble each year to raise the money for such an essential component of our service.

So, 24/7 no longer needs to be funded by volunteer dollars. The new McAuley House is built. We’d all love to think perhaps our work is done; that we’ve come a long way since 1988 when Sr Sheila Heywood, appalled by the lack of options for women and children in violent relationships, made a passionate plea to the Mercy leadership: ‘We need a place!’ Her vision created the original Mercy Care, where phone calls came at all hours of day and night; sometimes 10 people slept on the lounge room floor.

Yet in 2016/2017, over 91,000 calls came into family violence referral services. Sixty seven per cent of these were women requiring ‘immediate protection’. Homelessness among Victorian women rose by 8.5 per cent over the past five years. On any given day, 99 people are turned away from homeless services because there is —still — simply nowhere to go.

So the vision of ‘All home safely’ is one that remains elusive, and yet one that we are absolutely determined to achieve.

**Sonja Hood**  
Chair





## FROM THE CEO JOCELYN BIGNOLD

Achieving our vision — *All Home Safely* — takes a dedicated approach. It means working earlier to prevent a housing breakdown, providing a co-ordinated response at the time it's needed, and ensuring the capability to sustain housing is secured.

It involves hours of listening, practical and emotional support, assisting skill development, managing health issues, legal assistance, debt reduction, financial assistance, advocacy, policy change, employment, and addressing the trauma that children feel when their mother experiences violence.

While this day-to-day work continued throughout the year, we successfully underwent our third round of accreditation, moved into a larger office, and reset our mission, vision and strategic plan. The Victorian government contributed 60 per cent of our funding this year, and with the help of the community and our amazing donors we raised the rest of what was required for our services in 2017/18. We have again built upon our work with Deloitte Access Economics – undertaking a baseline evaluation and launching the first of our annual evaluation statements. This work is underpinned by a new data platform which will enable reporting on outcomes.

Countless volunteer hours have contributed time and expertise across our services, including our magnificent Board, diligent, governing astutely, transparently and courageously. We have a wonderful and talented staff team who work alongside women and children, day in and day out.

Diana, a woman whose story is featured in this report, says: 'McAuley had all the pieces of the puzzle to give us the right help.' In providing this sort of response - the right type of support at the right time - we can't, and don't, do it alone. Our partnerships with many outstanding individuals and organisations are

absolutely essential to our capacity to respond to the needs of Diana and others in a way that is integrated and connected. In Diana's situation, collaborations with Caraniche and WEstjustice meant Diana and her family could get specialised counselling support for the traumatic after-effects of the violence they'd experienced, and expert help with the legal problems that were hampering her ability to rebuild her life.

Collaborations strengthen our joint organisational capabilities and lead to better social policy. They enable us to expand the reach of our services, such as through partnerships with Bethany and EDVOS who deliver our Court Support 4 Kids programs in Geelong and outer-eastern Melbourne, or in our work with leading peak bodies such as Mental Health Victoria, who have turned around mental health policy in Victoria.

The point of highlighting our partnerships is because we know that an integrated approach to service delivery is the most effective; we clearly see when this isn't occurring and the detrimental effect that it has on women and children particularly. However, there is a crucial inhibitor to integration that we, the social service sector and our government colleagues, need to grapple with. Professor Allan Fels recently labelled it a 'diagonal accounting problem' – where one government department funds a social service activity and the benefits and outcomes show up in another government department. For example, better funding for psychosocial mental health and housing services will reduce presentations at hospital emergency departments, homelessness, prison rates etc – budgets that are benefiting from, but not paying for, the original outlay.

Our desire to integrate services is not in question – this year's annual report is evidence of that. Our challenge is to address the disincentives to do so.

**Jocelyn Bignold**  
CEO



SECTION ONE:  
**ABOUT US**



# OUR WORK IN ACTION



### Safe accommodation at time of crisis

Our 24-hour safe house, and medium-term refuge accommodation, support women and children who are leaving a violent relationship. While they are staying with us, we work alongside women to plan for a safe future. We also help children deal with the trauma they have experienced.



### Preventing second generation costs arising by direct support of children

Children and young people, including males, are able to accompany their mother in our safe house and refuges, reducing the likelihood of identification with, or harm from, an abusive parent.



### Improved physical and mental health

Many of the women we support have a chronic illness or disability, and nursing and mental health supports are available at McAuley House. We link women and children to counselling and trauma services.



### Assisting women to find valuable employment opportunities

Women affected by family violence and homelessness are likely to have a disrupted and erratic work history. We help them to get job-ready so they can achieve financial security.



### Skills to live independently so women don't return to an unsafe environment

Family violence and homelessness often act as barriers to gaining skills in education, training and employment. We equip them with everyday skills so women can live independently.



### Foster strong connection between women and their families, friends, and community

Feelings of isolation and loneliness are common for women after leaving a violent relationship. Without social support, women are at risk of returning to, or remaining in, an unsafe situation. We encourage women to form supportive networks with others.



### Changing attitudes and beliefs to reject gender inequality and family violence

Community attitudes to family violence still need to change. We educate the community and dispel myths about family violence and homelessness. We also educate employers so they can respond more effectively to family violence in their workplaces.

## OUR APPROACH: ALL HOME SAFELY

McAuley Community Services for Women is changing lives and tackling complex and connected problems.

We help women and children who have faced family violence and homelessness to take control of their lives.

We support women and their children who want to be safe from family violence by providing 24/7 crisis support and temporary accommodation.

The women needing our support have experienced, or are at immediate risk, of serious harm: through physical and emotional violence, threats, sexual assault, and stalking. We work alongside them to plan the steps they need to take to move towards a new life free from violence.

We also operate McAuley House, Victoria's first purpose-built accommodation for women who are homeless, many of whom have also experienced family violence. It is a place for rest, recovery and reconnection, as well as a welcoming community hub.

### **FAMILY VIOLENCE, WOMEN AND HOMELESSNESS**

Because we work at the intersection of family violence and homelessness, we know the experiences of the women we support are complex and multi-layered. They include mental and physical ill health, isolation, poverty and unemployment. These issues overlap and co-exist, meaning one-size-fits-all models — or efforts to tackle one issue at a time— are bound to fail.

The women we work with tell us that at the core of their experience is a deep loneliness and isolation. Many have drifted away from, or lost, family and friendship connections. Being judged for 'putting up with' family violence, feeling you've been unable to protect your children from harm, constantly uprooting your life to be safe, episodes of couch-surfing or homelessness: all take a toll. Language barriers, disabilities, financial and legal problems, struggles with addiction, or acquired brain injuries, lead to a loss of confidence. Many women are simply exhausted.

### **OUR RESPONSE: SERVICES THAT FIT TOGETHER**

Our approach puts each woman at the centre of support regardless of when she first receives our services, the complexity of her need, or recovery time. We bring together health, legal, employment and recreational responses into one place, our purpose-built facility, McAuley House, which offers a safe and nurturing haven for women to access this support at their own pace. We recognise the strengths of the women who come to us and foster their resilience in creating a new future.

## THE RIGHT HELP AT THE RIGHT TIME

Our approach addresses all the factors that keep women trapped in cycles of homelessness, family violence and mental illness. We know that help with those underlying problems is essential for our work to have a lasting impact.

A woman affected by family violence and homelessness often has a disrupted work history making it more likely she will return to a violent relationship: so we support her with tools to find work and build financial independence.

She is frequently isolated: so through the sharing of meals and recreational activities, she has the chance to form new friendships and connections, becoming part of a McAuley community. Her relationship with her children may have become troubled by the challenges she has faced: we support children in their own right and help nurture the confidence of their mothers.

She may lack basic skills, owe money, and be in poor health: we help her become more financially literate, give her support with legal problems, and ensure her health needs, both physical and mental, are addressed.

She may have endured a day-to-day struggle to survive — a constant fear about her safety and worry about where to 'crash'. She may be dealing with mental illness or addiction: we provide her with a chance to rest and recover and the right help.

We help women and children navigate from a place of trauma to safety, healing, confidence and hope.

## IN AUSTRALIA:



**One in four** women are affected by family violence.



**One woman a week** on average is killed by her partner.



**Eight women a day** are hospitalised because of family violence assaults. One in 12 of these is pregnant.



**For women aged 25–44** – Family violence is also the greatest health risk factor greater than smoking, alcohol, or obesity.



**65%** of women with children in their care reported that the children had seen or heard the violence.

## IN VICTORIA:



**44%** of requests for support from homeless services are because of family violence.

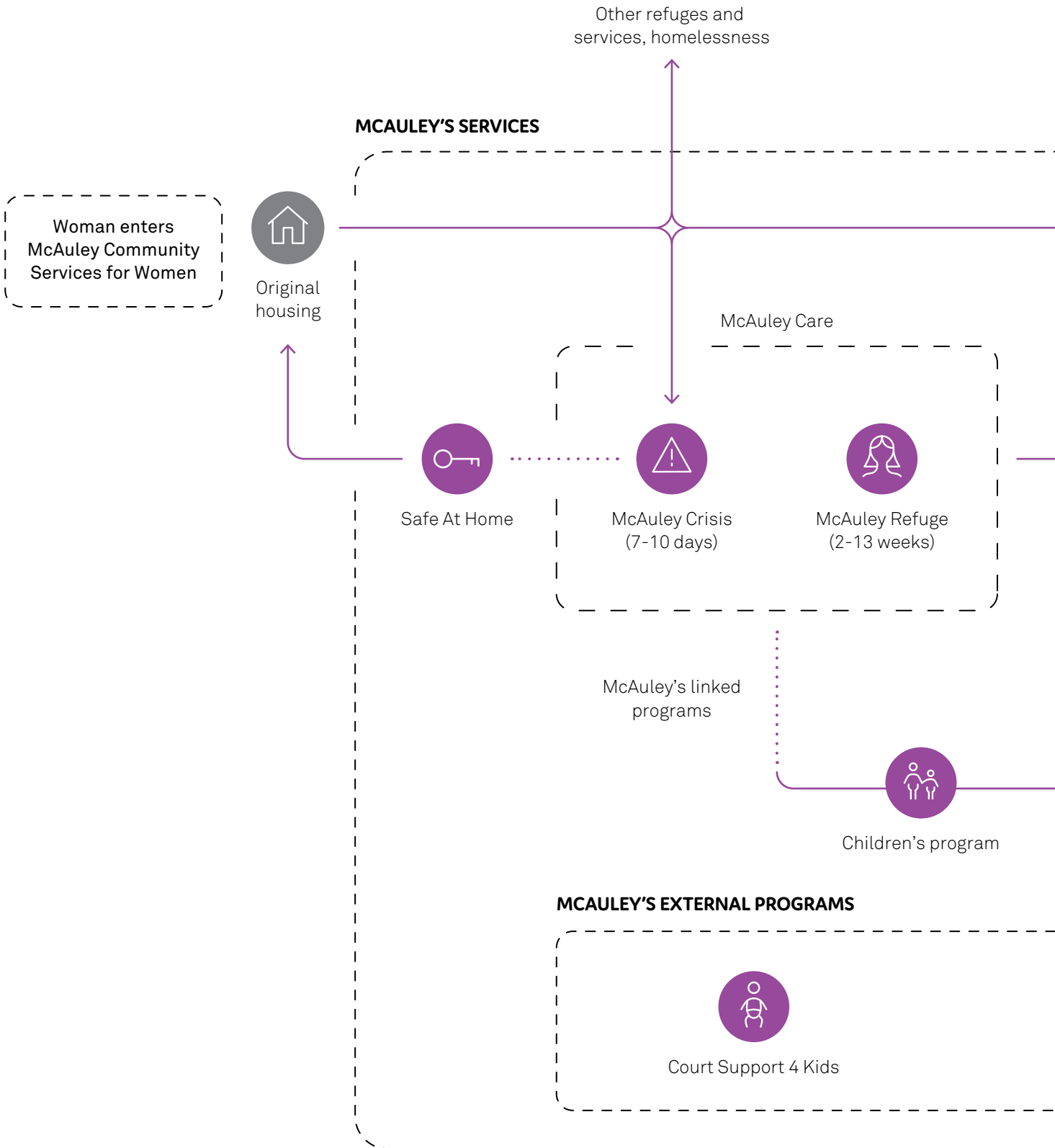


**8.3%** increase in women's homelessness over past 5 years.



**99** requests per day for homelessness support are unable to be met.

# SERVICES THAT FIT TOGETHER



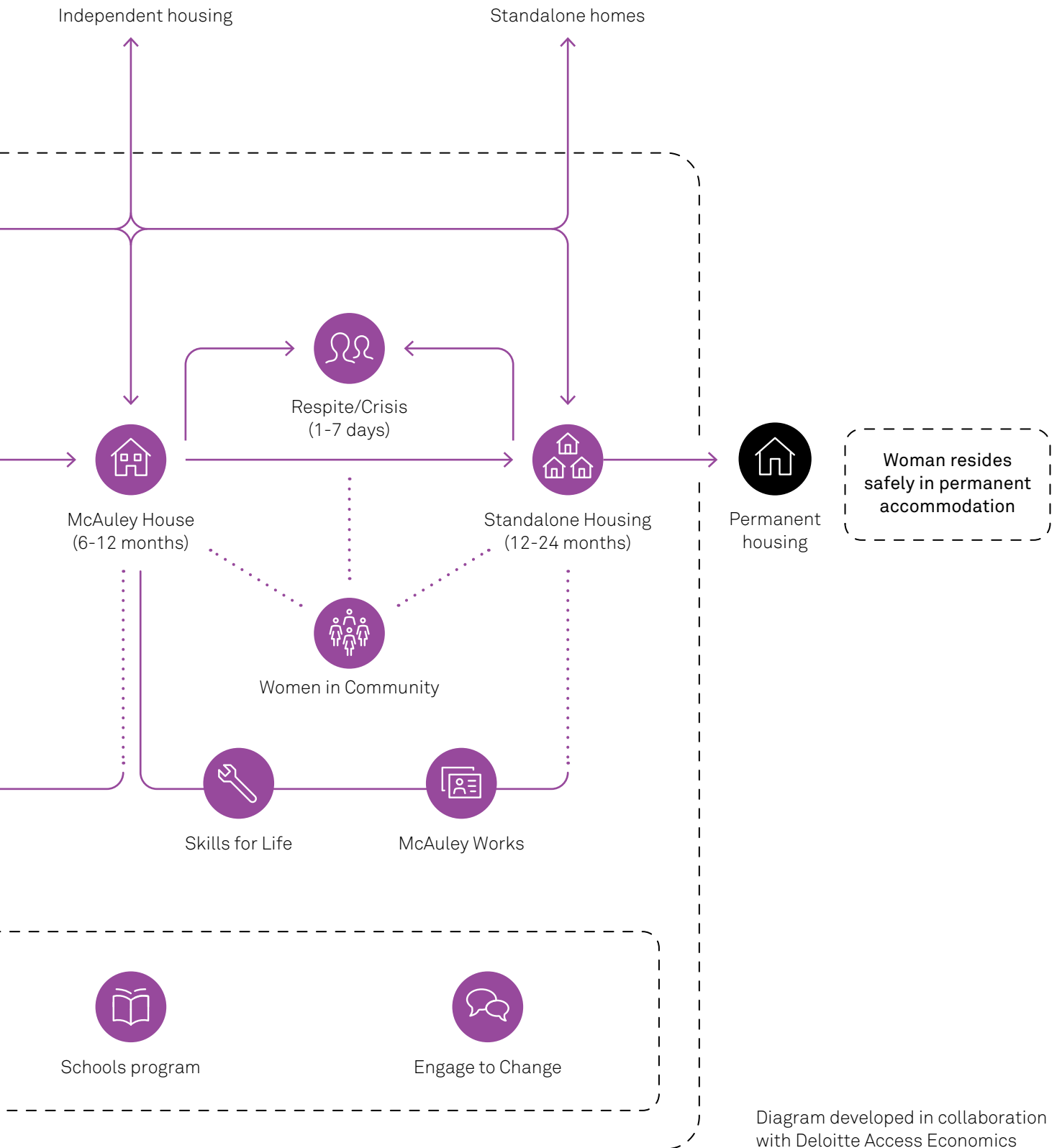


Diagram developed in collaboration with Deloitte Access Economics

# ALL HOME SAFELY: A TRADITION OF SUPPORTING WOMEN AND CHILDREN

## 1831

Sisters of Mercy established in Dublin by Catherine McAuley. Servant girls who 'have not yet sufficient means to provide safe lodging are invited to this house at night as their home'

## 1846

Seven Mercy Sisters, led by Sr Ursula Frayne, land in Fremantle and set up one of the first Australian schools to offer formal education specifically for girls

## 1938

Legion of Mary establish Regina Coeli, a former orphanage, for women who leave jail and need a place to stay

## 1985

Sisters of Mercy take over the running of Regina Coeli, living in community with homeless women

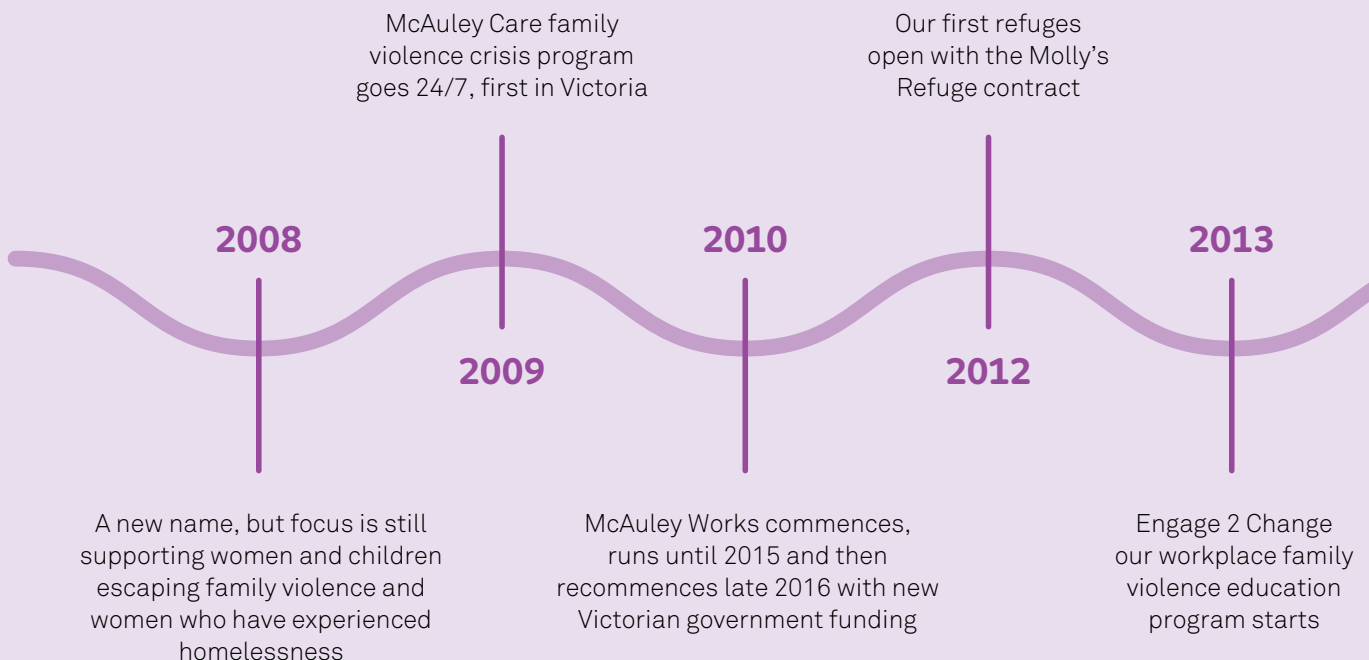
## 1988

'We need a place': 70-yr-old former school principal Sr Sheila Heywood recognises the plight of women and children fleeing family violence. The Sisters of Mercy establish Mercy Care, Victoria's first safe house

## 2008

The histories of Mercy Care and Regina Coeli are brought together in a new organisation: McAuley Community Services for Women

## TIMELINE OF OUR FIRST 10 YEARS







A



B



C



D

Images:

A: The first House of Mercy in Baggott Street, Dublin.

B: Regina Coeli.

C: Children's play area featuring artwork.

D: Over the years, thousands of women and children were kept safe from family violence at the first Mercy Care safe house.

Photos of Regina Coeli and Mercy Care reproduced with the kind permission of the Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea archives.

Submit 12 recommendations to the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence

The social and recreation program is expanded to become Skills for Life and offered across all McAuley services

2014

2016

2018

2015

2017

Court Children's Program starts (now Court Support 4 Kids)

Victoria's first purpose built accommodation and support hub for women, McAuley House, opens

A new strategic plan, vision and mission developed to carry us forward for the next five years

## ANNA'S STORY 'IT WAS WHEN MY LIFE STARTED'

Twenty-nine years ago, alone, scared and defiant, a young woman called Anna found herself in Regina Coeli, a home and sanctuary for women who are homeless and the forerunner to today's McAuley House. Her story is as relevant now as it was then.

She was addicted to heroin and had been living on the streets. 'I was married for 15 years. And I was abused for 15 years,' she recalls.

Her initial impression of Regina Coeli, a dormitory-style model of housing, was far from favourable. She was angry, and believed her stay there would be a 'waste of time.'

'I thought: I don't belong here. I was sure I was in the wrong place. I asked where are the nuns that run the place. I couldn't believe they were wearing civvies instead of habits. One of them was even smoking a cigarette!'

Anna kept her distance from her fellow residents and staff in her first few months as she concentrated on the huge challenge of beating her addictions. Gradually her resistance began to thaw.

She vividly remembers the first time she realised she had, without even knowing, become part of a community. It was her birthday: Anna says she couldn't remember the last time it had been celebrated. 'The next thing I knew they all came out with a cake, and then a present. I began to cry.

'Bit by bit I started to talk to some of the others, and stay in the house more often. There were hugs, and people to ask: how are you going? I loved it there; in fact I could have stayed all my life.'

Anna did end up staying for five years and was initially reluctant to move when a brand new social housing home became available. Despite its lovely garden, and the chance to keep pets, she was initially lonely, but soon found that

her strong connection with Regina Coeli did not need to end.

Before her struggle with addiction Anna had been an advocate for women's rights - a union representative in the rag trade who had stood up for women in a factory where management didn't even bother to put up toilet doors in the bathroom. Once her life was back on track, and after she had moved to her own home, Anna resumed her advocacy on women's behalf. She ran community education sessions talking to school groups about her experiences, and also established and ran Narcotics Anonymous groups in prisons, hospitals and other institutions.

She learnt to use a computer, volunteered in an op shop for nine years, completed Year 11 and a certificate of community services. Now, she says, she has 'a good life.'

Anna was present at the celebration of the 10-year anniversary of the establishment of McAuley Community Services for Women. The new architect-designed McAuley House in Footscray, light-filled and spacious, may have seemed light years away from the Regina Coeli that she remembered, but the tumultuous emotions she recalled, as she reflected on those early years of her association with us, were ones many present would have understood.

'When you're on drugs, you hate yourself. You feel useless. And you do awful things because of the drugs,' she says.

'To get better, you need more than a roof over your head. You need friendships, and people around you, or you just feel empty inside. Coming to Regina Coeli was the day my life started.'



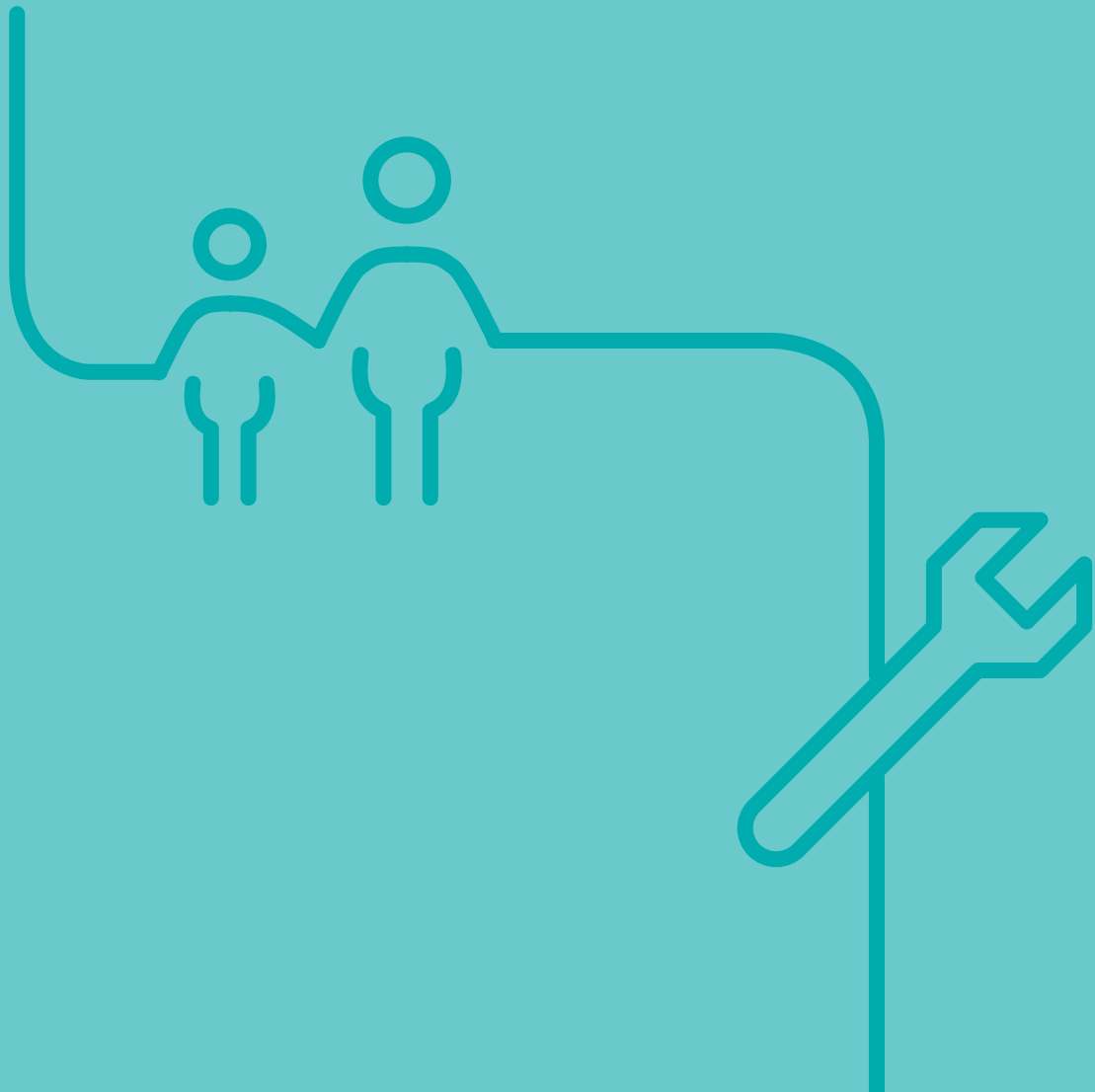
YOU NEED MORE THAN A  
ROOF OVER YOUR HEAD







SECTION TWO:  
**OUR YEAR  
IN REVIEW:  
2017/18**



# THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN WE SUPPORT



**1375**

women and children  
supported this year

**72%** 72% of children we supported were aged under 10

**41%** 41% of women supported by family violence outreach were from a culturally diverse background

**45%** 45% of women needing support at our safe house said their abuser used the drug ice

**91%** 91% of the women we support are not working

**6%** Six percent of the women we support are Indigenous

**23%** 23% of women coming to our safe house have no income

**64%** 64% of women coming to our safe house had experienced homelessness in the previous month

**83%** 83% of women living at McAuley House have a diagnosis or indicator of mental illness

**43** 43 women over 45 sought help across our services compared to 28 last year

**4%** Only 4% of women who came to our safe house or refuges ended up 'safe at home'

## DIANA'S STORY

### 'EVERYTHING NEEDS TO BE CONNECTED'

It might have seemed that the worst moments in Diana's journey to escape a violent relationship came during the first three weeks, when she and her teenage son lived in their car in a McDonald's car park.

But it was actually 12 months later when she reached her lowest ebb. The aftershocks of her decision to leave were continuing to reverberate. Problem after problem compounded. Her initial hope that it would take six months to return her life to 'normal' had proven to be a mirage.

'That's when I began to feel...not like ending my life...just like getting in the car and never coming back. Because it seemed it would be easier simply to not be here,' Diana says.

As a New Zealander who had no access to social security payments, Diana had endured a violent marriage for years. She had decided to wait for her children's education to be complete before making a move.

She was embarrassed about even the idea of being divorced, let alone the stigma of family violence. And with her family all overseas, and living in a rural community, she thought the best option was to try to placate her husband and 'keep the peace.' Diana also had major health issues to manage, having survived a serious battle with two different forms of cancer, which means she is dependent on a feeding tube for much of her nutrition.

But just at the point when her son was completing Year 12, the violence escalated, and this time her son was also a target. Diana and her son fled their home with just the clothes they were wearing.

She had to enlist police help to return to their home the next day and grab their belongings – including her son's school uniform and Diana's essential medications.

She hooked up her feeding equipment, and kept her phone charged, through a power point at McDonald's.

Diana didn't want to tell the school what was happening, and the nearest support services were two hours away. With only a \$300 one-off Centrelink payment, their situation was dire.

Over the next months, new problems arose on all fronts. Her daughter, who was at university, had to leave her studies; she and her brother had to work so that the family could survive once they finally moved into temporary accommodation.

There were battles with an ineffectual court system, with her husband breaking the intervention order 13 times, including an occasion when Diana had to barricade herself inside the house. At one point her husband stole her son's work boots from outside the door, simply so he would have to pay for a new pair.

There were seven moves in two years, reliance on food vouchers, skipping medications just to get through each week, and at times a crippling loneliness while struggling to get the right help.

Diana's daughter became extremely anxious about the pressure for her to earn money for the family, and grieved for the life she once had. Though the family were offered counselling, it was not with a specialist family violence service, and Diana felt it lacked sensitivity to the trauma they had been through and was largely ineffective.





## THERE'S ALWAYS BEEN A PIECE OF THE PUZZLE MISSING

'We were all stuck, and hurting,' Diana says. 'It was like we were in quicksand, with no way out.'

Throughout the following two years, Diana was also dealing with legal problems. She represented herself in family law proceedings; with great tenacity, she taught herself – via Google – how to issue a subpoena. But the biggest burden she was carrying was a \$12,000 overdraft debt. On the very day Diana finally fled the violence, her husband had withdrawn the entire amount from an account where Diana was a joint signatory.

Though she negotiated a \$20 a month repayment plan with the bank, even that amount was onerous given the family's precarious situation. 'You don't realise how much being in poverty makes everything cost more,' says Diana. 'You can never get a discount for paying bills early; I could never afford to connect to the internet. I used the free Wi-Fi at McDonald's just to get by.'

Several months ago the family came to Melbourne. 'You lose your life again with each move,' says Diana. She rang 12 different

organisations trying to get help, and was turned away at every point as not eligible, as she was by now technically not 'homeless' or 'facing family violence.'

The phone call she made to McAuley turned her life around. 'McAuley had all the pieces of the puzzle to give us the right help. We were finally referred to specialist counselling, which has made a huge difference to us processing what we went through. And we were connected to WESTjustice for the legal mess I was dealing with.

'That bank debt which had caused me years of sweat, tears and stress was taken off my hands and then solved straight away. The dread of those phone calls when I missed a payment was gone at last.'

Slowly, with all the pieces of the puzzle finally being addressed, the lives of Diana and her children are coming together. Diana herself is completing a Bachelor of Arts degree.

Reflecting on all she has learnt over the last three years, Diana says: 'We got through, but we shouldn't have had to fight like we did. For so long we were in limbo. You can't move on with your life, unless everything is connected.'

Diana has given us permission to use her real name in this story, because, she says: 'Survivors of family violence shouldn't feel they have to live their lives in the shadows.'



# MCAULEY CARE: KEEPING WOMEN AND CHILDREN SAFE FROM FAMILY VIOLENCE

## A SAFE HOUSE FOR WOMEN EXPERIENCING FAMILY VIOLENCE

We operate a safe house for women and children who need to immediately escape family violence. The women needing our support have experienced, or are at immediate risk of, serious harm: through physical and emotional violence, threats, sexual assault, and stalking. Our safe house is accessible 24/7, and provides secure and immediate accommodation, typically for seven to ten days.

The need to expand after-hours crisis services across the state was a recommendation of the Royal Commission into Family Violence. This year the Victorian Government announced that we were one of the service providers who would be funded to carry out, and expand, this work over the next four years.

For the past ten years, our capacity to offer 24/7 support to women has depended on fundraising, so this is an important step in boosting our capacity. We will be able to expand further: in 2018, we will be able to double our capacity to respond to women and children needing crisis accommodation. We will also expand our specialist children's work, which will be available seven days a week, and our outreach services will be available in the evenings.



**111 women** and **118 children** supported this year

## OUR REFUGES

Our refuges provide longer-term safe accommodation for families escaping violence who are still at risk and have nowhere else safe to go. Typically women and children stay for around 13 weeks.



**51 women** and **64 children** supported this year

## FAMILY VIOLENCE OUTREACH WORK

Our capacity to support women who are living in refuges, transitional housing or home has been bolstered by new outreach case management funding. This first became available during the 2016/17 year and is one of the initiatives recommended by the Royal Commission into Family Violence.



**126 women** and **158 children** supported this year



**38% of women** supported across our family violence services were from a culturally diverse background



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## WHAT WOMEN TELL US

In our safe house, women are invited to share their comments in a guest book. Their stories offer glimpses of the horror they have experienced, and the hope and resilience they want to share with others.

For many, it is the first time they have had space to reflect on the impact of the violence and the future that lies ahead.

'I was belittled and made to feel like nothing,' one writes. 'I believed it was my fault – fat, ugly, can't do anything right.'

Another said: 'I was terrified, anxious, depressed all the time.'

Many are still ambivalent about the perpetrator of the violence, feeling concern and compassion for his wellbeing, and uncertain about their decision to leave. 'I left home to keep my kid safe, but I've often felt guilty and wondered if I've done the right thing,' one woman wrote.

Another said: 'I don't hate my ex. But I have started loving myself.'

The women comment, again and again, on the feeling of warmth and acceptance in the safe house. One woman reflected: 'After spending many years in a hostile environment, it is inspiring to experience kindness and compassion. It has reminded me for as many cruel experiences, there can be just as many kind ones.'

But the common message from the guest book entries is the determination to encourage and inspire the women who will stay with us next that their lives can be rebuilt. 'You're never as alone as you feel,' one woman wrote, while another said: 'Never let people pin you down. Educate yourself, get a degree, or learn a skill. Take charge of your life and rebuild!'

Another said: 'To all the women who will read this in the future: You are beautiful. You are resilient. You are strong.'



I DON'T HATE MY EX.  
BUT I HAVE STARTED  
LOVING MYSELF.

## ECONOMIC ABUSE AND HELP WITH LEGAL PROBLEMS

Economic abuse is present in virtually all family violence situations and keeps women trapped and unable to leave. Frequently women are denied access to their own money and saddled with their abusers' debts, fines and other legal issues. These debts often spiral out of control, placing women at risk of poverty and homelessness.

This year our collaboration with the western suburbs' legal service, WEStjustice, led to incredible outcomes for women dealing with these stressful and complicated situations. A lawyer and financial counsellor provided a weekly outreach legal service based in McAuley House. In just four months 24 women were relieved of more than \$100,000 of crippling debts.

WEStjustice had already established relationships with industries such as banks, utilities and insurance companies who wanted to improve the way they dealt with women who were facing hardship because of a violent relationship. However WEStjustice realised they weren't reaching women early enough. Partnering with us meant they could assist women promptly, before those problems escalated.

The WEStjustice collaboration also provided support with complexities in the intervention order processes, insurance and Centrelink issues.

### TAMARA'S STORY

When she first came into contact with us, "Tamara"\* owed more than \$25,000 in debts for unpaid utility bills, credit cards, a Centrelink debt and a personal loan she used to pay for her daughter's tombstone.

Tamara and her husband were married for 10 years and had two children. Tamara's husband was extremely violent, abusive and controlling; she wasn't allowed to have friends, a driver's licence or buy clothing.

After the tragic loss of their daughter, Tamara's husband refused to pay the funeral expenses and continued to use Tamara's Centrelink benefits to fund his lifestyle. With the money she could access, Tamara paid for her daughter's funeral and the family's rent, school fees and her husband's fines. She had to leave her son with a close friend so he could continue his studies. Tamara was skipping meals while living in a safe house to make ends meet.

We organised for Tamara to see a WEStjustice lawyer at McAuley House. In just five hours, WEStjustice sought and obtained a full waiver of Tamara's \$10,000 personal loan thanks to their contact at a bank. Within a week, WEStjustice also obtained full debt waivers on Tamara's telephone, utilities, other banking and debt collection debts. By clearing Tamara's debts, she could afford to return to a private rental and live with her son again.

\*not her real name

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## 'SAFE AT HOME'

We have been strong advocates of a woman's right to remain home or to return home safely, in contrast to the more usual scenario where the person responsible for the violence remains. When women and their children are forced to leave, it is often the start of a damaging cycle of housing instability, forced relocations, and disruption to schooling, employment and social networks.

In 2016/17 there were encouraging signs that progress was being made in this regard: seven per cent of women did return home safely. However, in 2017/18 we were disappointed to note that only four per cent of those who stayed in either our safe house or refuges returned safely to their own home.

Working with women to plan a safe future, striking a balance between a woman's right to return to her own home, and the knowledge of the very real risks to her safety should she choose to do so, is a difficult task. It reflects some attitudes held in the community and justice system; a traditional focus has been on the need for women and children to 'escape' rather than holding the perpetrator of the violence to account by his removal from the family home.

The building blocks for an effective system so that women can be 'safe at home' are being put in place: individual support packages, additional outreach case management and personal alarms. However, as a community, in order to ensure that women can indeed be 'Safe at home' we need to reframe the question: 'Why doesn't she leave?' to: 'Why doesn't he stop?'



LET'S NOT ASK: 'WHY DOESN'T SHE LEAVE?' BUT 'WHY DOESN'T HE STOP?'

## GIVING CHILDREN A VOICE

We provide direct support to children who have experienced and witnessed family violence. Their own pain and trauma is unique and different in nature from their mothers' and requires a specialist response.

We have a playroom with a specialist children's worker. Through art, play and conversation, a child's feelings about what has happened in their family can be explored.

We focus attention on improving the bond between mothers and their children, which has often been damaged by the violence. This is not inadvertent: perpetrators of family violence often use 'divide and conquer' techniques to damage or undermine a woman's ability to parent. Additionally, many women come to our service traumatised and need help to learn how to respond to the distress and trauma of their children.

To rebuild the mother-child bond, we encourage mothers to attend the playroom alongside their children. Fun activities such as playdough and slime making, collage art and making bubbles, can recapture simple delight in one another's company as well as opening up avenues for conversations about how the children are going, and enabling children's voices and experiences to be heard and reflected on by their mum. Our children's worker also liaises with child care centres and schools.

Our safe house and refuges can also accommodate children and young people, including boys, so that they do not have to remain with the perpetrator of the violence. By staying, they may be at risk of direct harm or identification, and collusion with, violent behaviours. But while this capacity exists, only eight young people aged 15-17 accompanied their mothers into a safe house or refuge. We view this as a matter of great concern, as we know these young people are either staying in unsafe home environments, couch surfing —or becoming homeless themselves.



Our work supported **340 children** whose mothers were escaping family violence



Half the children we supported were **aged under 5**



**89 children** were under two years old



**65 PER CENT OF WOMEN WHO ARE IN VIOLENT RELATIONSHIPS AND HAVE CHILDREN IN THEIR CARE REPORT THAT THEIR CHILD HAD SEEN OR HEARD THE VIOLENCE.**

## WHAT CHILDREN TELL US ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCE OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

A common theme, as children express their feelings about family violence in the safe environment of the playroom, is their ambivalence towards their fathers. When doing a drawing, some children see their dad as part of their family and want him to be 'in the picture', others are adamant he should not be included. One child expressed fear that he 'will turn out to be bad' like his father.

Many children are still scared and fearful. One child used his time in the playroom to plan, in a very practical way, for how he would deal with this fear. He was helped to identify 'safe' people that he could approach when he was worried. He also decided to prepare an emergency backpack, with a favourite toy and a torch in case he needed to hide in the dark.

Sometimes children are angry towards their mother too, feeling she has failed to protect them, or not understanding if they were, for example, locked in a room that it may have been for their own safety.

Younger children may be very anxious and clingy about their mother's whereabouts. They may not yet have words for their big emotions, and some haven't even had the experience of play and are scared to 'get messy.' Tactile and sensory activities with things like play dough can help them simply be kids, who don't need to be 'on alert' all the time.

## VIVID PORTRAITS OF THE EMOTIONS OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED FAMILY VIOLENCE

In October last year '*Smarty pants, kitty or tiger?*' was launched by Victorian Commissioner for Children and Young People Liana Buchanan. Sr Nicole Rotaru RSM, a founding member of McAuley's first Board, social worker and art therapist, authored the book which was a collection of artwork of children and mothers staying in our safe house.

Ms Buchanan said the book contained many lessons that can be learned when children who have lived with family violence have a voice. 'We are also starting to acknowledge that for too long children have been silent, invisible victims of family violence.

'We know we must do better at supporting children and young people living with family violence'.

'*Smarty Pants, Kitty or Tiger?*' was funded through the Campbell Edwards Trust, Mercy Foundation, and the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea.



### STORY OF GOD AND I AM INVISIBLE

A seven year old girl wrote:

'This is me invisible with a beautiful golden dress. There's an orange butterfly and a special shiny purple, blue, black and orange butterfly.

In the sky it says: 'Love you.' It's God. And God's smiley face is there.

'There are flowers in the background trying to grow. Some are already grewed.'



# MCAULEY HOUSE: RECONNECTION FOR WOMEN WHO HAVE BEEN HOMELESS

McAuley House provides safe and stable longer-term accommodation for women only, unique in a service system which often favours ‘rough sleepers’ and is geared towards male homelessness. By its very design it promotes the dignity and wellbeing of the women who live there, all of whom have been homeless.

With an average age of 44, most of the women who are supported at McAuley House have had long histories of trauma, family violence and mental illness. For this reason, McAuley House provides more than just a place to stay: it also features all the elements that we know are essential for a woman who has been homeless to rebuild her life.

We focus on personalised programs, training and skills development to rebuild a woman’s self-confidence. We also recognise that for many women, their journey can only start when they have had a chance to rest and recover.



**37 women** lived in McAuley House this year



**16 nationalities** were represented including women from Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea, Turkey, Mauritius, Bangladesh, Syria and Eritrea



**17** are mothers



**Images:** With women from 16 different nationalities living at McAuley House, cultural celebrations have been popular this year.

A Syrian-themed lunch was a recent example. A woman who had been born in Syria and is living at McAuley House worked with the Food for Life facilitator to develop a meal plan, shop and prepare a feast that would showcase the cuisine of her homeland. She then instructed and worked alongside volunteers, residents and staff to prepare the meals which were shared at our community lunch. Donations from attendees went to a Syrian humanitarian cause.



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## SKILLS FOR LIFE: WELLBEING AND INDEPENDENCE

Women from across our services, and an increasing number of children, can access our Skills for Life program, which is based at McAuley House. Funded by the Sisters of St John of God Ministries Western Australia and the Baker Foundation, the program promotes independence as well as encouraging women to take care of themselves and their health and wellbeing.

The numbers attending the range of activities have almost doubled over the past year.

The most well-attended sessions overall were: 'Gaining ground', pampering sessions, and the 'Ladies of language' discussion group.

'Gaining ground' was a pilot group trialled in 2018. Those who took part were women who have experienced family violence and/or sexual assault in their lives. The project was jointly designed and delivered by a West CASA (Centre Against Sexual Assault) counsellor and our Social Inclusion worker. Its approach combined education, information provision, group discussion and practical exercises, and topics included mindfulness and sleep, responses to trauma, and managing change and stress.

Pampering sessions were also popular activities, and a chance for women to feel good about themselves. Volunteers from the Young Mercy Links program provided pedicures, massages and facials.

A recently developed conversation group, facilitated by a volunteer with a social work background, has also been popular with the women. These low-key chats in the kitchen are more about listening and sharing experiences than heavy topics. They have been especially appreciated by women who are getting ready to transition from McAuley House into the community and may be feeling anxious.

While we offer programs onsite at McAuley House, we also use existing community supports, through partnerships with local services, for example the local fitness centre. This is another way that women can build connections and make new friendships. Many women have begun to attend fitness groups; initially we help with transport, but where possible women are encouraged to get there independently. Other programs include yoga, English, computers, swimming and art.

**Counselling and peer support:** Through our partnership with Caraniche, who provide specialist psychological services, women who are currently supported by us or have been in the past can access free counselling. A psychologist is based at McAuley House one day per week.

**Food for Life:** is a hands-on cooking program designed to educate women about the joys of cooking, nutrition and connecting with others over a shared meal. Women learn to cook healthy meals, using vegetables and herbs from the McAuley House garden. Other skills acquired include hospitality, meal planning, food preparation, budgeting, and education in the area of food safety, and commercial kitchen introductory training.



A PLACE FOR REST,  
RECOVERY AND  
RECONNECTION,  
MCAULEY HOUSE  
IS INCREASINGLY  
MORE THAN A  
BEAUTIFUL BUILDING;  
IT IS A VIBRANT  
COMMUNITY HUB.





Economic independence, and the increased confidence and self-esteem that come from workplace participation, play a vital role in preventing women from returning to unsafe and violent relationships.

Our employment support program McAuley Works, funded by Jobs Victoria, operates across Victoria, helping women who have experienced family violence, homelessness or mental health issues to find, and maintain, employment.

One hundred and fifty one women participated in the program in 2017/18. Two hundred and four have registered for support since its inception.

From the time the program commenced in early 2017, 42 women have been placed in employment — an exceptional outcome given the serious challenges and barriers many are facing to gaining work. Seventy five per cent of the women over that timeframe were known to have experienced family violence. Forty-seven women were in situations where the family violence was regarded as ‘critical’ – meaning the woman was still dealing with an imminent and immediate threat of violence.

Many women were facing multiple challenges in getting work. In 2017/18, seventeen of the women we worked with had experienced homelessness, and of these, seven did not speak English as their first language.

We also worked with women from Shepparton; as well as the disadvantages the women faced in obtaining work in a rural setting with poor transport options, they are refugees with limited English and some lack literacy even in their own language.

## **AMBER'S STORY**

The impact of getting into paid employment is about more than financial stability. One of the young women supported by McAuley Works, Amber\*, who had left school at 13 and became a mother at only 16, told us she wanted to get a job so her children could see her working.

She had left school in year eight and at 24 she had already experienced a life she described as ‘chaotic’ – marked by struggles with addiction, family violence, and a battle to manage as a single mum to two children, including one with special needs.

Now that she is working, her children are seeing a mother who is flourishing, and she is proud to now describe herself as a ‘role model’ to her children. She has formed friendships with her new workmates, and is thrilled to know that her work ethic and attitude are so valued by her employer that she is the first one called for extra shifts. After starting work on the factory floor, she was recently promoted to do office work one day per week.

\*not her real name

## AKANKE: 'I KNEW I WASN'T DOING THIS BY MYSELF'

A young African-born woman Akanke\* stumbled upon McAuley House when she came to Melbourne, lost and alone. This is her story in her own words:

'The McAuley House was a God-sent help for me. I left Wodonga due to family issues and not being able to find employment there. I came to Melbourne in search of employment which I found within a week. However I had no stable place to stay as I was jumping from couch to couch.

One night I was unable to find a place to stay as my plans had fallen through that night and I was stuck in Footscray. As I was walking and crying out of defeat I stumbled across a green house that offered refuge for women without a place to stay. I hesitated to ring the bell because I wasn't an Australian citizen so I thought they wouldn't help me and I was also embarrassed of how bad I had let my situation get.

As I hesitated to ring the bell a lady came out and I asked what the purpose of the building was and she confirmed that it was indeed a place for women in need of help. At the time I didn't know what I needed: I just knew I needed a place to stay the night so I could go back the next day and collect the rest of my luggage.

I told my story and in my mind I really didn't know how she could help me, but she really listened to what my urgent needs was, and not wants. She organised a two-way return ticket from Melbourne to Albury-Wodonga and money to buy clothes as I was wearing ripped clothes.

I really didn't know what I wanted at the moment but my needs were met beyond my expectations. With that act of kindness I was able to settle in Melbourne the next week, I had more time to sort out my stay when I returned to Melbourne.

I sadly lost my job and I felt helpless again.

I called the McAuley House and they set up a meeting with me the same afternoon. They drove to my location and they bought me hot chocolate and made me feel comfortable. They gave me hope knowing that I wasn't doing this by myself and that they would support me with getting my CV up and running to attract more jobs.

Within a week I received a full time job and six interviews from the CV they assisted me with. The McAuley House was my support system, and with their help I was able to become independent and stable.

My new job was with an interpreting company. While I was there I received numerous calls from McAuley House booking interpreters to help other women get on their feet.

It was always emotional speaking with them because that's where I started off as well. I am and will be forever grateful to McAuley for helping me get my life back on track.'

\*not her real name



THEY GAVE ME HOPE KNOWING THAT THEY WOULD SUPPORT ME WITH GETTING MY CV UP AND RUNNING TO ATTRACT MORE JOBS.



### **THE CHALLENGE OF GETTING 'JOB-READY'**

Akanke was one of the first woman that McAuley Works case manager Lorraine met when she started in her role. It gave her a first-hand insight into the array of barriers a woman involved in the program may be struggling to overcome, and how difficult it can be to become 'job-ready'.

With so much going on in Akanke's life, Lorraine's first steps were about emotional support and empathy – 'wrapping an arm' around her. The sharing of a hot chocolate that is mentioned in Akanke's story was not just comforting, it was about building trust. Lorraine encouraged her to settle at least some parts of her life before the efforts to get work could begin.

Akanke was linked to 'Fitted for Work' where she was kitted out from head to toe in business clothing, including appropriate shoes and accessories.

Lorraine also helped her with resume preparation and coaching on interview techniques. These were integral steps in Akanke firstly finding a job in administration support, and then with an interpreting company.

Finding a job made an extraordinary difference in every possible way. 'You could hear the change just in her voice,' Lorraine says. 'Not only did her confidence return, she began making friends and mixing with people her own age.'

Along the way Lorraine continued to remain in close contact; her encouragement and belief in Akanke's abilities were just as critical as her help with the logistics of finding and keeping work.

## COURT SUPPORT 4 KIDS

Our program to support children who accompanied their mothers to court for family violence-related legal matters — Court Support 4 Kids — has continued to evolve and grow over the past 12 months.

Court Support 4 Kids involves the placement of a trained children's worker in Sunshine Magistrates' Court where women are seeking intervention orders against their violent partner.

Obtaining an intervention order is a critical step in protecting the safety of a woman and her children. But women frequently have no alternative to bringing their children along with them to court, because of limited family support, safety concerns, or lack of short term day-care.

Courts are not equipped to deal with the needs of children, and caring for their children in a hectic environment like a court is a distraction for women seeking legal remedies. Children may be re-traumatised if they have to be present when their mother is recounting the detail of family violence incidents; their father may also be present in the waiting areas of the court which is upsetting and confusing for children. It is often unpredictable when the court might hear an individual application, and women and their children can end up waiting many long and boring hours.

For these reasons many women do not follow through with intervention orders.

The Royal Commission into Family Violence recommended that Magistrates' Courts in Victoria 'provide adequate facilities for children and ensure that courts are 'child-friendly'. This has still not occurred, and it is this service gap which the Court Support 4 Kids program was designed to address.

On days when the court is sitting, our worker introduces herself to women accompanied by children and offers support. She can look after and entertain children with games and toys suitable for all ages, allowing women the time and space to conduct their vital court business. While we prioritise assistance for women attending court for family violence related legal problems, and these are recorded in the figures above, the program also supported women at court for other legal matters. In total, 1507 children were supported by McAuley and our partners Bethany Community Support, and EDVOS (Eastern Domestic Violence Service).

An evaluation of the work of Court Support 4 Kids has been undertaken by the Centre for Innovative Justice, and outcomes will be launched later in 2018.

We acknowledge the generous support of the Campbell Edwards Trust and William Buckland Foundation in funding this program.



**524 children** supported at Sunshine Magistrates' Court



**311 children** supported at Geelong and Ringwood Magistrates' Courts by our partners Bethany and EDVOS

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## ENGAGE TO CHANGE

Engage to Change is an innovative workplace education program that aims to change attitudes and responses to family violence.

The program originated a number of years ago from our initial employment support program where women reported that they were losing their jobs because their performance was affected by their experience of family violence and workplaces lacked capacity to support them.

Engage to Change sessions are conducted in the workplace and delivered by our training partners, CC Management Consulting, co-facilitated by a female and a male facilitator, and with one of our frontline workers also present to give perspective on women's experiences. The two-step program begins with a two-hour awareness raising program which enables participants to recognise and respond to family violence in their workplace, and builds capacity and confidence to support colleagues experiencing family violence.

Engage to Change also offers a second module on Response Skills, developed by our partners in response to participants' feedback. Using the 'crucial conversations' model, the shared experience of participants, and the organisation's procedures and policies, this module builds on the two-hour awareness program. This is done within a confidentiality and risk management framework to build a safe and supportive workplace culture.

In 2017/18, Engage to Change ran a total of 14 sessions, reaching 625 employees. Participants indicated a high level of satisfaction with the sessions and told us that these were some of the things they learnt and valued:

- > 'Never forget the level of shame a person may have about what is occurring/has occurred'
- > 'I knew it was a major issue but not the sheer size of it'
- > 'Almost everything has been a learning for me as I have had no experience with this in the past – it was all valuable and eye opening'
- > 'How we can all make a difference to start making a social change: challenge, don't accept'
- > 'The importance of safety planning and how the workplace can be involved in understanding their role in this'
- > 'Excellent presenters who gave us the headspace to think and respond with case studies.'



NEVER FORGET THE LEVEL OF  
SHAME A PERSON MAY HAVE  
ABOUT WHAT IS OCCURRING.



SECTION THREE:

# OUR SUPPORTERS AND PARTNERS





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## MANDY'S STORY

### 'WHAT YOU GAVE TO ME, I AM NOW GIVING TO YOU'

At this year's Volunteer Recognition Day we held a morning tea to thank our volunteers. Each person was presented with ceramic mugs overlaid with a striking design. The black and white image was the work of one of our volunteers, Mandy, who runs a weekly Zentangles art class – one of the art and recreation programs open to all women with an association with McAuley.

This form of artwork is an elaborate form of doodling – but as the name suggests, it also has a soothing, almost hypnotic nature, bringing about a sense of calm and wellbeing, while at the same time, a beautiful image is produced.

Mandy gives her time as a volunteer because as someone who previously lived at McAuley House for two years, she wants to give back to a place that has meant a lot to her, and with which she is still strongly connected.

Living locally in medium-term accommodation, Mandy says she is never far away from her friends among the women and staff. She might be whipping up a cake in the kitchen, helping out with the food preparation for our weekly community lunches, or having lunch with 'the girls'; or, as she does each Tuesday, encouraging others – even those who say they aren't arty - to have a go at this unique artwork.

'There's no right or wrong way to do it,' Mandy explains. 'You can do it any way you like.'

Mandy was introduced to the art technique while living at McAuley House and says that it is now an important part of managing her mental health. 'If I'm a bit stressed, people know to just put a pen and paper in front of me, and it calms me down. Some people write...I draw.'



In recognition of the beauty of her work, it will feature in an exhibition for 2018's Mental Health Week.

Mandy has been living in supported accommodation for several months now. She knows that if there's a need – as there has been a couple of times this year, when she has needed a bit of extra support – she will always be welcomed back to stay for a rest while she regains her health.

She says she can remember when she first came to us, she felt scared and helpless. 'This is the first home I have had that I can come back to. I would do anything for the other women that live here. I always say: What you gave to me, I am now giving to you.'



THIS IS THE FIRST HOME I HAVE HAD THAT I CAN COME BACK TO.

## CORPORATE ENGAGEMENT

By connecting with companies we aim to improve awareness of our work and explore ways to leverage our shared resources.

The opening of McAuley House has provided a unique opportunity for us to invite people to see at first hand our vision for high quality accommodation. This year we provided guided tours, interactive training sessions, group volunteering opportunities and information sessions to over 100 individuals from a cross sector of industries including banking, property, retail, insurance and health.

Being able to open our doors in these ways enabled us to share more about the issues facing women and gave people a better understanding of our work. After visiting McAuley House we spoke to our corporate partners about how they could support our work by raising awareness about family violence and homelessness within their own organisations and wider community.

Guided tours of McAuley House with representatives of the Western Bulldogs Community Foundation and CommBank Private resulted in two new events; we opened the McAuley House kitchen to the Taste of Harmony multicultural celebration, and spoke about our work at a CommBank Private lunch, connecting individuals who were looking to learn more about philanthropic opportunities.

### TASTE OF HARMONY

During a visit to McAuley House the Western Bulldogs Community Foundation knew they could help us get 'our message' out to the wider community via their networks. That's when the idea that the McAuley House kitchen could host the filming for a promotion of Victoria's Taste of Harmony multicultural celebration was born.

The Western Bulldogs Football Club are our near neighbours, and this opportunity meant we could both reinforce our strong connections to the local community. For us the event was a natural fit: our kitchen is the heart of the building, a place of welcome, sharing and friendship. The Taste of Harmony themes of sharing food and conversation, and celebrating your cultural heritage – given that there can be as many as 16 nationalities represented among the women living at McAuley House—are ones that resonated with us.



JJ COULD ONLY  
RATE MAJAK'S RICE  
PAPER ROLLS AS  
'THREE OUT OF TEN.'

On the day of filming, our McAuley House kitchen was transformed into a hectic scene with the arrival of players from the Western Bulldogs and North Melbourne AFL clubs and a film crew. The teams took part in a light-hearted cooking challenge which would showcase the array of different cuisines that make Victoria unique.

North Melbourne was represented by the AFL competition's first Sudanese-born player Majak Daw, Marley Williams who has Maori heritage, and Alex

Morgan, whose parents were both born in India. Despite this eclectic mix of cultural backgrounds, North's master-chefs settled on Vietnamese rice paper rolls as the dish to showcase their combined cooking talents.



San choy bau was on the menu for the Western Bulldogs contingent, which included AFL Multicultural Ambassadors Jason Johannisen and Lin Jong. 'JJ' as he is universally known, was born in Johannesburg, arriving in Australia as an eight-year-old, while Lin is the first Australian of East Timorese and Taiwanese descent to play in the AFL. The red, white and blue team also featured AFLW star Emma Kearney and Josh Dunkley, who are both ambassadors for the Western Bulldogs Community Foundation.

There was camaraderie instead of rivalry as the players compared notes, though JJ could only rate Majak's rice paper rolls as 'three out of ten.' But the spirit of the day meant that nobody was very clear about who 'won'. For the women who live at McAuley House there was pride in showing off our kitchen and being involved with picking and preparing vegetables and herbs from our kitchen garden, as well as hosting and sharing conversations and a meal with the players.



**Images A:** The Western Bulldogs players are interviewed about their san choy bau by our Board member Matt Tilley



**B:** Women from McAuley House welcomed the players into their kitchen



**C:** Left to right - Majak Daw, Jason Johannisen, Marley Williams, Emma Kearney, Alex Morgan, Josh Dunkley.

## FUNDRAISING AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Throughout the year we benefited from extraordinary community generosity which made a real difference to the support we could provide.



In September Our Lady of Mercy College (OLMC) Heidelberg held their High Tea to raise funds for McAuley. In the lead up to the event, OLMC put the call out to their alumni, Sisters of Mercy, and students to collect tea cups for the event. They were overwhelmed by the donations received and the room looked amazing with the beautiful china which had special significance to many of those present. The day raised nearly \$14,000 to support our work.



Once again the Green Acres Golf Club supported McAuley through their annual Charity Golf Day which was held in October. The members very generously raised over \$36,000 in support of our Skills for Life program. A very big thank you to the organising committee, the sponsors of the event and especially to Lee Rimes for her hard work in bringing the event together.

Image: Committee members Christina and Lee present our cheque.



Over December we were amazed at the generosity of the community over the Christmas-New Year period. Individuals rallied family and friends to collect gifts to donate and residents at two apartment complexes, one in East Melbourne and one on St Kilda Road, used the Christmas tree in the foyer of their buildings to leave a gift which was donated to McAuley. This is in addition to the fantastic gifts from small businesses, collections of toiletries and much needed items from schools and community groups. We had beautiful Christmas trees at each of our sites thanks to Melbourne Christmas Trees who continued their support and generosity.



Deliveroo came to the party in December providing the food for our first community Christmas lunch held in the communal dining room at McAuley House; women and children from across all of McAuley's services were invited to the lunch providing a bit of cheer during a difficult time. Local restaurants Phat Chicks Fried Chicken, Huong Viet and Lux Smith who work with Deliveroo donated the delicious food and Holly and Jess from Deliveroo were on hand to help serve the food. It was a great day and one that we will repeat each year.

Image: Our staff members Amy and Caddy; Holly and Jess from Deliveroo, and our staff member Jade.



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The staff at local Coles store in Yarraville are passionate about giving back to the community and because of their commitment, the team was awarded the Store Team of the Year for Victoria in late 2017. As part of their prize, the team received a \$5000 cheque to donate to a charity of their choice and they chose us because team members wanted to raise awareness and support a charity that is giving back to their local community.



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More than 30 schools and community groups participated in our educational sessions or facilitated fundraisers. They were keen to learn more about our work and the broader issues that women in our services face. Our school sessions are educational and provocative, creating space for discussion and reflection on healthy relationships. We thank the various schools and communities that have fundraised in support of women and children in our services. Their thoughtful and enthusiastic contributions are testament to their belief in what we do.

**Image:** Students of St Anne's Catholic Primary School, Park Orchard learn more about our work.

The Mercy Education Workplace Giving program continues to grow and we thank the teachers and staff who generously donate each month through this program, as well as Mercy Education staff. Workplace giving is an easy and efficient way to support with your donation taken out before tax.

In addition to the support from the community and businesses we could not provide a number of our services without the support of philanthropic organisations. We would like to say thank you for your support of work directly with women and children, work behind the front line and pilots that enable us to try something new.

A special thank you to all the organisations, groups and individuals who raised money to support the women and children coming to McAuley, as well as the donation of goods that are needed throughout the year.

Lastly, a heartfelt thanks to the many Sisters of Mercy who not only financially support the work of McAuley, but to those who donate their time in our various programs. We are honoured to be able to continue the work of Catherine McAuley and are grateful for your dedication and support.



## OUR VOLUNTEERS

The theme for National Volunteers Week in May 2018: ‘Give a little, change a lot’ summed up the enormous difference our volunteers, who give their time so generously, make to our work.



Throughout the year **67 volunteers** helped us across all our programs



Together they contributed: A minimum of **2830 hours** of volunteer contributions over the year, equivalent to an additional 1.55 EFT staff member (based on a 48-week year)



An economic value of **\$131,700**.

At the end of June 2018 there were 43 active volunteers, filling 50 roles, a significant growth compared to 28 volunteers at the same time last year. We took 120 expressions of interest, and conducted 50 interviews.

As well as the growth in numbers this year we broadened the range of roles so we could harness volunteers’ particular interests and areas of expertise. The calibre of volunteers is outstanding, and they bring expertise and qualifications in a wide range of domains.

To make the best use of these wide-ranging skills, new roles created during the year included acting as mentors for McAuley Works participants, corporate engagement, and providing personal development support such as communication skills, music, and stress management.

The goal of the Volunteer Program is not just to expand numbers of volunteers but to improve the quality of experience for volunteers, and support for staff and clients. With this in mind we have introduced strategies to strengthen the orientation, performance and understanding of McAuley’s mission and values for volunteers. Examples of this include:

- > information sessions for new and prospective volunteers
- > regular professional development sessions for volunteers
- > inclusion of volunteers at relevant staff training and information-sharing opportunities.

We also took steps to ensure that our program meets the National Standards for Involving Volunteers, set by Volunteering Australia. This year we administered the first volunteer and staff surveys as one method to assess the program against these standards. We wanted to gain an insight into the culture, how volunteers are valued by McAuley staff and learn more about the volunteer experience.

The results were very positive, with staff agreeing that the volunteers contribute to their programs and the goals of McAuley. Volunteers reported that they are satisfied in their roles, feel that their contributions are valued and appreciated, and are gaining personally or professionally from their involvement.



SECTION FOUR:

# OUR ORGANISATION AND FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE



## ADVOCACY

As an organisation that sees the interconnections between family violence, homelessness and mental health, we are in a unique situation in being able to speak out and advocate about these issues. We use our knowledge of the lived experience of the women and children we support, to work on the system as well as within it. This year this work has included collaborating with other organisations on advocacy campaigns.

We joined the 'Everybody's home' campaign, a national coalition of homelessness services which has identified five measures that could be taken to alleviate homelessness by 2030. We were also part of the 'Make Renting fair' campaign which advocated for reforms to Victorian rental laws. The most significant of these from our point of view is the push to introduce a suite of protections for survivors of family violence. These include protections against evictions, debts or blacklisting because of damage by perpetrators of family violence and stronger abilities to break a lease when violence is a factor.

We also drew attention to the repercussions of the transfer of Victoria's mental health funding to the Commonwealth because of the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). The NDIS will only be able to support around 10 per cent of those with severe and enduring mental illness, and we spoke out about our concerns at the impact on the remainder who could be left without support.

We also supported the campaign 'Raise the rate' which highlights that the current NewStart and Youth Allowance rates, which have not been increased in real terms for the past 24 years, are driving people into poverty.

We sponsored the March edition of the Council to Homeless Persons' magazine, Parity, which focused on the future of women's refuges, and contributed two articles including an opinion piece on the need for services to be integrated.

This year we were pleased to welcome several Victorian MPs who took up our invitation to see McAuley House and learn more about our work in action. We thank Special Minister of State Gavin Jennings; Minister for Employment Ben Carroll; Minister for Mental Health Martin Foley; Members of the Legislative Assembly Marsha Thomson and Emma Kealy; Members of the Legislative Council Georgie Crozier, Shaun Leane and Fiona Patten, for their interest in our work.

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## **A SAFE AND INCLUSIVE ORGANISATION FOR LGBTIQ PEOPLE**

The 2016 Royal Commission into Family Violence acknowledged that family violence was equally prevalent in lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and questioning (LGBTIQ) communities. It also identified that people escaping this violence faced additional barriers in accessing support, and could be reluctant to approach faith-based organisations.

Anti-discrimination laws provide exemptions for faith-based organisations to refuse to provide facilities, goods and services to LGBTIQ people. However while this is the current legal situation, as an organisation we rejected the idea of utilising these provisions. We wanted to take proactive steps to make our services safe and inclusive of all people.

Our Board approved the following statement which is on our website: 'We welcome lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse and intersex people at our services and pledge to provide non-discriminatory, inclusive services to LGBTIQ clients'.

We also conducted a survey of our staff to assess their understanding and knowledge of the issues and gauge where, as an organisation, we could take steps to improve. The survey had a 56 per cent response rate and indicated that staff could benefit from training and awareness raising around issues and responsibilities. Training was delivered by GLHV (Gay and Lesbian and Health Victoria), associated with LaTrobe University. We have established an internal working group to reflect on our current practice and the challenges we face in providing a truly inclusive service.

We have begun the journey towards meeting the Rainbow Tick standards, which will be mandatory for all government funded family violence services by late 2019.

## **ACCREDITATION**

In February 2018 Quality Innovation Performance (QIP) conducted an Accreditation process; the fourth Accreditation cycle undertaken by McAuley Community Services for Women.

We met the requirements of the Quality Improvement Council Health and Community Standards and the Human Service Standards Accreditation. The Accreditations are valid for three years.

The final report from QIP included the following observations:

- > The organisation has very clear philosophical statements and the values of the organisation are evident from the ground up.
- > The Assessment Team would like to highlight the Pickett Street property as an excellent example of providing clients with an environment that gives them a message that they are worthy of safety and a space that reflects dignity and nurture.
- > Service delivery is based strongly on a person-centred model and is clearly founded on clients' rights.
- > Programs and activities designed specifically to enhance client outcomes are evident and have been developed on the basis of systematic feedback.

## **CHARITY STATUS**

McAuley Community Services for Women is registered as a charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ABN 85696671223).

# THANK YOU

## OUR SUPPORTERS

Holistic support for women and children would not be possible without close connections and partnerships with other organisations.

These collaborations help, among other things, extend the range of community and recreational activities women can access; provide practical support with donated food or children's nappies; and help women get job-ready through training or professional outfitting. For women and children, the fact that we can draw on these supports means services fit together and they don't have to go from agency to agency, repeating their story, to get what they need.

Together we are able to make a difference well beyond the impact we could have as an individual organisation, so our heartfelt thanks go to:

## PROGRAM SUPPORTERS AND COLLABORATIONS

Australian African Foundation for Retention and Opportunity (AAFRO)  
 Baptcare  
 Bethany Community Support  
 Brotherhood of St Laurence  
 Caraniche  
 CC Management Consulting  
 Eastern Domestic Violence Service (EDVOS)  
 Fare Share  
 Fitted for Work  
 Foodbank Victoria  
 Housing Choices Australia  
 Lort Smith Animal Therapy Program  
 Maribyrnong Aquatic Centre  
 Moonee Valley Family Violence Network  
 Peak bodies  
 Rec West  
 Reclink  
 Safe Steps  
 Second Bite  
 St Kilda Mums  
 Sunshine Magistrates' Court  
 Unison Housing  
 WestCasa (Western Region Centre against Sexual Assault)  
 Western Emergency Relief Network  
 Western Family Violence Case Management  
 WEstjustice  
 WIRE (Women's Information and Referral Exchange)  
 Yarraville Community Centre  
 Yogahood  
 Young Mercy Links

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT

The past year has seen incredible generosity and support from the community, businesses and philanthropic organisations. Some of our individual supporters have elected not to have their name published in the annual report and we respect their request to privacy and thank them for their support of the women and children we work with.

We would like to thank the many people who contribute on a regular basis either through monthly donations directly to McAuley or through their workplace giving program.

## SISTERS OF MERCY

We acknowledge and thank every Sister and the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy Australia and Papua New Guinea for their generosity and unfailing support of our work.

## INDIVIDUALS

Mr Denis Fitzgerald  
 Ms Marlene Hansford  
 Ms Anne Jackson  
 Ms Kathleen Jordan - the Lucinda Jordan project  
 Mrs Leonie and Mr David Koadlow  
 Mr Laurie Larmer  
 Mr Eugene Lynch

## TRUSTS AND FOUNDATIONS

Baker Foundation  
 Campbell Edwards Trust  
 CARI Foundation  
 Dubsky Lang Foundation  
 Equity Trustees  
 Jenkins Foundation



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Leo Halpin Trust  
Mahemoff Charitable Fund  
Mercy Foundation  
Nelson Alexander Charitable Fund  
Nordia Foundation  
Scanlon Foundation  
Simpson Family Foundation  
The Jack & Robert Smorgon  
Families Foundation

### **SCHOOLS**

Academy of Mary Immaculate  
Catholic Regional College Melton  
Catholic Regional College North  
Keilor  
Glen Waverley Secondary College  
Loyola College  
Methodist Ladies' College  
Our Lady of Mercy College  
Padua College – Mornington  
campus  
Padua College – Rosebud campus  
Sacred Heart College Geelong  
Sacred Heart College Kyneton  
St Aloysius College  
St Columba's College  
St Paul the Apostle Catholic  
Primary School  
Xavier College

### **BEQUESTS**

Estate of the Late Joyce Therese  
Rebeiro  
Estate of the Late Lydia Robertson

### **ORGANISATIONS, BUSINESSES AND COMMUNITY GROUPS**

150 Clarendon Apartments  
All Souls Opportunity Shop  
Asahi Beverages  
Australian Association of the  
Sovereign Military Order Malta  
Austrian Super  
Big Impact  
Bunnings  
Catholic Church Insurance Limited  
Coles Yarraville  
CommBank Private  
Compton Green  
CUA (Credit Union Australia)  
Deliveroo  
Deloitte Access Economics  
Family Care Sisters  
Green Acres Golf Club  
IAG (Australia)  
Impact for Women  
Kennedy Group  
Magistrates' Court of Victoria  
Man with a Van  
Melbourne Christmas Trees  
Mercy Education  
Next Steps  
Photographic Imaging College  
Pricewaterhouse Coopers  
Rotary Club of Balwyn  
Rotary Club of Essendon  
Royal Park Ladies Golf Club  
Share the Dignity  
Sisters of St John of God Ministries  
Taste of Harmony  
Thirteen Barmi Program  
Two Good  
Toorak Opportunity Shop  
Twelve Batmi Program  
Vermont Lions Club  
Western Bulldogs Community  
Foundation  
Williamstown Soccer Club  
Yve Apartments

### **PRO BONO AND EXPERT ADVICE**

Thank you to the many experts who  
provide advice and support during  
the year.

### **GOVERNMENT**

McAuley Community Services for  
Women is supported by funding  
from the Victorian Government.



## GOVERNANCE: OUR BOARD



### **DR SONJA HOOD, CHAIR**

Sonja Hood is CEO of Community Hubs

Australia, an organisation working across Australia to help to integrate migrants and refugees—particularly women—into the community. Her background is in health policy, where she has a PhD and over 20 years experience in research and implementation in Australia, the US and the UK. Her particular interest is programs that drive change and make a tangible difference to people's lives, and this is the reason she joined the Board.



### **MARK BIRRELL, TREASURER**

Mark is the Chief Financial Officer of

Partners Wealth Group, and has had extensive experience as a financial services executive and consultant in the development and management of distribution, financial planning, retail investment product, superannuation and master trust businesses with major Australian Organizations and Industry Bodies. His background includes leadership experience with profit centre and strategic development responsibilities. Mark's strong leadership skills and experiences are an asset to our organisation.



### **BRIDGID CONNORS**

Bridgid Connors is Chief Human Resources Officer with

Monash University, an organisation committed to social justice and human rights. Bridgid has always worked in areas that serve to positively impact community wellbeing and improve social justice for all. This includes Melbourne Health and the Department of Justice and Regulation in Victoria and WorkCover and the Department of Premier and Cabinet in South Australia. Bridgid holds a Executive Master of Public Administration and a Master of Applied Positive Psychology. Bridgid believes that everyone must play a role in the generational change necessary to remove family violence from our communities.



### **DR MICHELLE COTTER**

Dr Michelle Cotter is Principal at Avila College in Mount

Waverley, having previously been Principal of Mercy College, Coburg where she worked for 13 years. Michelle recently completed an Executive MBA, Doctorate of Education, Master in Leadership and Master in Religious Education. Leading in a Catholic school community for global citizenship in the twenty first century resonates powerfully with the story of Catherine McAuley and for Catholic girls' Education. Michelle sees her stewardship of gospel values and Catherine's story being realised in her work as a teacher and leader in Catholic education, but also as a contributor to our Board.



### **SR CHRISTINE COUGHLAN, RSM**

Christine Coughlan is a Sister of Mercy, and

trained as a teacher at the Teacher Training at Aquinas College (now ACU). Once qualified, Christine moved to country Victoria to commence her teaching career. Following that time, she moved to Melbourne working in Supportive Accommodation for HIV+ men for 12 years; during this time, she also volunteered at Mercy Care (now McAuley Care) and the Royal Children's Hospital. Since returning to Ballarat she has studied Pastoral Counselling. She is a member of the Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea Initial Formation team. Her ministry at present is supporting the aged Sisters of Mercy.



### **SR JOAN DOYLE, RSM**

Joan brings a great commitment to pastoral care,

education and social welfare. She has qualifications in music, teaching and social work, and worked in Child Protection and in the Women and Girls in Custody advocacy group. Joan has worked in Chile and Peru for 18 years where she was involved with the community to establish three centres for women, two childcare centres and a medical clinic. She worked in partnership with Caritas Australia and Mercy Family Health Service for 10 years to implement a community health education program encompassing projects in ecology, sanitation and nutrition.

**LOUISE MCNAMARA**

Louise McNamara is Community Engagement Officer at

Loreto Mandeville Hall in Toorak. Louise joined the Board after having spent four years on the Special Events Committee working closely with other people passionate about preventing family violence. While assisting the McAuley Care Safe House and the women and children who arrived there was always a focal point, advocacy also became important to the committee and inspired Louise to move into governance.

**DR ANITA MORRIS**

Dr Anita Morris is Family Violence Principal Practitioner

at the Department of Health and Human Services. She has a social work background and has worked across health, education, government and the community sector. Anita completed her PhD in 2015 on the safety and resilience of children who experience family violence. She was an expert witness at the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence and she brings her knowledge of honouring children's voices into our organisation to continue to support initiatives that keep women and children safe.

**ANGELA SCAFFIDI**

Angela Scaffidi is SenateSHJ's head of change, and she

designs, implements and measures change programs for clients in the public and private sector. She is an accredited user of the Four Rooms of Change™ and she specialises in change in the health and education sectors. She has worked in professional services for more than 20 year. Prior to establishing Scaffidi Hugh-Jones (now SenateSHJ), she worked at McKinsey & Company and Turnbull Porter Novelli. She has won a range of state, national and international awards for her work in communication. She is a Fellow of the Public Relations Institute of Australia.

**ROB SCENNA**

Rob Scenna is Chief Executive Officer of Catholic Church

Insurance. He has more than 20 years' experience in financial services, management consulting and aviation, previously holding positions of Managing Director ANZ Private Wealth, Managing Director ANZ Trustees and Managing Director Super Concepts, as well executive director roles on the Boards of ANZ financial advice companies. Rob has a passion for developing strong relationships with customers, building energised and engaged workplaces and developing solutions to enable businesses to directly benefit communities. He is a graduate of the 2013 Leadership Victoria – Williamson Community Leadership Program.

**SR KATH TIERNEY RSM (until May 2018)**

Sr Kath Tierney works as a governance and

management consultant across the Institute of Sisters of Mercy and Papua New Guinea. Kath's association with us started more than a decade ago when, as Congregational Leader, she oversaw the amalgamation of two Mercy Ministries (Mercy Care and Regina Coeli) to form our organisation. In her capacity as Congregational Leader she had oversight of Mercy health, welfare and education ministries Victoria-wide for 12 years.

**MATT TILLEY**

Matt Tilley has been a Melbourne radio broadcaster for over

25 years, and was introduced to our organisation through his MC'ing the Fed Up lunches, before joining the Board in 2016. McAuley Community Services for Women offers Matt a chance to work for the elimination of family violence, and also to continue his long association with ministries of the Sisters of Mercy, an order of women religious that he admires for the work they have done over many decades. He believes his involvement is paramount if men as a collective are to begin to take responsibility for the violence perpetrated against women.

## OUR FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

### PROFIT AND LOSS STATEMENT

INCOME	2018	2017	EXPENSES	2018	2017
State Govt Funding	2,966,387	6,528,060	Employee Benefit Expenses	3,462,516	2,785,219
Donations/Bequests	1,585,914	1,443,766	Depreciation	79,889	69,786
Rent Received	201,546	213,469	Program Resources	296,105	458,455
Interest Received	84,679	66,249	Occupancy Expenses	338,402	279,921
Miscellaneous	137,840	139,729	Administration Expenses	382,909	278,838
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>4,976,366</b>	<b>8,391,273</b>	Interest Expense	0	114,225
			Donation of Building expenditure to ISMAPNG	0	9,414,179
			<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>4,559,821</b>	<b>13,400,623</b>
			<b>ENTITY PROFIT (LOSS)</b>	<b>416,545</b>	<b>(5,009,350)</b>
			Eliminate the Donation back to ISMAPNG for the Pickett St building costs refer Note 2	0	9,414,179
			Eliminate a portion of the \$4m Govt Grant income relating to completing the Pickett St Building	0	3,425,556
			<b>OPERATING PROFIT (LOSS)</b>	<b>416,545</b>	<b>979,273</b>

## STATEMENT OF EQUITY

	2018	2017
Retained Earnings at beginning of Financial Year	3,222,614	8,231,964
Entity Profit /(Loss)	416,545	-5,009,350
Retained Earnings at the end of the Financial Year	3,639,159	3,222,614

*Note 1.* In FY 2013 ISMAPNG gifted MCSW \$5,590,000 for the construction of a new McAuley House facility on land ISMAPNG owned at Pickett St Footscray.

*Note 2.* As it has now been agreed that the Pickett St building will be owned by ISMAPNG upon completion, the now completed building expenditure has been donated back to ISMAPNG.

*Note 3.* FY 17 State Govt Funding includes a \$4 million contribution to assist the construction of the new 'McAuley House' building at Pickett St Footscray.

## BALANCE SHEET

	2018	2017
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Cash & Equivalents	4,167,428	4,176,088
Receivables	42,124	2,619
Other Current Assets	108,227	105,512
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>		
Investments	1,116	1,832
Property Plant & Equipment	383,459	240,361
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>4,702,354</b>	<b>4,526,412</b>

<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Payables	744,551	1,079,297
Provisions	233,762	183,548
<b>Non-Current Liabilities</b>		
Provisions	84,882	40,953
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>1,063,195</b>	<b>1,303,798</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>3,639,159</b>	<b>3,222,614</b>

EQUITY	2018	2017
Retained Earnings	3,639,159	3,222,614
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>	<b>3,639,159</b>	<b>3,222,614</b>

## GREAT WAYS TO GIVE

There are many ways you can get involved and make a difference.

With your compassion and generosity, we can continue to prevent women's homelessness and brighten the lives of the women and children we work with.

### MAKE A DONATION

Your donation, no matter how large or small, will help vulnerable women and children set up new lives.

Donate online at [mcauleycsw.org.au/donate](https://mcauleycsw.org.au/donate).

### DONATE THROUGH WORKPLACE GIVING

You can help change lives every payday. Workplace giving is an easy and tax-effective way to support our vital work. It also provides us with a steady, regular source of income, enabling us to plan for the future.

Speak to your payroll team about how you can get started. We are registered with Good2Give.

### BECOME A MONTHLY DONOR

Sign up to monthly giving and make a lasting difference. It's simple and convenient. Your regular donations also help us plan for the future, as well as save on administration costs, which enables us to spend more on the vital programs we run.

### BECOME A CORPORATE PARTNER

Corporate partnerships are crucial to our work. There are many ways to get involved in McAuley such as funding programs, sponsoring events, undertaking volunteering or signing up for workplace giving. Your contributions will go directly towards supporting women and their children escaping family violence and experiencing homelessness.

### ENGAGE TO CHANGE

Sessions are conducted in the workplace by a female and a male facilitator. The two-step program begins with a two-hour awareness raising program which enables participants to recognise and respond to family violence in their workplace, and builds capacity and confidence to support colleagues experiencing family violence.

### LEAVE A BEQUEST

Leaving a bequest is a special way of leaving a gift for generations to come. It also allows us to plan for the long-term future with a greater degree of certainty.

### INVITE US TO SPEAK

We offer various presentations to suit schools and community groups. Invite us to speak and learn more about the vital work of McAuley, and the pressing issues of homelessness and family violence.

### CREATE YOUR OWN

Get creative, have fun and make a difference! Set up an Everyday Hero or Go Fundraise account and raise money via fun runs, hold a girls' night in or request donations instead of gifts for celebrations. As a café or restaurant, you could select a day, week or month where tips are donated to us. For businesses of various sizes, maybe donate a percentage of sales from a specific day, week or month.

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For further information about how you can support our work, please call 03 9362 8900, email [fundraising@mcauleycsw.org.au](mailto:fundraising@mcauleycsw.org.au) or visit [mcauleycsw.org.au](https://mcauleycsw.org.au).

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## OUR FOUNDATIONS

Catherine McAuley opened the doors of the 'House of Mercy' in Dublin, Ireland, in 1827. Her dream of providing disadvantaged women and children with housing, education and religious and social services – enabling them to find a brighter future – had become a reality.

Catherine founded the Sisters of Mercy in 1831. Led by Mother Ursula Frayne, the Sisters of Mercy first arrived in Australia in 1846. Thirty years ago, the Sisters of Mercy established Regina Coeli (now McAuley House) followed by Mercy Care (now McAuley Care) in 1988.

In 2008 Regina Coeli and Mercy Care services were combined to form McAuley Community Services for Women and expand the Sisters of Mercy's commitment to women and children and social justice.

Today, Catherine's founding spirit and ethos continue to live on at McAuley Community Services for Women.

## THE MERCY NETWORK

We work closely with, and are supported by other Mercy ministries.

### THESE ARE:

The Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea

Institute Property Association Ltd

McAuley Property Ltd

The Sisters of Mercy Papua New Guinea Inc

Ministry Companies

### HEALTH AND AGED CARE

Mercy Health and Aged Care Inc

Mercy Services Ltd

### EDUCATION

Mercy Education Ltd

Mercy Co-sponsored Schools

Mercy Affiliated Schools

Communications

Fraynetwork Ltd

### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Mercy Works Ltd

### COMMUNITY SERVICES

McAuley Community Services for Women

MacKillop Family Services Ltd

Mercy Connect Lavington Ltd

Mercy Services

St Joseph's Cowper Ltd

### ECOLOGY

Rahamim Ltd

### OTHER SPIRITUAL AND CORPORAL

McAuley Ministries Ltd

**IF YOU'RE FEELING  
VIOLENT TOWARDS  
A WOMAN, HERE'S  
THE MOST POWERFUL  
THING YOU CAN DO  
WITH YOUR HAND.**

**Open the front door and walk away for a while.**

That's it. Such a simple but effective way to avoid what could inevitably lead to a terrible situation and a huge mistake. If you're a man who struggles to control his temper, and often feel like you might cross a physical line with your wife or partner, the best thing you can do at that exact moment is recognise you're about to lose control and leave the situation. Leave the house. Take a walk. Get physical in some other way. It's the safest option for everyone, and a much stronger stance to take than violence.

*A message from McAuley Community Services for Women.*



McAuley Community  
Services for Women  
A ministry of the Sisters of Mercy

**McAuley Community Services for Women**  
Level 1, 81-83 Paisley Street, Footscray VIC 3011

T 03 9362 8900

E [mcsw@mcauleycsw.org.au](mailto:mcsw@mcauleycsw.org.au)

W [www.mcauleycsw.org.au](http://www.mcauleycsw.org.au)

ABN 85696671223

[mcauleycsw.org.au](http://mcauleycsw.org.au)

@mcauleycsw   