



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

Annual Report
2016/17



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McAuley Community Services for Women

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.

McAuley Community Services for Women was formed in 2008 when Regina Coeli and Mercy Care services were combined to expand the Sisters of Mercy commitment to women and children and social justice.

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



Our Values

McAuley Community Services for Women is committed to hospitality, compassion, justice and community. In our daily encounters we offer women the opportunity for empowerment in their lives.



Our Vision

Through our service, McAuley Community Services for Women is committed to advocate for a better, safer and just society.



Our Mission

McAuley Community Services for Women is a ministry of the Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea, impelled by the Gospel of Jesus Christ and enriched by the spirituality of Catherine McAuley, the founder of the Sisters of Mercy.

Our mission is to provide accommodation, services, advocacy and support for women who are homeless and women and their accompanying children who experience family violence.

From the Chair



Like many organisations which tackle homelessness head on, at McAuley Community Services for Women, we talk a lot about finding ‘housing’ and ‘accommodation’ for vulnerable women and their children. Accommodation can be a hotel room, a temporary room in a crisis centre—it is a safe place to sleep and recoup. But home, finding someone a home, is an entirely different matter.

With the construction of our new McAuley House in Pickett St, I feel that we have made the leap from offering safe accommodation to offering a safe home. It isn’t just a beautiful building—it redefines what a homelessness service looks like, and it makes me wonder if we should redefine ourselves as a ‘home’ service, not a homelessness one.

The new McAuley House is the culmination of more than a decade’s work by the outgoing board, in particular our former Chair Denis Moriarty, and we take our hats off to their passion and their unwavering commitment to make it happen.

You can take my word for it, or you can read the words from McAuley House residents. It was built for them and it is really to them that we should look for the final assessment of its success.

We are a few women from McAuley House in Footzgray and we just wanted to say a huge big thankyou for all the effort you and your helpers did for us.

Our rooms were made up beautifully with the gorgouse lovely doonas and all the pillows they are perfect and the double beds are super comfy, it has make us feel very special.

And the towels in our bathrooms are luzurouse too. We dont no who painted the pictures on our walls and the beautiful mureils but they are amazing and colorful and i love to look at them. And our lounge rooms are very special and so comfortable with the lovely desiner chairs we totally love em.

So please please thank all the people who put so much effort and hard work into the new McAuley it has made our lives a great deal better and just knowing people do care.

We now have a new board and executive team to go along with our new building, and with that will come a new strategy. But while some things change, others remain depressingly the same—continued women’s homelessness, escalating family violence, and increased need deplorably addressed by decreased funding.

McAuley Community Services for Women is still the only provider of a 24/7 crisis service, and this is still funded on community donated dollars. The service needs to grow, and be replicated—but first it needs to be secured, and we call on government to do this.

There is still so much work to be done. We can pause—briefly!—to celebrate McAuley House, but we can’t stand still.

We are incredibly fortunate to have our CEO, Joce Bignold, who continues to steer the organisation, and has such a profound impact on state policy. She has a talented and dedicated team that work at the coal face of family violence and homelessness and really do make such a difference day after day.

In closing I think about our founder, Catherine McAuley. Earlier this year I had the honor of travelling to Dublin as part of the Mercy Leadership Pilgrimage. Learning about the life and drive of Catherine McAuley was absolutely inspirational. I have no doubt that she would be very proud of McAuley Community Services for Women although I suspect she would be more than a little irritated that such inequity still exists in our world.

Sonja Hood
Chair

From the CEO



It's been a big year for McAuley Community Services for Women (McAuley).

The new McAuley House is the jewel in the crown, a model for how we should treat those that need not only a home, but support to create a new life. It has been designed to promote health and wellbeing and the inherent dignity of each resident.

In just a few months the value is obvious, first and foremost for women who need this accommodation. Now we are starting to see our first planned movements out, women who, after years of needing a home, are now ready and able to move into one of their own.

We believe that women who are homeless have a right to well designed, quality housing, positioned in the midst of our community. McAuley House is just the beginning.

We knew that McAuley House, as a hub and visible site, would enable us to branch out. This is already evident in the discussions that we are now having with a Council and a philanthropist who, together, are planning to build a block of units on council land. McAuley is the chosen support partner.

Despite our achievements, our track record of innovation, flexibility, and respectful advocacy, we must still go to the government cap in hand begging for funding for essential services. We have helped shape policy and developed models which not only deliver outcomes but which are easily replicable and accessible. Yet, ongoing sustaining funding remains elusive and the need is still great.

Women, with and without children, are sitting in hotel rooms for more than three weeks, unable to return home but with nowhere else to go. At last count, around 80 motel rooms were required for women escaping family violence every night. And this is just for women who have been subjected to family violence—it doesn't cover homelessness.

At the same time, \$80 million is being taken out of the mental health budget to pay for NDIS. Whilst we support NDIS, these initiatives cannot be funded at a cost to another, equally vulnerable group—those with mental health conditions.

It is my privilege to acknowledge and applaud the incredible grassroots support that we have received all year. From school children raising funds and donating toiletries, to Man With A Van helping move women and their belongings to safe accommodation. Volunteers, philanthropic trusts, our amazing special events committee, the Sisters of Mercy, the donation of real Christmas trees to create new memories for women and children alike, the artists who created incredible work at cost price for McAuley House—the list goes on. Such a groundswell of support, not just for us but for the issue. The community is committed to eradicating the scourges of family violence and homelessness and we are so grateful because we cannot do this by ourselves.

Heartfelt thanks to our outgoing Chair and board members. Their support and drive has been incredible. And a warm welcome to our new Chair and Board.

Lastly, but not least, I would like to thank the dedicated and amazing staff across McAuley for their hard work. None of our work would be possible without you.

We have achieved so much but we have the potential to achieve so much more. We just need your ongoing support.

Jocelyn Bignold
Chief Executive Officer

The Board



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 U.K. 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.



Kath Tierney, RSM, Treasurer

Sr Kath Tierney, a Sister of Mercy, works

as a governance and management consultant across the Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea and in the broader community. Kath's association with McAuley Community Services for Women began more than a decade ago when, as Congregational Leader, she oversaw the amalgamation of two Mercy ministries (Mercy Care and Regina Coeli) in 2008 to form the current organisation. In her capacity as Congregational Leader she had oversight of Mercy health, welfare and education ministries Victoria-wide for 12 years.



Mark Birrell

Mark is the Chief Financial Officer of Partners Wealth

Group, and has had extensive experience as a financial services executive /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 experience are an asset to our organisation.



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.



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 years. 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.



Bridgid Connors

Bridgid Connors is Chief Human Resources Officer

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



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 thirteen 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, a Sister of Mercy 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 and cared for her aging mother as well as being involved in the care of elderly Sisters of Mercy.



Rob Scenna

Rob Scenna is CEO 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. Rob has a passion for 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.



Matt Tilley

Matt Tilley, KiiS 101.1 FM breakfast radio personality, had been

involved with our organisation for a few years 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 welcomed an involvement in the Fed Up lunches because they offer men the chance to weigh into the issue of family violence in a positive way.

Highlights of 2016/17



New McAuley House officially opened in November



742

women and children directly supported through McAuley programs



Court Support 4 Kids expanded to Ringwood Magistrates' Court



165 families assisted at the Sunshine Magistrates' Court through Court Support 4 Kids



\$41,000

Green Acres Golf Club raised \$41,000 at their Charity Golf Day to support Court Support 4 Kids



40 presentations and interactive sessions to secondary schools on family violence, homelessness and gender equality



Reached 270 community leaders and senior managers through Engage to Change



Outreach funding to support more women and children experiencing family violence matched with Flexible support funding



Farewelled three board members Denis Moriarty, Kim Windsor, and Netty Horton; combined they have contributed 37 years to McAuley



\$1.4m

Raised from community fundraising and philanthropy



Employment of a Volunteer Coordinator to oversee the expanding volunteer program



McAuley Works re-established through government funding via JVEN



Launched Stage 2 of the Engage to Change program



In six months McAuley Works signed up 52 women with 8% placed in jobs



Employment of a Specialist Children's Worker across our crisis, refuge and outreach services



Welcomed new Chair, Sonja Hood and three new board members



Safe at Home increased to 7% up from 3%



\$100,000

24/7 Cocktail Party, Journey from Violence to Safety raised over \$100,000 for McAuley Care

McAuley Care

Over 2016/17 our service supported:

Crisis

131 women and
131 children

Refuge

55 women and
73 children

Outreach

20 women and
15 children

Total support

206 women and
219 children

McAuley Care is the only safe house in Victoria open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, providing crisis accommodation to women and their children who are escaping family violence.

In a safe and welcoming environment, women and their children are provided with emotional support as well as practical assistance with legal, medical and financial matters to help them assess their next steps and feel free and safe to make choices. Families stay for an average of seven nights and during this time they are also provided with meals, clothing and toiletries. Over the period covered by this report, McAuley Care assisted more than 130 women and 130 children.

Within the safe house we also operate a unique Children's Program to address the traumatic effect family violence has on mother and child. This program is illustrated in detail in this report. We also operate a refuge program to support women and children escaping family violence.

From the safe house, 11 women moved to one of McAuley's refuges, 48 to another refuge, 23 moved in with family and friends, 11 to a housing service (social or community housing) and five returned home where their safety was compromised, that is they didn't return home safely.

While this service has a target to support 30 women a year, in 2016/17 we assisted 55—an increase of 83% over the annual target.

McAuley Care was funded to offer outreach case management to women and children living in the Western Region. The outreach funding has given us considerably more capacity to support many more women and to assist them for longer if needed. This can often make the difference between having the confidence to settle in a new location or returning to a violent partner.

Safe House and Refuges



186 women and **204** children



27 women were pregnant or with a new born



78 women said perpetrators used ICE



17 Aboriginal and Torres Islander women and children



76 culturally and linguistically diverse women and children



131 women with mental health issues



81 were granted an intervention order



70 women had no permanent residency



10 were able to return home safely

Safe at Home

The aim of Safe at Home is to work collaboratively with other organisations to ensure women and children can return home safely, with the perpetrator of violence removed from the home. This contrasts with the current situation where the perpetrator tends to stay, and it is the women and children who are forced to leave. This is despite the greater emphasis on perpetrator accountability that began with the introduction of the 2008 Family Violence Act.

A robust and sustainable Safe at Home program was our number one recommendation to the Royal Commission into Family Violence.

We strongly believe that women and children have a right to safety and to remain at home. To date, women and children have not been safe in their own homes because of the unacceptably high rate of breaching intervention orders. We need a cultural shift within the community to stop hiding women and children away for their own safety, and instead to hold perpetrators to account swiftly and consistently.

We see that pieces of the response ‘puzzle’ are coming together. We think that the additional funding for outreach case management, the increase in available and affordable houses, and the introduction of flexible support funds have all contributed to making staying at home more viable. We want to both congratulate the Victorian Government for introducing these measures and urge them to keep going.

There is more to be done. We are looking forward to the implementation of personal safety devices, an initiative that will also move us significantly forward.

We need a public awareness campaign about Safe at Home, what it is and why we need it.

Our legal system needs to be continually resourced to respond quickly.

Safe at home is where we all deserve to be.

Faxbacks

Under the Victoria Police Family Violence Referral Protocol, McAuley works with Women’s Health West to respond to women who have been victims of family violence. Police fax through risk assessments (known as Faxbacks or L17s which relate to the 17 areas of risks assessed).

Women are taken through an updated risk assessment and a quick safety plan; whilst not all women wish to talk to staff, others express a sense of relief that someone has followed up and an increase in confidence in knowing what to do.

Last year the partnership received around 10,000 faxes from Police operating in the Western Metropolitan Region. We are unable to respond adequately to all faxes.

Dani

What can be done to change the life of someone in two and a half months?

Dani's story details what the work, commitment and conviction of women and their McAuley Care support team can achieve in this incredibly short time frame.

Having already had one child removed by child protection, Dani faced a choice of coming into a refuge with her other children and undertaking not to see her former abusive partner, or relinquishing all children.

Dani is a proud Aboriginal woman and taught her children parts of the language from her family's country of origin that had been taught to her by her grandmother. Dani's grandmother was a member of the stolen generation and Dani and her mother were also removed from their family at different times during their childhood.

Dani chose her children and refuge and set about doing what was necessary to keep them all together safely.

And there was much to do: finding a safe police station to report into; identifying a suitable location for drug screening; enrolling children into new schools complete with uniforms and books; working with a children's therapist to support the children's needs; learning the power and control dynamics behind the violence; engaging a lawyer to manage criminal matters; finding suitable housing; and using the flexible support packages to furnish her new home.

McAuley Care staff were with her every step of the way encouraging, referring, helping to line up the necessary supports and arrangements.

The road was not an easy one. There is a shortage of suitable legal aid available to represent women. Changing the police station to one in a safe area that was more easily accessible proved to be almost impossible.

Weeks were filled with child protection meetings and hearings. Dani experienced extreme anxiety and depression making it difficult for her to cope. In the most difficult times Dani said her children were what kept her going.

The long term home they eventually moved to was in an area the family were not familiar with and far away from any one they knew. The family moved into their new home with a mixture of nervousness and excitement.

Despite the many challenges, Dani showed great strength, courage and resilience. In this short space of time, Dani and her family went from no housing to safe long term housing, the children established routines and now attend school regularly. Dani no longer uses drugs, criminal charges against her were dropped, and a re-unification order was granted for the child in out of home care. Dani engaged with her new community, began volunteering at a local café, and established connection with the local Aboriginal community.

Dani gained increased confidence in mothering and this led to an improvement for the whole family.

A life was changed in two and a half months due to a family's determination, safe accommodation in a refuge, a dedicated team, and the right interventions.

‘Dani chose her children and refuge and set about doing what was necessary to keep them all together safely.’

Children's Program

Over 2016/17 our services supported 219 children in the own right, focusing attention on early intervention to prevent further trauma.

McAuley developed the Children's program to address the harmful effect that family violence can have on them and their mothers, and help children to process their experiences and express their feelings.

This year, thanks to philanthropic funding, we were able to fulfill a long held ambition and introduce a Specialist Children's Worker who responds to the needs of children through art activities, play and conversation. Work with children is conducted within our safe house, refuge and in outreach. This service can also provide advice to case managers and volunteers.

A recent example from the playroom shows how important this work is: two young boys from different families were drawing; one drew a house and the other asked if the boy would live in the house with his mum and dad. The first child said no, his father would not live with them because his dad had tried to kill his mum. The second child appeared amazed and said that his dad had tried to kill his mum too. The children saw that they were not alone in their experiences and the Specialist Children's worker was able to ensure that they understood that violence is never okay and that it is not their fault.

Further enhancements to the program have included specialised training for staff and volunteers around child-focused practice, child development and the impacts of family violence on children. As a result, our team are now taking a more child-focused approach to supporting families.

We are pleased that the Allied Psychological Services (ATAPS), funded through the Primary Health Network, has continued into this year, and we are delighted to announce that McAuley was invited into a new partnership with the Caroline Chisholm Society to deliver the Mothers in Mind program in Melbourne's West.

This program has been adapted from its origins in Canada and is designed for mothers and children under four years old, who have had hurtful experiences such as family violence. This program helps mothers respond to their children's needs.

Our goal for 2017/18 is to learn how to continually develop our support to children and their mothers. Thanks to funding through the Catherine Circle, we are about to embark on a project which measures the effectiveness of the family art therapy sessions, which are aimed at improving the protective mother-child bond.

Total support

219 children

Bess

Specialist Children's Worker Bess is a fan of swimming in the ocean, her dog Bob, and perhaps not surprisingly, watching kids' movies.

'It's good to know what movies are great for the kids I work with, but I also just really enjoy them!'

Bess does not have a typical work day. Everything is driven by the unique needs of the children at McAuley Care.

'I will often spend hours in the playroom playing and talking with children and their mothers. I also go out to our refuges and to outreach clients to run art therapy sessions with individual families.'

Art therapy is used to facilitate discussion around the impacts of violence on the family, and also to build support in rebuilding connection between family members.

'I love making art with mothers and their children. It is a privilege to be invited into their space and to watch them enjoy being safe and playing together again after such traumatic events.'

Although Bess loves her job she says it can be extremely difficult being witness to people's pain, especially the pain of a child.

'Children are so powerless and it's awful to see adults harming them.'

'There is a great team at McAuley Care who support me in managing difficult situations and we are all very big on sharing self care strategies too. I always try to have lunch with some of the team and try to talk about things other than our work.'

Bess is angered by the circumstances into which women and children are forced, their lives turned upside down, no choice but to flee with no time to grab precious possessions or beloved pets. 'Why do the women and children have to leave while the person responsible for the violence stays in the house?'

She is also angered by the misconceptions about family violence in our society. 'So often commentary is directed at the woman with questions like "why didn't she leave sooner?" Or "what did she do to provoke them?" Violence is always a choice and if someone chooses to be violent they must be held responsible.'

'One of the hardest but most important parts of my role is creating a space where children can express their fears and experiences, and for mothers to be able to witness this and feel that they can support their children in this process. When I see this connection my hope is strengthened that this family will recover and stick together.'

Bess believes McAuley is more than just a place of physical safety for women and children, it is a place of warmth and compassion.

'It is a privilege to be invited into their space and watch them being safe and playing together...'



Court Support 4 Kids

Our Court Support 4 Kids program embeds a trained children's worker in Magistrates' Courts to provide support to women attending to family violence legal matters.

This program directly addresses the difficulties faced by women affected by family violence attending court accompanied by their children. Many women are forced to bring their children to court due to safety concerns, and lack of short term day-care. Not only are children a distraction to women seeking legal support, the experience can be detrimental to the emotional wellbeing of the children as they are subjected to the retelling of the incidents of family violence. Court workers report that many women do not follow through with intervention orders due to the stress of caring for children while navigating the court system.

The Court Support 4 Kids Worker provides a child-centred support service which:

- > Enables women with children to attend, participate in and successfully complete intervention order proceedings.
- > Engages children and young people in age appropriate creative play activities, contributing to a positive court experience.
- > Minimises further trauma to children attending court by offering them a safe and positive diversion through creative play.
- > Advocates for women and children while they are in attendance at court.

- > Provides information to women about the court process.
- > Provides informal referrals to appropriate services for women and children.

Highlights of the last year were the expansion into the Ringwood Magistrates' Court in partnership with Eastern Domestic Violence Outreach Service and the addition of a new trained volunteer to work with the Court Support 4 Kids Worker at the Sunshine Magistrates' Court.

Court Support 4 Kids has been running at the Geelong Magistrates' Court in partnership with Bethany Community Support for the whole of 2016/17, providing services to 236 families consisting of 318 children.

The Sunshine Magistrates' Court program operated for 20 weeks during the financial year, supporting 165 families consisting of 210 children and is funded through the generosity of philanthropic support.



23 family violence court session



165 families directly supported



210 children were supported



Average age of children was **3** years and **5** months



47% of children were female, **53%** male

Total support

210 children

Genevieve

Genevieve never thought she would become a UNO champion but through her role as Court Support 4 Kids Worker, she has become somewhat of a star at the famous card game.

'The older kids are always up for a game so I have become pretty good at it.'

Genevieve's day begins at 9am at Sunshine Magistrates' Court, where she attends the court service's daily meeting before collecting her bucket of toys and heading out to the waiting room in search of kids.

'One day is never the same as the next. I meet different children every day, needing various levels of support and engagement depending on their age, interests, abilities, mood, anxiety and stress level.'

Genevieve introduces herself to all the families with children at court that day and offers games and activities. 'It's a way to identify what level of support each family and child will need.'

'I revisit and engage those needing the most support, building rapport with both mother and child, gauging the child's interests and finding activities that are most appropriate. Sometimes it will be necessary to stay with one family and support them through their entire time at court. Others don't need as much support so I check in with them from time to time.'

After what is often a long wait, the women must go inside the courtroom to have their matters heard before the Magistrate. 'The court processes and procedures can be very time consuming, often women are waiting many hours to go in; I wonder if things could be improved to be easier and quicker for them.'

Every case is different; most commonly it involves sitting and playing with the child outside the courtroom while the mother goes in. Sometimes children are unable to be separated from their mother due to a high level of separation anxiety and often Genevieve plays an advocacy role.

'Where possible, I will sit with the child inside the courtroom — it is where the iPad and head phones come in handy to keep the child's attention on positive experiences rather than the court proceedings.'

'If however, the child is older and cannot be distracted by games and activities, or the mother is highly anxious, I will advocate to police and appropriate court staff that she would be best represented by police or civil advocate.'

Genevieve recalls working with a mother and her son, both of whom were highly anxious. The boy was very withdrawn and initially would not engage, but through a slow and considered process of colouring in together, and a lot of discussion about dinosaurs, he was gradually comfortable enough to stay with Genevieve while his mother went into court for an interim intervention order.

'I saw the boy and his mum when they returned at a later date for the final order. His mother noted how much safer she felt having the interim order in place and how much better he was doing now that he has a more stable home life.'

Genevieve focuses on making the child's experience of court a fun and positive one. She is inspired by giving children the best chance to live a safe and happy life but is frustrated that after building a relationship with a family there is no opportunity to follow up with them in the future to see how they are going.

'As the best case scenario is that there will not be a need for them to be back at court, I try to take not seeing them again as a good thing.'



McAuley House

McAuley House has been providing accommodation for women who are homeless for over 25 years. Its purpose is to provide a place to rest and recover and re-establish lives. In 2016/17 McAuley House supported 54 women.

In late 2016, McAuley opened a new and improved McAuley House in Pickett Street, Footscray. This building was funded by the Sisters of Mercy and the Victorian State Government. It is Victoria's first purpose-built accommodation and support services hub for women who are homeless.

Visitors to McAuley House are stunned by the beauty and quality of the accommodation which includes 25 uniquely decorated bedrooms with ensuite, and world-standard artworks. Most importantly, women who live at McAuley House report feeling valued, empowered and special.

This new accommodation is having a direct impact on residents' self-esteem and their ability to take control of their own lives. In addition to quality accommodation and support, McAuley House is the base for programs dedicated to improving women's independent living skills, social and economic participation.

At McAuley House, women determine their own goals and receive support according to their individual needs. These range from a high level of support in order to regain health and skills, moving to greater independence as they recover and regain their ability to live more independently, through to support to maintain good health, social connection and economic independence.

To achieve this, McAuley House serves two key purposes. One is to provide a community 'hub' which delivers support and services to the wider McAuley community which includes previous residents supported through our outreach program together with women from the wider community. The second is to provide accommodation for women from diverse backgrounds and with different levels of need.

Essential components of the model include:

- > Accommodation with support to access safe, affordable, secure long term housing.
- > Intensive case management, graduating according to need
- > Independent living skills, assessment and training
- > Provision of meals and cooking lessons
- > Social and recreation program and introduction to community
- > Communal and reflective space
- > Respite and long term support on an 'as needs' basis

Total support

54 women

Skills For Life

The new facility enables the Skills for Life program to step up; taking the best from our existing programs and creating an overarching framework for delivering a wide range of fun and educative sessions.

Women from across McAuley's services can choose to participate in sessions that aim to improve independent living skills and build self-esteem and confidence.

Skills for Life provides a safe environment for learning, social connection and developing social networks and helps women maintain their health and housing.

The Skills for Life program delivers practical and relevant living skills, and provides opportunities for residents to co-design sessions, such as the art sessions which are currently facilitated by a resident.

A new component of Skills for Life is the Food for Life program which teaches the women about nutrition, the basics of cooking (including healthy cooking), how to shop on a tight budget and how to plan out weekly meal plans. The joy of sharing a meal with others is a great outcome of the program.

McAuley House demographics



29 women were from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, coming from over **20** countries



3 women used our respite service through out the year



44 women had been diagnosed with a mental illness



14 women identified as having a disability



13 identified as having drug or alcohol addiction



39 women had experienced family violence



7 were on a temporary visa and awaiting permanent residency



17 were mothers



All were homeless, or at risk, when they arrived



30 women in the community used our social and recreation programs



Suzie

Suzie loves going to the movies. Before her involvement with McAuley, this wasn't something she was able to do.

'I lived with mum until I was 30. I had no freedom. I was able to go out to collect my pension but I always had to come back straight away. My life was about going to bed early, getting up when mum did, staying home and getting bored.'

Suzie, who has schizophrenia, thinks her mother may have been trying to protect her, but says she had no life.

Her mother decided to return to her home country of Croatia. Suzie was unable to go with her as she would not have access to an income or the medical treatment she needed. Essentially, with her mother's move overseas, Suzie became homeless.

'I had nowhere to go. I went to see my case worker in Sunshine and she recommended McAuley House. It was called Regina Coeli then. I stayed there for five years. It was my first real home.'

'At first I was really quiet, really withdrawn. But I was safe there and it was a good place. I started to come out of my shell, to enjoy life, to enjoy my freedom.'

Suzie discovered the simple pleasure of being able to do what she wanted.

'I love going to the movies and I love playing soccer, I couldn't do those things when I lived with mum.'

Although Suzie no longer lives at McAuley, she is a regular visitor, maintaining weekly Scrabble games with old friends.

'The best thing is that you can still do things when you don't live there. I come in for a coffee or a meal and I hang out with my friends.'

Suzie doesn't know what the future holds but she does know one thing: 'I will be doing what I want to do and I will still be visiting McAuley.'

Suzie says that without McAuley she would be living on the streets. She wishes she had something to give back.

'I have nothing to give them and I would love to give them something back. So I give them my heart and I just love them more and more.'

**'I give them my heart
and I just love them
more and more.'**

User friendly kitchen facilities



Uniquely designed living spaces



Own private space



Tennielle

A typical day for Tennielle might include organising yoga, a community lunch, a Pilates class or hairdressing appointments. As McAuley House's Community Inclusion Support Worker her days are anything but typical.

Tennielle works on creating onsite social and recreation programs for women. 'I work alongside the women to create and implement sustainable programs that are accessible and have positive outcomes for all women at McAuley.'

She works with external organisations such as the Yarraville Community Centre and RecWest. 'We have many different facilitators for our different activities—a drama teacher, art therapist, yoga instructor and English support teachers.'

One of the favourite parts of her job is the weekly community lunch where both current and past residents return to McAuley House. 'We have fostered a community of inclusiveness through staff and women sharing a lunch and some time together and I love that.'

Tennielle has a passion for women's rights, equality, equity and social justice. 'I am so glad to be part of something that creates change. Wanting a world where women feel valued and are heard is important to me.'

But the greatest driver is her own life story. 'I experienced family violence and homelessness for a number of years as a youth and into my mid twenties. This is probably my greatest driver of why I love my job and what I do.'

Tennielle is often saddened by working with women who have complex trauma backgrounds. 'It can be challenging sometimes as they may not be ready for the journey to healing and empowerment and seeing them fall back or decline can be really heartbreaking. I see the potential in all our women.'

But her spirits are lifted by feedback from women who have begun the journey and are benefitting from the programs.

When she isn't busy with her work at McAuley House, Tennielle is busy creating events to promote positive cultural attitudes through the Sounds of Africa and Harmonious Youth Participation Festivals, and is also studying for a degree. If that isn't enough she is about to become a lot busier with the upcoming arrival of her second child, a sibling to her thirteen year old.

'Luckily I have a pretty awesome family—my partner Phil is always supportive.'

Tennielle says the work of McAuley is critical in empowering and protecting women and their rights.

'We give women and children a safe place to create a new beginning for themselves.'

'We give women and children a safe place to create a new beginning for themselves.'



McAuley Works

Since December 2016 McAuley Work has supported 53 women. The McAuley Works program aims to support women into long-term sustainable employment. Unlike other employment services, our support continues until this aim is achieved, which can be seven months and more.

The McAuley Works team is specially trained in working with women who are homeless or experiencing family violence and/or mental health issues. We work with women to develop vital job-ready skills, preparing them for interviews and bolstering the confidence they need to gain jobs in the open market.

We run an intensive and personalised program to help women secure jobs and build financial capability; we know that women are more likely to return to violent partners when they are unable to financially support themselves and their children. By assisting women to gain financial independence, McAuley Works is helping to prevent further homelessness, financial hardship, reliance on social welfare, family breakdown and many other associated issues.

Our staff are mobile and will travel to see women in their own environments.

McAuley Works is not just for women accessing McAuley's family violence or homelessness services McAuley Works accepts referrals from other community sector organisations and self referrals.

The team is also working hard on building relationships with potential employers, a vital component in this program.

McAuley Works was re-established this year thanks to funding by the Victorian Government through the Jobs Victoria Employment Network (JVEN), through the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources.

Total participants

53 women



4 women placed in
employment



22 women were born overseas
representing **16** nationalities.



38 were affected by family
violence



31 were homeless



20 were impacted by mental
health issues



30 were sole parents

Justine

Justine Connolly is an early bird beginning each day at the office before everyone else arrives.

‘I like when it is quiet and the phones haven’t started ringing.’

As the Program Coordinator for McAuley Works, Justine’s days are busy. She works out of McAuley House but as an outreach program, her team travel all over Victoria assisting women into employment.

After her little moment of quiet, she starts each day with coffee with her team to discuss any concerns, and flag any risks. ‘The safety and wellbeing of the team is our priority. We all see first hand the effects of violence on women and children. It can be a real challenge to maintain my own mental health and self care as well as that of my team. Ensuring the team is supported and able to meet the demands of this challenging job each day is a vital part of my role.’

Justine is constantly inspired by each of the women who achieve employment as she knows it will change the future for them and their children. ‘McAuley Works supports women to regain power and control over their lives and their finances through employment. Their success is our success.’

But she is frustrated by the need for the services provided by McAuley.

‘I wish our family violence and homelessness services were not required. I would like our community to acknowledge that violence is not ok—at any time in any context. Despite our best efforts, on average, one woman a week is still being killed in Australia. This makes me sad and angry and frustrated.’

‘But I also feel proud that our service is having a positive impact on the lives of each woman and her children, one woman at a time.’

Justine tells a story which she feels exemplifies the work of McAuley Works.

‘I met one of our clients in a food court with her young children crying, distressed, shaking with fear. She was so afraid that her ex had found her new address and they would have to run again. This woman and her children had endured significant family violence.’

‘We supported her to engage with a specialist family violence case manager, Victoria Police and to access needed funds. We also organised the installation of CCTV cameras and monitoring equipment so she could remain safe at home. Best of all, we supported her into ongoing sustained employment in an industry she is passionate about. Despite the challenges her ex presents, this young woman continues to work in a job she loves and remain safe at home with her children. Her future is not reliant on Centrelink and welfare payments—she is earning a decent income and able to provide for herself and her children.’

‘This is the best outcome—sustained employment and financial security.’

When Justine isn’t leading McAuley Works she loves hanging out with her three ‘awesome’ kids, her dog Rex, and sitting on the deck at home looking at her garden. Just rewards for her hard work.

‘Our service is having a positive impact on the lives of each woman and her children.’



Melody

Melody is 35 years old and a mother to three children. This is her story.

I lived in fear although my life from the outside looked like that of a normal wealthy married couple. There were overseas holidays twice a year, smiling faces, and in public my ex husband often referred to me with phrases like 'I love my beautiful wife'. I was allowed to go out with certain friends some of the time and it appeared like I had freedom. Behind closed doors it was a totally different story.

My ex would come home from work and do what I called 'the house inspection'. He would go room by room checking to see if the cleanliness of the house was up to standard. My mail, email and phone were opened or accessed on demand. I was constantly told that I was a terrible wife and hopeless mother to my face but other people were told how fantastic I was. It was total façade.

The daily verbal, mental and social abuse was relentless. If I tried to leave I was pinned to the ground and told that if I wanted to leave I would need to do so with nothing but the clothes on my back. I wished I could die. I didn't have the courage to leave; I barely had the courage to look people in the eye.

One day I went for a coffee with a friend, we were having a nice time when I got a text from him telling me I needed to come home and make his lunch. I got a little brave with the help of my friend and told him to make his own lunch. I got bombarded with texts telling me I was a terrible wife and that I was not doing my duty to him.

When I got home there was a terrible fight and my ex-husband, who is a big man, threw me about two meters across the kitchen into the fridge. He came over and choked me yelling at me that he was going to kill me. I thought I was going to die, and I felt a sense of relief in death as opposed to living another day with him. My three year old came running over and stood knee high against his father. He said, as he bashed his hands on his father's leg, 'let go of my mummy! Stop hurting my mummy!'. My ex let me go.

Things settled down and I went on with life but I couldn't feel safe and I felt like I was living in a ticking time bomb. I confided in a close friend who was working as a counsellor for a help line, she knew someone who had also experienced family violence and arranged for us to meet for coffee; she helped me make my first call to a family violence service.

I didn't realise what social, emotional, mental and financial abuse was and I was horrified to realise I had put up with this abuse for years before the physical violence started.

I planned for months, saving cash and placing suitcases of clothes, nappies and toiletries at the homes of two friends in case I needed to leave in a hurry. I started looking for a private rental — the private rental market is very tough for single mothers.

It wasn't long before the second round of violence took place again in front of my children. It was time to go. I luckily found a rental and left with the children for good!

The family violence service put me onto McAuley Works because I was struggling to pay the rent. McAuley helped me gain self-confidence and practical and professional experience to improve my resume and write job applications. They also sharpened my interview skills, sent me to Fitted for Work for interview clothes. But most importantly of all, they provided the encouragement to persevere and patiently keep trying until I found the right job.

I landed a great job and I love working in administration and my kids are doing well in school. I'm also involved in activities I was never allowed to do before. I have freedom and life is looking up!

Thank you McAuley Works for your amazing contributions to women and children in our community.

Engage To Change

Over 2016/17 we have:

Facilitated

20 face to face sessions

Worked with

7 organisations from local government, superannuation, insurance and the leisure industry

Total participants

271 people

Engage to Change is an innovative workplace education program that aims to develop staff within organisations to respond to family violence.

The Engage to Change sessions are conducted in the workplace and delivered by our training partners, CC Management Consulting Pty Ltd, co-facilitated 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.

The program originated a number of years ago from our initial employment 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.

This year CC Management has developed and trialed a second module on Response Skills. 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.

The Response Skills (one-day) program aims to:

- › Develop the readiness of People Managers, HR Managers and Contact Officers to recognise, respond and refer to family violence in the workplace.
- › Develop a focus on honing communication skills using the crucial conversations model, and real life case studies to raise awareness of how to tap into and effectively utilise the organisation's family violence policies and procedures when responding to cases of family violence.
- › Sensitively and competently facilitate 'crucial conversations' with employees experiencing family violence within a risk management and confidentiality framework.

Participant feedback:

'A great approach to a very difficult, multifaceted social issue.' Insurance industry participant.

'Little did we know how much we didn't know nor how powerful and practical a training program like this could be.' Health Service participant.

'Thanks for helping the leadership team understand the importance of recognising the signs and to have the courage to ask the right questions.' Local Government participant.

'Greatly improved my understanding of what family violence is and that we all have a role to play to help change things.' Banking sector participant.

Advocacy

McAuley Community Services for Women is not only a provider of essential services, it is also a voice for women and children who have been impacted by family violence and homelessness.

Advocacy is crucial to achieve lasting change and in the last year McAuley has been involved in a variety of work including speaking at key events, contributing to government submissions and lending our weight to the efforts of others to push for good social policy decisions and raise community awareness.

In addition to the following advocacy activities, senior representatives of McAuley participated in various consultations connected to the Recommendations that came out of the Royal Commission into Family Violence.

During the year McAuley made the following submissions:

- > Joint Standing Committee on the NDIS: *The provision of services under the NDIS for people with psychosocial disabilities related to a mental health condition*
 - > International United Nations Economic and Social Council General Assembly 72nd Session. The report on The Right to Housing of Persons with Disabilities, was prepared by invitation from the Sisters of Mercy, Mercy International Association who hold special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council.
- > Sentencing Advisory Council of Victoria's review of *'Swift and Certain Approach to Sentencing in Family Violence Matters'*
- > Melbourne City Council proposed change to the Activities Law (to ban rough sleeping in the CBD).
- > Victorian Government Budget 2016-2017 process.

We also took part in the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement campaign through social media activities and supporting peak organisations that McAuley is a member of.

Representatives from McAuley spoke at:

- > St Vincent's Private Grand Round—an in-house staff professional development day on family violence.
- > HESTA Financial Inclusion Action Plan.
- > United Nations Association of Australia economic empowerment of women and girls conference—Panel participant: *Women's economic empowerment in contexts of family violence.*

Fundraising

McAuley has been generously supported by individuals, organisations and the community all year round.

In **October**, the Green Acres Golf Club held their annual Charity Golf Day and McAuley was the charity of the day. The members very generously raised over \$41,000 in support of our Court Support 4 Kids program. A very big thank you to the organising committee, the sponsors of the event and especially to Sue Leong and Lee Rimes for their hard work.

Over Christmas residents at two independent apartment blocks band together to collect gifts for women and children who would be with McAuley during that time. 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 the Christmas Boxes once again and the beautiful real Christmas trees thanks to Melbourne Christmas Trees.

Share the Dignity delivered their bags which were well received by women. Each bag was a handbag and contained sanitary items, make up, toiletries and other essentials. The variety of bags was fantastic ranging from casual to more corporate look which were ideal for women who were part of McAuley Works—they were able to go to interviews feeling a little more confident.

In **January** work commenced on changing the McAuley Schools Program to offer a wider range of sessions. In addition to addressing year levels, full assemblies or classes and talking about the work of McAuley, we developed a series of interactive workshops on homelessness, family violence and gender equity;

targeted at Year 10 and above. The workshops could either be provided as a series of three or schools could have one or two of the workshops. Between February and June, 29 sessions were conducted with 19 being the new interactive sessions. Across the financial year McAuley conducted 40 presentations or workshops. Many schools, in particular those in the Mercy network, also raised much needed funds and students collected items, such as toiletries for women and children.

In **February** we hosted around 30 principals from Mercy Education at McAuley House for their start of year meeting. It was an opportunity to provide the principals information about McAuley, our work, a tour of the new McAuley House and ways that schools could support our work, including workplace giving. The Mercy Education Workplace Giving program provides over \$700 each month to support McAuley—we thank those teachers and staff who generously donate each month through this program, as well as Mercy Education staff members.

In **April** and June we had two groups come to McAuley from the Twelve Batmi and Thirteen Barmi Programs—A Year of Giving. The Twelve Batmi Program saw a small group of girls, with their mothers, hear from our Schools and Community Engagement Officer about homelessness, family violence and the work McAuley does. They then created special Mother's Day gift bags for the women at McAuley and hosted a tasty afternoon tea for women at McAuley House. In **June** we had a group of young boys from the Thirteen Barmi Program come with their fathers, where they also learnt about McAuley and then prepared about 100 bags for children who McAuley interacts with. We thank both groups for their support.

In **May**, we held the annual 24/7 Cocktail Party at Green Fields, Albert Park where over 150 guests were taken on 'a Journey from Violence to Safety'. Guests were able to walk through a week in the McAuley Care crisis program, the average stay of a woman and her children. Team members from McAuley Care were on hand to talk through what each of the days could entail. A big thanks must go to Rebecca Maddern who once again generously gave up her time to MC the evening. She interviewed Bess, the Specialist Children's Worker at McAuley Care, who talked about work she does with the children who come into the crisis program. The night was an eye-opening experience for everyone and raised \$100,000 to ensure that McAuley was able to run the crisis program 24/7.

McAuley would like to extend a heartfelt thanks to the 24/7 Special Events Committee of Jodie Holckner, Amanda Oliver, Sarah Orloff, Alicia Pau, Monique Rosshandler, Emily Slade and Kim Thurlow for their hard work in organising the cocktail party.

The 24/7 Special Events Committee has ensured that McAuley Care has been able to be open after hours and on weekends for over 12 years, McAuley would not have been able to provide assistance to the thousands of women and children who have passed through the doors at McAuley Care had it not been for their hard work and generosity.

Also in **May**, Nelson Alexander Flemington office selected McAuley to be their charity as part of the annual Nelson Alexander Foundation Day where each office donates their fees from the sale of a designated property on that day. McAuley was honoured to be selected by the Flemington office and excited when we heard that they were donating over \$19,000 as a result of the day. Thank you to the staff at the Flemington office and to the winning bidder on the property!

In **June** we held our annual High Tea campaign. Thank you to everyone who hosted a High Tea to raise funds and awareness of our work. A special thank you to Australian Super for hosting a High Tea; the event included a silent auction featuring three paintings completed by residents at McAuley House. The women started painting as part of the art therapy program. A portion of the proceeds went directly to the artists and the other to the art therapy program at McAuley House.

We could not do a lot of our work without the support of philanthropic contributions. During the year we were fortunate to have support from many who contributed both financial and pro bono services and support.

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 in need 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.

A special thank you to all the organisations, groups and individuals who raised money to support the women and children coming to McAuley.

Emily Slade

Emily Slade is a busy lawyer, passionate home cook, exercise buff and keen traveller. She is also someone who has no hesitation in knocking on doors and asking for donations for the McAuley Care 24/7 refuge.

'After visiting the Safe House and seeing women and children in crisis first hand I am never bashful about approaching donors for support for the cause, and am always proud and inspired to be championing this cause and the needs of the victims of domestic violence.'

Emi is a member of the Special Events 24/7 Committee which runs an annual cocktail party to raise money for the McAuley Care Safe House. For over twelve years the committee have raised in excess of \$100,000 each year to keep the refuge open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Emi spent some time as Chairperson and Director of the Springvale Monash Legal Service and saw first hand the impact of family violence on women and children. While she is now more removed from such cases, she is just as passionate about the services provided to women and children caught in family violence and homelessness.

'I have always been involved with community work for various causes. But after attending a 24/7 cocktail event and then a workshop run by McAuley where we engaged in a case study of women's experiences with domestic violence in an intimate group, I decided I wanted to give my time to McAuley Care in a meaningful way.

'Every year we worry about hitting our fundraising target of \$100,000, but every year we meet or exceed it after a lot of door knocking and hard work.'

Emi said it is frustrating and sad that their work can help and make a difference to the lives of only a small number of victims of domestic violence, in a society where there are so many more women and children in crisis.

'But I know that the money we raise has a direct benefit to those in need and it goes directly to helping the women and children fleeing domestic violence to give them a safe place to go, and provide them with the basic living amenities they need in their time of crisis.'

Emi believes that McAuley is an organisation whose work directly benefits the victims of family violence and is able to make a tangible and real impact on the lives of women and children in crisis without layers and layers of bureaucracy.

'Unfortunately, the epidemic of domestic violence and its effects on the community are so far reaching we cannot solely rely on government support, so we need McAuley Care and its workers to step in and provide a safe haven and support for women and children in crisis.'

'Every year we worry about hitting our fundraising target of \$100,000, but every year we meet or exceed it.'

Volunteering

Where do our volunteers give their time?

- 10 McAuley Care
- 13 McAuley House
- 5 Food for My Life
- 3 Special Projects
- 1 Court Support 4 Kids
- 2 Administration
- 1 Finance

Total participants

35 people

Volunteers are the lifeblood of any community organisation and McAuley is no exception. Our volunteering program attracts committed, positive and talented people from all walks of life and we appreciate the skills and effort they bring to their roles.

During the year McAuley recruited a Volunteer Coordinator. This appointment reflects the commitment of McAuley to providing a high quality program, and recognises the value that volunteers bring to our services.

In addition to employing a Volunteer Coordinator we began a review of volunteering procedures and policies in line with best practice as documented in Volunteering Australia's 'National Standards for Volunteer Involvement' May 2015. The objective is to ensure that our volunteer program meets best practice and that volunteers have a meaningful and rewarding experience.

When McAuley House opened and new programs were introduced, it created new opportunities for volunteer participation. An example is the Food for My Life program which has created roles for volunteers wishing to engage with women through the love of food and cooking.

How do people end up volunteering at McAuley?

- > 45% word of mouth.
- > 16% of enquiries are from people web searching specifically for volunteer roles within the family violence and homelessness environments.
- > 28% are via the Go Volunteering website

To all our regular volunteers, our sincere thanks for your commitment and dedication to the work of McAuley and the women and children who use our services. We would also like to thank some groups who have provided some one-off support throughout the year:

- > Young Mercy Links and Bernadette Hogan for all the wonderful pampering sessions at McAuley House, and carols and gifts for Christmas.
- > Institute of Sisters of Mercy Australia and Papua New Guinea Alphington office staff for a day of jobs at McAuley House.
- > Australian Super who helped with the huge task of packing and moving us from the old McAuley House in North Melbourne and unpacking at the other end in Footscray.
- > Ormond College students who did an amazing job of cleaning up the gardens at McAuley House, North Melbourne once we moved out.
- > Cbus Super who tackled the donated items at McAuley Care, sorting into specific and easy to navigate categories and started an inventory system.

Sarah

Every couple of weeks Sarah makes sure she gets herself to a live music gig.

‘I love live music, especially local bands.’

Sarah’s other great passions are food and feminism. As well as eating out as often as she can and attending everything promoting female empowerment, Sarah volunteers with the Food for My Life program at McAuley House.

Sarah starts her volunteering day by discussing the weekly menu with the program facilitator and then preparing a fruit platter for residents to pick from as part of an effort to encourage healthier eating.

‘Monday lunch is usually a frittata and salad. Lunch time is 1pm and after that, there’s an opportunity to sit and chat. It is one of my favourite parts of volunteering. The atmosphere in the kitchen is very casual and welcoming so we often have women coming up for a chat. There’s another woman who will often sit up at the bench before lunch and talk to me about all kinds of things from our favorite animal videos, to the type of food her dad cooks. There is a real sense of hospitality and community in the kitchen and I really love that.’

Sarah helps plan the weekly menu based on nutrition and food availability, but also on requests from the McAuley House residents. Special food requests and self catering have increased since the new McAuley House has opened.

CEO Jocelyn Bignold says that while the kitchen has always been the heart of McAuley House, at the old building, women had few opportunities to cook for themselves. ‘With two kitchens in the new McAuley House we can cater to any level of need. The self catering facility in Pickett St has meant that women can take control of their own catering, or, when they’re not quite up to it, come up to the main kitchen for meals.’

‘This is a fantastic indicator of the increased wellbeing and confidence created by the new environment.’

Sarah says the only part of volunteering that makes her sad is hearing some of the stories that have led to women needing McAuley’s services. ‘The trauma and anguish that they’ve had to endure in their lifetimes is truly heartbreaking, but witnessing women’s strength and how they’re overcoming adversity is incredibly inspiring.’

Sarah encourages anyone interested in volunteering for McAuley to give it a go. ‘I would definitely recommend volunteering at McAuley to anyone who wants to help make a difference to the lives of women and children in need. Since my first day I have been made to feel very welcome by all of the staff at McAuley House. I truly believe in everything that McAuley stands for and I enjoy every day that I spend there.’

‘This is a fantastic indicator of the increased wellbeing and confidence created by the new environment.’



Recommendations from the Royal Commission into Family Violence

In April 2016, the Victorian Government accepted all 227 recommendations from the Royal Commission into Family Violence. All 12 recommendations included in McAuley's submission were recognised in the report and incorporated in some form in the 227 recommendations.

There are at least 21 of the 227 recommendations that either have a current impact on how McAuley currently provides services to women and children experiencing family violence, or will have an impact on our future services in this area.

Here are some of the recommendations and the current impact on McAuley:

Recommendation 12

Pending the establishment of the recommended Support and Safety Hubs, the Victorian Government expand funding for after-hours responses—including the capacity to activate a face-to-face crisis response when required—in each of the 17 Department of Health and Human Services regions. McAuley has been providing 24/7 services for women and children escaping family violence since 1988 and hopes to continue to provide this service 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Recommendation 13

The Victorian Government give priority to supporting victims in safely remaining in, or returning to, their own homes and communities through the expansion of Safe at Home-type programs across Victoria [within two years]. These programs should incorporate rental and mortgage subsidies and any benefits offered by advances in safety devices, with suitable case management as well as monitoring of perpetrators by police and the justice system. This recommendation works on ensuring women can go home safely, if that's what they want to do. Safe at Home is a component of the services provided at McAuley Care and we have increased the number of women returning home from 3% to 7% in 2016/17.

Recommendation 17

The Victorian Government expand the provision of Family Violence Flexible Support Packages [within 12 months]. These packages should provide to victims assistance beyond the crisis period and should include longer term rental and mortgage subsidies where required, along with assistance for costs associated with securing and maintaining counselling, wellbeing, education, employment, financial. McAuley Care has been able to access these packages to assist women to find new accommodation or to be able to remain safe at home. McAuley Works team has also been able to make women aware of the packages to assist them with accommodation, safety measures and education opportunities.

Recommendation 19

The Victorian Government establish a Family Violence Housing Assistance Implementation Task Force consisting of senior representatives from the public and commercial housing sectors and family violence specialists [within 12 months]. McAuley has a representative on the Family Violence Housing Assistance Implementation Task Force.

Recommendation 31

The Victorian Government ensure funding of specialist family violence and sexual assault services to facilitate their collaboration. McAuley is beginning a program in collaboration with WestCASA (Western Region Centre Against Sexual Assault Inc.) a community based not-for-profit sexual assault counselling service operating in the western metropolitan region of Melbourne.

Recommendation 70

The Victorian Government fund and complete works to ensure all Magistrates' Court of Victoria headquarter courts [within five years]... provide adequate facilities for children and ensure that courts are 'child-friendly'. McAuley's Court Support 4 Kids program has been introduced into three Magistrates' Courts and in the last financial year these programs collectively provided services to 573 children from 407 families. The Sunshine court program is run by directly by McAuley and we provided training and support to Bethany Community Support in Geelong and the new program at Ringwood provided by Eastern Domestic Violence Outreach Service (EDVOS).

Financials

Profit and Loss Statement

INCOME	2017		EXPENSES	2017	2016
State Govt Funding	6,528,060	2,054,184	Employee Benefit Expenses	2,785,219	2,046,051
Gifts and Donations	1,443,766	724,049	Depreciation	69,786	50,969
Rent Received	213,469	176,568	Program Resources	458,455	358,146
Interest Received	66,249	56,903	Occupancy Expenses	279,921	179,112
Miscellaneous	139,729	61,341	Administration Expenses	278,838	246,122
TOTAL INCOME	8,391,273	3,073,045	Interest Expense	114,225	57,703
			Donation of Building expenditure to ISMAPNG*	9,414,179	0
			TOTAL EXPENSES	13,400,623	2,938,103
			ENTITY PROFIT (LOSS)	(5,009,350)	134,942
			Eliminate the Donation back to ISMAPNG for the Pickett St building costs refer Note 2	9,414,179	
			Eliminate a portion of the \$4m Govt Grant income relating to completing the Pickett St Building	3,425,556	
			OPERATING PROFIT (LOSS)	979,273	134,942

* ISMAPNG is the Institute of Sisters of Mercy Australia and Papua New Guinea

Statement of Equity

	2017	2016
Retained Earnings at beginning of Financial Year	8,231,964	8,097,022
Entity Profit /(Loss)	(5,009,350)	134,942
Retained Earnings at the end of the Financial Year	3,222,614	8,231,964

Note 1. In FY 2013 ISMAPNG gifted McAuley \$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. Government funding was materially increased post the Royal Commission into Family Violence which is reflected in the improved profit for FY 17.

Balance Sheet

	2017	2016
Current Assets		
Cash and Equivalents	4,176,088	3,683,705
Receivables	2,619	63,113
Other Current Assets	105,512	222,004
Non-Current Assets		
Investments	1,832	2,369
Property, Plant and Equipment	240,361	7,642,106
TOTAL ASSETS	4,526,412	11,613,297
Current Liabilities		
Payables	1,079,297	2,227,517
Provisions	183,548	118,393
Borrowings	0	1,000,000
Non-Current Liabilities		
Provisions	40,953	35,423
TOTAL LIABILITIES	1,303,798	3,381,333
NET ASSETS	3,222,614	8,231,964
EQUITY		
Retained Earnings	3,222,614	8,231,964
TOTAL EQUITY	3,222,614	8,231,964

Thank You

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. We would particularly like to thank Mercy Education for their workplace giving program which includes school staff and Mercy Education head office staff.

Government

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

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.

Organisations, businesses, community groups

150 Clarendon Apartments
 Australian Association of the
 Sovereign Military Order Malta
 Australian Super
 Caraniche
 Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne
 Deloitte Access Economics
 Family Care Sisters (Grey Sisters) Inc
 Green Acres Golf Club
 James Richardson Group
 Kennedy Group
 KIIS FM Family Feud Team
 Magistrates' Court of Victoria
 Man With A Van
 Mercy Education Limited
 Mini Chatterbox
 Network Ten Pty Ltd
 Nikias Diamond
 Price Waterhouse Coopers
 Probuild
 Rotary Club of Cheltenham
 Royal Park Ladies Golf Club Inc
 Sarah Hatherley
 Share the Dignity
 ShineWing
 Sinapse
 Suzanne Grae Corporation Pty Ltd
 The Life Centre Trust
 Too Good
 Toorak Opportunity Shop
 Twelve Batmi
 VMIA
 Yve Apartments

Individuals

Patricia Eadie
 Helen and Tony Gandel
 Anne Jackson
 Kathleen Jordan—the Lucinda Jordan Project
 Laurie Larmer
 Laini Liberman
 Eugene Lynch
 Marianne Margin
 Fiona Marsh
 Jennifer Monk
 Denis Moriarty
 Michelle Redfern
 Carol Schwartz AM
 Brendan Shanahan
 Dean Sunshine
 Noel Thurlow
 Karina Woolrich

Trusts and Foundations

Campbell Edwards Trust
 Jenkins Foundation
 Nelson Alexander Charitable Fund
 Nordia Foundation
 Scanlon Foundation
 Simpson Family Foundation
 Slade Foundation Pty Ltd
 Susan Harris Foundation Pty Ltd
 The George and Freda Castan
 Families Charitable Foundation
 The Jack & Robert Smorgon Families Foundation
 The Orloff Family Charitable Trust
 The Macs Foundation
 VCF—George Perry Fund—Catholic Welfare
 Woodards Charitable Foundation

Schools

Academy of Mary Immaculate
 Catholic Regional College Melton
 Loyola College
 Mercy College Coburg
 Mercy Regional College—Camperdown
 Methodist Ladies' College
 Mount Lilydale Mercy 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 Brendon's Flemington Primary School
 St Columba's College
 St Kevin's College
 Swinburne University

Bequests

The Estate of the Late George Timothy Ryan

Program support

Baptcare
 Housing Choices Australia
 RecWest
 Safe Steps
 Second Bite
 Symmetry HR Recruitment
 Trainix Hoppers Crossing
 United Housing Co-Operative Limited
 Yarraville Community Centre
 Yogahood

Pro bono and expert advice

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

Great Ways to Give

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

With your compassion and generosity, McAuley Community Services for Women 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.

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.

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.

Leave a bequest

Leaving a bequest to McAuley Community Services for Women 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, community groups and businesses. Invite us to speak and learn more about the vital work of McAuley, and the pressing issues of homelessness and family violence.

Volunteer

Gain new skills and experience while giving back to the community. Meet new people and discover a new passion. The benefits of volunteering are endless!

Create your own

Get creative, have fun and make a difference!

Planning your own fundraising event is a great way to raise much-needed funds and awareness of McAuley. Have a casual clothes day at work or school, set up an Everyday Hero or Go Fundraise account and raise money via fun runs or hold a girls' night in.

As a café or restaurant, you could select a day, week or month where tips are donated to McAuley. For businesses of various sizes, maybe donate a percentage of sales from a specific day, week or month.

For further information about how you can support McAuley, please call 03 9371 6600, email fundraising@mcauleycsw.org.au or visit mcauleycsw.org.au.

The Mercy Network

McAuley is a ministry of the Institute of Sisters of Mercy Australia and Papua New Guinea; they are great supporters of our work and we work closely with them.

McAuley works with and is supported by other Mercy ministries.

The Mercy network in Australia consists of:

- > 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

IT TAKES A SPLIT SECOND TO HIT A WOMAN AND A LIFETIME TO UNDO THE DAMAGE.

A punch, slap or hit happens in seconds but its effect can last much longer. Not only is there the obvious physical damage you could cause to your wife, partner or kids, there's the longer lasting damage as well.

If you can just put a few seconds between you and the exact moment of violence, you can escape a lifetime of regret and hurt.

If you feel you're about to cross the line, 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
18 Robertson Street, Kensington, VIC 3031
T 03 9371 6600
E mcsw@mcauleycsw.org.au
W www.mcauleycsw.org.au
ABN 85696671223

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-  Twitter: [@mcauleycsw](#)
-  Instagram: [@mcauleycsw](#)

Cover image:
Untitled artwork by Baby Gorilla in
the foyer at McAuley House, Footscray