

THE VOICE



wesley
mission
brisbane

Winter 2013

Art from the Margins

Four artists celebrated in the Heiser Gallery Emerging Artists Exhibition

Lest we forget

Residents share their memories on the 98th anniversary of ANZAC Day

Creativity and excellence in child care

WMB receives three Child Care Services Award Nominations

Crisis in Queensland

Please help us save vital youth programs

INSIDE THIS EDITION

MESSAGE FROM

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
GEOFF BATKIN

HELLO

I have the privilege of meeting just a small cross section of the 80,000 people that Wesley Mission Brisbane supports each year and I am humbled by the strength and resilience of so many people in spite of the enormous adversity they face every day – people living with disability, mental illness, the frail aged, people who are homeless. I am also proud of the 2,300 staff and 1,000 volunteers within Wesley Mission who are the hands and feet and the heart and soul of how we walk alongside and in relationship with people in need to provide practical support, encouragement and care.

I, like many Australians, listened to some of the commentary around the 2013 Federal Budget. I was delighted by the positive seismic shift in the way our country has embraced its responsibility to provide the care and support needed by over 400,000 Australians with complex disabilities. In Queensland today less than 20 per cent of the 100,000 people living with a complex disability receive any form of reasonable funded care and support. It was abundantly clear that the

vast majority of Australians were prepared to pay a small increase in the Medicare Levy to ensure people living with disabilities get a 'fair go'. We must remember however, that after the political noise dies down that many people with disabilities may still be waiting for another five years before DisabilityCare Australia is fully implemented.

When governments are making budget choices or priorities for spending it is sometimes easier to focus on the dollars and economics rather than our community and the people whose lives are impacted. There are more than 26,000 homeless people living in Queensland today, with families the fastest growing demographic experiencing homelessness.* Many of our services in Logan City and on the Gold Coast support people to maintain secure housing or in some cases we provide temporary housing. Our Emergency Relief program in Fortitude Valley provides crisis support for more than 5,000 people each year. We operate OzHarvest Brisbane which in the last eighteen months has collected more than 230 tonnes of good food from 140 businesses (that would otherwise have gone to waste) and delivered it to more than 70 charities each week – in total 700,000 meals have been provided free of charge.

As winter sets in, we at Wesley Mission Brisbane are grateful for your help in giving people a hand up to get them back on their feet. We couldn't do it without you.

Geoff Batkin
Executive Director

*Source: Chamberlain, C Mackenzie, D., 2009 Counting the Homeless 2006: Queensland. Cat No. HOU 205, Canberra, AIHW

PS If you'd like to donate to Emergency Relief this winter, we are particularly in need of socks, beanies and blankets. Please call (07) 3621 2046 if you'd like to donate goods, or visit www.wmb.org.au to make a gift online.

WINTER 2013

OUR STORIES

- Lest We Forget - the 98th anniversary of ANZAC Day4
- Award nominations recognise creativity and excellence8
- Honouring a life well lived10
- Art from the Margins12
- Volunteering a reality check17
- Crisis in Queensland18

REGULARS

- Newsbites15
- Wordwise16

LEST WE FORGET - THE 98TH ANNIVERSARY OF ANZAC DAY

With more than 950 residents living across our 13 aged care communities, there are hundreds of poignant ANZAC memories and tales to tell. Public Relations intern, Alysha Hilevuo visited some of our ANZAC veterans to hear their stories firsthand.

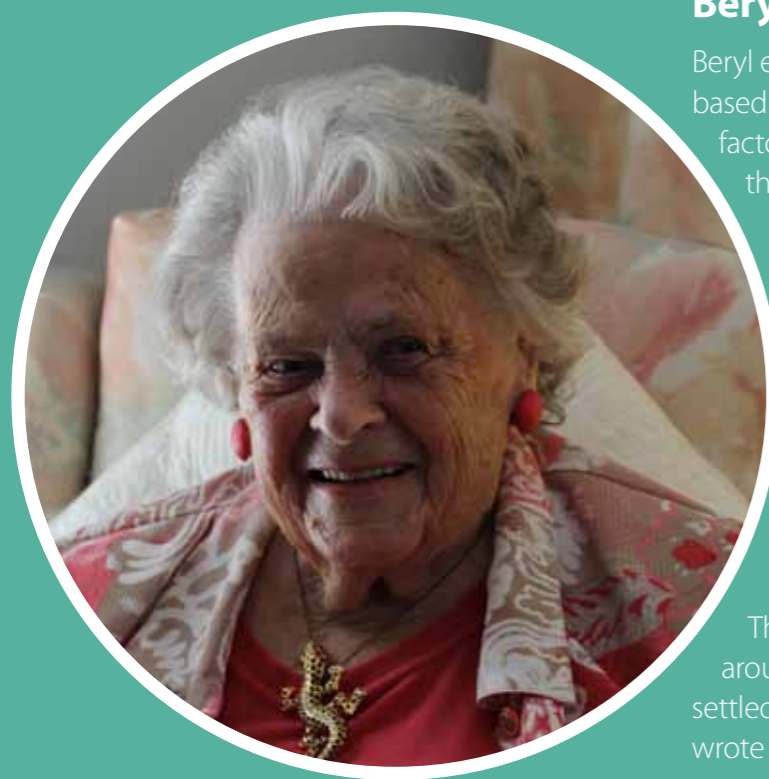
Beryl, 96, Anam Cara

Beryl enlisted in the Air Force in 1941 when she was 23. She was based in Sydney. "You didn't have a choice – either you went into a factory or you did war service, and I wasn't going into any factory thank you!"

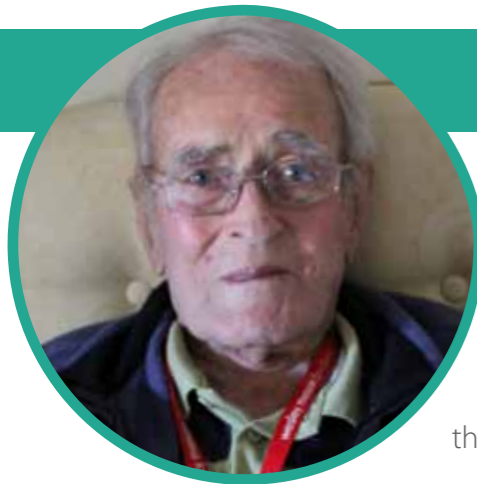
Beryl operated as a transport driver, dealing with cars and trucks on the army base. Throughout her service, Beryl mourned her husband, Group Captain Hall, who had served in Burma and who was reported missing, presumed dead.

To her great surprise, Beryl discovered by way of telegram three and a half years later that he was alive and had been taken as a prisoner of war by the Japanese. "I later got a card from him saying 'I'm alright' with the Imperial Japanese Army letterhead on it."

The couple were reunited after the war ended and travelled around Australia, Europe, and the US together. They eventually settled in Melbourne with their two daughters, and Beryl's husband wrote a book, *Railway of Death*, detailing his experiences as a prisoner of war.



Emmaus resident Valerie Thompson holding the Airforce wreath at the Emmaus Village Display. Valerie served in the Airforce



Alf, 89, Anam Cara

Alf enlisted in the Army in 1941 at the age of 16. He was living in Kerang, Northern Victoria, at the time. Although the legal age for enrolment was 18, Alf was eager to be part of the war effort.

"It was incredibly stupid of me, but it was pretty common in those days. I tried a few times to enlist before I found someone who didn't know me and I pulled the wool over their eyes," says Alf.

Alf served in Papua New Guinea until the war's end. Initially, he was a rifleman, and then transitioned to a new role as a 'runner', carrying messages and reports from the platoon commander to the company headquarters. After a brief period of special training in landing craft in Australia, Alf returned to PNG as an infantryman. He was promoted to corporal shortly before the end of the war in 1945.

His most vivid memories from his experience are linked to a war injury he sustained towards the end of his service. "I was wounded, a shrapnel wound, on the eve of my 21st birthday. I spent my birthday on a stretcher being carried down out of the hills," he says. He recovered from his injury within a week or two.

He moved to Queensland after the war, where he met his wife Nancy.

Bernie, 92, John Wesley Gardens

English-born Bernie enlisted in the British Air Force in June 1939 when he was 18 and signed up for the duration of World War Two. Bernie had a keen interest in electronics and says he joined the war effort because it was his only avenue to become a wireless operator. He was so enthusiastic about this career path that he temporarily became ambidextrous so he could pass the wireless exam.

"I'm a leftie, and I had to sit my exam at 25 words a minute. I always sent with my left but for the exam I did it right-handed," he says.

Bernie was trained for nine months in the theory of radio and subsequently worked his first station in Bedford, England. After the war, Bernie continued to work with electronics.

In 1959, Bernie was one of six English applicants chosen to travel to Sydney to work at Goodwin's, an electronics store. After only nine months, Bernie's role fixing TVs and radios earned him the manager's position at the newly opened Brisbane Goodwin's.

That same year, Bernie met his wife. They were happily married with two daughters for 46 years. Bernie says his experiences in the Air Force will never leave him.

"There was an Aussie soldier being interviewed on the wireless here, and he said 'Mate, to me, every day is ANZAC Day', and he's dead right, you never forget."



Marion, 93, Cooper House

Marion enrolled in the Army in 1942 at the age of 23. She originally wanted to enlist in the Navy, but an advertisement for the Australian Women's Army Service switched her focus.

After attending rookie school in Yeronga, she was assigned to Gun Site 386, Heavy Ack Ack Battery. Her role was anti-aircraft, and her team recorded all aircraft movements. In May 1945, Marion was deployed overseas in Lae, Papua New Guinea. There were no anti-aircraft assignments in the area, so she became a private.

Marion reflects fondly on her time in PNG.

"We had a lot of fun up there. We used to go on picnics on Sundays and went swimming every Wednesday, and we played sports, mainly cricket," she says.

Marion and her Army comrades also had the opportunity to explore the area. "We would go for walks up the hill and see the Japanese fox holes there, and go out on the water in Lackatois to look at the coral down below," says Marion.

She returned home after the war in 1946 and met her husband at Rosemont Hospital, where she began visiting him after his eardrum was shattered by an explosion in Borneo. They married after his recovery and their eldest son was born in 1947.



Lorna and Gill, 88, Parkview

Lorna and Gill separately enlisted in the Army in 1942 when they were both 18. Lorna was based in Townsville working in signals, and Gill was in Melbourne focusing on chemical warfare. The couple first met at an Army dance at Brisbane City Hall.

"All of the troops were there. All of the girls fell for the Americans in their smart uniforms, but somehow, I liked the baggy greens better, so I went for the Aussie," Lorna recalls.

Gill's Army responsibilities involved examining gas shells for signs of deterioration so they could be safely used. The role was often dangerous and his team originally attempted to wear protective clothing, but the sweltering Queensland climate proved too much.

Lorna's role involved sending and receiving coded messages across Australia. They both served until 1945. After the war, Gill was sent to Papua New Guinea to check for residual chemicals, and was then transferred into a veterinary survey unit. Lorna and Gill married in 1946 and continued to attend City Hall dances together.

After a break from the Army, Gill re-enlisted in 1948 where he changed his trade and became an electrical mechanic engineer, working his way up to the position of Major. He was based in Brisbane, Townsville, and finally Perth. Lorna and their two children accompanied Gill around Australia during his service.

AWARD NOMINATIONS RECOGNISE CREATIVITY AND EXCELLENCE

Wesley Mission Brisbane Child Care services have achieved national recognition with their nominations for the 2013 Australian Family Early Education and Care Awards. The awards acknowledge the creativity and excellence of home-based and centre-based child care services.

Little Marchants Child Care Centre Chermiside was nominated for the Early Childhood Service of the Year Award, while home-based educators Tracey Benden and Lynda Sharpe were both nominated for the Early Childhood Educator of the Year Award.

All three WMB nominations were shortlisted, with Tracey selected as one of five state finalists for her category.

Tracey's Family Day Care service is designed to encourage confidence, positive attitudes, and independent thinking in children. Tracey, who was

nominated by a parent, says that she observes the children, taps into what their interests are, and then tailors the program to their individual preferences. "Whatever the kids need and want, they get it here.

"I've been doing this for years, so my life has always been about the kids – you love them like they are your own," Tracey says.

Lynda was also nominated by a parent impressed with her engaging, learning-oriented "Humpty's House" Family Day Care service. Her visiting coordinator Cathy Yuen says that Lynda deserved her nomination.

"In my opinion, Lynda runs a superior service. Lynda views the children as capable and competent learners and as soon as a child's play starts to flow in a particular direction, she has the resources available to support it," says Cathy.



Tracey Benden (pictured) and Lynda Sharpe were nominated for the Early Childhood Educator of the Year Award



Little Marchants Child Care Centre Chermiside was nominated for the Early Childhood Service of the Year Award

Director of Little Marchants Child Care Centre, Jeanette Brennan, says their nomination was particularly special because it came from a parent who works as an Early Childhood Lecturer.

"It shows us that we're on the right path, if we're being recognised from someone within the field. It's wonderful for such a young centre to receive a nomination like this," Jeanette says.

Little Marchants has been commended for its Intergenerational Program, where the children conduct weekly visits with residents of Parkview and St Mark's aged care communities. The program is mutually beneficial, providing company for the residents and teaching the children valuable life lessons.

"The children are learning to understand the needs of others and are already displaying empathy far beyond their years," says Jeanette.

Little Marchants is one of only three child care services in Queensland that currently offer this program.

WMB Home Based Child Care Manager, Julia Patton says these services were nominated because of their value to the children and their educators.

"WMB Child Care services strive to provide fair, friendly, and ethical environments where staff and children are accepted as individuals and their contributions are appreciated," Julia says.

HONOURING A LIFE WELL LIVED

Last month the Wesley Mission Brisbane community was sad to farewell long-time resident, Reverend Ralph, 'Ellis' Bramley.

Ellis was born in Chillagoe in 1911 and after losing both his parents at a young age, he and his siblings moved to a children's home in Coorparoo. It was here that he converted and, at 16, decided to embark on a lifelong journey to serve God.

Ellis was ordained as a Methodist minister in 1938 and worked across the country until 1976 when he retired. After his wife Jess, a nursing sister, died in 1979 Ellis returned to the church's service and was still preaching from his hand-written sermons into his 90s.

In 2008 he celebrated 70 years of ordination and his local Chermshire- Kedron Uniting Church dedicated a stained glass window to Ellis to celebrate his 90th birthday.

Ellis moved to Youngman Lodge in 2007 and was still driving at 97, only moving into full time residential care at John Wesley Gardens in 2012.

With his son the former Hoodoo Gurus bass player Clyde Bramley, Ellis was always attracting media

attention. However, he became somewhat of a media superstar at WMB in his own right, featuring in stories about being born in the year of the first census and the length of his ministry.

In January he featured in a Courier-Mail Australia Day article sharing his memories of Australia and the changes he'd seen over the past 100 years.

On his 90th birthday Ellis shared this with friends and family, "Keep in touch with people, don't live as a hermit ... have something specific to do ... and relate to the younger generation."



Photos by Dylan Evans



Ellis was born on June 5, 1911



He initially trained as a French polisher whilst attending night school (The Home Mission Training Institute) to earn his junior certificate in order to become a missionary



Ellis met his late wife, Jessie Purcell, by talking to her on the train from Adelaide to Perth. They married in 1949



Ellis spent two years at Kings College, followed by posting at Clermont and Longreach, before being ordained a Methodist Minister



Ellis celebrated his 100th birthday at Kedron Uniting Church, which had dedicated a new window to him



Guests came from as far as Germany and Western Australia to help celebrate Ellis' birthday, while his son, former Hoodoo Gurus member Clyde Bramley travelled from Sydney

ART FROM THE MARGINS



Art from the Margins (AFTM) began in 2008 as a program to support homeless artists. The idea was born in a Brisbane park beside a coffee van when a member of the Albert Street Uniting Church's Servant Network was talking with an artist living in isolation. The artist spoke about the challenges confronting artists living with disadvantage when they try to display their work in a public space or participate in the wider arts community. Wesley Mission Brisbane made the commitment to support artists whose creative development was limited by homelessness, disability, disadvantage or social isolation and Art from the Margins was created.

Four inspirational artists from Wesley Mission Brisbane's Art from the Margins (AFTM) program have featured in the 2013 Heiser Gallery Emerging Artists Exhibition, held at Newfarm's Graydon Gallery in April.

This is the third year that Art from the Margins has partnered with leading Brisbane art identity Bruce Heiser to provide a mentoring program for emerging local artists.

Bruce says the four artists were selected from more than 280 who entered the last year's AFTM Brisbane Festival Exhibition.

"This program seeks to further capitalise on the wonderful work AFTM does by engaging marginalised artists, who due to their individualised circumstances, ordinarily would not be positioned to receive an opportunity to participate in a curated, professional exhibition showing work amongst their peers," says Bruce.

"The program is designed to support their creative and professional development from concept through to exhibition stage."

AFTM Manager Anthony Anderton says the partnership with Bruce Heiser is invaluable for the artists.

"We're privileged to have Bruce Heiser's support for this award. Bruce is one of the leading figures in Brisbane's art world - his mentoring not only helps the artists prepare for the exhibition, but also provides them with valuable practical and creative insights," says Anthony.

"The artists featured in this exhibition each have an incredible story to tell about overcoming stigmas associated with disadvantage - including mental illness and disability.

"This exhibition is another important step forward in creating connections between the artists and the community," he says.

One of the artists involved in the exhibition, Colleen Stevenson, says the feedback and support from Bruce is really important.

"The exhibition is a stepping stone for me, not many people have an opportunity like this to show their work," she says.

The exhibition also gave AFTM a chance to publicly welcome their newly appointed Patron to the program. The Hon Paul de Jersey AC Chief Justice, Supreme Court Queensland says he is proud to be the new AFTM Patron.

"This wonderful initiative is enduring to the benefit of both individual and community. It is exposing a bank of creative talent previously untapped, and it is empowering people in a most productive way. I am privileged to be Patron of this really worthwhile endeavour."

Chairman of AFTM, Dr Ian Airey, says AFTM is thrilled to receive the patronage of his Honour.

"The Chief Justice has spoken about the impact of the absence of opportunity on the lives of people living in isolation. He has spoken about the how the lack of generally available resources and advantages

can lead people into a state of homelessness. "He has recognised that some young people bristling with untapped talent don't have the opportunity to reveal their abilities to the community and consequently lead lives unfulfilled. He acknowledges the injustice of these circumstances," he says.

AFTM will benefit from this tangible support in a number of ways. New opportunities will be available for AFTM to assist it in achieving its mission and vision, which include advocating for people isolated through unfortunate circumstances over which they have little control.

Colleen Stevenson, photographer

Colleen is a 'Forgotten Australian' and was taken from her parents at a young age and placed in an orphanage. Despite a difficult past, Colleen has found inspiration in photography after attending workshops five years ago. Since then, she has focused her photography on nature and finds it very therapeutic. Colleen's work has been acquired for the AFTM Permanent Art Collection.



Luke Fitzgerald, artist

Luke is a talented young artist who has only been painting and drawing for a short time, but already his work has won awards and been widely exhibited in Brisbane and regional Queensland. Luke is autistic and completes most paintings very quickly. His work has been acquired for the AFTM Permanent Collection and this year his work was selected for the Queensland Regional Art Awards to tour Queensland regional galleries.

Mark Davey, artist

Mark is a self-taught artist who took up painting as a hobby in 1995. When health problems forced Mark to give up his job, he turned to his art as a creative outlet and it turned from a hobby to an obsession. His work has been shown at numerous galleries including, Jabiru Gallery, the Kingston Butter Factory and the Logan City Art Gallery. Mark is a past award winner in the annual AFTM Brisbane Festival Exhibition.



Jo Morris, artist

After being diagnosed with a rare muscle disease at the age of six Jo found drawing and painting her passion and entertainment. In 2008 Jo graduated from the Brisbane School of Distance Education and had her first official exhibition at the Terrace Art Show. Since then she has displayed her work through Martins Gallery, local coffee shops and was a winner of the 2012 AFTM Brisbane Festival People's Choice Award.

1 BBQ for ER!



When Bill and Beverley Porter heard Emergency Relief wanted to set up a weekly BBQ and community space at their new location they donated their old BBQ. What a wonderful act of community kindness! The team at ER look forward to setting up a community space and starting weekly barbecues for clients.

Thank you, Bill!

Everybody's got a Hungry Heart

2



Wesley Mission Brisbane welcomes new chaplains to Area West

3

Reverend Neville Sturwhold and Reverend Monique Mawbey have joined Wesley Mission Brisbane as new chaplains ministering to Area West. Welcome to the team!

OzHarvest Brisbane was thrilled to partner with Bruce Springsteen at his sold-out shows in Brisbane in March! Concert goers were greeted by our team in bright yellow shirts and Bruce himself gave us a shout out (you can check out the video on OzHarvest Brisbane Facebook page). Together we raised more than \$12,000 over the two nights – that's 12,000 meals for people in need. We love that you are passionate about preventing food waste, Bruce!



Moreton Bay College fundraising success

Wesley House at Moreton Bay College ran its annual fundraising day in support of Wesley Mission Brisbane in March, raising a grand total of \$1,604! That is an absolutely fantastic effort. A big thank you to all the girls who planned and ran the day, head of Wesley House Janet Stewart, and everyone who donated.

I recently went to the local wholesale chemists shop and while waiting in line to pay for my purchase, the lady before me struggled to carry her two full bags of goods.

This particular lady was also using a medical crutch and struggled to make it out of the door, let alone to her car on the other side of the car park. Without thinking, I automatically offered to help take the parcels to her car. There were many thanks all round from both the lady and the shop assistant. For me, however, this act was something that came automatically.

The response by these ladies to my actions made me think "Isn't this what a Christian does?" I am reminded of the words of Matthew 25:35-36

"I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was alone and away from home and you invited me into your house. I was without clothes, and you gave me something to wear. I was sick, and you cared for me, I was in prison and you visited me."

And we read from Luke 10:25-37. The story of the Good Samaritan changes our hearts of hate into hearts of love. It is a parable that condemns non-involvement, "Oh, I am just too busy to be involved/I'm too busy to go over to the Jericho Road today." This parable is an invitation for us to have a heart that overflows with love and mercy for those who are hurting. This parable is an invitation for us to love our enemies, those we look down upon, wouldn't normally talk to, let alone offer assistance.

The Jericho Road was also a place where there was violence. The Jericho Road is any place where there is

oppression; it is any place where people are robbed of the dignity and robbed of their love and robbed of their food and robbed of their freedom. The Jericho Road is always with us, is all around us.

As a Christian, I also remember Christ's mercy and compassion, his sorrow over the sin of the world, all his little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love, which show the perfection and grace of his every deed and thought. And as Christ and his works upon the earth are expressions of God's grace or mercy, so must we who are followers of Christ, demonstrate the same quality of mercy in our lives to others.

He could only do this because of his close relationship with his Father and we must be of the same relationship with Jesus for his love to pour out for those in a needy world, a world that sometimes appears to have gone mad with 'self'.

My prayer is that humankind will one day reach out to those in need, just as Jesus reaches out to us; and gave his life for all mankind.

Cliff Yarrow
Chaplain
Wesley Mission Brisbane

VOLUNTEERING A REALITY CHECK

Twenty-three-year old Luke Bull is studying psychology and law at Queensland University of Technology. In between lectures and spending time with friends and family, he volunteers at Wesley Mission Brisbane's Emergency Relief in Fortitude Valley.

Over the nine months he has been volunteering at ER, Luke aims to get there at least every couple of weeks and increases his volunteer hours over especially busy periods for the service, such as Christmas.

Luke says he found out about Wesley Mission Brisbane when they called for volunteers through the QUT psychology faculty.

"I had some spare time so when I saw Emergency Relief needed volunteers, I thought I should probably get out there and give something back. I did some research and liked the work Wesley Mission seemed to do, especially Emergency Relief," says Luke.

"I live with my brother who is a social worker. He told me about one time he was trying to get help for one of his clients and when he called Wesley, they said they could help straight away."

Luke's tasks at ER vary from day to day, but he starts most volunteer shifts by packing and stocking food to ensure ER has a good supply of parcels for families or individuals who need them.

"I also help serve clients when they come in. We give

people food parcels if they don't have enough money to get through the week. If they're stuck for food that day, we give them a sandwich and a couple of bottles of water," says Luke.

"You see some pretty needy people. But the staff at Emergency Relief are great. We don't turn anyone away. Wesley also has great connections – a wonderful referral service and partner agencies like OzHarvest."

Luke says that his volunteer shifts bring him back to reality.

"I didn't realise how many homeless people there were in Brisbane. This has made me realise there are a lot of people in need.

"When I see people my age come in, it's really hard. That's the saddest thing for me, seeing people in their early 20s who are really struggling. It just makes you realise how lucky you are."



Psychology and Law student at QUT, Luke Bull, volunteers with Wesley Mission Brisbane's Emergency Relief Service

CRISIS IN QUEENSLAND

This is an urgent appeal for your help to keep Wesley Mission Brisbane support programs in the Logan City area open. Your support helps inspiring young people who desperately want to improve their lives.

As you may know already, Wesley Mission Brisbane runs programs in one of the toughest and most disadvantaged areas of Queensland - Logan City.

Our youth employment program is nothing fancy, but it works. It gives kids facing what seem like impossible odds the practical support, skills and encouragement to get themselves into the workforce.

The problem is we have been hit by a funding crisis. This means we have had to shut this great program down. It's a terrible setback for the dozens of young people we helped each year. Some of Wesley Mission Brisbane's services have already been forced to close, and others are facing the same threat.

The situation in Logan is dire. Without your help, there is a high risk more of our programs will have to close. We are determined to keep helping the poor and disadvantaged in our region but are facing one of the toughest decisions: which service gets cut next.

These vital programs are worth saving because of people like Erin, a brave and inspiring 21 year-old who's already seen a lot of hardship in her young life.

Looking at her now, you'd hardly think that two years ago, she turned up in Logan City with nothing but her baby in her arms and a bag of his clothes and toys.

Erin had taken her son and fled from a violent and abusive partner. She'd had to leave everything she owned behind. It was an exhausted, sad and terribly

worried young woman who first came to Wesley Mission Brisbane in Logan City.

"I had nothing. No savings, no bed, no job. But I picked myself up for my baby son - I didn't want him to suffer."

Where do you start when you're just 20 and you have no home, no job and a baby son to provide for? Erin started with an amazing attitude.

"I didn't want to give up. I wanted to live the life my son and I deserved."

Our deeply committed staff and volunteers will not give up either. Wesley Mission Brisbane programs are often the last hope for people like Erin when life delivers blows that are too hard to bear alone.

What would have happened to Erin and her little son if we had not been there? What will happen to others like her if we are forced to shut down another program?

Sadly, that is the reality Wesley Mission Brisbane is facing. We are in the situation where we must take another look at our resources and see what we can afford to keep running.

That's so hard because we see time and again how kindness and compassion can help someone turn their life around.



Two years on, Erin and her little boy are both smiling

Erin was determined to get work. But she didn't have a resume, a decent outfit for job interviews, or much confidence. Wesley Mission Brisbane at Logan City got Erin started and then helped her prepare for the workforce.

Erin says it was hard, hard, hard going. She says there were days she just wanted to sit on the floor and cry. But she kept going - she wasn't going to let her son down.

"I set myself goals every day of what I had to do. I budgeted down to my last cent and saved every single dollar. Each week with the money I saved, I bought one thing for our future house."

If you know what it's like to go without, to scrimp and save, and to work hard at something, you'll understand what it took for Erin to lift herself out of her situation.

Erin overcame one obstacle at a time - helped and supported all the way by Wesley Mission Brisbane.

Erin has built up her life. She's found work. To her great delight, she achieved her personal goal of giving her son a little party for his second birthday in their own home.

"These people and programs helped me turn my life around. I'm pretty much working fulltime now and it's made a huge difference. It's also had a huge impact on my son's life. I am just so grateful!"

She might be young and from a rough area, but she has a great work ethic, discipline and solid values.

"Right from day dot, the people at Wesley understood I was in a bad place and supported me. They listened

and never judged me. They made the world of difference to someone who was broken. I can't thank them enough."

Kerry Clayton has been running Wesley Mission Brisbane programs in Logan City for 20 years. He says there are plenty of success stories like Erin's, but more needs to be done.

"What we're trying to do here in Logan City is prevent major social problems. If people are poor and desperate, that's when they turn to crime and other bad activities. But if we can get in early enough, we can head that off and make a long term difference.

"The need here is great. Every single dollar we get is important to the people we help. If you remove our Wesley Mission Brisbane programs, it will leave lots of those people with nowhere else to go."

That would be a tragedy for a lot of people like Erin - and for the other children, old people, and families who are involved in our programs.

As Kerry says, there could be a real flow-on effect for the entire South East Queensland region.

"These programs have been hugely successful at preventing problems. Every person in Queensland will eventually pay the cost if they close."

Yet it doesn't have to be that way.

Please help, if you can. A donation from you today can help someone like Erin.

Visit www.wmb.org.au to donate today. Thank you.



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