

# Wesley Impact

Spring 2024



REV ALAN WALKER'S  
92-YEAR LEGACY  
Tributes flow after Walker's p  
on 29 January from former P  
The Hon. Bob Carr MP, form  
Minister The Hon. John How  
Rev Dr Billy Graham and Arc  
Emeritus Desmond Tutu.

2003





## Words from our CEO

### Your compassion empowers people and saves lives

Everyone needs help from time to time. Compassion extended by others is a beautiful reminder to people that they are precious, valued and never alone.

Thanks to your support, Wesley Mission is able to offer compassionate support and services across harm prevention, intervention and postvention. This includes our Lifeline Sydney & Sutherland service, LifeForce Suicide Prevention training and networks, GambleAware Helpline, programs to support the resilience of older people – and many more.

These are all empowering programs that help save lives through human connection. Several of them are spotlighted in this newsletter.

As this week unfolds, I ask you to be kind to yourself and remember the power of human connection. You are of inestimable value, precious and unique, not for what you do, but for who you are.

If life is a struggle for you right now, don't be afraid to reach out for help. Doing so is never weak, but a sign of true inner strength. Keep in mind, there is always **strength in connection**; you'll see its power in the stories in this newsletter. And if you suspect a friend is doing it tough, take time to check in with them.

Please remember Lifeline is a service everyone can freely access at any time by calling 13 11 14. There is always someone there for you.

Every blessing,

Rev Stu Cameron  
CEO and Superintendent



▲ Wesley LifeForce

## Building connections and strengthening communities

Australians from all walks of life came together in July for **Wesley LifeForce's National Suicide Prevention Conference**, an information-sharing event for community groups and experts brought together to strengthen networks and reduce the rate of suicide across Australia.

Guests heard keynote speeches from Colin Seery from Lifeline Australia, Katherine Newton from R U OK? Organisation and Ashley Fell from McCrindle Research.

The conference is a critical component of our leading the way in strengthening communities as together we work towards an Australia free from suicide.

Wesley LifeForce is driving real change in suicide prevention through forward-thinking research and publications. We're uncovering new insights and refining approaches, equipping communities, organisations and healthcare professionals with powerful knowledge that informs mental health support, offers hope and saves lives. Together with our partners, we're not just advancing understanding – we're creating a future where more people at risk of suicide get the help they need.

The University of Melbourne carried out a study which showed a significant reduction in suicide rates following community establishment of Wesley LifeForce Networks with a **17% drop in suicides over the first 9 months!**

## Will you consider leaving a gift of lasting impact?

Imagine a future where your compassion continues to change lives. By leaving a gift in your Will to Wesley Mission, you can create a legacy that offers hope and light to those who need it most. Whether it's a large bequest or a small donation, your generosity will make a lasting impact, providing vital support for years to come.

Every gift, big or small, helps transform lives. With your help, we can continue to offer love, care, and support to those facing their darkest moments.

**Make a lasting difference today.**

**For more information please contact us on (02) 9263 5548 or email [giffinwills@wesleymission.org.au](mailto:giffinwills@wesleymission.org.au)**



# Thank you for supporting Lifeline Sydney & Sutherland

During April of this year, Lifeline recorded its highest number of calls and requests for help in a single day. Call volumes continue to increase as more and more Australians struggle with feelings of despair and mental health problems.

These calls are life or death, and we know they can't go unanswered.

## We called, and you answered.

Your wonderful gifts are providing the life-saving connection so many Australians need right now. Josh\* was on the brink of suicide one cold night, but a call to Lifeline Sydney & Sutherland saw him return to his warm home, where his loving family were waiting for him. That's thanks to people like you who support our work.

Josh was one of many thousands of people who call Lifeline every day. Lance, who took Josh's call has been a volunteer crisis supporter for over a decade and knows only too well the impact your donation has had, particularly for young people like Josh.

**"In making a donation to Lifeline Sydney & Sutherland, you're showing them that someone's there, backing them and in their corner, and that while they may think they're alone, Lifeline is and always will be here."** - Lance, Volunteer Crisis Supporter

If you are yet to make your donation, there's still time to show your compassion and make a difference to people experiencing distress. Your gifts are truly lifesaving.



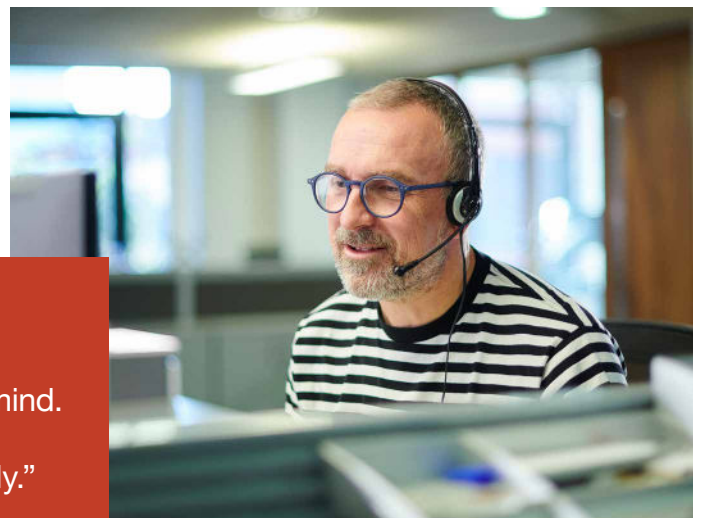
▲ Josh\*

**"Your donation supports our centre to facilitate more Crisis Supporter Workplace Training which enables a growing number of volunteer crisis supporters to be equipped to support help-seekers when they have the courage to make that call. 1 in 5 calls to Lifeline nationally goes unanswered, Lifeline Sydney & Sutherland is dedicated to changing this as we work towards an Australia free of suicide."** - Tony Cassidy, Group Manager, Lifeline Sydney & Sutherland

\*Name and photo changed to protect privacy.

## How does volunteer crisis supporter, Lance, protect his own mental health?

"Swimming really helps with looking after my mental health - physically and metaphorically washes my troubles away and helps clear my mind. I love listening to music and keeping active by cycling and spending quality time with my family."



▲ Lance, volunteer crisis supporter who took Josh's call

# Remembering lives lost to suicide

In French, sunflowers are called tournesols which literally means 'turns with the sun'. It's a name that captures their unique behaviour of following the sun across the sky for light, warmth and energy, much like we ourselves seek hope and inspiration in life.

It is because of this deep symbolic connection that we chose sunflowers to be laid at the Wesley LifeForce Suicide Memorial Service on September 6, in honour and remembrance of precious lives sadly lost to suicide.

It was a truly beautiful service, held at the Sydney Opera House, serving as an opportunity for those affected by the loss of a loved one to suicide to come together and reflect over music, personal stories and messages of hope.

**"When we gather together, we stand side-by-side, connected through a shared experience. It is a powerful expression of hope and a reminder for people bereaved by suicide that they are not alone,"** Rev Stu Cameron, Wesley Mission CEO and Superintendent.



▲ LifeForce memorial service



▲ Elizabeth

## Meet Elizabeth

Elizabeth Leow is Program Manager at Wesley School for Seniors. She supports older people to stay active and enjoy a better quality of life through learning and connection to others.

"I create safe, supportive and harmonious spaces where older people can make friends and truly support each other in their journeys. I always tell our students not to let society dictate your value or how you should live, they've given many years of their lives to their job and loved ones and now's the time to look after themselves and live for themselves. I want them to be happy, grateful and to enjoy every moment. One time, a new student said to me **'I'm so happy I found you, I'm lonely even though I'm not living alone, and I've now found a community where I belong'**. That's what we're all about, so as you can imagine, it made me very happy," Elizabeth said.

## Forge new friendships at Wesley School for Seniors!

Keep an eye out for our beautiful new hand designed cards created by the talented students at School for Seniors.



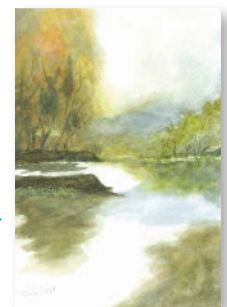
▲ Big Bird - Ron Stuart



▲ Going Home - Gloria Chiu



◀ Flowers - Daniela Voican



Riverside ▶ - Teresa Ng

## Would you like to try your hand at a new hobby and meet new people?

Learn new skills and connect with new friends in the wonderfully supportive environment at Wesley School for Seniors. Whether you're eager to explore the arts, stay active with dance and Tai Chi, or dive into the digital world with technology classes, there's a course for everyone.

**Learn more at: [wesleymission.org.au/schoolforseniors](https://wesleymission.org.au/schoolforseniors)**

## Every Tuesday Carol\*, 84, looked forward to a visit from Sarah\*, her 33-year-old companion.

So did Sarah, mother of three.

“It was one of my favourite days of the week,” says Sarah.

While Carol has now passed away, Sarah feels privileged to have met Carol while volunteering with Wesley Aged Care Volunteer Visitors, a Community Visitor Schemes provider that connects older people to companions.

While nervous about their first meeting, Sarah’s concerns were eased once she saw Carol’s big smile. And it didn’t take long for Carol to become part of Sarah’s family.

“We’d just sit and have a cuppa together and you’d just forget that you are a volunteer. It’s more like visiting a grandmother,” Sarah says.

And when Sarah’s three kids visited Carol, they’d often play a competitive game of Monopoly.

“Sometimes the kids tried to cheat but Carol kept a close eye on them,” Sarah laughs. “But it was always good fun.”



▲ Carol & Sarah

While there was a big age difference, Sarah was surprised by how this friendship impacted her own life.

“I started volunteering because I wanted to give back. But she has enriched my life in so many ways,” Sarah says.

“The age gap just didn’t matter. There was always so much to talk about, and I learnt so much from her.”

When people ask Sarah if they should volunteer, she says, “There are so many people out there who would appreciate having someone to talk to. Becoming a Volunteer Visitor is a way to do that.”

\*Names and photo changed to protect privacy.

**Looking to make a life-changing impact?** Become a volunteer with Wesley Aged Care Volunteer Visitors and build a deep, meaningful friendship with an older person in your community! Your time can brighten their world—and yours.

If you are looking for companionship, get in touch. We’ll match you with someone who shares common interests and can visit you on a weekly or fortnightly basis. Please visit: [www.wesleymission.org.au/visitors](http://www.wesleymission.org.au/visitors) or email [visitors@wesleymission.org.au](mailto:visitors@wesleymission.org.au)

## Small acts of kindness help Alisha build her new life

Alisha\* used to carry her belongings wherever she went. But now she doesn’t have to. Thanks to people like you, Alisha has a new home where she feels safe to leave her stuff.

“Wesley Mission gave me a house, a bed, food, blankets and things for inside my home and I’m so happy,” says Alisha.

Alisha had escaped a years-long domestic violence relationship when she first found Wesley Mission. She was pregnant, had a young daughter and felt hopeless and alone. But Community Engagement Lead, Liesa, helped Alisha find not only a home, but also hope and friendship in a welcoming community.

“Wesley Mission made me feel happy because the people treated me so nicely. They supported me and Liesa is so very kind,” Alisha says.

Alisha is so thankful that Liesa came into her life because



▲ Alisha and daughter

now she knows she always has someone she can turn to during tough times.

**“I trust Liesa. She always prays for me and then I feel happy. Now I’ve opened my heart up to God,”** Alisha shares. **“Liesa keeps supporting me even now when she doesn’t have to, and that means I can finally feel safe again.”**

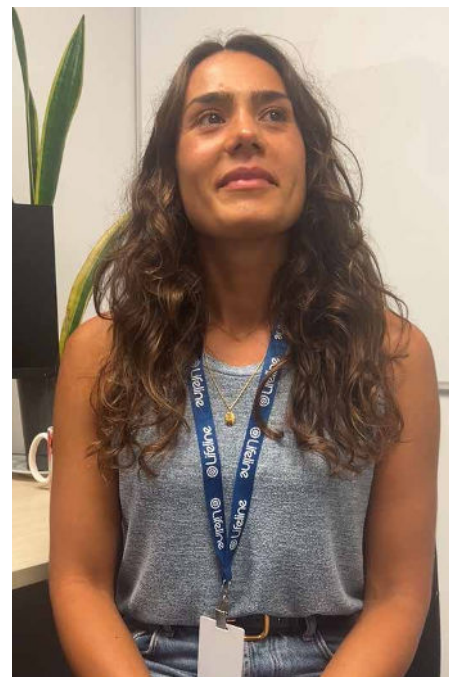
\*Name and photo changed to protect privacy.

# Behind the door of Lifeline Sydney & Sutherland

Volunteer crisis supporters at Lifeline Sydney & Sutherland come from all walks of life. Our team is made up of students, parents, corporate workers and retirees, all bringing with them their own unique background and perspectives.

While it can be a tough job, there are many great things about being a volunteer crisis supporter. Here are just a few that our team came up with:

- You're providing a (often lifesaving) connection.
- You learn new skills that help in your personal life and stay with you for life.
- You feel a wonderful sense of purpose.
- When you give back, you always feel good.



▲ Maca

“A lot of people are feeling very alone. And in order to put an end to that, to give people a space to talk, to connect, to feel heard, we need more people that are able to listen. If anyone out there is willing to make even one person feel less alone, less sad, less hopeless, I'd encourage them to call Lifeline or go online and sign up for one of the courses to join the team.” Maca, Volunteer Crisis Supporter.

For more info on becoming a volunteer crisis supporter please visit [www.wesleymission.org.au/volunteercrisissupporter](http://www.wesleymission.org.au/volunteercrisissupporter)

## The Helpseeker Wall

Our volunteer crisis supporters often receive heartfelt messages from helpseekers who feel a renewed sense of hope after their call. Many of these grateful words are captured on our Helpseeker Wall, serving as a powerful reminder of the life-changing impact our volunteers make every day.

Take a moment to read some of the inspiring messages on our Helpseeker Wall right now:



*I'm so glad I spoke to you, I've realised there's other options*

*You're my inspiration for the day*

*I feel so much lighter now after talking to you*

*It feels like I'm talking to a lifelong friend that completely understands me*

*Calling you helped me untie my mental knot and helped me think clearly*

*I can't believe how much talking to a complete stranger has helped*

## Yes, I'm ready to provide life-changing support to those in crisis

### Please accept my gift of:

\$25    \$50    \$100    My choice \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### My contact details\*:

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Street address: \_\_\_\_\_

Suburb: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

### I would like to make a recurring monthly gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please debit the credit card below\*\*. (You can change or cancel at any time.)

Please contact me to set up direct debit.

### My payment details:

Cheque made out to Wesley Mission OR

Please debit my credit card:    Visa    MasterCard    Amex

Card no.: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Name on card: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Online: [wesleymission.org.au/yourimpact](http://wesleymission.org.au/yourimpact)**

**Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible.**

Scan here to donate now



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