

Walking
TOGETHER



WESLEY MISSION ANNUAL REPORT 2024

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We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's First Peoples.

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the original and ongoing Custodians of the lands and waters on which we all live and work. We recognise the continuing sovereignty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the Australian states and territories where we have a presence, and their absolute right to self-determination. We pay our respects to all Elders – past, present and future generations – and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

Walking together

This year in Australia, life got harder for almost everyone because of the cost-of-living crisis, and people who were already struggling under inequity and disadvantage were hit the worst.

The effects were clear:

- many people who've never needed services like ours before reached out to us for help
- more people needed help from more than one of our services.

Wesley Mission has been driven to do all the good we can for 212 years, continuing the work of Jesus Christ in Word and deed. As people needed more help this year, our resources and resilience were stretched and tested.

But our commitment never wavered.

Inspired by each other, our faith and the strength, perseverance and joy of the people we help, we applied our skill and compassion to keep helping as many people in as many ways as we can.

Walking together with people across the difficult and the everyday moments of their lives is not only a job for us; it's a calling, and we're so grateful to be in it together.

From the Wesley Mission team to all the people we serve and our volunteers, partners and donors: thank you for all you contributed to the good we achieved together this year. With soft hearts, sharp minds, hard feet and open hands, we look forward to the year ahead.



Our Wesley Family Preservation team out walking on Darug Nation in Sydney to celebrate NAIDOC Week.



From left: Julz, Meena and Lisa, Wesley Youth Accommodation housing team.

A warm welcome from our Chair

Wesley Mission is filled with joy as we continue our walk, guided by our vision to ‘do all the good we can because every life matters’.



Michael Anderson
Chair of the Board
of Directors, Wesley
Community Services
Ltd

As you read through this report, I hope you are as encouraged as I am by the profound impact Wesley Mission is having. The stories of support and restoration are a testament to the difference we are making in the lives of many.

We have made this journey now for 212 years. Every day, our people and those we support remind me that practical care, combined with sharing hope and a sense of belonging, can make all the difference.

When we connect and help each other, we all thrive.

Our 2028 Strategic Plan, put in place last year, gives us the framework to be bold as we walk alongside people in everyday life and through challenges. It calls us to speak up for those who are not being heard. It guides our feet as we walk towards reconciliation with Australia’s First Nations and guides our voice to challenge societal harms like gambling addiction and housing inequality.

In April, Lifeline recorded its highest-ever number of calls and requests for help in a single day. This statistic is a stark reminder of the stakes we face. It galvanises us to put care into action.

So this year we had to make our resources go even further. Our team rose to the challenge by continuing their competent and compassionate support while innovating in service delivery and making difficult decisions when needed. These actions reflected our ongoing commitment and ability to steward our funds appropriately and boldly to support people who need our help.

We are fortunate to be supported by the trust invested in us by our government funders, partners and donors. We renewed several key contracts this year, including our contract administering the Escaping Violence Payment to support people leaving domestic violence and our Specialist Homelessness Services contract to help prevent people being discharged from mental health facilities into homelessness.

“**These actions reflected our ongoing commitment and ability to steward our funds appropriately and boldly to support people who need our help.**”

We also continued strong partnerships, some of which are highlighted in this report, and we received generous gifts from donors. One that stands out is that of an anonymous donor who dedicated his estate to helping people in their darkest moments by supporting Wesley Mission’s Lifeline Sydney & Sutherland 24/7 crisis centre.

I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to all our dedicated staff, volunteers, congregations, donors, supporters and partners. Together we meet people where they are and walk with them when they need us.



Volunteers at our Good Friday celebration in Martin Place.



Pokies piñata, Martin Place, Sydney. Gambling Harm Awareness Week hits back at gambling harm 'What's gambling costing you?'



With Rev Dr Rick Dacey.



Preaching at Hinterland Chapel on the far north coast.



With Maha Abdo from Muslim Women Australia.



Celebrating Terry's dedication and years of service at Wesley Mission.

A message from our CEO and Superintendent

What a blessing it is to do the work we do, to come alongside people at their point of need and empower them to live into a different, supported future.

As I reflect on the past year, I am so grateful that Wesley Mission continues to be given opportunities to serve.

I'm proud of our staff and volunteers, who went far above and beyond to help people facing tough times. Because of their compassion, people know they can turn to Wesley Mission when in need.

I'm humbled and inspired by the people we serve. Their courage and resilience strengthens my resolve to always keep our 'why' at the heart of all we do, inspired by Jesus' example of unconditional, powerful and transformative love.

And, I'm privileged to lead an organisation where the 'good' we do is life-changing, whether it's answering a crisis call, helping someone find a safe home or supporting a person with disability to gain meaningful employment.

With our mission to continue the work of Jesus Christ in Word and deed as our guiding star, and our strategic plan as our navigational pathway, we're making real impact.

Doing all the good we can

This report highlights outcomes we realised this year. For me, a few stand out.

First, we were able to support more than 160,000 people this year (compared to about 150,000 last year). This achievement is significant, given significant service delivery changes made across the period, limited funding sources and rising costs of living.

Second, our staff wellbeing and engagement grew for the third year in a row. Our people are always doing challenging

work that helps so many in our communities. Supporting and recognising them is a priority for us, and I'm pleased that our ongoing efforts are helping our team feel so well engaged.

Third, boldness and innovation are increasing across Wesley Mission. We made structural improvements in some of our service areas. We saw our people continually ask themselves 'How can I navigate barriers to make things better?', and then make positive changes happen. We also continued to advocate against systems that harm, most particularly the destructive excesses of the gambling industry.

Making tough decisions

The decision to close our mental health hospitals in Kogarah and Ashfield was a difficult one and not taken lightly. The struggles of the private hospital sector are well documented, and for some time, both hospitals ran at a significant loss, with low occupancy rates. Despite our prolonged and best efforts, to our great disappointment we were unable to sell the hospitals to another provider who could operate both facilities. As we closed those hospitals, we put the utmost priority on continuity of care for the patients.

Celebrating together

There is great joy in walking together with people.

This year, we supported more than 3,000 people who were experiencing homelessness, assisted more than 40,000 people through Lifeline Sydney & Sutherland and provided more than 223,000 hours of direct care to older people in their homes.



Rev Stu Cameron
CEO and Superintendent



Reflective of the rich legacy we've been entrusted, we also reached some milestone anniversaries, including 75 years for our Frank Vickery retirement living village, 50 years for the Wesley Aunties & Uncles mentorship program and 100 years of Wesley Dalmar Carlingford, which began as a children's home and today supports our many vital services.

I am so proud and grateful to share that last year we also finalised our first adoption as an accredited adoption agency, with more to come.

Looking ahead

As we continue to journey together, I'm honoured to work alongside people who embody our vision, mission and values as they serve with soft hands, sharp minds, hard feet and open hands.

At the heart of all we do is our Christian faith, which inspires us all – no matter our personal faith background – to connect, serve and support people who engage with Wesley Mission, from our services to our congregations.

Thank you for walking with us. It's through partnership that we can continue doing all the good we can and see more lives flourish.

Year in Review: Our 212th year of action

Throughout 2023 – 2024, we continued partnering with donors, funders, volunteers and the people we serve to work toward our 2028 Strategic Plan, which outlines a bold vision for our continuing mission.

Strengthening and supporting our team

Our team demonstrated commitment, care, ingenuity and resilience this year to help more people. Both staff and volunteers are continually responding to a surge in need, and supporting them is our priority. We invested \$1.7 million in staff development and continued working on areas our team would like to see us improve, such as greater recognition, better non-monetary benefits and improved systems. We're proud that our employees' engagement and wellbeing have grown for the third consecutive year and our retention rate is more than 8 per cent higher than the industry average. See page 36.



Staff being celebrated on Aged Care Worker Appreciation Day

Walking with families, children and young people

39,000+
people

More than 39,000 people were supported with our foster care, youth mentorship

and other programs for families, children and young people. We proudly completed our first adoption as an accredited adoption agency. Their journey reflects the strength of their bond and our commitment to walk with them. See page 10.

Walking with people in housing and financial hardship

5,000+
people

This year, more than 3,000 people experiencing homelessness were supported with safe

and stable crisis and transitional housing. We also secured an extension for a program that's designed to prevent discharges from mental health facilities into homelessness. Amid financial hardship, more than 2,000 people accessed our financial supports. See page 14.

Walking with people toward better mental health

65,000+
people

In times of crisis, more than 40,000 people turned to our Lifeline Sydney & Sutherland helpline for support this year. Wesley LifeForce continued to train and support individuals, workplaces, healthcare

professionals and community networks to prevent suicide – training more than 3,000 people and providing targeted support for refugee and asylum seeker communities. Our GambleAware helpline responded to more than 22,000 calls from people affected by gambling harm. See page 21.



Walking and journeying with people with disability

200+
people

More than 200 people living with disability were supported or employed by Wesley Mission this year. Our David Morgan Centre proudly celebrated more than 50 years of employing people with disability. See page 25.

Walking with older people

Accessing services across Wesley Mission, many older people were supported this year. More than 3,000 older people were helped to live independently in their homes as we provided more than 223,000 hours of direct care. By optimising our structure, we were able to provide more specialised care to older people and recognise our aged care workers with a deserved 15 per cent salary increase. Our retirement living villages continue to be distinguished by unique supports such as mental health and resilience programs, and 24-hour emergency response by trained onsite staff. See page 29.

Walking in Christian community

Our church congregations and missional communities continue to serve people who identify as Christians or who are exploring faith, as well as those simply seeking connection or support. The supports offered by our congregations are integral across Wesley Mission, providing tangible help like referrals to community services as well as chaplaincy, prayer and individualised support. See page 34.



→ People assisted

160,535

Families & children services	30,404
Teenager & young adult services	9,190
Home care services	6,537
Senior & aged care services	1,171
Hospital services	4,248
Housing & accommodation services	3,546
Community, schools & partnership services	3,983
Mental health services	28,588
Suicide prevention services	43,099
Training & job services	6,966
Venue & catering services	22,420
Disability support services	383

Note: Many people access more than one service.

Our mission

Continuing the work of Jesus Christ in Word and deed.



Our vision

A Spirit-led disciple-making movement: doing all the good we can because every life matters.

Our values

Soft hearts

We put people first. We're here to show love, compassion, respect and gentleness in the way we care for each other and the people we serve.

Sharp minds

We challenge the status quo and share bold ideas. We find new ways to respond to people's needs and to pursue justice.

Hard feet

We persevere. We speak up for those who don't feel heard, raise our voice on what matters and go to the fringes to serve people from all walks of life.

Open hands

We're passionate about extending our legacy together. We want to see real change and to 'be the change' that helps people most in need.



Walking with families, children and young people

→ **39k+**
people built
stronger foundations
using our supports for
families, children and
young people

Strong foundations are vital to bright futures. We help families be supportive and nurturing units, and walk with parents, foster carers, children and young people to ensure children and young people have safe homes and the love, care and support they need.

Many of our family support programs are delivered in partnership with the NSW Government. Additional support comes from the generosity of our partners, donors and volunteers.

We support:

- families to stay together, and children and young people to be safe, with early intervention and evidence-based parenting programs
- children and young people to be placed in safe and loving foster care homes when they need it, and to maintain connection with their birth families
- young people to grow up healthy, with mentorship, guidance and intervention for drug and alcohol usage and life skills programs
- people experiencing intimate partner and family violence with secure housing and financial support through our Escaping Violence Payment.

More than 3,000 children and young people stayed with their families in safer circumstances

This year our Wesley Family Preservation team, which provides early intervention and evidence-based parenting programs to help families stay together, supported more than 800 families and more than 3,000 children and young people – this is three-and-a-half times more children than last year. Among the families were 120 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

The care, structure and supports provided by our team help strengthen families. A key measure of success is the number of families that no longer need our immediate support. This year, 120 families reached their defined goals and exited our program.

Wesley Family Preservation is committed to building life-long loving networks for children and looks forward to seeing more families remain together and achieve their goals.

More than 500 people opened their homes to a child who needed safety, stability and care

Children and young people may need foster care for a short period, or for longer. Wesley Mission partners with the NSW Government to provide emergency, short-term, long-term and specialist care for children and young people.

We match Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people with carers who are connected to their communities and cultures. We provide aftercare support for young people who have previously been in care (until they're 25 years old) and supplement our foster care with wraparound services, ensuring direct access to education and clinical specialists.

This year, 531 carers across New South Wales stepped up to support 798 children needing foster care.

Supported at every moment by our skilled case workers, our foster carers provided safe homes, stability and care for vulnerable children who are often confused, afraid and carrying a history of trauma and mistrust of adults.

This year, we expanded our short-term emergency care to northern New South Wales and continued to focus on increasing the number of carers available to support children, particularly in regional New South Wales. We also focused on maintaining our quality of care despite constrained government budgets and cost-of-living increases.

The commitment, hard work and innovative thinking of our staff allow us to find the balance and maintain quality care, but it's not easy.

We remain focused on bringing new foster carers into Wesley Mission so vulnerable children in the child protection system can be placed in safe, stable and caring homes.

This year we cooperated in audits undertaken by the NSW Auditor General to assess how effectively the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) oversees the child protection system and safeguards the rights of Aboriginal children and young people. While the audits primarily focused on DCJ, they also assessed non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that provide services on its behalf, including Wesley Mission. The audits were released in June 2024 and didn't cite any specific issues with our services. We strongly support the recommendations and their intent to improve outcomes for children and families. We provided a formal response that affirmed the recommendations and our willingness to participate in any reforms that arise from them.

Children kept connected to their birth families

Wesley Keeping Connected helps ensure that children and young people in foster care can spend valuable time with their birth families. We understand that challenges like transportation and supervision can make it difficult to maintain these important connections. Wesley Keeping Connected removes those barriers by providing suitable activities, required supervision and safe transport, all designed to nurture these vital family bonds.

Late this year, we began exploring opportunities to expand Wesley Keeping Connected to meet the needs of children and families in the community who aren't connected to Wesley Foster Care.

Young people were supported to build healthy, successful lives

We continued to empower young people through supported independent living opportunities and by working with more than 400 young people aged 15 and over through Wesley Take Charge of Your Life. Our goal is to help them successfully transition out of foster care and equip them with the life skills they need to thrive on their own. Young people seized these opportunities, taking up courses, traineeships and certificate-level studies. We also continued to support young people with guidance and intervention for drug and alcohol usage and other issues.

Did you know? Foster carers can:

- be single or have a partner
- be from any culture or religion
- have their own children
- own or rent their home
- be working or not, studying or retired.

Could you be a foster carer?



Scan the QR code to learn more.



Walking with families, children and young people

Two children were adopted into their permanent home, as we expanded our adoption expertise

In May 2024, after a process that formally began in 2017, we finalised our first adoption as an accredited adoption agency. This milestone marks an exciting achievement in a long journey that accelerated over the last few years as we enhanced our adoption expertise. Our goal has always been to facilitate quicker resolutions for adoption matters while ensuring better processes and outcomes for both children and adoptive parents. By increasing our expertise in adoption, we're also reducing our reliance on external agencies.

Wesley Aunties & Uncles mentored 152 children over the year

Wesley Aunties & Uncles is a mentoring program that matches children facing disadvantage with a mentor 'aunty' or 'uncle' who invests in their lives and provides mentoring, care and guidance under a long-term commitment to stay involved.

This year, we had 152 children matched with aunties and uncles, and celebrated the 50th anniversary of this incredible program.

Wesley Aunties & Uncles continues to grow, and next year we intend to support even more children.

The Escaping Violence Payment became completely operational

Launched by the Australian Government in 2021, the Escaping Violence Payment (EVP) helps people aged 18 and older who've recently experienced intimate partner domestic violence, have a changed living situation and are experiencing financial stress.

Wesley Mission is the not-for-profit organisation administering the program in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory in partnership with Uniting Vic. Tas. This year, the EVP program at Wesley Mission moved from a 'pilot' phase to full operation. We also joined with the government and its other partners to tackle financial fraud and ensure EVP funds reach the people who need them. We strengthened our internal controls and worked with others to combat fraud across the state, participating in bi-monthly Fraud and Risk Governance meetings and problem-solving with other EVP providers to safeguard against fraud.

Our commitment to putting people first and providing high-quality support was recognised by the government with a renewal of our contract to administer the EVP until June 2025.

Celebrating a loving and open family

The story of our first adoption is one of profound love and resilience. At its heart is a dedicated single mother and her two adopted daughters, who, despite not being related by birth and coming from different cultural backgrounds, have forged an unbreakable bond.

The adoption was an incredibly difficult road, but the adoptive mum – who has been a foster carer with Wesley Mission for almost 15 years and has cared for 20 children in foster care – was determined.

"I looked at those two little girls, and I couldn't give up," she says.

Both girls entered her care when they were less than two years old. The adoption was completed more than 10 years later.

"When I received the phone call that we had the date for court for the adoption to be finalised, I just cried. We all cried ... knowing we had done it," she says.

The girls feared their adoption might never be finalised or they would age out of the system before it happened. These worries ended when the Supreme Court of NSW decision assured them they could stay together.

The mother's family, along with the girls' birth families, remain actively involved in their lives through an open adoption.



“We’re very much appreciative of everything that they’ve done, and we couldn’t ask for a better team.”
– Christina*

Love is found in foster care

Every morning Christina* and Jason* awake to Lachlan’s* little footsteps running down the hallway before he hops into their bed.

“He gives big cuddles and he’s like, ‘I love you, Mummy and Daddy,’” Christina smiles.

Two-and-a-half-years ago, Christina and Jason’s hearts expanded with love when they began fostering Lachlan with Wesley Foster Care in Ballina.

“He’s just the most loving little man,” Christina says. “Anyone that’s upset, he’ll go give them a cuddle and ask if they’re okay,” Christina says.

Lachlan, who’s been in foster care since he was born, entered Christina and Jason’s care on a long-term placement at just two years old. And their bond was immediate.

“We were instantly just Mum and Dad,” Christina says.

And that bond grows every day. “He brings so much joy to our lives... he’s made us kind of look at the world out of a different view.”

Whether they’re having dance parties or family picnics in the lounge room, every day brings a sense of adventure. But alongside these adventures have been significant challenges.

Diagnosed with autism and foetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD), Lachlan was born with significant brain damage. Since starting occupational and speech therapies, Lachlan has grown from strength to strength.

“He’s come so far in the last two-and-a-half years, says Christina. “His emotional regulation is always going to be a big thing. But he can tell us how he’s feeling now.”

Christina and Jason say they’ve found the strength to navigate these challenges thanks to Wesley Foster Care’s support.

“It can be very difficult at times but with the right support, it is a lot easier,” Christina says.

From organising doctors to autism and FASD training and financial aid, Christina is thankful for the support they’ve received from their Wesley Foster Care Case Manager, Adam. And knowing that Adam and the whole team at Wesley Foster Care Ballina are just a phone call away, gives Christina peace of mind that support is always available.

“We’re very much appreciative of everything that they’ve done, and we couldn’t ask for a better team.”

Every Saturday when Christina and Jason take Lachlan to ballet lessons, Christina is filled with pride as she watches Lachlan become his own little person.

“We just hope that he knows that he’s loved, he’s safe and he can be himself without any judgement from us,” says Christina.

*Names and photo changed to protect privacy.

Walking with people in housing and financial hardship

Life can shift unexpectedly, reminding us that the line between stability and hardship is thinner than we might think. In those moments, we need compassion and support to build ourselves up and get ready for what's next.

We support:

- people experiencing homelessness or lacking housing, with access to short- or long-term housing
- people needing relief in times of financial hardship, with emergency support
- people to take control of their finances, with financial counselling and support programs
- job seekers with jobs, training and job readiness programs.





Experiencing homelessness after a stroke, Jason (left) was provided safe housing at Wesley Edward Eagar Centre. Andy (right) was a key support to Jason as he rebuilt his life. See story on page 18.

Walking with people in housing and financial hardship

→ **90%**

of people in our tenancies said their lives had improved

97%

of people we helped felt well treated

84%

of people we helped felt better equipped to handle issues

500 people and families were safely and affordably housed

Amid the housing crisis, we ensured 500 families and individuals had safe places to call home through transitional or permanent housing – leveraging our 317 properties and our partnerships with government departments, other non-governmental organisations and other service providers.

Within our housing communities, we worked alongside tenants to create thriving communities. Community clean-up days, activities and Bible studies are regular events. New partnerships formed this year with Habitat for Humanity and Brush with Kindness helped improve community collaboration and facilities.

We secured \$5 million from the Community Housing Innovation Fund this year to grow our housing portfolio by purchasing 13 two-bedroom units on the mid-to-far north coast of New South Wales. We also secured a grant that gives tenants aged 50 and older support to address hoarding and squalor conditions in their homes.

Looking ahead, it will be essential for us to secure further funding, because there's no sign of the housing and cost-of-living crisis abating.



Wesley Community Housing gardening day at Ashcroft.

More than 3,000 people in need had a safe and warm bed

As the housing crisis grew, we stretched our resources to help as many people as possible. More than 3,000 people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness received support, and 1,000 of these people were provided with crisis or transitional housing. In total, Wesley Mission provided more than 100,000 nights of accommodation over the year.

Among the people we helped, 97 per cent felt well treated and 84 per cent felt better equipped to handle issues for which they sought help.

We worked to establish an accommodation and support service for women and their children leaving violence in Sydney and supported an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation to hopefully establish a similar service regionally.

We secured a two-year extension of our eight Specialist Homelessness Services contracts with the NSW Government Department of Communities and Justice and secured additional emergency relief funding from the Department of Social Services to support people facing financial hardship through partnerships with first-to-know providers throughout the state.

Our Specialist Homelessness Services contract with the NSW Government, delivering the Mental Health-Homelessness In-Reach Service (MH-HIRS), aims to break the cycle of homelessness and prevent discharges from mental health facilities into homelessness.

It launched as a pilot in 2022 and has now been extended. Wesley Mission is providing the program in the Sydney and South Eastern Sydney Local Health Districts.

Encouraging outcomes to date include:

- some hospital stays and discharges slowed to achieve better housing and support outcomes
- better trust and rapport in some cases where people admitted to in-patient care have an existing relationship with the MH-HIRS specialist homelessness support worker
- strong positive feedback from Local Health Districts, patients and patients' families.



Tenants are cooking tasty meals with fresh ingredients from their community garden.

Communal garden + cooking classes = community and delicious food

The popular Paddock to Plate project in our housing communities was delivered in partnership with the Community Greening Team at The Royal Botanic Gardens. They supported tenants to grow their own food and attend cooking classes to learn how to use the produce in delicious, homecooked meals.

Our staff and volunteers are responding to the surge in homelessness, but funding has not come close to keeping pace with the need. Helping our people to maintain hope – especially when those we walk with may not be able to – is more crucial than ever. Helping ensure they maintain their health and resilience is our priority, alongside our efforts to secure additional funding to help people experiencing homelessness.

Walking with people in housing and financial hardship

Jason's road to recovery

When Jason suddenly had a stroke at home, his life instantly came tumbling down. "I was blind and deaf. My blood pressure was that high and I just couldn't cope," Jason says.

Rushed to the hospital, after surgery, Jason's sight and hearing began to return but he still had a long recovery ahead. For Jason, this meant significant life changes.

Before his stroke, Jason was living with a friend. But after his health dived, Jason couldn't return home because he now needed intensive care support.

"I was only 60 kilos. I wasn't eating properly and couldn't function properly. I had nowhere to go, no one to see or talk to," Jason says.

That's when Wesley Edward Eagar Centre stepped in and offered him a place to stay while recovering. What began as a short stay ended up being two years.

"He's probably one of the longest residents we've had here. We pride ourselves on not having a time cap on how long people can stay. The majority leave when it's right for them," says Andy, Wesley Edward Eagar Centre and Inner City Program and Practice Manager.

Finding support

While Jason doesn't remember much from when he first arrived, he was blown away by the friendly, caring staff.

"I was confused for a while because I wasn't well. It took me a long time just to wake up and realise, wow, these people are really great to me."

Jason says he owes his life to the Wesley Edward Eagar Centre team. And he is truly thankful for them, especially Andy – a bond that's sustained beyond Jason's stay at the Centre.

"Without Andy and the team, I wouldn't have recovered otherwise. And Andy, I'll never forget him. Can't get rid of him now," Jason smiles.

It's a sentiment that Andy echoes.

"It seems as though I've known him all my life," says Andy. "It was always a pleasure going to work knowing that his smiling face was going to be there."

But it's not just Andy and his team that Jason appreciates. It's his wider community. Jason formed friendships with many residents at the Centre, including three close friends, and together they were known as 'the gang'. Jason also knew everyone in the local neighbourhood while living at the Centre.

"I've never known a resident to set up that many tabs at different shops. He's got that much charm about him," Andy says.

A new chapter

When the time came for Jason to leave Wesley Edward Eagar Centre, Andy and the team supported Jason to find a permanent home in Glebe. They also helped Jason furnish it to make his place feel like home, including a bed, fridge, washing machine and many more household appliances.

"They got me all brand-new stuff. It was great," Jason says.

While Jason's health has come a long way, Jason says his approach to recovery is step-by-step. Now Jason can do that thanks to funds from the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). From cooking to cleaning and a Support Worker who takes him to medical appointments and equine therapy, Jason feels he has everything he needs to live and recover independently in his home.

"We ensured Jason had the support in place through NDIS to help him every day. Because Jason wouldn't have thrived just anywhere. That's why he was with us so long," Andy explains.

Jason has settled into his new home and has already opened tabs at all the local coffee shops. And knowing Andy is just a phone call away fills Jason with peace that someone is looking out for him.

“ Without Andy and the team,
I wouldn't have recovered
otherwise.” – Jason



Jason is recovering his health after a stroke, and has moved from crisis accommodation at Wesley Edward Eagar Centre to a permanent home in Glebe.

Walking with people in housing and financial hardship

During financial hardship, more than 2,100 people improved their financial literacy and had financial counselling

Using our confidential financial supports, 2,178 people took control of their finances this year. Our financial counselling and financial literacy programs help people get back on track financially.

Our financial counsellors provide intensive support that begins with an in-depth assessment of a person's financial situation to understand the extent of their financial difficulties and identify options to address these. The counsellor then supports with information, advocacy and in some cases negotiation to address immediate financial problems and help the individual build longer-term capacity and minimise their risk of future problems. Our approach to financial counselling is a partnership with the person being helped, ensuring their full participation in the planning and decision-making process.

We also offer financial literacy programs to help people in marginalised communities increase financial literacy. These programs address systemic and generational causes of homelessness. In collaboration with Count Charitable Foundation, we offer the In Charge of My Money service, which builds financial confidence, resilience and wellbeing through improved financial knowledge and financial counselling (see page 43).

Holistic supports helped people find employment paths

Across all the moments in people's lives where we offer help, one of our holistic supports is helping people access employment opportunities. We understand the barriers people face, such as living with disability or experiencing homelessness, and can offer direct support – for example, our job readiness programs – or link them to local supports or with our network of partners. Our focus is on helping people access and secure the level of employment they want, to support their individual goals and independence.

Enterprises for good

Wesley Conference Centre and catering – standout events that give back

In the heart of the Sydney CBD, Wesley Conference Centre is a standout events venue whose profits support the community services provided by Wesley Mission.

The accessible and modern centre has full audio-visual services, hybrid event solutions, a state-of-the-art recording studio, strong branding opportunities and full catering. Flexible spaces – including our large theatre – make it ideal for major corporate events and graduations as well as smaller sessions. Our sustainability features and commitments help minimise the environmental footprint.

This year, the centre hosted almost 25,000 people attending almost 300 events for both commercial and non-profit organisations.

Dove Café – good food, great coffee, incredible staff

A standby in the Ballina community in the Northern Rivers region of New South Wales, the Dove Ballina serves seasonal food, specialty coffee and artisanal drinks using locally sourced and ethical produce.

Even better than the food is the fact that the café is staffed by young people who are transitioning out of foster care. The café is a springboard to training programs, job readiness and social support that has been helping young people succeed since it opened.

For details on our David Morgan Centre enterprises, see page 28.



Elizabeth, Lifeline Sydney & Sutherland volunteer Crisis Supporter.

Walking with people towards better mental health

People who struggle with mental health often feel that nothing in their lives is certain, even themselves. We're here to be with people through this struggle – listening and understanding, supporting without judgement and helping them find and take the next positive step.

We support:

- people struggling with mental health, with pathways to help across all our services
- people in crisis and those at risk of suicide, with the Lifeline Sydney & Sutherland helpline
- people affected by gambling harm, with support, counselling and advocacy against gambling harm.

→ **40k**
crisis calls
answered by Lifeline
Sydney & Sutherland

6
new languages
in the Refugee
and Asylum Seeker
Suicide Prevention
program, for launch
next year

34
community networks
across NSW supported
and resourced to
prevent suicide locally

22k
calls answered
by GambleAware
Helpline to address
gambling harm

>3,100
people trained in
suicide prevention

Walking with people towards better mental health

More than 40,000 people were helped when they were affected by suicide

Suicide is preventable, and it's essential that people access support when they need it. In 2020 – 2022, one in six Australians aged 16 – 85 years experienced suicidal thoughts or behaviours in their lives.¹

Lifeline was created at Wesley Mission by Sir Rev Alan Walker in 1963, and the legacy of supporting people affected by suicide continues in our operation of Lifeline Sydney & Sutherland and our Wesley LifeForce suicide prevention program.

Lifeline Sydney & Sutherland responded to 40,181 crisis calls for help this year, and Wesley LifeForce continued to:

- support and resource community networks to prevent suicide
- train workplaces, community members and healthcare professionals in suicide prevention and mental health to reduce stigma and shame associated with suicide and reduce the incidence of suicide in Australia
- offer community memorial services for those suffering the loss of a loved one to suicide.

More than 3,100 people were trained by Wesley LifeForce this year in 255 workshops across Australia. This included two new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander accredited instructors who delivered suicide prevention training to their communities in the Australian Capital Territory.

We continued our Train the Trainer program for refugee and asylum seeker communities, which began in 2021. This year, we partnered with community organisations – including the NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors and SBS Translation Services – to prepare our Refugee & Asylum Seeker Suicide Prevention program in Arabic, Dari, Farsi, Karen, Khmer and Tamil for launch next year.

Our Wesley Suicide Memorial Service in Adelaide in April supported 75 people who gathered to remember and honour the lives of loved ones lost to suicide. Shortly thereafter, we hosted our National Suicide Prevention Conference, an annual event empowering our staff and networks with knowledge and new connections for preventing suicide in Australia.

More than 22,000 people were helped when they were affected by gambling harm

Gambling is a public health problem in Australia; Australians lose almost \$32 billion a year, or about \$88 million a day, on gambling and wagering.²

GambleAware is a NSW Government-funded program that provides therapeutic and financial counselling support to people impacted by gambling harm. Wesley Mission operates the service in Northern Sydney and the Central Coast.

Wesley Mission is also funded to provide the GambleAware Helpline, which is a statewide, 24/7 phone response. The helpline offers immediate support, brief solution-focused counselling and referrals to local providers who support with ongoing individualised gambling or financial counselling. For callers who are not ready to fully engage in ongoing counselling, or those seeking information to support a loved one, the helpline also provides self-help information that can be sent via text message or email. This information aims to build awareness and understanding about gambling harm, urge management strategies and services that might support those impacted by gambling harm, including multi-venue self-exclusion.

This year our GambleAware helpline received more than 22,000 calls, initiated 2,200 referrals for gambling and financial counselling and sent 1,458 self-help emails/messages.

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics 2020-2022, *National Study of Mental Health and Wellbeing*, ABS, 5 October 2023, accessed 15 September 2024. www.abs.gov.au/statistics/health/mental-health/national-study-mental-health-and-wellbeing/2020-2022

² Australian Gambling Statistics, 39th edition, 1997-98 to 2022-23, Queensland Government Statistician's Office, 2024, accessed 15 September 2024. <https://www.qgso.qld.gov.au/issues/2646/australian-gambling-statistics-39th-edn-1997-98-2022-23-state-tables.pdf>

Ryan reclaims his life after betting away his football career

Every week, 15-year-old Ryan saved his school lunch money so he could gamble at the TAB.

Although he was dressed in his school uniform, shockingly, no one ever stopped Ryan from walking into a TAB or even checked his ID. “I was addicted before 18, and then it was a very slippery slope from that,” Ryan says.

Playing rugby league all through high school, Ryan was highly talented and on track for a professional football career. After school, he signed a contract with a prestigious professional team.

But Ryan’s gambling addiction was bubbling underneath his seemingly perfect life. Often losing his pay cheque in three days, gambling became all-consuming. “If I had a bad night on the punt, I didn’t sleep well, and I couldn’t stop thinking about chasing those losses or how to get that money back,” Ryan says. The slippery gambling slope cost Ryan his professional football career.

From stealing money to being in trouble with the police, Ryan lived in denial about his gambling addiction, losing several relationships. It was his ex-partner who brought Ryan along to GambleAware counselling.

“I thought it was like a couples counselling thing.

So, it caught me off guard on the first day,” Ryan shares. But after meeting GambleAware Counsellor Pat, all of Ryan’s fears settled.

“She just made it a safe place. She helped me understand my emotions, what triggers me and what to do when I’ve got these triggers.” Since then, Ryan has been meeting with Pat every week.

“She’s a very good listener, and she just lets me speak. It’s just amazing to be able to talk to someone about it all.”

Ryan no longer lives from pay cheque to pay cheque. He’s learnt how to save and is saving to go on holiday. He’s now sharing his story to encourage others to seek out life-changing support from GambleAware. “You get someone to talk to who’s non-judgmental, who understands gambling and who understands what you’re going through.

“It’s a safe place where you can communicate how much you’re struggling. I would encourage anyone to reach out for it.”

Making progress in minimising gambling harm

This year, we continued our campaign to minimise gambling harm, and we're now widely acknowledged as the leading voice advocating for gambling reform in New South Wales.

Achievements this year

Building on our November 2022 reform package launch at Parliament House, we've continued to engage like-minded organisations with our advocacy movement. Our expertise and authority mean we're invited to sit on advisory groups and reference panels as New South Wales moves to a new era in gambling regulation. We're shaping the advice the government receives and changing the way the public service operates, particularly by insisting that voices of lived experience are included side-by-side with Wesley Mission in consultations.

Our CEO and Superintendent Rev Stu Cameron continues his advocacy on the government's Independent Panel on Gambling Reform, which is evaluating a pre-implementation trial of technology to make poker machines cashless. Our advocacy staff sit on the External Advisory Group for the planned statewide exclusion register. This initiative was one of our five key reform recommendations, and its successful implementation demonstrates the importance, value and power of our advocacy.

Our lobbying has also changed the landscape, inspiring a cultural change within the Department of Liquor and Gaming to greater transparency and an increased concern for gambling harm minimisation. A measure of our success has been the recent announcement that New South Wales will start publishing poker machine losses on a quarterly basis, rather than half-yearly. This is a step in our goal towards full venue-by-venue disclosure.

It's harder than ever in New South Wales to get approval for new poker machines in venues, and two councils have taken steps to act on the impact of gambling in their local communities. Northern Beaches Council renewed its policy, following Wesley Mission's work to increase the number of submissions in support. As a result, we're auspicing a local consortium of church and community groups to hold a roundtable on gambling impact. Lane Cove Council is supporting its two bowling clubs, which lease council land, to divest from poker machines altogether.

→ **38**
partner
organisations

3,300
committed
supporters

3
local community
action groups

Our aims for 2023 – 2027

We're aiming our advocacy toward:

- introducing a mandatory cashless gambling card with harm-reduction measures
- powering down poker machines between midnight and 10am
- launching an independent statewide self-exclusion register paid for by the gambling industry
- letting local communities have the right to make submissions about poker machine applications in their area through Councils
- gaining more transparency on venue-by-venue gambling data to inform policy and public health responses.

Walking and journeying with people living with disability

Communities are richer when they include everyone. By walking together in all circumstances, we forge communities where everyone lives with dignity, independence and connection.

We support:

- people with disability to access support available as part of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and other services as needed
- people with disability to find and maintain meaningful work.



190

people with disability accessed
our NDIS-funded services

90

people with disability employed
in our David Morgan Centre enterprises

6

young people successfully moved
from therapeutic accommodation
into an adult living community



From left: Helen and Hugh, Wesley LifeSkills team.

Walking and journeying with people living with disability

People with disability were safe and independent at home, and connected in their communities

People living with disability access a full range of supports from Wesley Mission:

- purpose-built homes for a safe, comfortable environment
- one-on-one support and group activities to develop friendships and grow skills, confidence and independence
- meaningful and flexible employment and training opportunities in a range of commercial and business services
- disability employment support
- home modifications and property maintenance to make life at home easier and safer
- domestic assistance with household chores
- social support to make new connections in the community through activities like book clubs, hobby groups, day trips and community lunches.

In addition to the supports we offer as a registered NDIS provider, we partner with the NSW Department of Communities and Justice to operate a therapeutic accommodation program for people under 18 who have significant disability and have experienced trauma in their lives.

This year, we made improvements in the program to reduce incidents and further support young people in developing the skills they need to live independently. We also celebrated the success of six young people who 'graduated' from the program and moved to live in an adult community, enjoying their best lives with the assistance of NDIS funding.

Next year we look forward to developing and growing our service delivery options to extend further geographically and to help more people with disability.

Closing two mental health hospitals, we directed our efforts to other supports

In March 2024, following an exhaustive pursuit of options to keep them open, we announced that our Ashfield and Kogarah private mental health hospitals would close. Occupancy rates at the two facilities had remained unsustainably low for some time, with the facilities operating at a loss. To direct our funds appropriately, we made the difficult decision to close the hospitals and continue our other mental health supports.

As we closed the facilities, we ensured patients could continue care with their existing psychologists and psychiatrists at alternate locations, and facilitated a transition to other services as smoothly as possible. The closure of these facilities was nonetheless a real difficulty for patients and their loved ones, dedicated staff who had served the facilities over the years and the wider community. We acknowledged this as we walked through the process with the people affected.

We believe that it's unacceptable for anyone who needs mental health care to go without that care, and we do our best to direct our supports where they can best fulfil our vision of doing all the good we can.

Shane finds his voice

When Shane belts out the lyrics to his favourite song, his voice soars through the room. But that wasn't always the case.

When Shane first came to the 'Green Room' at Wesley Mission Clarence Valley, which supports people with disability to build life skills and become more independent, he was quiet and withdrawn. He struggled to join words together to make sentences and refused to join group activities or conversations.

"When you asked him if he wanted to join a group activity, he would stay seated firmly or he'd just walk away," explains Donna, Green Room Service Team Leader. "When he did speak, he wasn't speaking in sentences, just disconnected words and phrases. It was really hard to understand what he was trying to say."

Shane also struggled with fine motor skills and couldn't hold a paintbrush or use utensils while he ate.

"He was having to eat with his hands. We gave him something to eat that had paper wrapped around it, and he ate the paper instead of removing it," Donna says.

Now, after a year at Wesley Mission, Shane is thriving. He's able to eat with a fork, knife and spoon – and he cooks his own meals. Every week, Shane makes a shopping list, buys groceries with Donna and prepares nutritional lunches. He's also become an avid painter.

Most importantly, he is now joining in conversations. To encourage Shane to develop his speaking skills, Donna and her team discussed his favourite NRL team with him – the Roosters.

"He's come a long way. He can say everyone's name now. He knows who I am and says 'hello'. He's learning more words and he's starting to use sentences," Donna says.



Shane used to struggle with fine motor skills; now, he cooks his own meals.

Shane has grown from strength to strength thanks to our dedicated Green Room staff.

"We kept including him and consistently tried to get him to join the activities. We just made him feel welcome, encouraged him and praised him for every new skill he developed," explains Donna.

The consistency has paid off. Seeing Shane thrive is a joy for Donna and her team. Shane has increased his attendance at the Green Room from one to four days a week and the smile on his face every day shows how much he enjoys being there.

“ He seems quite happy. He chats away to the other participants, and he's got some mates now,” Donna says.

For Donna and the team, the most memorable part of Shane's journey was fulfilling his dream of visiting a fire truck.

"He loves fire engines. So, we made a trip, especially for Shane, to a fire station where he got to sit in the truck. He had a really good day."

And that's the team's mission – to ensure every day is a good day for Shane and others who attend the Green Room.

Walking and journeying with people living with disability

50+ years of meaningful work for people living with disability

People with disability are less likely to be employed than people without disability – only 53.4 per cent of people with disability aged 15 – 64 are participating in the labour force, compared to 84.1 per cent of people without disability.³

Since 1973, Wesley Mission's David Morgan Centre (DMC) has been providing meaningful employment for people living with disability. At DMC, people with an intellectual disability work in a supported environment, develop their skills and achieve their employment goals.

DMC operates as a commercially-run enterprise, providing packing, cleaning and gardening services to commercial customers and internal customers within Wesley Mission.

This year, the DMC employed more than 90 people, completed 590 jobs for 27 customers and provided cleaning and gardening services at 333 sites.

In February, the exceptional environment created for employees at DMC was spotlighted by Channel Nine on *A Current Affair*. "It's been dubbed Australia's happiest workplace, simply because no one wants to leave," they said, citing employees who've been employed at DMC for 30, 40 and even 50 years.

We continued to improve the employee experience this year, introducing improved work health and safety processes and protections for employees and the service.



From left: Rev Stu Cameron and Terry.

Terry celebrates 50 years of employment with DMC

It's difficult to believe that one employee has served at DMC almost since it opened its doors in 1973 – but that's exactly what Terry has done. His first day at DMC was at age 17, and this year he celebrated 50 years on the job.

Terry also isn't alone in his long tenure. Several other employees have clocked up more than 30 years.

³ Australian Human Rights Commission, *Employment for people with disability in Australia*, n.d., accessed 15 September 2024. humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights/employment-for-people-with-disability-Australia#_ednref21



Annareta, resident at Alan Walker Village.

Walking with older people

Communities need older people, and older people need communities. We help older people stay connected to communities and opportunities to keep growing, learning and evolving as they age. We also provide essential care and support as their needs change.

We support:

- older people with home care, including domestic assistance, personal care, social support, transport and respite
- older people to learn new skills and participate in a range of activities at Wesley School for Seniors
- older people who live in our community- and lifestyle-oriented retirement villages.

→ **>3k**
people supported
to live in their own homes,
with in-home care

223k
hours of direct care
to older Australians

28k
hours of coordination
and administration
to support in-home care

Walking with older people

More than 3,000 older Australians received support and care at home

We help older Australians maintain their independence and live in their own homes. This year, we restructured our in-home care to better meet the changing needs of older people, making our service more functional and also more focused on specialisation. We increased our staff training and adopted more robust risk assessment, incident investigation and reporting systems.

These changes allowed us to maximise our funding across New South Wales' North West, South and Far North Coast regions that we serve and – critically – to increase the salaries of our aged care workers by 15 per cent. This salary increase reflects the value of our team's work and helps us attract and retain the most skilled workforce.

We also began a program that's focused on improving staff retention in this critical area, where disruption of support workers affects the people we're helping.

We helped more than 500 older people receive aged care and community support


We also support vulnerable older people to access Australian Government aged care services and supports, as a partner in the government's CareFinder program. Our support:

- helps people understand and access aged care
- connects people with supports in their communities
- helps people who require intensive support.

This year through CareFinder we supported 581 people, and about 200 of them needed intensive support with aged care services, housing and advocacy. Among these, 52 per cent were female and 7 per cent were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people.

Residents in our retirement villages continue to enjoy their homes and flexible supports

More than 400 residents live in Frank Vickery Village and Alan Walker Village, our two retirement villages. The villages act as communities within the wider community.

 **The best part about my role is making a difference in residents' days and putting a smile on their faces.”**
– Kayla, staff member, Frank Vickery Village

This year, we continued to offer residents strong quality-of-life benefits, flexible supports and critical services like 24-hour emergency response by trained, onsite staff.

We also overhauled and improved fire safety measures at the two villages and continued working on the redevelopment of Frank Vickery Village, which celebrated its 75th year. After significant foundational work on the redevelopment, we gained approvals to proceed to the detailed business case. We hope this will lead to a Development Application next year.

Supporting older people's mental wellbeing

As Lead Mental Health Clinician, Jason is on site and fully integrated in Wesley Mission's two retirement living villages. This helps him and his team build relationships.

“Along with free, unlimited, one-on-one and group counselling, we support community projects, helping residents connect with one another and adjust to their new environment,” Jason says transitioning from the family home to a retirement living unit can be challenging.

“Often people leave behind memories when they leave their family home. We try to connect with them between eight and 10 weeks after they've moved into the village. It gives us an opportunity to see how they're adjusting,” Jason says.



Danny (left) and his wife Margaret (right) with Emel, a Support Worker with Wesley Home Care.

Care Danny simply can't live without

Every fortnight, Claudia picks up Danny and takes him shopping. Struggling with arthritis, Danny, who's 81, relies on Claudia to push the trolley and handle the heavy lifting while he checks off items on his list. And when they've finished, like clockwork, they stop for a coffee, muffin and chat.

While Claudia has only been caring for Danny and his wife Margaret for a few months, it feels like years.

"It just fills my joy cup," says Claudia, a Support Worker with Wesley Home Care.

Emel, who also supports Danny and his wife twice a week, feels the same.

"I had a banter with them straight away," Emel smiles. "Every time I'm with them, it's so lovely and positive, especially as we crack jokes and have a laugh."

Danny echoes the sentiment. Trust doesn't always come easily to Danny, especially when it comes to people who are caring for Margaret, who's 78 and lives with Alzheimer's. But with Emel and Claudia, Danny says it's easy.

"I really feel comfortable with them, and I make sure they feel comfortable with me and my wife as well. And they all like coming in to see us," Danny says.

Claudia adds, "He often tells me that he enjoys our catch-ups and looks forward to seeing me."

Having cared for Danny and Margaret for three years, Emel says they've built a strong bond. On Tuesdays, Emel stays with Margaret while Danny takes a break. Without fail, Emel and Margaret take a walk before Emel makes Margaret lunch. And on Fridays, Emel cleans their house.

"Margaret always seems happy. It just flows when we're together. It's really nice being around them," Emel says.

While Emel has made a difference in Danny and Margaret's lives, she's surprised by how much they've enriched her life.

"Danny's so caring, so supportive. He doesn't make you feel like you're just a support worker. They have so much respect and they're so happy to have me."

Danny says without Wesley Home Care they couldn't continue to live independently.

"The amount of help it provides just gives them the confidence to stay at home," Emel says.

Claudia adds, "I can assist with those more challenging tasks. It also helps Danny get out in the community and have independence."

Danny is deeply grateful for the support and says he couldn't imagine life without it.

"I've never thought about changing providers. They've always been good."

Walking with older people

Mum and daughter can finally feel settled

Pat no longer worries about her daughter's future since moving into Wesley Mission's Frank Vickery Village.

"I'm more at peace here than I've probably been for the last couple of years," she says. "Moving here has fulfilled my wish for my daughter, Mandy, to have her own space. It's given her a new life."

When Pat's health took a downward turn that lasted a year, she started worrying about her daughter's long-term care plan. Mandy, who's now in her mid-50s, and her sister, have lived with a rare incurable condition since they were born.

"There's only 12 in the world and I happen to have two of them. Their brains are covered in lesions, and they just keep growing. Nothing they can do about them," Pat explains. "They're on a seafood-free, dairy-free and red-meat-free diet."

Pat smiles, "But I've learned to cook pork in 50 different ways."

Now Pat is no longer concerned if her health takes another downward turn, or if she needs to stay in hospital, because she knows Mandy will be looked after.

"We didn't expect all the support when we came here, but the people are just so lovely," Pat says.

For Pat, it's been a joy watching Mandy become more independent since moving to the Village.

"I try not to go to the activities that Mandy likes because I want her to have her own space. It has done more than I imagined. I've had someone say to me, 'She's blossomed since you've been here.'"

Mandy often pops down to the café for a coffee either by herself or with friends she's made at the Village. She also enjoys going to the gym or playing word games while Pat takes part in meditation and chair yoga.

"This place offers everything you could want. And what more could you wish for?" Mandy exclaims.

Finding a place to call home

Downsizing from a two-storey house to a two-bedroom unit, Pat is thankful she no longer has a large home to maintain. And although she misses her garden, including the roses she planted in memory of her late husband, she's made her balcony her garden.

Pat says their unit is spacious enough that Mandy can use her walker.

"We're on the third floor and it's flat. So, if I want to, I can walk around. And there's a lot of people that we talk to that are on that floor," Mandy explains.

Pat continues, "The rooms are big enough. We've set Mandy's up like a bedsitter and she's got her television. And the bathroom's huge. We can even dance in there."

Mandy adds, "It does feel like home."

It's not just the facilities and activities that make it feel like home, it's the people. From the moment they walked through the Village's doors, they felt welcomed by both staff and residents.

"The staff here are wonderful. When Mandy had an accident on Christmas Eve last year, they were up in here in a couple of minutes. Can't speak highly enough about the staff here," Pat says.

Both Pat and Mandy agree they feel surrounded and supported by the Village community.

"We've met so many people and everyone's so friendly," Mandy says.

Pat adds, "You don't have to be isolated here at all because like I said, there's always something happening, something's on or someone to talk to."

When Pat started thinking about moving to a retirement village, she surveyed every village in the Sutherland Shire before she settled on Frank Vickery Village.

"This came out on top by miles. It's the best monetary-wise and has the best facility offerings. It's peaceful, very affordable and we're safe," she says.

Being the first mother and daughter to move to Frank Vickery Village, Pat hopes their journey can inspire another mother and daughter, or father and son, to follow in their footsteps.

“ We don't miss the old house like I thought we would because we've settled in here so well. It has given us what we need.”
– Pat



From left: Pat and Amanda, residents at Frank Vickery Village.

Walking together in Christian community

We're a community services organisation and a church community united by our vision of doing all the good we can because every life matters.

Our congregations, together with our services in the community, seek to meet people in life's tough places with the love, hope and compassion of Jesus Christ. We're driven by our conviction that the good news of Jesus Christ that we proclaim with our lips needs to be lived out with our lives. We call this 'Word and deed'.

This year, we continued to deepen our Word and deed engagement, strengthening the integration of congregations and community services and innovating the way we engage people with holistic community and care.

Our congregations are vibrant and diverse communities of faith that love Jesus, genuinely embrace people from all walks of life and are committed to building an environment of welcome, care and connection

Across Sydney, our congregations meet in different languages and worship styles, from traditional to modern. These communities of faith, love and hope are the 'church home' of about 1,200 people. They're also central to how we support others as we continue the work of Jesus in Word and deed. This support takes the form of both tangible help and prayer. For example, this year our congregations supported a program that enabled children and young people in foster care to create and exhibit artworks in the heart of Sydney's CBD. They provided hospitality and event management, and encouraged the community to lift up children, carers and staff.

At a glance

→ Congregations

8

congregations in Sydney CBD, Surry Hills, Sylvania and Ryde

3

languages

1,200

attendees

High cultural and socioeconomic diversity

→ Missional communities

6

missional communities across NSW

150+

people served weekly

Supporting and connecting people who might not attend church

→ Wesley CityHeart

15

volunteers

Men's group to counter isolation with support and connection

Multiple open gatherings and activities in Sydney CBD every week

Referrals to community services

Our missional communities meet people where they are, literally, with hope and connection

Our missional communities extend their reach into the community through informal or activity-driven 'gatherings' that support people who might not attend church. People are supported and restored by the connections formed in these communities.

Our missional community work is also living out the Gospel of Jesus, as practised and preached by Jesus. This year, we expanded our work into the Sydney CBD and Newcastle West and supported more than 150 people weekly. We now have missional communities in Newcastle, Hamilton South, Windale, Glebe, Sydney CBD and Taree.

Our gatherings in Newcastle are among the fastest-growing 'churches' in the community. They entirely comprise people who either don't identify as Christians or don't attend church, yet gather in these Christian communities.

In Windale, where a missional community is active within a community housing block, critical incidents have fallen, and residents are expressing a stronger sense of safety, community, satisfaction and hope.

Wesley CityHeart vibrantly embodies our mission of serving and connecting people in Sydney's CBD

Wesley Mission's main location is in the heart of Sydney's CBD. Aligned to our mission, we use this incredible location as a 'welcome mat', inviting all people into our doors for support, help and connection. Under the umbrella of our Wesley CityHeart ministry, we:

- create an environment where people experience safety, harmony, connection and restoration – the opposite of what often confronts them in daily life
- meet people's immediate needs, often with referrals to community services and mental health supports within Wesley Mission and through our broad network.

Activities include picnics, art gatherings and more – with our weekly 'Wesley Connect' walk-in gatherings being the hub of these activities. At Wesley Connect, people are supported, connected with services and invited to share a meal and hear the Gospel from one of our chaplains or pastors.

Our chaplains bring wisdom, care and skill as they support the people we help and our staff

We have a team of passionate chaplains serving Wesley Mission, providing pastoral support across all our services and programs. They're an integral link between Word and deed, sharing devotions in team meetings, praying and individually supporting staff and people we help, facilitating Bible studies and more. They're embedded within our teams and an integral part of the communities and locations where we serve – making them known and trusted across Wesley Mission.



Wesley Mission's congregations hosted a Good Friday street performance in Martin Place, Sydney.

Stories of Word driving deeds

Art exhibition by children in foster care

In December, our foster care team, congregations and chaplains joined up to plan and host an art exhibition in our Sydney CBD location, giving children and young people the opportunity to create and display their artwork around the theme of 'Imagine what kindness looks like'. It was a special time as three-time Archibald Prize finalist Kirsty Neilson guest-judged the artworks. Every child received a personal affirmation and felt seen, celebrated and loved.

CityHeart men's group

This year, we started Men's Connect in the Sydney CBD to address the trend of men falling into social isolation. Its first meeting saw almost 15 men join, and it has continued to strengthen and support men throughout the year.

Easter lunches

Our Easter lunches continue to be special opportunities for people to celebrate Easter and connect with new people and old friends. The popularity of these lunches attests that they are a blessing to those who attend; this year, tickets sold out within one day.

Our 'why' – helping people like Jackson*

Jackson has been living in Wesley Mission housing for well over a decade. This year his beloved dog was diagnosed with cancer and Jackson cared for him through this process. When it became clear the dog would have to be euthanised, a member of the missional community Jackson attends offered to assist, driving to and from the RSPCA (an hour each way) to be with Jackson during this process. Others in Jackson's block rallied around him to help with the costs. This supportive community act is typical in our missional communities and across Wesley Mission.

*Name changed to protect privacy.



From left: Brodie and Michelle, Wesley Foster Care.

Our people

This year, our team of more than 2,000 staff and 1,000 volunteers used ingenuity, grit and compassion to help more people, and help people more.

As people across Australia struggled with the housing and cost-of-living crises, the need for our help skyrocketed. Because of our people, we were able to meet the need, and even go above and beyond.

Here's a snapshot of what our team did this year, and how we strengthened and supported them to do the important work of our mission.

→ **2,000+**
Wesley Mission staff

1,000+
Wesley Mission volunteers

Culture and engagement continue to strengthen

Wesley Mission's workplace culture remains one of our strengths. We're committed to continually building up our organisation and being a leading community services employer.

This year, we partnered again with Gallup to conduct our Employee Engagement & Wellbeing Survey. Most of our staff responded, and responses showed that employee engagement and wellbeing grew for the third year in a row.

The survey also showed how strongly committed our people are to our mission and values. Staff told us they get to do what they do best each day and that they're getting more feedback on their progress and having better opportunities to develop.

To improve, staff would like to see us give greater recognition for good work, offer better non-monetary benefits and improve our systems and processes.

→ Staff said they get to do what they do best each day, and they are inspired and driven by our mission and values.

We've heard staff feedback and we're responding. For example, we're exploring an employee wellbeing partnership and developing a framework to improve employee recognition and leader development.

Staff are choosing to stay at Wesley Mission, reflecting our positive workplace and culture

Our continual focus on maintaining and building a positive workplace and culture is paying off. We're getting better at recruiting talented staff, and our staff are remaining with us. Our retention rate started at nearly 5 per cent higher than the average for our industry and improved consistently during the year, ending at more than 8 per cent higher than the industry average.

We're continually investing in our staff's growth

Over the past year, we invested \$1.7 million in staff development. This included a revised Frontline Leaders program, and all participants said they felt a lot more confident to lead their teams after the program. An Emerging Leaders program was also developed to help people take up their first leadership roles. The first program will launch in the first quarter of the new year.

Our Education Assistance Program saw staff supported in a variety of formal courses and programs, enjoying fee support and study leave for their approved programs.

Our commitment to professional growth reflects our belief that every staff member deserves the opportunity to reach their full potential.

New initiatives are helping staff stay safe and well at work

We continued to introduce new initiatives through our Staff Wellbeing Guide for Action. This year, we focused on financial and career wellbeing, wellbeing workshops for managers and employees, support following critical incidents and wraparound support for injured workers. These programs are delivered holistically with input and support from our Work Health & Safety team, chaplains and Wellbeing Officer. We'll continue to implement new initiatives next year, focusing on physical wellbeing.

We further reduced our gender wage gap and formed a new working group to foster gender parity and respect

A Respect@Work group was established during the year to oversee gender-related initiatives and respectful behaviour at work. They revised our training programs on sexual harassment and discrimination and further enhanced our policies on respectful behaviour at work.

Wesley Mission's gender wage gap reduced further compared with 2023, to an average of 1.5 per cent favourable to men. This is in line with the guidance of Australia's Workplace Gender Equality Agency and reflects Wesley Mission's commitment to fair pay for all. We're determined to reduce the gender wage gap further.

Looking ahead

We're passionately committed to supporting our employees and volunteers by providing ongoing professional development, fostering an inclusive work environment and recognising the unique and valuable contributions of each individual. Our achievements this year are a testament to the dedication and excellence of our team, and we look forward to building on this foundation in the coming year.

We continue to be grateful to our extraordinary staff for their passion, hard work and clear commitment to our mission. Together, we're continuing to make a profound impact and support positive change in the communities we serve.

Our people

Helen's leadership sparks joy

Helen can't help but smile as the people she supports sing praise and worship songs at the top of their lungs. "It just gives us great peace to start the day off," she says.

Helen embodies Wesley Mission's mission to continue the work of Jesus Christ in Word and deed. She often wears what she believes. Today it's a T-shirt with 'Trust in the Lord' and earrings with 'Relax. God is in control.'

"I feel like God put me here for a reason," Helen confidently says.

Helen is the Support Lead at Wesley LifeSkills Woolooware, a disability day program in southern Sydney, which supports people with disability to become more independent. And every day Helen exudes joy.

"In everything that I do, I want people to see joy because I'm a real happy person. I want to create a positive space and through my joy, I hope I'm reflecting Jesus," she says.

Around the centre, Helen has hung multiple canvases with positive messages to empower the people she serves and her colleagues.

"I have this sign here that has the 'dis' in disability crossed out because they are differently abled. I have another sign that says, 'We rise by lifting others'," Helen explains.

It's easy to assume Helen has been supporting people with disability her whole life because of her caring nature, her dedication to helping people thrive and her strong communication and leadership skills.

But before Wesley Mission, Helen had worked in youth work, entertainment, events and administration. When she applied for a Youth Worker role and was offered a Support Worker position, she jumped at the opportunity to work close to home.

In just nine months, Helen's career soared from Support Worker to Support Lead. When her former manager left, Helen saw a gap and filled it. Taking on responsibilities beyond her role, Helen began building relationships with the centre's families and stakeholders, sending families photos of daily activities, coordinating activities and completing administration work.

"Helen started reconnecting everyone and sending these emails that I thought were brilliant," says Hugh, Wesley Disability Services' Operations Manager and Helen's supervisor.

Helen also introduced new activities like hydrotherapy and themed activities for special events like NAIDOC week and State-of-Origin. Everything Helen's done has improved the lives of people with disability.

"I want to introduce activities that cater to each person we support and incorporate who they are driving to be, not what we want them to be," Helen says.

Going above and beyond is Helen's mantra. When she discovered Dominica's* passion for riding bikes, she secretly coordinated with Dominica's mum, who provided the funds, to buy Dominica her dream bike from a local seller. Helen brought it back to the centre that same evening so Dominica could be surprised the next day. And indeed, she was.

"Dominica's eyes lit up while riding her bike. So, we incorporated bike riding into Dominica's day program," Helen explains.

Helen is grateful for a recent opportunity to step into a managerial role under a four-month secondment. She's also thankful for being nominated to participate in Wesley Mission's Frontline Leadership program, a hybrid of courses and individual coaching and development for managers and emerging leaders.

"For someone who has never had any experience with disability, it's been a huge blessing just seeing where God has taken me in the last year."

As her secondment ends, Helen will remain in her Support Lead role but will work alongside the manager who oversees our centres in Granville and Woolooware. The position will give Helen valuable opportunities to grow as a leader and set her on the path to becoming a fully equipped manager. When necessary, Helen will also take on the manager role at any of our three Sydney centres.

"She's achieved so much in just a few months because she's a natural leader. She's got a genuine passion for serving people and has the ability to walk together with clients, stakeholders and their families," Hugh says.

*Name changed to protect privacy.

“ I want to introduce activities that cater to each person we support and incorporate who they are driving to be, not what we want them to be.” – Helen



Helen, Wesley LifeSkills team.

Our people

Volunteers

More than 1,100 volunteers donated more than 88,000 hours to supporting and helping people in need through Wesley Mission this year. Their service is an inspiration and a blessing.

Volunteers are valued members of our team and are central to Wesley Mission.

Volunteers are at the heart of delivering services for these Wesley Mission programs:

- Lifeline Sydney & Sutherland
- Wesley Aged Care Volunteer Visitors
- Wesley Aunties & Uncles
- Wesley Connect, a community connection program
- Wesley School for Seniors
- Wesley Youth Mentoring.

Their support doesn't stop there. Volunteers throughout the organisation offer their time and expertise behind the scenes and on the front lines. This year, the hours volunteers gave to Wesley Mission represented a saving of almost \$4.5 million in wages.

→ **1,100**
volunteers

88k+
hours saved

\$4.5
million
saved in wages

Congratulations to our Volunteers of the Year

Catherine Asbridge
Senior Volunteer of the Year, Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme

Catherine has been volunteering with Wesley Aged Care Volunteer Visitors for eight years. By building lasting, genuine relationships with those she visits, she brings connection, friendship and joy to the lives of older Australians.

Brigetta Byrne
Adult Volunteer of the Year, Wesley Aunties & Uncles and Wesley Youth Mentoring

As a mentor in the Wesley Aunties & Uncles program, Brigetta has patiently and compassionately built a trusting relationship with a young girl who has experienced broken relationships in the past.

Sarah Newman
Youth Volunteer of the Year, Wesley Aunties & Uncles and Wesley Youth Mentoring

The young girl mentored by Sarah says that Sarah is the person she turns to for advice. Read more of their story on page 41.



Being a volunteer, it's so fulfilling. It keeps me grounded in that sense that I'm having that positive impact." – Sarah



Sarah, volunteer with Wesley Aunties & Uncles

A big sister and friend forever

Madison* says Sarah is just like a big sister.

Whether they're practising K-Pop dance moves, painting, ice skating or visiting Luna Park, every visit is jam-packed with fun. It's no wonder Madison says she wants to see Sarah forever.

Living with and being cared for by her great-grandmother, Madison is often at home due to her great-grandmother's age and health.

"I always try to make sure we are doing things that are out of reach for her great-grandmother to take her to do," Sarah says.

Sarah, who's 24, is a volunteer Youth Mentor with Wesley Aunties & Uncles, which matches an adult, known as 'aunty or uncle', with a young person who lives in foster care and needs a positive role model in their life.

Once a month Sarah drives for an hour to pick up Madison and take her on an adventure. But it's not just fun moments. They have plenty of time to talk about life. For Madison, this has been life-changing. The last two years have been difficult for Madison, and Sarah came into her life at just the right time.

"I try my best, as someone who's a little bit older, to guide her in a direction based on things that I've experienced in my own life," Sarah says. "I know she appreciates that because she does look to me to guide her on certain things."

Building trust

While they didn't click instantly, it didn't take long for Madison to warm up to Sarah. The turning point came with Sarah showing interest in Madison's interests.

"She's really into K-pop music, so every time she gets in the car, I make sure that I've got a K-pop playlist on Spotify and will let her pick the songs she wants to listen to," Sarah explains.

The trust grew from there, and so did open conversation.

"Whenever she raises how she's feeling, I give her the space to talk and offer up the information that she wants to share."

Sarah says her heart is full knowing she is making an impact in Madison's life.

"She's faced so many adversities in life. It's touching to know that I'm having a positive influence," Sarah says.

While Sarah volunteered to give back, their strong bond has impacted her life, too.

"She does hold a really big place in my heart, and I just want to see her excel in life in the best way. I'm very lucky that she's come into my life, and I've learnt a lot from being a mentor to her as well."

Giving back

Working as a Finance Analyst, Sarah says her parents have been instrumental in helping her build the life she has today. When Sarah realised not everyone has the same opportunities and support as she did in her younger years, she decided to help young people gain a better start in life.

"I saw a couple of people around me who didn't have a strong figure in their life and it impacted them negatively," Sarah shares.

Having now been a youth mentor for two years, Sarah would like to encourage others to volunteer with Wesley Mission.

"If everyone were a mentor, I'm sure it would have a very large impact on society as a whole because there'd be fewer kids out there who are going through life without the tools that they need to survive. Being a volunteer, it's so fulfilling. It keeps me grounded in that sense that I'm having that positive impact."

*Name changed to protect privacy.

Our supporters and partners

Our supporters don't stand by in the face of hardship and suffering.

This year, our individual supporters and donors generously gave again to support people in need. Even as many of them felt the pinch of economic hardship themselves, they remained steadfast in their intent to help others.

We also received valued support from trusts and foundations, corporations, churches and community organisations and others.

With all this generous support, we helped more than 160,000 people.



\$5.5+ million

total support from legacies and donations

Funding bodies and major partners

Government and other organisational partners

AGL

Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment

Australian Government Department of Health

Australian Government Department of Social Services

Benestar

Black Dog Institute

Blacktown City Council

City of Sydney

East Melbourne Primary Health Network

Hunter New England Health

Hunter New England Local Health District

Kenthurst Community Transitional Housing Project

Lifeline Australia

Multicultural NSW

Murry Primary Health Network

National Disability Insurance Scheme

North Coast Primary Health Network

Northern Territory Primary Health Network

NSW Commissioner for Fair Trading

NSW Department of Communities and Justice

NSW Department of Customer Service

NSW Department of Education

NSW Department of Industry

NSW Department Premier and Cabinet

NSW Land & Housing Corporation

NSW Ministry of Health

NSW Ministry of Health, Mental Health Branch

Office of Responsible Gambling

Primary Health Network Hunter New England and Central Coast

Primary Health Network Western Sydney WentWest

Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney

Uniting (Victoria Tasmania) Limited

University of Sydney

Wentworth Primary Health Network

Western NSW Primary Health Network

Youth Off The Streets

Funding partners

Aged Persons Welfare Foundation

Australian Philanthropic Services Foundation

Carla Zampatti Foundation

Centenary Foundation

Clear Sales Australia Pty Ltd

CommBank Staff Foundation

Count Charitable Foundation

Dick and Pip Smith Foundation

Diversicon Environmental Foundation

Greatorex Fund

Hills Community Aid

Ivany Foundation

Morebyte Trust

Perpetual Trustee Company Ltd

Rellim Foundation

Rio Industrial Group

St. John Paul College

Count Charitable Foundation's partnership is helping people take control of their finances

Financial difficulties and stress can have major and wide-ranging effects on people's safety, physical health, mental health and relationships. That's why we have for many years been supporting people to build financial literacy and independence with financial counselling and programs like 'In Charge of My Money,' which is designed to help people who are socially or economically disadvantaged increase their financial literacy and gain skills and confidence in effectively managing their money.

Our longstanding partner in this work is Count Charitable Foundation (CCF), the private foundation that runs closely with Count Limited, established in 2004 to support organisations and programs that make a significant difference in their communities by supporting vulnerable and at-risk people.

Sue Hardwick manages CCF. Below, she shares her insights on the service this year.

Wesley Mission: This was a difficult year for many people, as the cost of living rose exponentially. CCF has a particular focus on helping vulnerable people and marginalised communities. How did you see people being affected this year?

Sue Hardwick: This year CCF has unfortunately seen more and more charities that cannot stretch to meet the extra demands they face. Some of the increased demand comes directly from people struggling with cost-of-living issues, while other charities have had government funding cuts to long-running programs.

The most alarming thing I have heard this year was from John Robertson, CEO of Food Bank NSW, talking about the increase in two-income working families facing food insecurity and seeking assistance from Foodbank's charity partners.

WM: We all know that financial literacy and effective money management can be transformational – but your work gives you a unique insight into this. Why do you think financial literacy is so important?

SH: Count Limited was founded in 1980, so we've been helping millions of Australians manage their finances for 44 years. Throughout that time, we've always been passionate about the role financial planning plays in people's lives. For the most vulnerable, it is also about basic financial literacy, the skills for basic money management in an increasingly complex world.

CCF was founded in 2004 to run alongside the Count business to encourage philanthropy among CCF members to improve the lives of the disadvantaged in the communities in which CCF members live and work.



From left: Count Financial CEO Hugh Humphrey and Sue Hardwick.

Count believes every Australian should have the confidence to look ahead; for some Australians that's about their best possible retirement, for others 'confidence' may mean knowing that they can feed their families at the end of the day or keep a roof over their heads for another week.

WM: CCF and Wesley Mission have been working together since 2022, and we're so grateful for your support. What drives CCF to continue partnering with Wesley Mission?

SH: We are committed to giving back and being in service to others. We are very proud of our partnership with Wesley Mission, and we are particularly excited about the work you are doing with the 'In Charge of My Money Program'.

It's a natural synergy for Count and we believe it will make a big difference to the marginalised members of our community who are most in need of help.

WM: Is there a story or an impact that stands out for you from the combined work of CCF and Wesley Mission?

SH: It has been impressive learning all about the work Wesley Mission does for Australians and just how many areas of need are covered. What stands out the most is our visit to the Wesley Edward Eagar Centre homeless and crisis accommodation centre. The staff there gave our team a great rundown of the work and a tour of the site. We all enjoyed engaging with the residents of the centre over morning tea and a fun game of bingo. Nothing beats that level of firsthand knowledge to build a relationship. Our team left feeling very inspired about the service and support your staff were providing. It was a special day.

On behalf of Count, we just want to thank all of the people involved with Wesley Mission. We are proud of our partnership and look forward to hearing more about the positive impact you have on our community.



Walking together towards Reconciliation

Encouraged by the example of Jesus Christ to do all the good we can, Wesley Mission is committed to truth (acknowledging our contribution to past injustices experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples) and to reconciliation (walking together and working to establish a just, equitable and healing culture where all may flourish).

Walking together towards reconciliation

Wesley Mission is deeply conscious of the historical injustices and ongoing challenges faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. That's why we're committed to walking alongside these communities towards reconciliation, to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are restored in dignity and respect while having the agency and opportunities they deserve. Our Reconciliation Action Plan was initiated with a strong commitment to listen to and learn deeply from our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, allowing ample time to build trust so we can journey together.

Our commitment to truth-telling and truth-listening

In March 2024, a two-day Yarning Circle brought together Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, community members and Wesley Mission senior leaders to share stories and develop effective strategies to review and build upon the actions in our 2024/2025 Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan. The event acknowledged not only the importance of truth-telling but also truth listening. Over the past year, we've focused on capturing truth-telling while simultaneously encouraging truth-listening.

Wesley Mission commissioned the short film *Truth*, filmed on Country in Brewarrina. The film

captures the story of Wesley Mission's Reconciliation Action Lead, Aunty Kathy Donnelly, and shares the impact of colonisation on Aboriginal People in far western New South Wales.

We premiered *Truth* during National Reconciliation Week at an event for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and community members at Mount Druitt Indigenous Church to foster conversations about why reconciliation is important, 'Now More Than Ever'.

Since production, *Truth* has gained international recognition, being selected for the International Down Under Film Festival in Berlin and Copenhagen in September and October 2024. It has also been shared with First Nations Peoples in Canada, showcasing its global reach.

Committed to reconciliation through action

During National Reconciliation Week, Wesley Mission held eight additional events from Western Sydney, Sydney Metro, Mid-North Coast and Northern NSW. These events created spaces for sharing knowledge of past injustices so reflection, understanding and reconciliation could follow.

Wesley Mission staff across New South Wales participated in Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training (ACAT), with nearly 300 team members completing the training within the first seven months of its launch. *Truth* has been woven into the training, which has led to significant shifts in perceptions within Wesley Mission. Many participants have initiated conversations with facilitators, seeking advice, guidance and knowledge about their work and interactions within their communities.

Wesley Mission reinforced its commitment to truth-telling by facilitating workshops at Ravenswood School for Girls during their Social Justice Day. Students reported that the content was both deeply moving and eye-opening.

The employment, retention and professional development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff have increased, particularly within Wesley Family Preservation, which currently employs 10 Aboriginal team members. Across Wesley Mission, we'll continue to create more cultural support roles, especially in our frontline services. Many staff have expressed that the growing presence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues makes them feel included and culturally safe in their work environments.

Leadership and governance

Governance

Wesley Mission is an organisation with two distinct yet integrated purposes – and this is reflected in our structure (see figure below) and governance.

Our community services are delivered by Wesley Community Services Limited (WCSL), a public company limited by guarantee, governed by an independent Board. Our church and spiritual community, Wesley Congregational Life, is a governed by a Mission Council.

Our CEO and Superintendent leads the operations of our community services and church.

This structure reflects our commitment to continuing the work of Jesus Christ in Word (by creating and maintaining inclusive and supportive church communities) and deed (by doing all the good in service to others).

Effective risk management

Wesley Mission’s overarching risk management policies and methodologies are based on the International Standard ISO 31000:2018 – Risk Management. Each year, the Board reviews Wesley Mission’s Risk Management Framework and sets its risk appetite for our key risks.

This year Wesley Mission continued to embed the new enterprise risk management system throughout the organisation. The system supports consistent risk

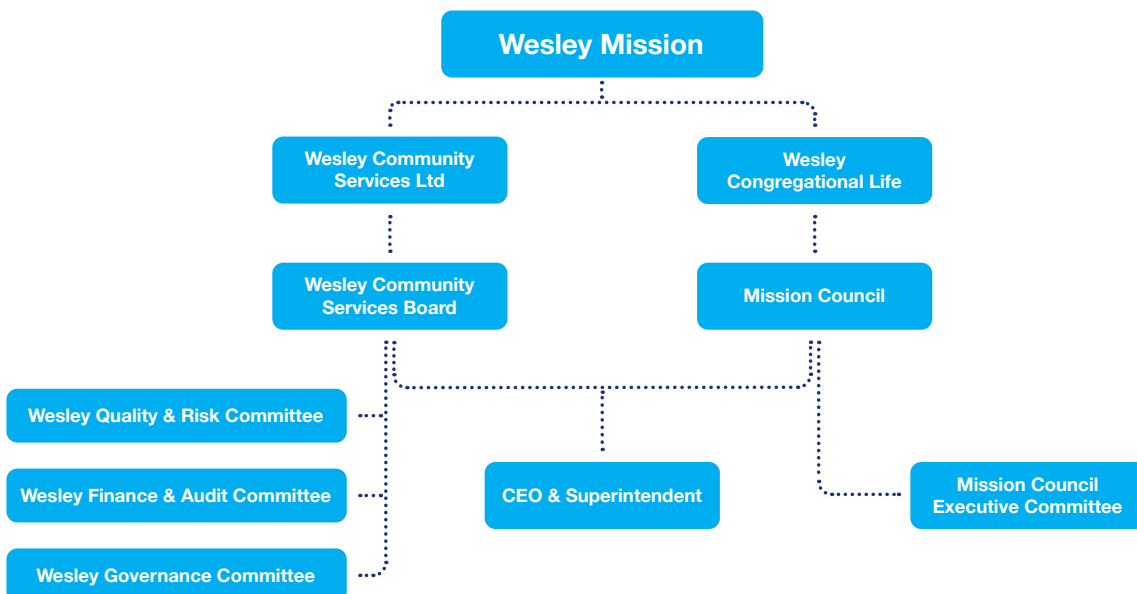
management, improves monitoring and reporting, and provides insights across the organisation.

Internal audit

Wesley Mission obtains independent assurance to support and strengthen its risk management framework and quality management system. A three-year rolling strategic internal audit program addressing key strategic and operational risks is in place. The internal audit operates under a fully outsourced model. Wesley Mission’s internal audit function performs a critical role in monitoring and confirming that audit findings have been appropriately addressed to enhance the control environment.

Quality management

Wesley Mission is committed to meeting the quality management principles in International Standard ISO 9001:2015 – Quality Management System. These include a strong customer focus, a process approach, effective leadership, evidence-based decision-making and continuous improvement. To support the embedding of the Quality Management System in Wesley Mission, specialist quality risk and compliance staff work within our services, supporting accreditation processes and assessing Wesley Mission’s performance against quality standards by reviewing incidents, compliments and complaints; ensuring appropriate policies and procedures are in place; and seeking opportunities for continuous improvement.



Leadership

Board of Directors



REV STU CAMERON
CEO AND SUPERINTENDENT
BA (Acc)

“Serving Wesley Mission is the greatest of privileges. The good our people do transforms lives and communities.”

Stu joined Wesley Mission as CEO and Superintendent in January 2021, after serving for almost 15 years as Lead Minister of Newlife Church in South East Queensland. A qualified accountant, Stu was ordained as a Minister in the Uniting Church in 2004. He has served as a denominational leader and led the Global Leadership Summit (GLS) movement in Australia. Stu is a leading gambling reform advocate and a member of the Independent Panel for Gambling Reform established by the NSW Government.



MICHAEL ANDERSON
NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND CHAIR
BEc, FIAA, Grad Dip (Christian Studies), MAICD

“It is a privilege to be a part of Wesley Mission, which has a heart that beats for others and strives to support those who are finding life tough.”

Michael was appointed to the Board in May 2017 and is a member of all Board committees. In addition to his role as Chair of the Board at Wesley Mission, he is a director of Australian Ethical Superannuation and Chair of the Uniting Church NSW/ACT Synod Board. He previously acted in roles including as Chair of Uniting Financial Services and Ecclesia Housing (community housing) and held senior investment and management roles at AMP Capital Investors.



BERNARD BOERMA
NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND CHAIR OF QUALITY & RISK COMMITTEE, BOARD DEPUTY CO-CHAIR
BA BSocStud (1st Class Hons), MBA, MAICD

“Being a member of the Wesley Board is a privilege. It enables me to work with a team of thoughtful people who are committed to build a just society and better world in which everyone is treated with dignity, is loved and has the opportunity to contribute.”

Bernard was appointed to the Board in May 2017. He has more than 25 years of social work and senior management experience, including more than 12 years as CEO of a large human services agency. He currently holds the position of



Secretary of the Australian & New Zealand Third Sector Research Inc and teaches at the University of Sydney.

SAM DONNELLY
NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
BDS (Hons), MPH (Merit)

“Through the work of Wesley Mission I can clearly see that the life and message of Jesus remains as relevant today as ever. It is a privilege to be a part of it – serving and learning alongside people committed to doing all the good we can.”

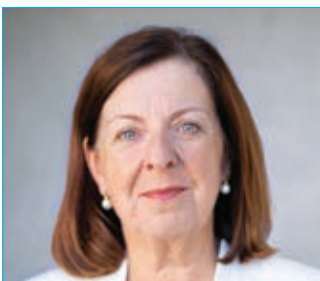
Sam was appointed to the Board in February 2021. He began his career as a dentist before moving to China to volunteer with Bless China International, providing dental care and training village doctors. Later, Sam managed HIV/AIDS care and prevention projects in China. Since returning to Australia, he has continued to work in the primary health care and aged care sectors.



SUREKA GORINGE
NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
MA (Hons), PhD, GAICD

“Christ dwells at the margins. At Wesley Mission, we seek out the places of struggle, and in the midst of hardship, we encounter Christ and the true power of loving service to transform lives.”

Sureka was appointed to the Wesley Mission Board in December 2023. She is the National Director of UnitingWorld, and brings senior executive and board-level leadership experience from 15 years in the technology sector and 10 years in international development. She currently serves as Vice President on the Board of the Australian Council for International Development and the Chair of Church Agencies Network Disaster Operations.



TRACY MORGAN
NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND CHAIR OF FINANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE, BOARD CO-DEPUTY CHAIR
MBA (Macq), CAHRI, GAICD

“I am strongly compelled by the Wesley Mission vision – doing all the good we can because every life matters. It is a privilege to serve and play a role in shaping a better future for those most in need, ensuring that compassion guides our decisions and reflects this vision.”

Tracy was appointed to the Wesley Mission Board in December 2018. She is a highly regarded strategist and governance expert with over 30 years of leadership

and consulting experience. Currently a National Facilitator with the Australian Institute of Company Directors, her board roles include Chair of The Housing Connection; Chair, Finance and Governance Committee for the Australian Music Centre; and director roles at Sylvanvale Disability Services and Sydney Philharmonia Choirs. She's an experienced business consultant with expertise in strategy, change and business transition management, financial management, human resources and organisational design. Tracy is an active member of the Anglican Church and contributes to a variety of Christian and community organisations.

MARK NORTHERN
NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
BComm, BAcc, GAICD

"I feel extremely blessed to be part of an organisation that has faithfully served people in need for more than 200 years. Wesley Mission's enduring legacy of caring and serving across a wide range of services, delivered by passionate and committed staff and volunteers, is as critical today as it has been over many years."

Mark joined the Wesley Mission Board in July 2017 and is a member of the Finance & Audit Committee. He is an experienced property and finance executive having worked in Australia, the United States and South Africa. He is an advisory board member of Waterman Business Centres, a past Board member of Wesley Gardens Aged Care and past chair of KYDS Youth Development Service. Mark is a member of Roseville Uniting Church and has been an Elder, Chair of the Council, Treasurer and member of various committees.

JILL PRETTY
NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
RN, MN, BN (Admin)

"It is a privilege to serve Wesley Mission as a director and to observe how the mission is reflected in the services provided to the most vulnerable and marginalised people in New South Wales. The mission is an important focus for Wesley Mission, and this is evident in the dedication of the staff who reflect in their work that every life matters."

Jill was appointed to the Wesley Mission Board in 2017. She is a registered nurse and was employed by Aged and Community Services NSW and ACT for 15 years, including as Manager of Policy and Consultancy and Chief Executive Officer. She is now the President of the Yacaaba Centre at Nelson Bay, which provides

information and counselling services to victims of domestic violence and people experiencing homelessness. Jill is a Fellow of the Australian College of Nursing and the Australian Association of Gerontology, and a Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

TARA REID
NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Babus (Accounting), Grad Dip Applied Finance, GAICD

"Serving with the Wesley Mission board is an honour. I love that we stand alongside those who are often overlooked and create spaces where everyone belongs. Our mission fosters dignity, connection and healing, reminding us that every act of kindness can spark hope and change a life."

Tara was appointed to the Board in February 2021 and is a member of the Finance & Audit Committee. She is a Non-Executive Director and Chair of Baptist World Aid / Transform Aid International and a Non-Executive Director of Royal North Shore Hospital. She is a business consultant with more than 20 years of business and management experience, including as a partner in corporate finance at Deloitte and the founder and director of her own internet start-up business. She currently operates an equine-assisted learning practice on the NSW Central Coast.

MARK W SEWELL
NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
B Soc Sci, MBA (Bus Law), GAICD

"It's an enormous privilege for me to be involved with such an important ministry as Wesley Mission, with its 200-plus year history of doing whatever it takes to meet the needs of vulnerable Australians."

Mark was appointed to the Wesley Mission Board in 2023 and is a member of the Quality & Risk Committee as well as the Property Preference Group. He is an inaugural Director of the Aged and Community Care Providers Association, a Director of Grand Pacific Health Ltd, and a company member of Warrigal, the Community Industry Group, Southern Youth and Family Services, and The Housing Trust. He has been on various business, charity and government boards and committees and has chaired the Boards of Cedars Christian College, Lighthouse Church and Lighthouse Community Care. Until 2022, he was the CEO and Company Secretary of Warrigal, an aged care, home care and retirement living charity.



Leadership

Executive Leadership Team



CATHY BEVERLEY
EXECUTIVE GENERAL MANAGER
WESLEY CORPORATE
RN, B Health

“At Wesley Mission I hope to always contribute to a mission that aligns with my values and supports others in many and varied ways.”

A talented healthcare specialist with more than 30 years of management experience, Cathy ably leads the functions of people and culture, information services, advocacy and government relations, business services and business, growth and improvement across Wesley Mission.



DAVID CUNNINGS
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER
MBA, FCPA, AICD, BBus

“I am grateful to be able to use the gifts that God has provided and to be part of team at Wesley Mission that contributes to making a difference in people’s lives in so many ways.”

David brings more than 30 years of executive management experience in social services and financial services to our mission. He has been with Wesley Mission since 2011 in the roles of Financial Controller and CFO. Previously, he held roles at the Sydney Diocesan Services of the Anglican Church and Financial Controller at FAI Life as well as being on the Board of Life Care (Churches of Christ SA) and the Finance Committee for Anglicare SA.



REV DR RICK DACEY
SENIOR MINISTER
BA, MDiv, DMin

“God’s Mission is about reconciling the world in love. We share the amazing privilege of taking part in that together as Wesley Mission.”

As Senior Minister, Rick connects with every corner of Wesley Mission – with people in leadership and at the coalface of our community services and congregations. In helping Wesley Mission to continue unfolding our missional legacy in this generation, Rick is a catalyst for inspiring, connecting and equipping the local church to live out God’s mission in their local community.



REV GARY IZZARD
EXECUTIVE MANAGER,
MISSIONAL COMMUNITIES
BTh, BSW

“Wesley Mission sees the world as it is and imagines what could be. It is a privilege to work in a place that invites people into community and believes in hope.”

Gary began his career with us managing an employment office before leading Newcastle’s community services, where he saw the impact faith can have in the lives of people on the margins. Twenty-four years later, having worked all across Wesley Mission, he still uses this insight to strengthen our alignment between Word and deed.

CATHERINE KING
GENERAL COUNSEL AND
COMPANY SECRETARY (to Jun 2024)
BA (Hons), LLB, GradDipFinGrad
Certificate of Management (AGSM)

Catherine contributes her considerable expertise and experience to steering the legal, risk and company secretarial functions of Wesley Mission. Skilled in corporate governance, legal services, strategy and business planning, risk management and with indispensable experience in major government reform projects, private legal practice and the community housing and energy sectors, Catherine focuses our vision on doing all the good we can.



JUDI LEWIS
EXECUTIVE GENERAL MANAGER,
WESLEY MARKETING & FUNDRAISING
DipFA

“It’s an absolute privilege being part of the team at Wesley Mission, working with great people who are relentless in their commitment to others, and driven to make a tangible difference in a world that so needs it.”

Since April 2023, Wesley Mission has benefited from Judi’s more than 20 years of commercial, governance and not-for-profit experience. She devotes her energy and expertise to leading mission-driven marketing, communications and fundraising across the Wesley Mission teams.

NIGEL LINDSAY
GENERAL MANAGER, WESLEY
DALMAR CHILD, FAMILY & DISABILITY
BA, Psychology, AdDip Management

“The work Wesley Mission does at the heart of the community matters. To be able to play a small part in that real privilege keeps me coming back day in and day out. Every life matters.”

Nigel joined Wesley Mission as a youth worker in 1994 and steadfastly provides his services to our mission today. He is a respected leader in the sector, serving on multiple industry working groups as well as holding the position of Chair of the sector’s peak body – the Association of Children’s Welfare Agencies. He and his team take care of our Wesley Dalmar Child, Family & Disability services and Nigel is also the Principal Officer for Foster Care and Adoptions, having overall responsibility for more than 700 children that Wesley Mission care for each night.

ANDY MOORE
GENERAL MANAGER, WESLEY
HEALTH, CONFERENCES & EDUCATION
GradDipMgt, GradCert Suicidology, MAICD

“In 2008 I accepted a six-month Project Officer contract with Wesley Mission not knowing I’d spend over half my work life using the same email address. I believe that ‘doing all the good we can’ is Australian slang for loving your neighbour – and that’s why I’m so invested in growing the work of Wesley Mission.”

With management experience in clinical and community mental health services, addiction services, counselling, youth

justice and rehabilitation services and First Nations services, Andy has contributed hugely to Wesley Mission for 15 years. Andy’s Health, Conferences & Education Group shepherds the development and maintenance of out-of-school-hours care, employment and training, social enterprise, retirement villages and suicide prevention.

ANDREW TYNDALE
CHIEF INVESTMENT & ASSETS
OFFICER
BCom (Hons)

“I love the work we do, the hope it generates and the team I get to work with.”

Andrew is responsible for stewarding Wesley Mission’s property portfolio: a legacy of numerous generous donors and the leadership’s hard work over many decades. With almost 40 years of experience in impact investing, property and banking, Andrew leads our investments and assets team strategising, designing and financing major property development and redevelopment projects.

HELEN BURGESS
GENERAL COUNSEL AND
COMPANY SECRETARY
(from Jul 2024)
BA, LLB (Hons), FGIA, FAICD

“Wesley Mission for me is about community. First the communities we serve, sharing the love of God in ways that make a real difference. Then the community of Wesley Mission itself, and the values of the organisation which I deeply embrace, and which motivate me daily: soft hearts, open hands, sharp minds and hard feet.”

Helen leads our Legal, Company Secretarial and Risk teams, fostering robust organisational governance and risk management practices. An experienced executive, Helen’s career spans a top-tier law firm, major corporations and government entities, including Sydney Airport, NRMA Motoring and Services and WaterNSW. Helen is dedicated to providing wise counsel combined with strong business acumen, empowering her teams to effectively support Wesley Mission’s priorities. She is a Fellow of the Governance Institute of Australia and of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

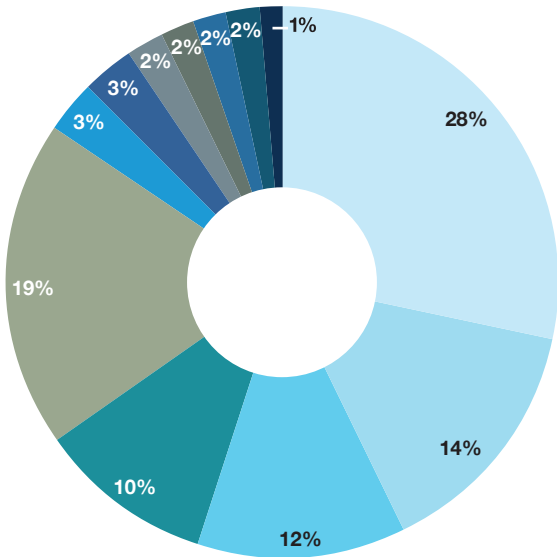




Financials

From left: Jean, Flexicare worker and Ernie, resident at Alan Walker Village.

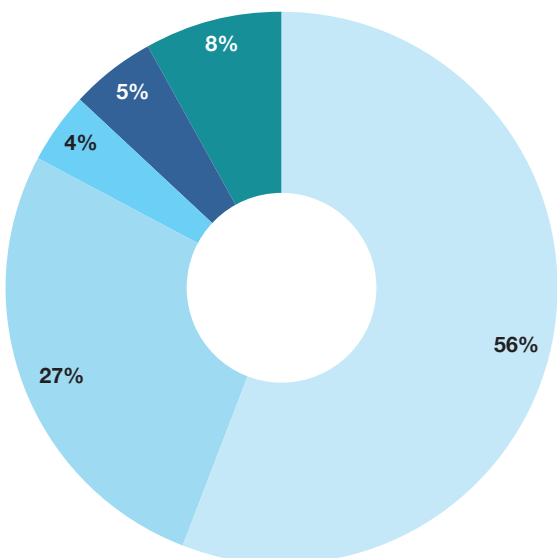
Where our revenue came from



2024

Dalmar Out of Home Care	28%
Community and Family Care	14%
Disability	12%
Home Care	10%
Escaping Violence	19%
Retirement Villages	3%
Wesley Social Enterprise	3%
Out of School Hours Care	2%
Community Housing	2%
Suicide Prevention	2%
Employment & Training	2%
Donations and legacies	1%

What we spent



2024

Employee Benefits	56%
Direct Client Services	27%
Maintenance and Accommodation	4%
Depreciation and Amortisation	5%
Other expenses	8%

2023

Employee Benefits Expense	59%
Materials and other Client Services	21%
Maintenance and Accommodation	4%
Depreciation and amortisation expense	6%
Other expenses	10%

Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income

For the year ended 30 June 2024

Continuing operations	2024 \$000	2023 \$000
Revenue from sale of goods	3,291	2,606
Revenue from rendering of services	161,670	139,652
Government grants	129,055	111,660
Legacies and donations	5,526	6,368
Revenue from continuing operations	299,542	260,286
Interest received on investments	2,468	2,133
Government grants – non-recurring	267	3,631
Other income	981	348
Gain on sale of assets	11,020	2,794
Fair value gain / (loss) on investments	1,773	1,148
Other income	16,509	10,054
Total revenue and other income	316,051	270,340
Employee benefits expense	176,238	159,117
Material and other client services	82,816	54,999
Maintenance and accommodation	12,959	11,477
Depreciation and amortisation expense	16,687	15,483
Travelling expenses	6,818	6,907
Professional fees	5,111	5,085
Communication expenses	57	527
Cost of goods sold	1,186	1,412
Other expenses	9,999	12,425
Finance costs	364	487
Total expenditure	312,235	267,919
Surplus before income tax expense	3,816	2,421
Income tax expense		
Surplus from continuing operations	3,816	2,421
Discontinued operations		
Deficit from discontinued operations	(10,527)	(22,513)
Total deficit for the year	(6,711)	(20,092)

Statement of financial position

As at 30 June 2024

	2024	2023
	\$000	\$000
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	10,279	9,510
Trade and other receivables	31,886	32,493
Other financial assets	36,239	20,710
Inventories	447	558
Assets held for sale	21,666	47,703
Total current assets	100,517	110,974
Non-current assets		
Property, plant and equipment	290,748	298,169
Right-of-use assets	5,506	5,797
Other financial assets	88	48
Other assets	-	428
Total non-current assets	296,342	304,442
Total assets	396,859	415,416
Current liabilities		
Trade and other payables	29,012	23,052
Lease liabilities	3,244	3,007
Resident licence agreements expected to be paid within 12 months	13,241	18,875
Resident licence agreements not expected to be paid within 12 months	108,200	118,679
Provisions	17,437	18,108
Contract liabilities – unearned funds	15,226	17,101
Contract liabilities – unearned funds – retirement villages	9,034	7,496
Other liabilities	547	344
Total current liabilities	195,941	206,662
Non-current liabilities		
Lease liabilities	2,704	3,112
Provisions	3,414	4,115
Unearned lease premium	232	247
Total non-current liabilities	6,350	7,474
Total liabilities	202,291	214,136
Net assets	194,568	201,280
Equity		
Accumulated funds	192,565	199,184
Reserves	2,003	2,096
Total equity	194,568	201,280

Statement of cash flows

For the year ended June 2024

	2024 \$000	2023 \$000
Cash flows from operating activities		
Receipts from customers including government subsidies	327,964	284,028
Payments to suppliers and employees	(329,051)	(310,263)
Interest paid on leases	(279)	(347)
Finance costs	(161)	(340)
Interest received	2,468	3,654
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	941	(23,268)
Cash flows from investing activities		
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	(11,504)	(16,274)
Proceeds from sale of property, plant and equipment	36,063	10,745
Net receipts from/(payment for) term deposits	(12,427)	43,438
Net cash from investing activities	12,132	37,909
Cash flows from financing activities		
Receipts from resident-funded licence agreements	13,746	33,320
Repayments for resident-funded licence agreements	(22,874)	(77,194)
Repayment of lease liability	(3,176)	(3,894)
Net cash used in financing activities	(12,304)	(47,768)
Net increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	769	(33,127)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year	9,510	42,637
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year	10,279	9,510





Reignite

2028 STRATEGIC PLAN

Progress towards 2028 Strategic Plan

We continue driving towards our bold 2028 Strategic Plan.

Established in 2023, our 2028 Strategic Plan articulates our commitment to continue to be bold across four strategic directions, each with measurable goals. The table below shows where we've made significant achievements this year [✔], and where work is still in progress [✔].

Strategic plan direction	Strategic plan goals	2023 – 24 annual business plan target	Status
Deepening our Word and deed	Embed Word and deed in all new community services' activities and congregations	3 new shared Word and deed expressions	✔
	Pioneer and establish five missional communities	2 missional communities established	✔
Claiming our prophetic voice	Grow our coalition of advocates to 10 active partners using their voices for change	10 active advocacy partners	✔
	Strengthen our leadership, advocacy and media capability	Demonstrated public policy change	✔
	See a 50% increase in unprompted brand awareness	Increased unprompted brand awareness	✔
Extending our impact	Invest in 20 new community services or locations	3 new services or locations	✔
	Double the book value of our property portfolio	Milestones achieved for major projects	✔
	Strengthen our regional presence with 10 new services or locations	2 new regional services or locations	✔
Strengthening our organisation	Plant five new churches	Approved and communicated strategy	✔
	Build sustainable finances with a 2.5% return on equity in 2027 – 2028	Achieve 2023 – 24 budget outcomes	✔
	Grow our fundraising revenue to \$30 million in 2027 – 2028	\$4 million fundraising income (excl. legacies)	✔
	Exceed industry staff engagement, retention and wellbeing rates	Exceeded industry engagement, retention and wellbeing rates	✔
	Continually renew our systems and processes and exceed industry Gallup's Employee Engagement Survey benchmarks	Improved Gallup result for "Systems ... help me do my job better"	✔
	Raise, equip, train and send out 500 missional leaders by 2032	50 missional leaders raised	✔
	Grow congregation giving to \$1 million for the Pioneering Fund	Pioneering fund established	✔

Walk with us



Work with us

With over 120 services and programs, you can make a real difference in the lives of the people we serve by working at Wesley Mission, all while growing your career.

Discover job opportunities at wesleymission.org.au/careers



Become a volunteer

The experience, skills and compassion of our committed volunteers are vital in enabling us to help more people through our community services.

To join our team of volunteers, visit wesleymission.org.au/volunteer



Donate and make a difference today

Each year, Wesley Mission helps thousands of people in need. While some of our services are government-funded, many of our programs are only possible thanks to our generous donors and supporters.

To donate, visit wesleymission.org.au/donate



Worship with us

Join one of our vibrant congregations who come together every week to worship Jesus Christ and share in God's Word. We have services in English, Indonesian, Mandarin and Samoan.

For more information, visit church.wesleymission.org.au



Get support

With over 120 community services, we're here to support you at every stage of your life. We'll walk with you and ensure you have access to the services you need.

For more information, visit wesleymission.org.au/find-a-service



By leaving a gift to Wesley Mission in your Will, you can leave a lasting legacy that can transform the lives of people most in need.

To learn more go to wesleymission.org.au/gift-in-will



Connect with us

Keep up-to-date with what's happening at Wesley Mission at wesleymission.org.au and follow @WesleyMission on Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram and X and @WesleyMissionSydney on YouTube.





Wesley Mission

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Wesley Mission is a part of the Uniting Church in Australia.

Get involved

To volunteer, donate or leave a bequest visit
wesleymission.org.au

Doing all the good we can
because every life matters