



imagine

FAMILY • LOVE • HOPE

WINTER | 2020

Words from the CEO, Paul McDonald

Welcome to the Winter edition of Imagine. We saw Victoria face the worst bushfires in recent histories and we faced the incredible challenges of a global pandemic. We can proudly say that “we were there” during a terrible time in history. More so, however, I think we’ll say “we were there for our community” too because people like you – our donors, volunteers, staff and partners – have genuinely stepped up. Thank you.

In these uncertain times, we reveal who we really are, because the crisis doesn’t change who we are – it reveals who we are. This edition of Imagine features highlights across our TEACHaR program, Emergency Relief and the significant work of AV’s Cultural Advisors, Uncle Ian and Auntie Kellie. On behalf of the family at AV, I thank all of you for your ongoing support. Please enjoy this edition of Imagine.



special report



TEACHaR is delivering the goods

AV’s TEACHaR[^] program has had a remarkable year. Remarkable in that the challenges we faced were unlike any other; remarkable also for the program’s adaptability and innovation of care during the crises.

Many of the vulnerable young people in our care have faced challenges that can make school attendance and education difficult

even at the best of times. For some, the disruption of bushfires and the pandemic added exceptional pressure.

In response, the TEACHaR program has been highly active, supporting new clients to deal with the loss of schools and family homes, moving existing students forward despite rapidly changing circumstances.

Our program’s Education Specialists offer one-on-one learning support to keep young people on track with their education.

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Extensive experience in teaching and further training in childhood trauma allows our specialists to adapt lessons and support to the complex behaviour our young people can exhibit. More than anything else, the program offers our young people consistent support as they move through the most challenging chapters of their lives.

The TEACHaR program led the field with the rapid provision of new online educational resources. We created an online version of the TEACHaR program offering remote tutoring and educational resources to every child in our care. The TEACHaR team personally visited and (safely) handed our learning packs with textbooks and stationery to accompany the online components. The team also created a new forum for carers to connect online and share their homeschooling experiences. The online program has been so useful to families and well-received by young people that it is likely to become a permanent feature of the program.

The support TEACHaR offered during the pandemic was critically important to the stability of our client family environments. School closures, job uncertainty and lockdown restrictions pushed carers to their limits. Some foster carers indicated that without the extra homeschooling support TEACHaR has provided, they would not have been able to cope.

The TEACHaR team have truly gone above and beyond to ensure that no child is left behind. We thank them for their incredible contribution now, and as they stand beside our young people into the future.

^ Transforming Education Achievement for Children and Young People in Home Based and Residential Care



AV Elders send a message

Many of the young people in our care in the Ararat area, have Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage. AV's Cultural Advisors Auntie Kellie Hunter and Uncle Ian Goolagong, led our cultural communications during the pandemic, spreading messages of good spirit, strength and togetherness at a time when communities were feeling isolation the most.

"As you know, the strong and resilient peoples of this land have survived climate change, food shortages, war and sickness long before today. Over thousands of generations we have overcome big challenges by standing together, because it's our strong community, connected in spirit, that make us strong as people. This virus our mobs are facing today is dangerous, but remember it's really we who are the deadly ones, eh!" – excerpt from AV's Letter to Indigenous our community during the pandemic.

Uncle Ian and Auntie Kellie also conducted a virtual smoking ceremony for young people and AV staff, to help lighten our hearts and minds as we move forward through this pandemic.



Parish Partnerships & the Pandemic

The byproduct of Victoria's necessary pandemic restrictions, created sudden and significant pressure on already vulnerable Victorians. AV's Parish Partnerships (PP) acted quickly to ensure our Emergency Relief support services adapted, to meet the ever-changing needs of the community as public guidelines were rolled out.

Emergency Relief centres introduced social distancing and regular sterilising of surfaces. To reduce gatherings of people, isolated families collected care packages at these locations by appointment. Clients were able to call to discuss needs and where required, staff arranged for personal deliveries.

AV was delighted to have in a kind donation of over 750 prepared meals from DNATA Catering. These meals will assist us in our Emergency Relief programs in Metropolitan Melbourne and some of our Regional Centres. On behalf of those in need, we sincerely thank DNATA Catering for their contribution.

Other initiatives included the extension of home services in the City of Yarra, providing home visits for individuals recently placed in temporary



accommodation. This included the provision of food, and other essential items such as personal hygiene products (toothbrush, soap, etc.). Home visits also provided (distanced) social connection for those clients experiencing mental health issues.

PP in partnership with the Diocese of Melbourne opened a specialised service in St Stephens, Richmond, which targeted the emergency needs (food and referrals) of migrants, refugees, international students. This also provides help for the many that have recently become unemployed, but are unable to access government welfare services. This program formed an essential part in the community and we appreciate the support of the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne in assisting us in establishing this initiative.

Bushfire Update – June 2020

In response to the growing number of Victorians whose homes and lives were suddenly disrupted by the bushfires earlier in the year, AV launched an emergency fundraiser. The appeal quickly received generous support from donors, raising over \$165,000 as of May 2020. The funds were put towards both immediate care and support for those affected, as well as services to help communities rebuild into the future.

Due to the severity of the fires, local communities in the north-east corridor of Victoria lost access to clean drinking water. AV played an integral role in ensuring that residents had water, and that it was distributed to those who needed it most.

A number of the schools lost in Gippsland were moved or amalgamated into others. For students who had lost their homes, or were already struggling with school attendance, this was a massive disruption. AV allocated increased funding to the TEACHaR^A program to offer more students dedicated education support as they came to terms with massive change and emotional trauma.

Additionally, AV's Seasons for Growth – an evidence-based change, loss and grief program – will be delivered to four schools in East Gippsland. This will allow children and young people to build the knowledge and skills necessary to strengthen their social and emotional wellbeing following significant loss.

Our financial counselling teams continue to support the many families who lost houses and property.



One such client is a 45-year-old farmer and volunteer firefighter who manages his farm with his elderly parents. Upon returning from a 16-hour firefighting shift, he found both his and his parent's houses ablaze. His parents fled the fire under ember attack, and the shed caught alight as they were reversing out. They lost everything. The family were deeply traumatised, and their financial difficulties quickly piled up.

Our financial counsellors jumped into action. They were able to help in many ways, including relief grant applications, insurance claims, negotiations with creditors for outstanding bills, letters of support for passport replacements, referrals to mental health support, and accessing

funds for an urgently needed replacement water tank for their livestock. Our financial counselling services were able to give this heroic family the support they needed to hold on through their grief and heartbreak and begin the long journey home.

We'd like to acknowledge and thank all the unforgettably generous donors, staff, partners and volunteers who contributed to the recovery of our Victorian communities. Your efforts have helped so many people, and we'll be here long into the future as our communities continue to rebuild.

[^] Transforming Education Achievement for Children and Young People in Home Based and Residential Care



A Gift in your Will can make a real difference

Through Anglicare Victoria you can help change the lives of so many vulnerable children, youth and families living across Victoria.

If you would like to confidentially talk to us about how a Gift in your Will could make a real difference, please contact our Relationship Manager - Gifts in Wills.

Phone: (03) 9412 6197 **Email:** peter.burt@anglicarevic.org.au

A crisis doesn't change who we are. It reveals who we are.

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PO Box 45 Abbotsford VIC 3067

Alternatively you can:

Donate online at www.anglicarevic.org.au
Phone 1800 809 722 to donate

**THANK
YOU**

We value your privacy. Please contact us on 03 9412 6136 to find out how we manage your personal information.



“Who cares if I’m not here at the end of the day? Nobody cares.

While the Coronavirus has pushed vulnerable families to breaking point, the economic crisis is going to be catastrophic. Will you donate to help them today?

Wendy and her son Jack* were homeless at the time. Alcoholism was slowly killing her, and after a violent fight, Jack’s father kicked them out of their home, without even letting them pack a bag.

She met AV counsellors, Sarah and Louise. She said she could tell they genuinely cared about her and wanted to hear her story. Wendy says this moment changed her life.

“I lost it; I was just an emotional wreck ... they sat in there with me until 6pm, just making sure I was all right, and talking me through everything, and telling me that I was a good mum.

Wendy still had a long road ahead of her, but the evidence is clear – there’s nothing more powerful in getting someone to turn their life around than the *belief and support of another person.*

Because if Wendy needed help at St Mark’s today, she’d still be shown the same level of care:

- **We’re delivering food and essentials weekly to families who are isolated**
- **We supply clean clothes directly to people who need them**
- **We are still assisting people with no homes, find a safe place to live**
- **We refer people who need specialist support via the phone or online**

That’s why I need your support to fund these increased efforts during these times. Please, will you make a gift today?

*Name has been changed to protect privacy