



# imagine

**FAMILY • LOVE • HOPE**

CHRISTMAS | 2020

## Words from the CEO, Paul McDonald

Welcome to the 2020 Christmas edition of *Imagine*.

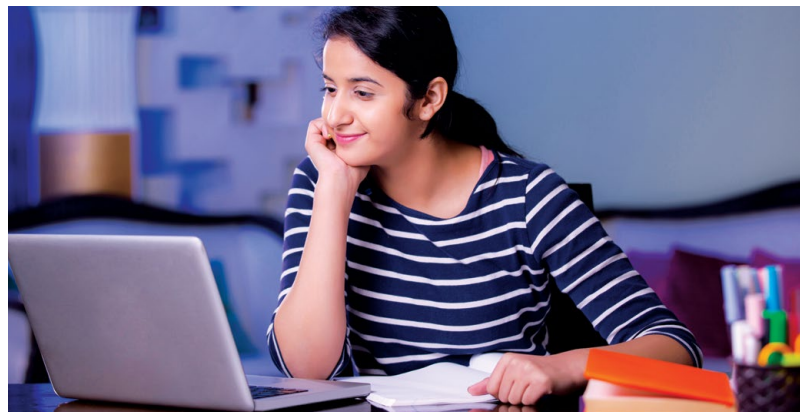
While the pandemic has created many challenges for AV, I'm proud to say that it has brought out the best in us too. Throughout a tough year, our staff, clients and supporters, have shown determination and resilience to overcome many hurdles.

AV has continued to protect and empower our vulnerable young people and families throughout this year, ensuring that all of our clients are strong, safe and stable. The compassion and commitment of the organisation to our clients through such a difficult year, has been remarkable. Despite the challenges, our work continued, whether it was caring for mothers recovering from violence; supporting COVID-19 and bushfire-affected families; supporting and caring for children and young people within our 31 residential houses or hundreds of foster care homes.

I want to wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas. It will be one savoured I'm sure, after such a difficult year. Furthermore, I want to thank you for your support to our Christmas Appeal and the support you have shown us throughout this extraordinary year.

I trust you will enjoy this update.

Thank you again.



## Supporting parents through lockdown

**“Thank you so much for the beautiful work you do! I am seeing results with my kids already, especially with my 15-year-old daughter.”**

– Parent participant from “Tuning In To Teens”

AV staff played an essential role in the lives of thousands of parents who found themselves reaching out for a helping hand during the pandemic.

With as much as three times the usual demand for services in some areas, the need to create pandemic-safe practices in our service delivery to families rapidly

ushered us into a new era of online operations. Thanks to the dedicated work of our teams to evolve into a digital environment, programs like ParentZone were able to successfully migrate online within a short period of time.

*“It’s been a magic roller coaster ride. The speed with which we’ve been able to move online has been phenomenal.*

*The staff have been absolutely astonishing. What may have normally taken us five years we have achieved in three months. And this has provided the catalyst to reach more clients on an ongoing basis.”*

– Cathie Valentine, Program Manager Community Services

## this month's issues

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# The single most significant reform to child welfare in a generation



**The Home Stretch campaign has applauded the Andrews Government for its nation-leading pledge to offer extended care arrangements to every young person in the state on an ongoing basis.**

From 1 January 2021, the Home Stretch program will provide an accommodation allowance to every young Victorian in out-of-home care until the age of 21. This means a young person can remain living with their kinship or foster carer if they wish, or transition to supported independent living arrangements.

"This announcement will transform the lives of vulnerable young people for the better, giving them options they would not have if their support had been terminated at 18 - as it is for the majority of young people across the country," Paul McDonald, Chair of the Home Stretch campaign said.



## Nurturing with nature

**During Victoria's lockdowns and in celebration of Kinship Carers Week, our Kinship program came up with a creative and fun approach to strengthen the bond between children and carers, while also fostering a connection to the natural world during the lockdown.**

The Kinship 'Grow it, Eat it' project delivered over 40 Grow Kits with pots, soil and vegetable seedlings to Kinship families.

Later, an instructional online group session was held via video conference.

The children planted all kinds of vegetables, including strawberries, carrots, tomatoes, chillies, and sunflowers, and had a lot of fun. One carer wrote, *"My grandchildren are very happy and enjoyed themselves this afternoon. They are asking when the next one is."*

The team behind the project plan to deliver more online workshops. One of the upsides of lockdown has been the learning of new online skills by staff and carers, allowing greater access to families with less demand on their time.



## In the spirit of generosity

### Norm Geschke: An Australian hero who believed in giving a fair go.

In 2018, at age 96, Charles "Norm" Geschke passed away. Having lived a life of contribution towards his country and community, his final act of kindness was leaving a gift to those whom he felt a great sense of empathy for: the vulnerable and disadvantaged children of Victoria.

Recently we met with his son, Phillip, who described his father as a strong-willed man of many talents and interests with a deep drive to serve and support those around him.

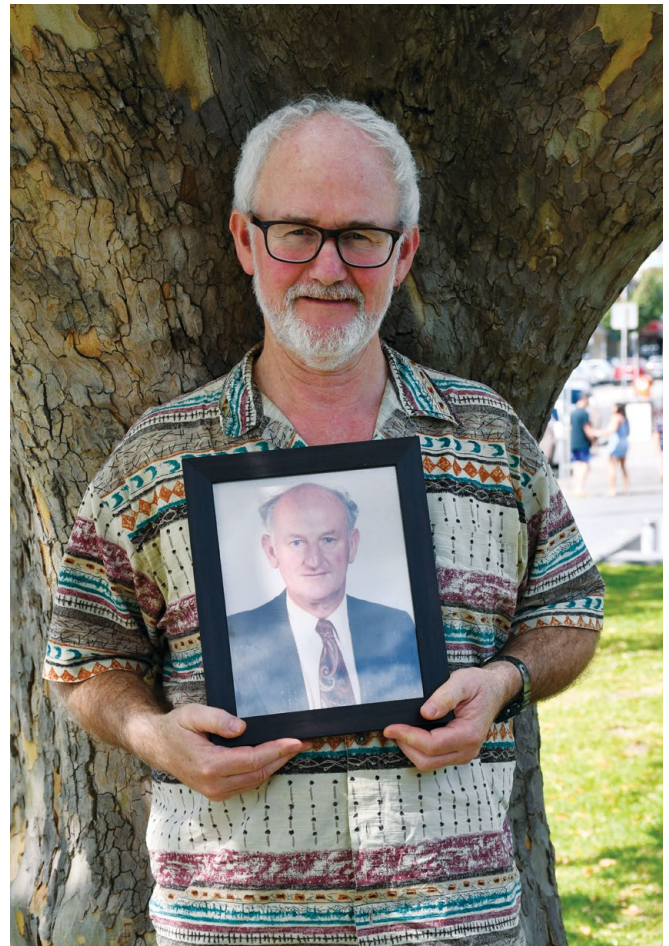
As a teenager living through the Great Depression and the Second World War, he was instilled with a deep sense of service, justice and compassion for vulnerable people.

He signed up for the RAAF on his 19th birthday, and by the end of his service he had flown 17 different types of aircraft including Australian-built Mustangs and Lincoln bombers.

Norm went on to become the Director of Consumer Affairs. *"He believed in fairness, he'd see injustice and chase it,"* remembers his son, Phillip.

Norm devoted time to many areas of interest but never lost his care for young people.

When he saw the local Youth Club was struggling, he applied his strong organisational skills to reinvigorate its essential role in young people's lives.



Throughout their life, Norm and his wife Audrey made significant donations to over 35 different charities. Norm's final wish to provide support to young people living in Out-of-Home-Care encapsulates a life of service and is typical of Norm and Audrey's generous spirit.

## Norm's lasting legacy

**Sandy\* had been living in residential care with AV for many years following a challenging upbringing. When Sandy was about to turn 18, his mind was preoccupied with the difficult reality of leaving state care.**

Norm's gift allowed AV staff to set Sandy up with much-needed tools and work clothes for his new employment as a part-time concreter. Sandy was overwhelmed with appreciation.

AV's Out-of-Home-Care Manager, Trevor Day, said, "These extra funds have been a godsend. We are in the business of creating memories for our young people, and Sandy will cherish his 18th birthday for years to come."

\*Name has been changed to protect privacy





## A safe space at Atrium Place

For more than 120 years, the location upon which Atrium Place sits has delivered care to vulnerable Victorians. Today, the premises continues its history of care by offering accommodation that provides the perfect space for people and families to find refuge and rebuild their strength.

During the pandemic, Atrium Place was a haven for helping vulnerable families facing the challenges of lockdown. In September, along with others, AV provided a family of seven a safe space to recover from COVID-19. Working with AV's TEACHaR program, we also delivered the children education packs, specifically designed to maintain their connection to school during isolation.



Our team provided outstanding care to manage the complexities of the situation and support alternate housing as the family left our care.

Community leaders said the response provided to the family had given their wider community confidence in asking for support.

## Toy and Food Appeal

It's not too late to donate to this year's Toy and Food Appeal.

If you would like to donate online, you can still do so at [www.anglicarevic.org.au/donation](http://www.anglicarevic.org.au/donation) and select either 'Toys' or 'Food/ER' from the drop-down list.

If you would like to call us to make a donation, please call 1800 809 722 and quote either 'Toys' or 'Food/ER' over the phone.

**Thank you for your support.**



## Make tomorrow better for a vulnerable child with a Gift in your Will

You can secure better tomorrows for vulnerable children, young people and families across Victoria by including a Gift to Anglicare Victoria in your Will.

Find out more at [www.anglicarevic.org.au](http://www.anglicarevic.org.au), email [giftsinwills@anglicarevic.org.au](mailto:giftsinwills@anglicarevic.org.au) or phone (03) 9412 6197.

Already included Anglicare Victoria in your Will?  
Please let us know – **we'd love to thank you!**



## Give vulnerable mothers and children the gift of a brighter Christmas.

Due to the pandemic, many more vulnerable mothers are in urgent need of our support. Your donation today will give the gift of valuable parenting programs that empower parents to take back control of their lives and create loving homes for their children.

Last Christmas, Zoe\* and her two boys were in a dangerous domestic situation. Worse still, her boys were beginning to take on increasingly negative behaviour.

*"Thinking back to last Christmas, I remember I was afraid. I hoped there would never be one like it again".*

When she reached out to AV, we introduced her to a program helping parents manage their children's emotions in the home; and it made all the difference.

*"Everybody wants to be a good parent. They may not necessarily have the strategies to do it, but they will try if they're given the opportunity." - Michelle, ParentZone.*

**Please donate today and provide urgent support to vulnerable families. Your simple act of generosity today will have a lasting and positive impact on many at-risk children.**

\*Name has been changed to protect privacy

# Yes, I will help Anglicare Victoria give vulnerable mothers and children the gift of a brighter Christmas.

## Donation Option

Please accept my single gift of:

- \$25                       \$50  
 \$75                       \$100

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ as a donation of my choice

*Donations greater than \$2 are tax deductible.*

## Payment Details

- Cheque/Money Order enclosed**  
(made payable to: ANGLICARE VICTORIA)

**My details are**

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

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

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

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

My Parish: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please debit my credit card**

- VISA                       MASTERCARD                       AMEX

Card Number - - - - / - - - - / - - - - / - - - -

Expiry - - / - -

Card Holder's Name

Card Holder's Signature

- Please send me information about becoming a regular giver  
 Please send me information about leaving a Gift in my Will to Anglicare Victoria  
 I have already left a Gift in my Will to Anglicare Victoria

**Please post to:**

Paul McDonald, CEO of Anglicare Victoria  
PO Box 45 Abbotsford VIC 3067

**Alternatively you can:**

Donate online at [www.anglicarevic.org.au](http://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.