



Words from the CEO, Paul McDonald

Welcome to our 2021 Autumn Edition of Imagine.

I hope your summer was restful and relaxing after a testing year of bushfires, lockdowns and restrictions.

While many of us enjoy the return to relative normality, the impacts of 2020 are far from over. Across all programs, our teams report an increase in families under pressure. We are working closely with the government and our partners to ensure that we meet the needs of our communities.

As you will read, the Working for Victoria initiative has been highly successful in extending vital support to those in need, and delivering jobs for Victorians during the pandemic. We've also launched an appeal requesting urgent donations towards our family-centred programs. I hope you enjoy hearing about our very successful Toy and Food Appeal, our first ever Education Awards, and the exciting launch of Village 21.

Thank you for your continued support in our endeavour to a make real and lasting impact to the lives of vulnerable Victorian children and families.

Paul McDonald.



SPECIAL REPORT: Working For All Victorians

During the last quarter of 2020, Anglicare Victoria partnered with the Victorian Government through the Working for Victoria (WV) Fund to employ 88 staff in a range of roles for a six month period.

The scheme offers those that were out of work due to the pandemic faster access to employment.

AV was fortunate to attract a wide range of talented and passionate employees, all of whom immediately started working to improve the lives of others. The WV staff were appointed and trained in financial wellbeing counselling and community support positions, and important back of house roles in HR, IT and finance. The staff have had a big positive impact on the lives of our clients and been exemplary in their dedication and enthusiasm towards their work.

this month's issues

- P2** Working for all Victorians · Toy and Food Appeal
- P3** Educational Awards
- P4** Village 21 opens · Rebooting the system

Nine of the 88 funded roles were employed in the North Metro Community Support Services Program, expanding the support we offer Victorians struggling with the financial impacts of COVID-19. Maxx, one of our WFV Financial Wellbeing workers, received training to support clients with budgeting, making informed financial decisions, and where necessary, triaging where more specialist services are required. Maxx said, "It's been a really good experience, I'm a trained electrician, and have a background in IT, so it's quite different. Instead of solving the immediate problem, we are about building independence; I've gained a positive life experience out of working for AV. I'm now looking into education to continue work in family services."

The WFV staff have contributed their unique skills to AV in every way they could including teaching Zumba classes, translating AV communications into Arabic, building corporate partnerships, and creating recipe books. Many of the WFV staff provided frontline support where it was urgently needed. This including working across dedicated hotlines to assist nearly 1000 people in need with food and material aid, financial wellness advice and providing holistic general assessment and referrals.

Alyssa started with AV's WFV staff in late September as Team Leader for the Metro region after her role as Customer Service Manager at Qantas was put on hold. "I've never experienced such an amazing onboarding process, and I have done recruitment for a number of years. I think AV should be used as the perfect example of doing it right. Even if I didn't get the role, I would have wanted to work for AV in the future. AV lives and breathes it, diversity and inclusion. I have learnt so much. My eyes have been opened!"



Toy and Food Appeal

AV's Annual Toy and Food Appeal was especially challenging last year but the determination of our teams and donors to deliver Christmas joy to every child in care shone through. We thank all our schools and donors for their generosity and for ensuring the year ended on a high.

Thanks to the Victorian Government's Working for Victoria initiative, extra community support workers were available to assist in the lengthy efforts to collect, sanitise, package and deliver hundreds of toys and hampers across vast distances while under the health restrictions. Our staff thoroughly enjoyed working on a project that contributes to making life a little brighter for children, parents and carers.

Kerri Miles, community support worker said, "They were so appreciative; some families acknowledged this would not have happened without the donations from some wonderful people and companies. It makes you realise there are so many caring, kind and thoughtful people in this world".

One young girl who received a Christmas present was particularly delighted when she found out her new toy

– a doll – had the same long black ponytails, pretty pink outfit and skin colour as her. Her case manager Nic said "She was over the moon. She and the doll looked like twins!" Her family were very appreciative and said she now takes the doll to kinder and it has supported her in interacting with other children and overcoming her social anxiety.





Educational Awards

The inaugural education awards was held in November last year and recognises students in our care from Prep to Year 12 who have shown outstanding improvement in their results and engagement with their schoolwork - and all while overcoming huge personal challenges.

The event, which will now be held annually, received 58 nominations for educational achievement across residential units, foster care, kinship care, therapeutic care packages, and COMPASS. Held as an online event, it was wonderful to see all our primary, secondary school children and young people gather around the screen and celebrate their achievements.

Each of the children attending was delivered a gift pack to open during the event. Those shortlisted for awards, or winners of awards, received a certificate and the winners received a trophy to sit proudly in their room. The inaugural Stephen Newton Scholarship was also awarded to those of our young people in Out-of-Home Care going on to do Year 12. They each received \$2,000 towards school costs. We were delighted to award 12 recipients in the first year of this scholarship and wish them well for the year.

EDUCATION AWARD ENTRY

Jason* had significant personal challenges with school engagement and learning. He experienced anxiety and found it difficult to focus in class. When AV staff first met Jason, he hadn't been in school for over a year.

Working with AV's Kinship foster program and TEACHaR (Transforming Educational Achievement of Children at Risk), he has since demonstrated significant improvement in school engagement and is now fully immersed within the school community. He is striving and working hard to finish school and thinking about his next steps.

It was an enormous effort for Jason to step back into school. His confidence in the way he began to express himself and speak fondly of being at school was a credit to him and his teachers as well as the measures put in place to support him. Support staff said that Jason is "a pleasure to teach and he is always willing to work". He has shown his resilience in a very tough year and continues to work on overcoming his anxiety.

* Name has been changed to protect privacy

Village 21 Opens

Late last year we were delighted to see the opening of a new project that provides studios for six young people, giving them a stable home, ongoing support and guidance, and a communal living experience for up to three years.

Delivered in partnership with Kids Under Cover, Village 21 is designed to reduce the challenges young people leaving care often face and was developed in response to this cohort's unique needs.

This innovative village environment will assist in creating strong connections back to the community and teach skills in self-sufficiency. Six young people aged 18-21 and two professional mentors will reside on-site, with regular visits by AV staff with expertise in employment and study pathways. Village 21 will support communal activities such as cooking, maintaining shared gardens and learning life skills.

Staff and partners alike are excited about significantly improving the lives of the young people in this special project. There is already a healthy dynamic between the young people and mentors, with an open flow of communication which has assisted in the development of positive relationships amongst the group.



Weekly group dinners are occurring involving the key practitioner, mentors and tenants, who are all involved in the preparation and cooking of the meals.

All of the current residents are linking in with some form of training/apprenticeship and one young person was recently offered a job. One more resident will move in the next week, with a final spot likely to be filled soon after. Ethics approval has also been obtained for Swinburne University to conduct the evaluation of the model.



Rebooting the system

ReBoot supports young people aged 10-14 at risk of offending or involved in low-level crime. The program supports those that might fall through the cracks by focusing on protection, education, dedicated mentorship, community and positive experiences.

Over the Christmas holidays, the ReBoot program supported three young people to attend Camp Wedgetail - a nine-night adventure camp for young people outside Ballarat. The children reported that the camp was a positive experience providing them with the opportunity to challenge themselves outside of their comfort zone and form new friendships. Their families also benefited from the period of respite and all attendees have requested to return next year.



A request for support

Help Victorian families who are at breaking point.

Your support today will help them get back on their feet.

Some families lost their income; some have lost their businesses, and some families have buckled under the strain of COVID-19 and fallen apart. After a tough year, the financial and emotional pressure on these families is taking its toll.

We are receiving more calls than ever from vulnerable people experiencing acute hardship and stress, and JobKeeper and JobSeeker supplements are coming to an end this March.

Your donation will ensure we are there to assist an unprecedented number of families and individuals in desperate need with financial counselling, budgeting, emergency grants and family support.

Read our heart-warming story of Isabelle and how her family got back on track with the help of our financial counselling team.*

www.anglicarevic.org.au/donation/

*Name has been changed to protect privacy.

Yes, I will help Victorian families who are at breaking point

Donation Option

Please accept my single gift of:

- \$20 \$80
 \$100 \$225

\$ _____ 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
Phone 1800 809 722 to donate

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YOU**

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