

# Hands & Heart

EDITION 2 | FEBRUARY 2021



**Cabrini**  
OUTREACH



## Welcome to the latest edition of Hands & Heart

As we tentatively step into 2021, I want to thank all who continue to support those most in need during a time of great global instability. Without you, our dedicated colleagues, volunteers, supporters and donors, our programs and services would not be possible. Despite the hardships faced by many last year, we received an incredibly generous response to our Christmas campaign. Through online sales of Christmas cards and associated donations, we were able to raise over \$15,000.

We were also grateful to receive a substantial donation from the Cabrini Health Malvern Mission Committee who, due to COVID-19 restrictions, were unable to hold their annual Christmas fair for staff. Instead, they generously chose to direct these funds to support people seeking asylum.

This donation, together with funds received from the Brighton Mission Committee, staff from the People and Culture and Food Services teams, and some very generous individual donors, enabled Cabrini Outreach to provide Coles, Woolworths and St Vincent De Paul vouchers over the Christmas period to families who use the Asylum Seeker and Refugee Health Hub. We were also able to contribute funding to our Pharmacy Waiver

Program, which provides free essential medicines to clients who are forced to make impossible choices between purchasing medication, buying food or paying for utilities.

Late last year we also released our FY20 Annual Report, detailing our programs, services and achievements for the year. You can find a copy of the Annual Report here: [cabrinioutreach.com.au/annualreport](http://cabrinioutreach.com.au/annualreport) or on our website under About Us, Publications.

Wishing you a happy and healthy start to 2021 and I hope that your wishes for 2021 are fulfilled.

**Tom Roth**  
General Manager, Cabrini Outreach

## OUR TOP 5 WISHES FOR 2021

The events of 2020 led to some incredible acts of kindness and generosity. However, they also highlighted and exacerbated the inequities that exist between different groups within Australia and across the globe.

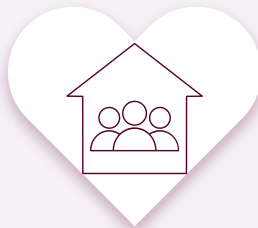
We know more can be done to tackle these inequities. Here are our top 5 wishes for 2021.



### Wish #1:

#### Access to universal healthcare.

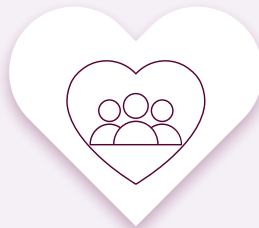
All Australians, including our First Nations Peoples, people seeking asylum, and people experiencing entrenched disadvantage, have equitable access to timely, affordable, high quality healthcare.



### Wish #2:

#### Provision of a minimum social welfare safety net.

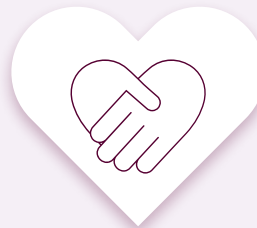
Everyone has access to stable accommodation and adequate nutrition, regardless of employment or visa status, and are not reliant on overstretched charity.



### Wish #3:

#### Protection of the most vulnerable.

Policy protects the most vulnerable, with special care and attention given to the needs of women, children, the elderly, people with a disability, people seeking asylum, and other minority groups.



### Wish #4:

#### Reconciliation with First Nations Peoples.

Symbolic and legal changes are made to allow Aboriginal self-determination over all aspects of life including recognition of our First Nations Peoples in the Australian Constitution.



### Wish #5:

#### Support to low resource countries.

Australia extends greater support to low-resource countries whose people continue to suffer from preventable disease and illness, particularly in the Pacific or in the event of humanitarian crises.

## EXPANDING MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT INTO REGIONAL VICTORIA

The COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to increased levels of distress amongst people seeking asylum and other vulnerable migrants. But with no access to Medicare or no income support, it can be difficult for people seeking asylum to access mental health services. This is particularly the case in regional Victoria.

Since 2016, Cabrini Outreach has provided a specialist mental health service for people seeking asylum, facilitated by mental health clinicians and pro bono psychiatrists. Last year, we expanded this service into Shepparton. In partnership with Uniting, we employed Ali Alhelayl, a Psychosocial Support Caseworker, to provide intake and non-clinical case management to people seeking asylum, refugees and temporary visa holders. Ali has recently settled in

Australia, and previously worked as an emergency doctor in Iraq. He has a great interest in mental health and cardiology, and is working towards registration in Australia.

Ali is based at the Uniting Vic.Tas Settlement Hub in Shepparton and acts as a satellite member of the Cabrini Outreach team. Ali's aim is to engage with community members, raise awareness of the mental health support that is now available and, when appropriate, link them in to our



Melbourne-based services. He also provides practical assistance, care coordination and emotional support to his clients. If this model is successful, we will be seeking to expand to Mildura.

## ESWATINI CONTINUES TO TACKLE HIV CRISIS AMID COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Despite its small population, Eswatini has the highest prevalence of HIV among adults aged 15 to 49 in the world.

However, through the *Strengthening the quality of life for communities in St Philips* program, Cabrini Ministries Eswatini has been able to make significant advances in the screening, health and education of people living with, or at risk of contracting, HIV.

Over the past six months, Cabrini Ministries Eswatini has screened more than 2,000 people for HIV. Of those that tested positive, 100 per cent were able to be initiated onto antiretroviral treatment within 24 hours of receiving their result. Once initiated, ensuring clients adhere to treatment is a further challenge. However, the holistic nature of the wrap-around service – testing, treatment, counselling and education



– is making a difference. Cabrini Ministries Eswatini has been able to achieve a 95 per cent adherence to treatment rate, and this has resulted in a sharp decline in the number of clients presenting with a high viral load.

Eswatini's ability to continue to provide HIV services has come under pressure during the COVID-19 pandemic. On 14 December last year, Eswatini's Prime Minister Ambrose Dlamini became the first head of government in the world to die in office from COVID-19. Since then, Eswatini's Labor Minister and

Minister of Public Service have also succumbed to the virus. Eswatini's total number of confirmed cases is about to pass 15,000. However, on a positive note, the Eswatini Ministry of Health has stated it has set aside budget to roll out vaccines to its 1.3 million population.

We acknowledge Cabrini Ministries Eswatini's ongoing achievements in the face of extreme adversity, and look forward to continuing to support their efforts in ensuring the people of Eswatini live long and productive lives.

## NOBODY LEFT BEHIND



Cabrini Outreach supports the Nobody Left Behind and the No Child Left Behind campaigns, led by the Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA). Over the past year, our doctors at the Asylum Seeker and Refugee Health Hub (the Hub) have become increasingly concerned by the number of children they are seeing with nutritional deficiencies. Loss of employment throughout the pandemic has resulted in families relying on emergency food relief, which is often lacking in fresh fruit and vegetables, or skipping meals altogether.

The concerns of our Hub doctors were reflected in a recently released RCOA report - *Hunger and homelessness among people seeking asylum during COVID-19*.

The report found that:

- 70% of people have been forced to skip meals due to hardship
- 14% are currently experiencing homelessness, while 55% are at imminent risk of homelessness
- 88% have struggled to pay their rent since the COVID-19 pandemic began.

Our campaign alliance reached out to the media to convey this story to the public, and we received an impressive response. Medical Director of the Hub, Dr Gillian Singleton, received numerous requests for interviews and the coverage included print, radio and television.

You can view the main media stories and find out more on our website at: <https://cabrinioutreach.com.au/news/hunger-and-homelessness-among-people-seeking-asylum>

We continue to work on this campaign and advocacy strategy with our partners across the sector of organisations that work with people seeking asylum.

If you would like to take action to ensure nobody is left behind as we continue to fight this pandemic, you can sign the Refugee Council's petition here: [https://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/support\\_safety\\_petition/](https://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/support_safety_petition/) or search and share our #NobodyLeftBehind posts on Twitter and Facebook.

I WOULD LIKE TO  
*support* CABRINI  
 OUTREACH

Here is my donation of:

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

My donation is:

Once off     Monthly

My payment details are:

Please debit my:

Visa     Mastercard     AMEX

Card number: \_\_\_\_\_

Expires:    / \_\_\_\_\_

Card holder name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

OR, Enclosed cheque/money order payable to Cabrini Outreach

Please contact me about leaving a Bequest to Cabrini Outreach.

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

Please direct my donation to:

My details are:

Title:                      First name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Suburb/Town: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

## MEET Catherine!

We're pleased to introduce you to Catherine, our Cabrini Outreach intern. The Cabrini Outreach internship is a unique opportunity that provides aspiring international and community development professionals with on-the-job training for 12 months to launch their career.

Catherine started with Cabrini Outreach in February 2020, after completing her Bachelor of Science followed by a Master of Public Health. As an intern, Catherine is involved in a range of administrative and support roles in our national and international development activities, gaining practical learning experience in social science, global health and policy advocacy.

We asked Catherine about her experience working with Cabrini Outreach, and this is what she had to say:

*"My experience at Cabrini Outreach has been both extremely fulfilling and humbling beyond words. The connections that I have been able to foster with our asylum seeker clients have already taught me so much in the way of humanity, generosity and open-mindedness, whilst emphasising the undeniable importance of having access to vital medications and showing me the reality that many migrants currently face as they try to find a better life in Australia.*

*The fascinating work I have done in helping to organise the International Health Commission meetings has likewise allowed me to build up my skills, and have given me a glimpse into the gallant efforts being made by the Sisters and other experts on the*



*committee to improve healthcare for the most disadvantaged communities around the world. Lastly, the warm, supportive and inspiring people who make up the Cabrini Outreach family have helped keep my days colourful and my frame of mind grounded, as 2020 brought surprise after surprise.*

*I am blessed to have been given this opportunity, and can't wait to apply this knowledge to whatever path I choose to take over these next years! It has kept me on my toes, and has been a journey I won't forget with an incredible organisation I have learnt so much from."*

If you are interested in a Cabrini Outreach internship, please contact us at [cabrinioutreach@cabrini.com.au](mailto:cabrinioutreach@cabrini.com.au).



[www.cabrinioutreach.com.au](http://www.cabrinioutreach.com.au)