

Cornerstone Contact Centre Annual Report 2020

About the work of Cornerstone

Moving premises and other exciting changes

In January 2020 Cornerstone Contact Centre moved to our new home on James Street. We began work renovating our drop-in centre at 1/31 James Street, and resumed our community meals at Dandenong Baptist Church adjacent at 25-27 James Street, with meals held in the church hall. The new Cornerstone logo was finalised, as well as a launch of the updated website.

Emergency relief during the COVID-19 crisis

In response to the COVID-19 crisis, all Cornerstone meals were adapted to be served as take-aways outside, in line with social distancing restrictions. Throughout the year, the Cornerstone team remained adaptable which meant we could remain open to serve those in need throughout the year. We served over 10,000 hot meals throughout the course of the year.

As the social impact of the COVID-19 crisis worsened, we began an extensive food parcel service, offering both home delivery and contactless pick-up of emergency relief parcels which included fresh fruit and vegetables, fresh bread, non-perishable pantry items, toiletries, baby items and pet food. Over the course of 2020, Cornerstone distributed over 4000 food parcels. Cornerstone were identified by local and state government as a key provider of local material aid, and assisted many who were isolating while awaiting test results.



Cornerstone remained open throughout 2020 adapting to serve meals as takeaways in line with COVID-19 restrictions; we distributed over 4000 food parcels, including boxes full of seasonal fresh produce for those in need.



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Partner Organisations

Partner organisations include the One Voice shower truck, Orange Sky mobile laundry service, the Avalon Centre who provide clothing, a Bolton Clarke homeless person's health nurse, the Australian College of Optometry and Wayss Housing. We have also enjoyed the support of the Lion's Club, the Rotary Club of Greater Dandenong and Endeavour Hills, Noel Social Services, the Lion's Club Supper Club, Friends of the Children Foundation, and a team from the ATO and Monash Health, who each partner with us to provide our community with ongoing meals. We are also pleased to be involved with the City of Greater Dandenong Anti Poverty Consortium, working collaboratively with Council and various local agencies.



Volunteers

Cornerstone has a committed team of volunteers. Through their ongoing and dedicated support, our organisation has provided support to hundreds of vulnerable individuals and families this year. Our team in 2020 has included three Community Studies placement students and we continue to partner with Chisholm TAFE and Federation University to provide valuable placement opportunities.

Staff and Board

Naomi Paterson: CEO
Juwita Jouhari: Kitchen Manager

David Talathoti: Chairperson
Jamie Maddaford: Deputy Chairperson
Grant Renkema: Secretary
Corey Van Garderen: Treasurer
Gloria Anderson: Board Member
Suzanne Van Rooy: Board Member

Case studies



Mark and Max

Mark has been visiting Cornerstone for the last 18 months, along with his beautiful Border Collie named Max. Mark was working full time until he lost his job in early 2020. He regularly attends the Cornerstone meal programs, and benefited from regular food parcels throughout the last year. We also provided him with dog food and treats for Max.

Mark spoke to the Cornerstone team about how the meals and food parcels kept him going throughout a difficult year when he has been struggling financially. The opportunity to have a chat with the Cornerstone team has been a source of comfort and encouragement for Mark (and Max!) throughout a challenging season in his life.

David B

David began volunteering for Cornerstone in 2019. He has been a member of the Cornerstone community for two years, and went from being someone who attends the Cornerstone meals, to one of our most committed community volunteers. David has a troubled past and spent some time in prison following an ice addiction. With the help of Cornerstone, David has been substance-free for over a year, and helps out cleaning, picking up vegetable donations from the local market, and with various 'handyman' jobs. David always has a smile, and his "can do" attitude makes him a valuable addition to the Cornerstone team.

Moving forward: 2021 and beyond

In the coming year we are excited to finalise renovations to our drop-in centre, along with having plans for a Creative Writing Group, an Art Group and a Community Garden Project. This will give community members valuable opportunities to learn new skills, whilst rebuilding social connections and building a strong and resilient community.

We have plans to establish an ongoing mental health forum space, providing vulnerable individuals with opportunities for valuable support.

Throughout this last year, we have been so encouraged by the support of the broader community, and heartened to see the strength and resilience of our Cornerstone community. As we look towards the coming year, it is with great hope and encouragement.



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Cornerstone's Supporters and Sponsors

We extend our thanks to all of our supporters, including the various levels of government, along with corporate and individual sponsors, and local churches, who make the valuable work of Cornerstone possible. Cornerstone sponsors include:

- City of Greater Dandenong Council
- State Government, with the support of Gabrielle Williams MP
- Federal Government, with the support of Julian Hill MP
- Toyota Material Handling
- The Andrews Foundation
- Dandenong Christian Reformed Church
- The DCRC Op Shop
- Dandenong Baptist Church
- Commonwealth Bank of Australia, Dandenong Plaza branch
- Nissan Manufacturing
- Various service clubs as listed on Page 2
- Our generous individual donors

We acknowledge the goodness of God in and through the work of Cornerstone, bringing hope and transformation to those we serve.

“Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the Lord.” Psalm 31:24