

# community resolve

Issue 3 - 2010

## homelessness hidden in rural communities

### **There are diverse groups of people experiencing homelessness**

The homeless population consists of diverse groups including single men and women, families with children and young people on their own. For some people, homelessness is a short-lived experience, while for others homelessness lasts more than a year, and some people experience repeated episodes of homelessness.

Homelessness for many is characterised by constant movement between different types of accommodation: the street, homeless shelters, boarding houses.

Alternatively, it may be from home to a refuge, a family member or a caravan park. Constant movement from one location to another is described as 'couch surfing' and is how most homeless people exist day-after-day, night-after-night in rural towns of South Australia.

Read more about how ac.care is helping to alleviate homelessness in rural regions of South Australia on page 3.

# message from the ceo



**Last year ac.care implemented fundamental changes that were necessary to keep up with the ongoing expansion of our services. In 2010 we will need to rise to many challenges that impact on our clients, focusing our energy and commitment to making a real difference.**

While some of these challenges will come out of the blue, some are already on the horizon and very familiar to ac.care. For example, the economic circumstances in our rural communities directly affect the quality of life of those disadvantaged, similarly,

the water issues in the lower regions of the River Murray not only affect the local economy but also community morale. The unknown challenges for us include the potential for policy changes arising from the State election this year and the potential changes if a national election is held. These policies are not only about priorities for particular portfolios but also include the type of relationship between government and non-government services.

This year we will develop ways to increase our understanding of significant trends and issues, in order to make sure our services are able to not only help individuals, but also make a real contribution to addressing disadvantage and social exclusion in all its forms. Most importantly, we have our clients' experiences and insights, and we will put in place better ways of gathering that information to help others in our services, as well as people more broadly. We need to note what is going on elsewhere, and to assess the relevance of trends to our communities. Bringing all this information together will enable ac.care to give true meaning to an 'evidence based' approach to our work and uphold our responsibility to create opportunities for life ... for rural people:

- opportunities for safe and stable accommodation
- opportunities to continue or re-enter formal education
- opportunities to develop employment skills
- opportunities to strengthen family and personal relationships
- opportunities for children to be supported, nurtured and develop
- opportunities for rural communities, so people feel connected and strong

In this issue of Community Resolve you will find a survey form that we would appreciate you completing. We talk about homelessness in rural communities. Please consider donating to our fundraising appeals to enable ac.care to provide further support to Aboriginal children in our Minya Porlar and Gerard crèches and expand the number of recipients in ac.care's new "Homeless Youth Resilience Scholarships" program.

**Rob Foggo | CEO**

# homelessness (from page 1)

Close to half of all people experiencing homelessness in Australia are under 25, and nearly a quarter are younger than 18. The available data\* reveals that 323 people in the Upper and Lower South East and 620 people in the Riverland and Murraylands regions of South Australia are living in impoverished dwellings, with friends, in boarding houses or in Supported Accommodation.

(\*Australian Government Census 2006)

## Research tells us that the experience of homelessness in rural communities can be particularly hard to bear for a number of reasons:

1. The shame and humiliation that is felt by many who experience homelessness in a close knit community
2. Homeless people can be more easily identified and thus seen as different
3. Homeless people say that in country areas they are more likely to be seen as failing and discriminated against.

## People become homeless for diverse reasons:

- teenagers typically experience homelessness following a breakdown in their family situation or because they are escaping from violent or abusive families;
- for some, family debt mounts and they are evicted from their housing. For other people it is a breakdown in their relationships, often involving domestic violence that results in one partner (usually a woman with children) losing their accommodation;
- many homeless people have experienced unhappy and abusive childhoods because of their experiences in care, including the Stolen Generation of Aboriginal children and Forgotten Australians;
- some face serious physical, as well as mental health issues; these lead to drug and/or alcohol problems that may impact on someone becoming homeless.

## creating awareness during national homeless persons week, august 09



Little hands to help at Centro Plaza



Many hands to help in Waikerie

## ac.care helps alleviate homelessness

- We recognise that homelessness is the result of many factors and life experiences
- We respect the person and understand there are many challenges on the road to change
- Early intervention is a key investment in the alleviation of homelessness.

## ac.care is a Specialist Homelessness Service Provider with the State Government of SA and provides:

- Supported Tenancies | Assisting individuals and families at risk of eviction from public housing to manage their household finances, property maintenance and link them to education, employment and counselling services.
- Supported Accommodation | Affordable transitional homes managed by ac.care for individuals and families who are homeless while they wait to move into stable long term accommodation.

## homeless youth resilience scholarships

### Learning stops the cycles of disadvantage and homelessness.

ac.care's 'Homeless Youth Resilience Scholarship' provides financial and personal support to help a young person that is homeless or at risk of homelessness to continue their education or re-engage in education and move onto a trade or tertiary education.

Initially ac.care is funding one young person from each of our regions, Murraylands, Riverland and South East, with a \$1,000 scholarship each, held in trust by ac.care and the support of a professional ac.care worker. Funds will be used for text books, course fees, uniforms, accommodation if the student needs to study away from home. ac.care's vision is to grow the program and increase the number of recipients each year.

"The scholarship program will help young people to finish their education or give school another go. Students will gain the confidence to find work or move onto tertiary education. The program creates the beginning of a future to succeed" said Rob Foggo, CEO

# new to ac.care and your community

## julia cranney

### youth and family services director

Julia Cranney has joined ac.care as Director of Youth and Family Services. Following a successful career in England, Julia came to Naracoorte in 1986 and has now returned. During her time in Naracoorte Julia worked for the former Department of Community Welfare. When the Naracoorte office closed Julia moved to Adelaide and worked for the office of Family and Youth Services. In 1993 she was asked to support the current Minister by resolving the key welfare issues brought to the Minister's attention. This marked a departure for Julia from service delivery to involvement in broader policy development for children, youth and families.

Amongst Julia's achievements were:

- Managing the former Children's Interest Bureau.
- Representing South Australia on the National Partnerships against Domestic Violence initiative.
- Facilitating the development of Youth Views, a process for youth participation across the human services sector.
- Initiating the Government directive for Government agencies to give priority access to children under guardianship.
- The Government's response to the Layton review of the child protection system and the development of the Keeping Them Safe agenda.
- Leading the passage of amendments to the SA Children's Protection Act 1993 to give a greater focus on the rights of children to be safe from harm and to live in safe and stable families.
- Establishing South Australian Child Death and Serious Injury Committee and the Council for the Care of Children.
- Preparing the SA Government's response to the Mullighan Inquiry into Child Sex and Abuse on APY Lands, including the establishment of locally based child protection services and a renewed focus on early childhood.



**PICTURED** Julia (front) joins fellow Directors, Ute Herrmann-Bullock (centre) and Helen Francis



**PICTURED** Faith

## gerard crèche

ac.care was honoured to be invited by the Gerard community to sponsor their crèche. The Gerard crèche opened on 1st February 2010.

“ The community had knowledge of our work with Minya Porlar (translated as little children ) crèche and was confident our organisational capabilities suited their needs. Minya Porlar crèche is well known and respected within the Aboriginal community. ”

**Helen Francis, ac.care Children and Community Services Director.**

Children are cared for in a culturally appropriate space in a manner that respects their culture while their parents and carers have the opportunity to do adult business including work, community business and other caring roles. Time spent at Gerard crèche helps children with school readiness, builds their social skills and strengthens connections between health and learning in the Aboriginal community of Gerard.

## ac.care millicent now a service sa rural agent

Demand for an agent of Service SA in Millicent was driven by the local community needs. On 4th December 2009 ac.care successfully formed a partnership with Service SA to provide State Government services not previously available in Millicent. ac.care now delivers services and products to the community such as:

- Learner Driver theory tests every Thursday between 3pm and 6pm
- Recreational boat licence theory tests Thursdays between 3pm and 6pm

Information to customers on Government services including:

- Downloading of application forms
- Sale of products
- 'Now you are a guardian' booklet
- Enduring power of Guardianship Kit
- Enduring Power of Attorney Kit
- Learner Driver Book



For more information on Service SA: [www.sa.gov.au](http://www.sa.gov.au)

## reducing poverty new financial counselling program

Financial counselling is a program for people who find themselves in debt and want to make changes to better manage their finances. The objective of the program is to empower a person to take control of their debt situation and provide them with strategies to self-manage their finances for a sustainable financial future. The target group is predominantly people on low-income but not exclusively. Clients could include a wealthy person with a gambling problem, a young working couple in trouble paying their mortgage, a recently unemployed young person struggling with credit card debt.

### The Financial Counsellor will:

- Analyse the client's debts and income and complete an income and expenditure statement to ascertain their net debt situation.
- Investigate strategies to reduce debt, including advocating for the client eg, hire purchase interest charges, utilities bills
- Look at all aspects of the client's life to develop long term, sustainable solutions and empower the client so they can control their finances.

### The outcomes for the client include:

- Knowledge of their true net debt status
- Learning how to reduce their debt
- Referrals to other organisation that can help with personal issues that may have impacted on their financial situation
- Empowerment and confidence by way of education to self-manage their finances for long term sustainability

## ac.care services expand in Naracoorte

The opening of new ac.care offices in Naracoorte provides additional and professional space to deliver an expanded service to the local community. People living in Naracoorte and surrounding districts will have the opportunity to obtain local assistance from ac.care for a range of issues. ac.care Naracoorte offices are located at 79 Smith Street. Phone 08 8762 3086.



# ac.care passes on donor s kindness

## diocese supports financial counselling roll-out

ac.care has been able to implement a Financial Counselling program to assist people affected by the water crisis in the Murraylands and Riverland, which includes communities in the Lower Lakes.

“This is not a government funded program – it is entirely an ac.care initiative funded by donations received from the Diocese of The Murray and other discretionary donations” said Mike Bleby, Convener of the Board of Management.

The Diocese of The Murray Synod last year expressed concern for communities associated with the Murray River and a motion was moved to donate to ac.care to enable the implementation of a program that will make a difference.

ac.care aims to be able to use donated funds for targeted programs in communities to make a real difference.

## helping to bring Aboriginal youth and elders together

The Military and Hospitaller Order of the Brotherhood of St Lazarus of Jerusalem recently donated the funds needed to purchase a custom-made camper trailer for RAY (Riverland Aboriginal Youth group).

RAY is a committee of young Aboriginal people who oversee a youth program that specifically targets young Aboriginal people in the Riverland. The benefit of the trailer is that it operates as a mobile recreation centre enabling Aboriginal elders to meet and share time with young people. The camper trailer allows the program to be taken out into the community so Aboriginal people who may not be able to access the program can access it.



**PICTURED** (L-R) ac.care Aboriginal Services Manager, Eric Milera, Order member, Nadine Williams, President, Brigadier (R'td) Chev. E B J (Ellis) Wayland and member Dr. Judith Roberts were present at the hand-over of the trailer in Berri late last year.

## helping ac.care help others

Fundraising for ac.care is one way to make a difference in your local community. If you want to get involved in fundraising to help local people please contact Anne Hinkly-Tyler [anne@accare.org.au](mailto:anne@accare.org.au) 08 8724 9211

The Government of South Australia is reviewing the Collections for Charitable Purposes Act 1939 and a proposed new Code of Practice. ac.care believes transparency of the sector will strengthen the relationships between communities and the charities working for them, and we will be making a submission to government relating to proposed changes to the Act.

We want donors to be confident their donations are used appropriately and we respect their right to privacy. For these reasons ac.care does not use telemarketing or door-knocking.

“ Share your food with the hungry. Give shelter to the homeless and uprooted. Provide clothes to those who need them and don't turn away your family. Then your light will shine like the rising sun. ”

Isaiah 58 : vs 7-8a

# making a difference in a child s world

## a foster carer shares her story

**It just happened I was sitting at home one day over a weekend, I recall watching TV and a commercial grabbed my attention, They badly needed local Foster Carers for local children.**

I was 25 years old, I had gone as far as I could in my small business. I was paying off my own home and I had spare rooms. I had a great childhood with fantastic family support. I am close to my parents so we discussed the changes that Foster Caring would bring to our lives. I felt confident in the decision I was about to make.

I undertook the training required and found this knowledge to be a real eye opener into how some people really live. ac.care provided me with great knowledge, support and were happy to help with any questions or challenges I faced as a Foster Carer.

I have been a Foster Carer for over five years now and have cared for some amazing children that have brought smiles to my face every morning. The children became a high priority for me, trying to make their lives seem joyful and trying to allow them to be kids.

Yes, sure there were some hurdles but you learn to work through those and overcome any difficulties with the children, understanding that it's not their fault they have been put in this situation.

**In my experience I have found that if you continually tell the child that you are always there for them they tend to open up a bit more on their feelings and they will succeed.**

I am passionate about Foster Caring. The happiness and fulfillment you get from helping children is beyond any words. I urge anyone that has a great caring heart to take up the opportunity to become a Foster Carer, as the rewards are beyond belief and better than anything else you receive in life."



“One hundred years from now, it will not matter what my bank account was, how big my house was, or what kind of car I drove. But, the world may be a little better because I was important in the life of a child.”

**Forest Witcraft**



## Aboriginal foster care campaign

In response to a growing need in rural SA for carers of Aboriginal children, ac.care's Marketing and Aboriginal Services' teams are developing a multi media advertising campaign to encourage the recruitment of more carers. Images from the photo-shoot will be used in printed material and television advertising.



# supporting our appeals

## Aboriginal crèches

Gerard and Minya Porlar crèches care for children in a culturally appropriate space in a manner that respects their culture and helps children with school readiness. Financial support provides indoor and outdoor play equipment, books and art supplies to develop children's physical, social, listening and creative skills.

## homeless youth resilience scholarships

Support for young people aged 12-25 who are homeless and using a homelessness service, continue or re-engage with education and move onto work, a trade or tertiary education, helping to break the cycle of disadvantage. Financial support will help increase the number of scholarship recipients. Read more on page 3.

## ac.care sunday

ac.care Sunday on the 18th July 2010 provides an opportunity for ac.care to raise much needed funds to support our work in rural communities.

# Yes! i want to support ac.care



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please charge my tax deductible gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_  Visa  Mastercard

Card Number

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry date \_\_\_\_\_

Payment by cheque or money order Enclosed is my gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

(Cheques to be made payable to Anglican Community Care Inc.)

### Easy Ways You Can Help

**Mail** PO Box 1842, Mount Gambier, South Australia 5290

**Fax** 08 8725 5087

**Internet** www.accare.org.au

**Phone** 08 8724 9211

### Please send me more information on:

- becoming an opportunities for life partner
- leaving a bequest
- homeless youth resilience scholarships
- becoming a foster carer
- volunteering opportunities
- about ac.care

Anglican Community Care Inc is endorsed by the Australian Taxation office as a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR). Our DGR number is 900 153 951

#### WE VALUE YOUR SUPPORT AND PRIVACY

We respect your privacy. In-line with the Privacy Amendment (Private Sector) Act 2000 and ac.care's own ethical standards all personal and sensitive information is protected by ac.care in secure confidential files only accessed by senior authorised staff. ac.care does not pass on your details to third parties. If you do not want to receive further correspondence please write to our Marketing and Communications Manager, PO Box 1842, Mount Gambier SA 5290 or anne@accare.org.au confirming your wish to be removed from the ac.care mailing list.

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