

Building better lives together



Brotherhood
of St Laurence

Working for an Australia free of poverty

Building better lives since 1930

Family centre opens on Melbourne's fast-growing fringe

Mernda, situated 30 kilometres north of Melbourne's CBD, is known as Australia's fastest growing postcode. In a little more than four months, the Brotherhood's newly established presence saw a huge uptake in our services.

The Jindi Family and Community Centre puts into practice our particular focus on outer suburban and rural areas where a lack of services and jobs holds back people, families and communities and makes them particularly vulnerable to social and economic exclusion.



A mother and child enjoying a playgroup activity at the centre



The new centre in Mernda

In collaboration with the Whittlesea Council and Goodstart Early Learning, the Brotherhood is now working with more than 100 families through our kindergarten programs, playgroups and maternal and child health services. All the children have an education and wellbeing plan to guide their development and help in their transition to school.

We are working with parents on their education and employment needs, including referrals to local services, practical support (such as resume development) and pre-employment programs for parents.

The demand for our flexible and high quality services is huge. Thank you for supporting our work and helping us build resilient and sustainable new communities.

To find out more about the centre go to **www.goodstart.org.au/centres/jindi/overview**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

The nature of poverty and disadvantage has changed in our nation. The risks nowadays are increasingly located on the outskirts of the cities and country areas where opportunities to get a good education, find employment and benefit from health and family support services are in relative terms diminished.

In large cities such as Melbourne, this form of geographic disadvantage is exacerbated by distance, traffic and lack of public transport. Those who live in the outer suburbs of Melbourne are, in many cases, at risk of being shut out of mainstream social and economic activities and services.

Many country communities are struggling with declining job opportunities, and the scarcity of health and social services are all accentuated by distances that need to be travelled.

The Brotherhood is responding to this changing face of disadvantage

by focusing our work in these growing new communities. In the past we worked intensely in inner urban Melbourne; now our role is to contribute to building resilience and sustainability in the outer suburbs and country areas. Part of our work is ensuring people are trained in the jobs of the future, including aged care and community services.

I want to thank you for helping us build these communities so they can have access to opportunities. Our goals for those doing it tough is to focus on employment, health, family and social connections. Poverty is far more complex today, but we



Tony Nicholson

know we can build strength and resilience to help people withstand economic challenges to build better lives for themselves.

Best wishes,

Tony Nicholson

Our research shows many Australians are excluded from the mainstream

The Brotherhood's Social Exclusion Monitor has found 825,000 Australians are deeply excluded from society, experiencing deprivation in at least four areas of their life, such as employment, health, education and isolation.

The monitor quantifies poverty and disadvantage in Australia by considering not only a low income – the traditional measure of poverty – but also many other important indicators, which include disability, literacy, social support and personal safety.

'People talk about Australia weathering the Global Financial Crisis well and that's because we had 20 years of economic growth', said Brotherhood economist and the monitor's co-author, Dr Francisco Azpitarte.

'Despite that, we still had a significant proportion of the population who are highly excluded and whose welfare is not linked to economic growth. Growth is important, but for some groups it's not sufficient to get them into the mainstream.'

The Brotherhood's executive director, Tony Nicholson, said poverty in the modern economy is not just about lack of money but also lack of work experience, lack of knowledge and lack of social networks.

The hot spots, he said, are in the outer suburbs and regional towns where the housing is cheaper but the opportunities are scarce.

The monitor, developed by the Brotherhood and the University of Melbourne, draws on data that has been collected since 2003 for the national Household, Income and Labour Dynamics (HILDA) survey.

Read about our research at www.bsl.org.au/research-and-publications/social-exclusion-monitor/

Celebrating our volunteers

The Brotherhood of St Laurence has relied on volunteers since the organisation's inception more than 80 years ago and recently celebrated their achievements and service with a special lunch.

Currently, there are 1121 registered volunteers, working in every part of the organisation. They range from young people experiencing their first taste of the work place through to some of the most highly skilled people in Australia.

There are people who have just started their voluntary service, right through to those whose journey volunteering with the non-profit has continued for more than 50 years.

The Brotherhood is an organisation that is voluntary in nature. It was created by people who shared a concern and voluntarily came together, joined hands, set their own directions and encouraged others to contribute.

The Brotherhood's Tony Nicholson said that 'volunteering at its best should be as much about receiving as it is about giving'.

'Volunteering, I believe, helps satisfy a deep yearning within all of us to be part of a larger good – a larger good to which we can bring our own humble contribution', he said.

'For many of us, there is a faith dimension to this. It's about letting the little bit of a higher being that dwells within all of us, reach out to the little bit of the higher being that dwells within those less fortunate than ourselves.'



Some of our wonderful volunteers who attended the celebrations

Anti-Poverty Week in October

Anti-Poverty Week, to be held this year from 11 to 17 October, is a national initiative of which the Brotherhood is a major sponsor.

The week aims to strengthen public understanding of the causes and consequences of poverty and hardship around the world and in Australia; and to encourage research, discussion and action to address these problems, including action by individuals, communities, organisations and governments.

Rob Hudson, the Brotherhood's group general manager for

programs and policy, said it is important that there is a national focus and attention brought to the issue of poverty.

'Anti-Poverty Week provides a great opportunity for a wide range of organisations to raise awareness. More importantly, it demonstrates the practical steps they are taking to tackle poverty in Australia', Mr Hudson said.

The Brotherhood will mark the week with a variety of events and seminars.

'We're keen to support Anti-Poverty Week because it's at the core of why we exist and what we are committed to eliminating. It's a great opportunity to talk about our work in the community and our efforts to tackle disadvantage', Mr Hudson said.

www.antipovertyweek.org.au/

Community stores need your donations

After a huge growth in sales, the Brotherhood's community stores are calling for donations.

General Manager of Social Enterprises, Niamh O'Malley, said the 21 stores 'rely on the kindness and generosity of others from volunteering to donating goods'.

'We had wonderful growth in our sales which support all of our programs, but this has left us with a deficit of stock. We are so grateful for all the help we've received in the past but we need your help again', Niamh says.

'We're looking for clothing, particularly men's clothing, as well as bric-a-brac, home wares or anything you think would love a new home.'

Don't forget that we have a free collection service – just phone **1300 DONATE (1300 366 283)**.

We also collect books for our online bookstore, Brotherhood Books. For more information go to www.brotherhoodbooks.org.au/



Thank you for making our Winter Appeal a success

The Brotherhood's Winter Appeal received many generous donations enabling us to help more people in need.

We are incredibly humbled by these donations; they will go a long way to ensure that we continue the fight against poverty. Thank you for your support.



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