



Annual Report

2016 17

About this report

The Mercy Community Services SEQ Limited Annual Report provides the community, our sponsors and other key stakeholders with a summary of our operational and financial performance during 2016-17.

The theme of this report is 'Inspiring people to live healthy, connected lives'. Through the stories and information we provide in this report, we show you how the organisation is helping build a world where people, families and communities are strong in spirit, healthy and connected.

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Mercy Community Services is committed to protecting the privacy of people who engage our services. Where appropriate, names have been changed and stock photography used.



Mercy Community Services acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which we operate and pay our respects to the Elders past, present and emerging, for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of Aboriginal Australia. Mercy Community Services acknowledges that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to live in spiritual and sacred relationships with this country.

Foreword



At the conclusion of Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, in November 2016, Pope Francis wrote the Apostolic Letter *Misericordia et Misera*. In it, he explored the mystery of God's love when it touches people, the social character of mercy that demands we do not simply stand by and do nothing and the call to give new expressions to the works of mercy. Francis implored readers to be merciful:

Mercy cannot become a mere parenthesis in the life of the Church; it constitutes her very existence, through which the profound truths of the Gospel are made manifest and tangible. Everything is revealed in mercy; everything is resolved in the merciful love of the Father. MM 1

On the first of September 2016, the World Day of Prayer for Creation, Francis spoke also of the need to be creative in developing new and practical forms of charitable outreach as concrete expressions of the way of mercy. To complement the traditional seven spiritual and corporal works of mercy, he included an eighth, Care of Our Common Home. Through reflection on God's world and simple daily gestures which break the logic of violence, exploitation

and selfishness Mercy Community Services staff has witnessed to the eighth work of mercy.

Across the past year, I was delighted that Mercy Community Services staff, Executives and Board Directors had the opportunity to participate in some of the many formation opportunities and life and ritual celebrations offered such as the Mercy Leadership Pilgrimage to Dublin in 2016, ministry gatherings and reflections on the Correspondence of Mother Vincent Whitty, the senior staff formation day entitled 'Encouraging a Compassionate Heart' and Mercy Day prayer, awards and presentations in September. These were graced moments for MCS staff to pause, to get to know one another, to share how each sees their position or role in the organisation as connected to and reflecting the mission and vision, values and tradition of Mercy and to celebrate.

In this reporting period, I was pleased to see a range of new initiatives occurring within Mercy Community Services some of which include; the renewal of the ministry's Catholic identity, mission, vision and strategic and the introduction of a cultural statement, the implementation of the National Guidelines for Spiritual Care in Aged Care, the ongoing development of person-centred pastoral care across the organisation, the revitalising of the Romero Centre and its positioning as a conduit for networking services for people seeking asylum, the 'Caring Dads' program supporting families affected by domestic violence, the transition project for residents with disability from Chalk Street to a range of accommodation options and the development of workshops 'Healing Our Mob, To Claim Our Future' for Aboriginal and Torres Islander

and non-indigenous staff and the invitations and welcome to the Sisters of Mercy to join in MCS life and celebrations.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank Dr John O'Donnell, Board Chair, Ms Elaine De Vos, Chief Executive Officer and the former Chief Executive Officer, Mr Peter Sydes, for their continuing support of and belief in the mission, vision, values of Mercy Community Services. To MCS staff and volunteers, it is through your words and actions with the people in your care that *'Mercy is the concrete action of love'*. MM 2 Sincere thanks for your commitment and contribution to living Mercy and for the care and dignity, acceptance, empowerment and excellence that is expressed daily as you touch people's lives in Family, Disability and Aged Care Services throughout the ministry in Queensland. And finally as Mother Vincent Whitty would say *'wishing you a hundredfold reward for all your charity'*.

Sister Catherine Reuter

Congregation Leader
Sisters of Mercy
Brisbane Congregation

MM refers to Pope Francis' Apostolic Letter *Misericordia et Misera*, Rome, 20 November, 2016

Chair & CEO Message

This year was particularly significant for Mercy Community Services (MCS) as we undertook a full review of MCS' strategy with a focus on enhancing our capacity and capability to sustainably grow the organisation in response to unmet community need.

The primary goals of the inaugural MCS Strategic Plan 2013-17 were achieved and with a strong financial and operational foundation in place, the time was right to review and define the desired future for MCS by 2020 and identify the strategic initiatives that will best deliver that future.

There were several catalysts in the community services sector that helped drive our review process and the development of a strategic plan that determined how MCS intends to serve the community. The impact of significant government reforms; the implementation of the NDIS; and the full implementation of the "Living Longer Living Better" national aged care reforms to name just two, guided our planning.

In developing the new strategic plan, we looked at how we could grow the organisation – and not just for growth's sake, but growth as a Catholic organisation committed to continuing the mission as inspired by Catherine McAuley, who recognised and responded to the needs of people. The plan guides us to embrace available technologies, systems and practices that will drive efficient

operations and improve customer experience. In addition, it guides us on how we can seek alternative revenue streams to support the range of services we provide and to grow our geographic footprint.

The plan includes initiatives that focus on investing in our teams so that we have the right skills and can provide the right services to meet people's needs. In addition, the plan drives us to invest in research, responding to industry trends, and establishes how we can work differently to be an effective, responsive human services provider.

A key outcome of the strategic planning process was the development of a new vision and mission statement. The organisation's vision is a world where people, families and communities are strong in spirit, healthy and connected. Our mission is to support and inspire

people in need to live healthy, connected lives within inclusive communities. At the heart of this are connected communities.

While there was much focus on strategic planning during the year, we would like to highlight a number of new services that we invested in:

NDIS Services

A new NDIS-aligned service offering providing Plan Management and Support Coordination services was established in 2016. To date, almost 250 people have been supported through this service, many with complex support needs. The NDIS teams have been working with multiple providers, both mainstream and NDIS registered, supporting people to link and engage appropriate services to ensure they get the most out of their NDIS Plan. The organisation plans to grow this service to new regions over the coming year to ensure NDIS participants are supported to achieve greater independence and control over their lives.

Caring Dads Program

Last year the organisation set a strategic goal to establish new services to address identified gaps in domestic and family violence support services. During the year, the organisation undertook research to identify these gaps and discovered that there were few services that worked with offenders to support children in families affected by domestic violence. After researching international programs, MCS established the Caring Dads Program, a group program for fathers that aims to improve child safety in the home and help strengthen families by

working with fathers and other services to promote behavioural change.

Allied Health in the community

In response to an identified need to provide holistic care for people we support in our aged care residential facilities, we recruited a team of Allied Health staff. These services are available to both aged care residents and people in the community. Extending these services to the community means people can live more comfortable and independent lives in their own homes for longer.

We thank the Congregation Leadership Team of the Sisters of Mercy Brisbane Congregation for their support and guidance as we developed a new strategic plan for MCS. In addition, we would like to acknowledge and thank all our staff and volunteers for their ongoing commitment during a period of change and for upholding the values of our organisation in the important work they do in supporting people in the community to lead more connected lives.

After more than five years with the organisation, CEO Peter Sydes has made the decision that the time is right to hand over the reins to another CEO. Peter has served Mercy Community Services, our staff and our community with success, skill and distinction. Peter's work to lead the integration of Mercy Disability Services, Mercy Family Services and Mercy Aged Care has provided the company with a great foundation for the future. On behalf of the Board, I thank Peter for his outstanding service and strong leadership and wish him well with his future endeavours. – Dr John O'Donnell



Dr John O'Donnell Chair



Peter Sydes CEO

Message from Elaine De Vos

I was welcomed into Mercy Community Services as CEO in September 2017. It is wonderful to be joining such a collaborative, values-driven organisation that supports thousands of people across Queensland each and every day.

I am excited about what the future holds for the organisation and am committed to successfully implementing the organisation's Strategic Plan for 2017-20. With recent significant change in the disability and aged care sectors, I will be steering the organisation in a direction that is responsive to this change so that the people we support can realise the opportunities for greater choice and control over the services they receive.

Whilst we must be responsive to an increasingly commercial environment, our mission and values still remain at the heart of everything we do and

we will continue to operate in a way that helps us realise our vision of a world where people, families and communities are strong in spirit, healthy and connected.

I look forward to a successful year ahead.



Elaine De Vos CEO

Our Company Member Board of Directors and Executive Team

The sole Company Member of Mercy Community Services SEQ Ltd is the Corporation of the Trustee of the Order of the Sisters of Mercy in Queensland.

Our directors and executive team have extensive skills and experience in service delivery, strategy development and organisational governance.

Board of Directors

DR JOHN O'DONNELL

Chair, MBBS (Adel), MHP (UNSW), Hon MD (Qld), FRACMA, FACHSM (Hon), FAIM, FAICD

ADJUNCT PROFESSOR

TERRY CRAWFORD

Deputy Chair (until 22 February 2017), Director, B Economics, LLB, FGIA

LYNN SMART

Director, Deputy Chair (from 22 February 2017), B Com, CPA, MBA, FAICD

ADJUNCT PROFESSOR

IYLA DAVIES

Director, LLB (Hons), LLM, FAICD

SHANE FRACCHIA

Director, MBA B Com, CertTech, FCPA, FAICD

GAIL DAVIDSON

Director, GAICD

Executive Team

PETER SYDES

Chief Executive Officer, B Business Management, MAICD

STUART DEMPSTER

Chief Financial Officer, BA Economics, CA, ATI

JULIE PURCELL

General Manager Aged Care Services, Registered Nurse, B Education, MBA

STEVEN KING

Executive Director Family Services, BA Honours Psychology

LISA EASTMENT

General Manager Mission Integration, Grad Dip (Early Childhood), B Education, MA (Leadership), Cert IV TAE, GAICD

JOHN HOFFMAN

General Manager People, Culture and Organisational Development, BA Industrial Psychology



Board of Directors

From left: Adjunct Professor Iyla Davies, Adjunct Professor Terry Crawford, Lynn Smart, Gail Davidson, Dr John O'Donnell, Shane Fracchia.

Our Journey

During the year, Mercy Community Services refined its vision and mission statements to reflect the Mercy Community Services 'ripple effect', which is based on the idea that what is set in motion when we respond to the needs of each person helps create stronger, healthier families and ultimately build more connected and inclusive communities.

Our identity

Mercy Community Services SEQ Ltd. is a Catholic ministry finding inspiration in the Gospel, the charism of Mercy, the life of Catherine McAuley and the traditions of the Sisters of Mercy.

Our culture

Mercy Community Services values the human dignity of every person and is committed to enhancing the quality of life and wellbeing of those who access our services, believing that through actions of merciful love, Mercy is given and received.

Our culture reflects the ethos of the Sisters of Mercy and promotes service, mercy, humility, diversity, transparency, open accountability, collaboration and cooperation, flexibility and adaptability, fearlessness and growth.

Our vision is a world where people, families and communities are strong in spirit, healthy and connected.

Our mission is to support and inspire people in need to live healthy, connected lives within inclusive communities.

All our work is driven by our core **values** of:

Mercy: We act compassionately and courageously, open to others and to their needs, nurturing joy and hope.

Acceptance: We embrace unconditionally the uniqueness and diversity of people, fostering quality and fairness in relationships.

Excellence: We are committed to quality, continuous learning and improvement.

Dignity: We treat all people with respect, accepting their right to spiritual, emotional and physical safety and care.

Empowerment: We assist and advocate passionately for and with people, enabling them to make life enhancing choices and to gain control over life shaping decisions.

Integrity: We act ethically, justly and honestly.



What we do

Inspired by Mercy, as expressed in the life and mission of Jesus Christ and the practical example of Catherine McAuley, Mercy Community Services (MCS) supports people in need. The organisation provides key services in the areas of child protection, family wellbeing, aged care, support for people with a disability, and support for people seeking asylum.

Supporting families and children to live more connected lives

Mercy Community Services provides support services for children, young people, and families in local communities across Queensland. Through our family services, we support vulnerable people and families to feel valued, connected and strengthened. The focus is on promoting community relationships and strengthening partnerships with funding bodies to enable the delivery of quality services.

Our individual and family support programs include counselling, family intervention, family support, group work, live-in home supports for mothers and babies, community engagement and community development programs. The focus of our work is strengthening family life by linking families with local community resources and creating support networks that enable them to realise positive family life experiences.

Mercy Community Services' residential care and transition services provide safe, fully supported placements for children and young people with complex needs who may require intensive support during their residential care or support with independent living placements. The practice models the organisation uses focus on structure, nurture, play, trauma and attachment-informed interventions. Children and young people are encouraged to achieve their personal goals, including education, employment, recreation, positive relationships, life skills and independence. We encourage family



connectedness to help maintain important family links and develop a strong sense of self and identity.

In partnership with the Queensland Government and other community organisations, MCS delivers Family and Child Connect services, which supports vulnerable families to connect with services they need to safely care for their children at home, build capabilities and improve family resilience.

The organisation delivers foster and kinship care programs in partnership with the Queensland Government to provide safe, nurturing and supportive homes for children and young people who are unable to live with their families. In addition to recruiting, training, and assessing foster carers, MCS provides support to carers in their journey of caring for children.

To find out more about our foster and kinship care services, visit www.caretofoster.com.au or call 1300TOFOSTER (1300 863 678).

We provide a range of multicultural supports for refugees and migrant families in Brisbane, Logan, Toowoomba, and the south west Queensland region, including the Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors Program, Settlement Program, and Community Action for a Multicultural Society.



Caring for people as they age

Mercy Community Services' Aged Care Services provides residential aged care, respite care and community care services.

The aged care facilities at Nudgee on Brisbane's northside consist of four modern residences. Life for residents at Mercy Community Services is about continued growth, learning, spiritual development, emotional wellbeing and contribution. The organisation has a pastoral approach to care, providing for the spiritual wellbeing of residents, families and staff, no matter what their faith might be. Our care philosophy centres on personal wellness – not just physical wellbeing - providing an environment where every person can maintain a full life.

Through our aged care services, we provide residential aged care services for 194 people. Services include speciality care for people with dementia, and those whose needs include palliation, ageing disability and complex clinical care. When Mercy Community Services welcomes new residents, we focus on the person having a unique set of preferences, history and style of living that are important aspects of tailoring both individual care and support when moving into an aged care facility.

At Mercy Community Services' aged care facilities, we provide respite accommodation in a comfortable, homely environment. The organisation caters to a range of respite care needs and flexible services provide for overnight, short term and longer respite stays. The residential communities provide a welcoming environment where people can be as social and active, or independent and private as they want.

Mercy Community Services' community-based care services provide flexible, personalised services to support people to maintain an independent lifestyle in their own home for longer. Services include a full range of domestic, nursing, personal, wellness (including therapy and allied health sessions in the home, exercise classes and dietary advice) and lifestyle services. Our person-centred care approach means the organisation's community care is all about the individual and Mercy Community Services creates personalised services built around their needs, their choices and their goals. This support aims to enhance a person's sense of self-worth in order to promote independence, self-sufficiency and active control over their own life. Access to respite care is available which assists the transition to residential care if the need arises.

To find out more about our residential aged care and home care services, please call 07 3260 9555.

What we do

Supporting people with a disability

Mercy Community Services has been providing disability support services since 1950.

The organisation provides individualised and flexible models of support to people who live with a disability, with a focus on supporting people to be empowered to lead lives of their own choosing. Our teams are comprised of disability specialists who maintain a commitment to working collaboratively with each person to ensure that services are customised, supportive, strengths-based and developmental. In doing so, we act ethically and with a focus on advocating for the human rights, value and dignity of all people who live with a disability.

We provide a range of disability services, predominantly located in North Brisbane. Our services include:

- Supported accommodation
- Independent living services
- Respite and drop-in support
- Recreational, community-based and capacity building services
- Supported employment through the Cookery Nook – a social enterprise initiative that provides professional quality catering services
- Specialist services for children and young people within non-statutory accommodation arrangements
- Services which assist people to transition into the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

Mercy Community Services is an approved host provider under the Queensland Government's *Your Life, Your Choice* initiative to support individuals and their families to self-direct supports and services for greater choice and control to meet individual needs.



NDIS Services

Mercy Community Services' NDIS Support Coordination and Plan Management Services support NDIS participants to achieve greater independence and control over their lives. Our NDIS teams comprise qualified practitioners and clinicians who provide NDIS-funded supports which focus on:

- Support Coordination – supporting NDIS participants to implement the array of supports available to them under their NDIS Plan.
- Specialist Support Coordination – supporting NDIS participants who have additional degrees of complexity within their lives to implement more specialist services within their NDIS Plans.
- Plan Management – supporting participants to manage their NDIS funding and to develop their capacity for the self-management of their own funding.
- Pre-planning engagement – supporting people who live with a disability who do not have funding to map their goals and aspirations, and supporting them to advocate for their supports in advance of their entry into the NDIS.

MCS NDIS Services works with an array of agencies and service providers to continuously promote best practice approaches to supporting NDIS participants, and in particular to enabling participants to develop the skills required to lead the implementation of their own supports. This focus on capacity-building is a critical component of the NDIS, as it enables people who live with a disability to be sufficiently empowered to take control of their own lives and the supports therein.

MCS NDIS Services currently operates from the following locations:

- Townsville
- Charters Towers
- Palm Island
- Mackay
- Gladstone
- Blackwater
- Mt Isa, Doomadgee and Normanton
- Toowoomba and west to the border
- Ipswich
- Brisbane.

Call the NDIS team on 1300 16 16 18 for more information on MCS NDIS Services or visit www.mercycs.org.au/NDIS



Romero Centre

The Romero Centre provides individualised, culturally sensitive and responsive case coordination services for people seeking asylum. Our approach provides children, families and people who are seeking asylum with access to the right mix of support and expertise.

By providing welcoming and inclusive services we aim to restore a sense of dignity and independence for people seeking asylum. Just as Catherine McAuley embraced people with compassion and respect, the Romero Centre exists to provide emergency support, comfort and hope for people seeking asylum.

Our services are provided within a cross-cultural framework with a commitment to human rights and the principles of social justice. The work of Oscar Romero is our inspiration as we support and give a 'voice to the voiceless'.

For more information on Romero Centre, please visit www.romero.mercycs.org.au



Our Performance 2016-17

248,359*
nights

of foster and kinship care provided through our foster and kinship care programs and services



1,500
hours

of support provided to young people through our Education and Vocational Support Program

23,507*
nights

of care provided to young people in our Residential Care and Transition Services

Romero Centre

995 instances of case coordination support provided to people seeking asylum and refugees



80 English as a Second Language (ESL) groups held

41 counselling sessions provided by pro bono professionals

43 sewing groups held

25 people supported by volunteers to complete essentials forms

20 men's group sessions held

12 playgroups held

27,546*
nights

of out of home care was provided to Queensland children and young people through the Intensive Intervention Placement Service

168 Get ready for school bags for school-aged children distributed

***** Material aid support provided to people seeking asylum and refugees included 249 Go Cards with at least \$30 credit, 249 gift cards, 597 food parcels, 14 bikes and 110 baby items

311 dignity bags and personal hygiene packages provided

35 pro bono migration advice appointments

156 

exercise classes

were held for aged care residents

 **246**
people

provided with support through our NDIS Support Coordination and Plan Management Services



473

sessions of counselling and group work support provided to 72 people through Family and Relationship Services in Goodna

* (as at 30 June 2017)

11,012

families referred to our Family and Child Connect services, and

3,373

families were connected with support services



313

families referred to our Connected Families program

738

parents/ carers supported through the Lowood Integrated Early Years' Service

592

children



5 people with a disability

employed at the Cookery Nook Catering and Conference Centre

12,052 hours of intensive family support provided to families through our Intensive Family Support Program in Ipswich

3,315 hours of counselling provided to 103 people in Toowoomba

Provided 11,101 hours of intensive family support to Queensland families through our New Families Program

67

children and young people received intensive support through Family Matters program

3,744 hours of sexual abuse counselling provided in Goodna and Toowoomba

7,421 hours of service delivered to families in Toowoomba through our Family Intervention Program

3,153 hours of support provided to 520 people who engaged with the Family Unit



399

people received community outreach and group work support through our Family Matters program in Goodna



856

 * Queensland children and young people supported through our foster and kinship care program

32

people with a disability supported to participate in recreational and social activities

547

 * foster and kinship carers supported to provide care through our foster and kinship care program

20

unaccompanied humanitarian refugee minors supported

87

 * carers supported 149 children and young people in our Intensive Intervention Placement Services

251

people provided residential aged care services

23

 people with a disability supported to live independently in their own home in the community

45

people provided with home care services to support independent living at home

21

 with a disability provided with supported living services at our Brisbane site

28

people provided with respite care and accommodation at our residential aged care site



305

people supported with allied health care services at our aged care site and in the community

* (as at 30 June 2017)

Case Studies



Counselling supports young girl in care to safely express her feelings

Mia*, an 11 year old girl, came into foster care as a result of parental drug use, severe domestic and family violence, and neglect. Mia had been significantly impacted by this trauma and grief. She had been placed with foster carers however this had broken down after she was abusive towards them.

Mia engaged in counselling at MCS every week after she had attended family contact. This helped her to 'hold' and process her feelings of sadness and anger and find ways to be able to safely express them. The counselling process used lots of drawing and reading stories that related to grief and loss. This gave her an avenue to connect with and express her feelings in a less direct way. There was a strong focus on building a trusting relationship with her to help her feel safe in the counselling environment, and to eventually talk about difficult topics. In time, this allowed her to articulate her inner world and express an opinion in a safe environment. Several strategies were developed to help her cope with

family contact and to understand why she felt sad, angry or bad afterwards and how she could express those feelings safely. A four hour hike with her counsellor allowed her to connect in a different way and have a fun and healthy experience whilst talking about different issues.

Our support focused on clear communication with Mia, her carers and other key stakeholders. We worked closely with a Child Safety Officer, her foster carers and her parents. This ensured everyone had an understanding of the impact of trauma on Mia, what her individual needs were, and how to provide targeted support that was consistent in different settings.

By giving Mia unrestricted listening with an adult for one hour each week she was able to experience a sense of appreciation, worth and value.

Counselling has had a positive impact on Mia's life. She is able to express herself better and life with her foster carers is more stable. She is having fewer nightmares and can cope better with challenges. She has more strategies and ways of expressing her feelings rather than expressing them through aggressive behaviour. In her words, for the first time in her life she can allow herself to become 'excited'. Mia has articulated the beginning of her own healing through her words. They also imply that she is more connected to others and feels safe enough to share something of her inner world. She has demonstrated an increased capacity to manage strong emotions and to moderate her behaviour accordingly.

Supporting young people to remain connected with their family

One of the main goals of our Pre-Adolescent and Sibling Group (PASG) Residential Care Program is to build sibling relationships and enhance family connection. Mercy Community Services (MCS) supports two brothers who have been living in an MCS PASG placement for around three years. The boys are in out-of-home care due to their parents' difficulties with drugs, alcohol and domestic violence and there are other siblings who are in multiple MCS and non-MCS placements. Prior to the boys being placed in an MCS residential, the family's contact and connections had been extremely disjointed and irregular. In particular the siblings were having very limited contact with each other and with their parents.

We have advocated for ongoing family contact that can be safely supported and maintained a strong focus on supporting the family to have as much contact as possible. In addition, the boys have close contact with their sister who is in another residential placement. Their sister has been having sleepovers at the MCS residential placement including at Christmas. This had a significant impact on the siblings in maintaining their connection with each other and their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. Our residential workers supported family contact over Christmas, with the father reporting that it was the first time in six years he had been able to have Christmas with his children. He thanked MCS residential staff

* Name changed to protect the privacy of the individual



for bringing his family together at Christmas.

Our Residential Care team's support focused on advocating strongly with stakeholders about the importance of the boys' connection with family and culture. We provided a high level of practical support to facilitate family contact. The ability for MCS to provide this level of support was key to achieving the goals and outcomes for these boys in relation to familial and cultural connection.

Our support led to several positive outcomes for the siblings. Regular and frequent contact has been a significant stabilising factor for the boys. Since coming into our program, the boys often talk about how 'Mercy' has been supporting their whole family. They have younger siblings who are currently with an MCS foster carer and their mother recently had another baby and is being supported by MCS through MCS' New Families program. This shared experience has given them a greater sense of connection with their family.

Supporting a young mother to safely care for her baby

Hannah* and her newborn baby were referred to our New Families Program



(NFP) Intensive Support House for a parenting assessment as a result of a number of concerns held by Child Safety. Hannah had a history of drug use, domestic violence, criminal activity and a lack of stable housing. At our Intensive Support House, mothers are supported by staff 24 hours a day for up to three months. During this time, we support mothers such as Hannah to increase their parenting skills and gain confidence in caring for their babies, and to overcome behaviours that may put their babies at risk.

Hannah and her baby stayed at our Intensive Support House for three months. During this time we were able to identify her parenting strengths and build upon these to increase her ability to consistently meet the needs of her young baby. Hannah was open to the support she received including crucial intervention areas such as:

- Engaging with drug and alcohol services to develop tools and strategies for relapse prevention
- Encouragement, role modelling and advice in establishing a daily routine for her baby
- Securing stable housing
- Building community connections through attending community activities and outings
- Establishing and maintaining meaningful relationships with family to broaden her support network.
- Providing education and support around healthy relationships, self-care, stress management and budgeting.

At the completion of the program, Hannah retained full-time care of her baby and moved into stable

accommodation, where we continued to support Hannah and her baby for another three months. Hannah remained drug free during her time we supported her and she engaged in counselling. Hannah demonstrated good self-awareness, increased emotional intelligence and articulated how her behaviours and choices impacted her capacity to meet the needs of her baby and keep them both safe and healthy.

When she left our Intensive Support House, Hannah had a wide support network to provide practical, financial and emotional support to her and her baby.

Supporting a family to build more connected relationships

Over a 13 month period Mercy Community Services supported the Smith family (a married couple and their two primary school aged children) through the Family Unit. This service focuses on supporting families to build strong, connected relationships through education on parenting skills, healthy relationships, self-control, behaviour management strategies and empowerment.

When a relative of the family came to us for support, the Smith Family were experiencing a number of personal and family issues. One of the parents was facing mental health issues, the parents had recently separated, and the children were experiencing anxiety and not always attending school.

The mother and her children had moved in with the children's grandmother as there were concerns about family safety at their home.

* Name changed to protect the privacy of the individual

Case studies

“It helped me learn about how to control my emotions and helped me cope with the stuff happening at home.”

She struggled with the separation from her husband and hoped for the situation to improve.

At The Family Unit, we supported the mother to list some key requirements in what it would take for her to feel safe again in their relationship, starting with mental health support. Other requirements included the father engaging in our service's Heart Ties Enriching Parenthood program and engaging in support from the Family Unit. While the father received mental health support, the mother engaged in the Enriching Parenthood program, the My Time women's group, family support sessions with case workers, and the children engaged individually with case workers in children's support sessions.

In addition, the parents engaged in Prepare/Enrich with case workers. The couple worked on healing their relationship, attending the Heart Ties Enriching Parenthood program, and the children continued to attend children's support sessions.

The couple successfully reunited and no longer require support from the Family Unit. They said they “can't thank the service enough” for the

support that was provided to get them back on track and deal with a number of issues that were affecting their relationship and a stable family life for the couple and their children. There has been a reduction in the children's anxiety and school withdrawal and both parents report an increase in their health and happiness.

Their nine year old son said of the support programs they participated in: “It was fun. It helped me learn about how to control my emotions and helped me cope with the stuff happening at home.”

Supporting families to be stronger and more connected

Carly*, a 36 year old mother to sons Lachlan*, Hayden* and Joshua* referred themselves to the Family Matters Program on the recommendation of a school guidance officer at the school her boys attend.

When we met with Carly, she talked us through the family situation, explaining that she had primary custody of her two younger sons and her oldest son lived with his father in an informal arrangement between her and the boys' father.

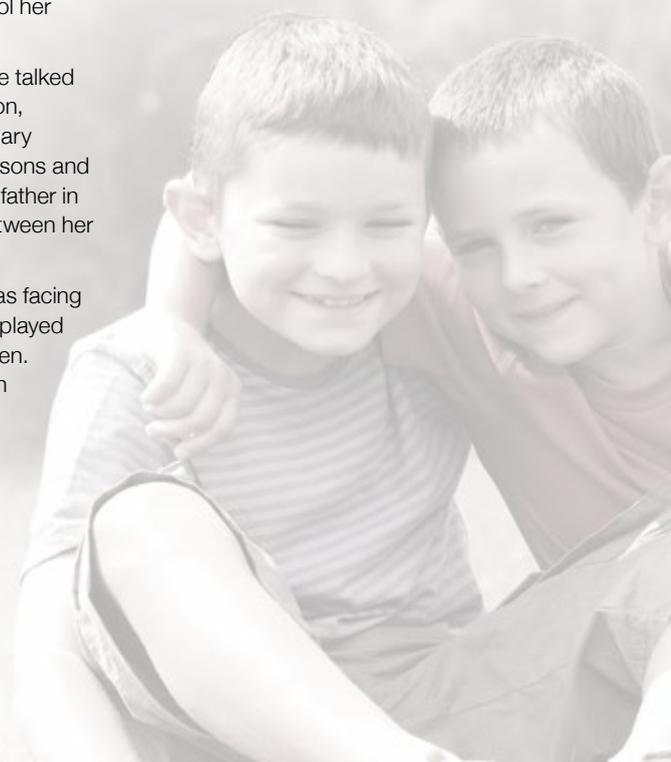
The main issue the family was facing was the behaviour being displayed by their 9 year old son Hayden. He had been diagnosed with ADHD and high functioning autism two years previously and was on medication to manage these diagnoses. Hayden's behaviour

at school was disruptive. He was walking out of class, and swearing and shouting at teachers and students. There was also an incident of violence threatened towards his father. Carly also had concerns about Hayden's treatment of his younger brother, and concerns about her oldest son Lachlan who at the time was suspended from school due to behaviour problems.

As we talked with Carly about her family situation a family history of discord was revealed, including Mum Carly's experience of a very traumatic incident at the hands of her father. Carly also talked about her difficult separation from her ex-husband and subsequent estrangement from her eldest son after he went to live with his father at the age of six.

After our initial conversations, the family commenced family counselling sessions, which utilised a mix of

* Name changed to protect the privacy of the individual





talk, play and art therapy along with Cognitive Behaviour Therapy for Carly in individual sessions. The family's goal initially was to focus on Hayden's anger and aggression and develop the interpersonal relationship between the two youngest sons. Through activities utilised in therapy the family was encouraged to be able to identify and articulate the emotions they were feeling. We then supported the family to put strategies in place to manage Hayden's anger at home and at school.

As the family became more comfortable with counselling, attention was focussed on the youngest son Joshua who was able to talk about his feelings of being unwanted and invisible in his family and his fear of his brother Hayden. We talked the family through different strategies to enable a more equal order to be established in the family between Hayden and Joshua, with Mum Carly taking on a more appropriate role in the family. This allowed the two youngest sons to feel safe enough to not have to be in a role of responsibility anymore.

Carly engaged in individual sessions with our counsellor to support her to manage her relationship with her oldest son Lachlan. Carly acknowledged and began working

to repair the damage done to her relationship with Lachlan that stemmed from her feelings of abandonment when he chose to live with his father when he was young.

Carly attended Circle of Security and 1234 Magic parenting groups which allowed her to reflect on her own experiences with her parents and how they have impacted her own parenting.

There were positive outcomes for the family after being supported through the Family Matters program. The family reported a great improvement in their interpersonal relationships, particularly between the two youngest sons. Hayden did continue to have some aggressions issues at school and an MCS counsellor worked with the school to implement the same strategies that Mum Carly was using at home. In addition, Carly continued to engage in individual counselling.

Parenting for Men supports Chad to be a stronger parent

Chad* is a father of four boys. Two of his children live with his ex-partner and his other two children live with Chad and his wife. Chad had lost his father four years earlier and when he started our Parenting for Men course he carried with him a sense of loss with his father's absence. He was also feeling inadequate as a father and struggled with his co-parenting role with his ex-partner.

Throughout the Parenting for Men group program, three primary learning processes impacted Chad significantly – self-regulation, co-

parenting and play. The course was enhanced by the facilitator's own vulnerable stories and the group processes that allowed other men to share aspects of their own stories.

Chad made several positive and impacting changes as a result of engaging in Parenting for Men. He was able to apply learning, engage in play and also recognised his resistance and comfort seeking alternatives that benefited him as a father and also benefited his children. He identified and owned emotions such as anger and frustration that were previously avoided or projected and lived the experience of self-regulating to co-regulate with his children and partner in heightened times.

He commented that he always used to be challenged by decisions connected with his ex-partner and consequently carried a legacy of sustained stress and angst. He now practises a flexible and understanding relationship with his ex-partner and recognised less stress on himself, his current wife and his older two boys.



** Name changed to protect the privacy of the individual*

Case studies

Connecting our communities

A two-day, community-based forum, Connecting Our Communities: Social Connection and Cultural Diversity in Regional and Rural Life, was held by the Cultural Diversity Hub of Mercy Community Services in Toowoomba in May 2017.

The forum, funded by Multicultural Affairs Queensland, explored the ways in which social connection and cultural diversity are reshaping community life outside large metropolitan centres in Australia.

The Cultural Diversity Hub brought together residents, agencies and community associations from south-west Queensland and northern New South Wales to discuss how we connect as friends, neighbours and colleagues within cultural diversity.

Community members from countries across Africa, the Middle East,

India, Asia and the Pacific Rim took part in a vibrant program of panels, roundtables and workshops.

Keynote addresses by the Regional Australia Institute, Canberra, and the Toowoomba Regional Council outlined the challenges regions face in attracting newcomers from overseas and ensuring social inclusion through strategies such as 'smart city' technology.

Forum highlights included workshops on the role of community-generated projects, such as communal gardens, art, craft and performance, in bringing together communities from differing cultural backgrounds.

Stories of refugee settlement in rural areas inspired communities facing the social and economic difficulties of acute population decline.

In addition, the forum explored how leadership, employment, family life, gender and age, the media and transnationalism frame how regions engage with cultural difference.

A forum communique circulated to Queensland and New South Wales

stakeholders has contributed to the growing community conversation about the importance of cultural diversity in regional life.

Inspiring Katie to live a healthy, connected life in the community

In last year's report, we started the story of Katie's journey to community living and we are pleased to continue the story of her journey this year. Katie is an adult woman who has worked her entire adult life, and has lived at Mercy Community Services in supported accommodation for over 10 years. She has many interests including the arts, community and sport. She is a member of the Divas singing group, loves conversations with friends discussing life and what matters – future plans for holidays, movies, books, words and their meanings and the latest State of Origin highlights.

Katie has an intellectual disability and lives with a range of complex medical issues including diabetes, epilepsy, asthma, vision impairment and specialist podiatry needs. Katie chooses not to focus on this, but instead focusses on all the other parts of her life and seeing the world in a positive light.

Katie and her brother worked with Maria to register for social housing. This was a complex process that

"I love my new home."



involved Katie and her brother working alongside Maria to complete the necessary documentation – visits to specialist medical professionals, financial situations and the team at the Department of Housing. It was all worth it when Katie received her eligibility and was registered for public housing. Katie started working with her MCS support team to plan what needed to happen ready for the day she might be offered social housing. Katie remained positive about a suitable place being found for her, and continued to plan and make enthusiastic steps towards securing a place of her own. We are pleased to say that day did arrive.

Brisbane Housing Company (BHC) called to offer Katie a unit. Katie visited the property and was impressed by the common area, the safety and security, the beautiful layout, new appliances and interior design and made a choice of unit looking out towards the hills. Katie has secured her own unit that is affordable, in her community, close to work and transport and importantly, her friends. We supported Katie to choose and order new furniture and appliances, connect her electricity and go through the ups and downs of moving into a new place.

Katie was part of the recruitment process for her new support staff and interviewed candidates.

In addition, Katie was part of the QUT summer semester student placement and connected with Michelle, a psychology student. Michelle and Katie worked on archiving life goals that were important to Katie's move from MCS accommodation into her

own home. This included creating a letter to let everyone important know about her move, getting an email address, using the public library to access internet and education about Smartphones, meeting up at a place like the State Library, requiring Katie to use new bus route and platform changes.

When Maria asked Katie soon after her move if she was okay she said, "I am sorry Maria, but I am not coming back to Mercy Community Services, I love my new home."



Home Care Services supports James to live safely at home

James* is an 85 year old gentleman who lives in a high set house in Brisbane. James has five children, one of whom lives with James but also works full-time. His daughter lives close by and assists regularly, along with a son. His remaining children live interstate and overseas.

James has been diagnosed with dementia and requires increased assistance with most of his daily tasks. He also has a number of other medical issues including Type 2 diabetes, where his family assist

with his insulin and check his blood sugar level four times a day. James presents with significant short and long term memory problems and can become frustrated with his limitations, and is at times angry, resistive and verbally aggressive towards his family.

We make home visits twice a day to support James, where he is encouraged to be independent both inside and outside the home including the stairs and enjoys being able to walk freely in the yard and downstairs, where he has a small workshop. James requires supervision when away from home, having wandered off when looking for the family cat.

James likes watching sport on television especially cricket, rugby, darts and snooker. He likes to be busy and water the pot plants, rake the leaves in the backyard or tinker with wood under the house. James also likes to check his weight regularly, having a staff member assist with setting up a weigh and record station.

MCS' personal care assistants, nursing team and allied health team have been working together with both James and his family to understand their unique situation and support them all in making the appropriate choices for James to stay at home and be safe and well. James presents at his home visits very talkative, enjoying the regular companionship, familiar face and varied options presented with daily activities. Support given to James' family has assisted in understanding James' health conditions and how to best manage his symptoms.

* Name changed to protect the privacy of the individual

Case studies

Providing specialist care in a connected environment

The aged care residences in Brisbane northside become people's homes and we provide a welcome, social environment for residents. Everything we do is about people's comfort, wellbeing, safety and happiness.

A new resident during the year, Sister Catherine*, came to live at Mary Damian Centre residence during the year after initially declining as she was reluctant to leave her convent. She accepted after she realised she required more care than could be provided at the convent. She said: "It was a good move. Life is now much easier."

Sister Catherine said she is thrilled with her room, which she describes as "beautiful, airy, light and spacious".

As it is difficult for Sister Catherine to get around as her breathing is compromised, we organised an electric wheelchair for Catherine to become familiar with before her mobility deteriorated further. With this assistance, she can now attend Mass and visit some of the other Sisters living at one of the other aged care residences.

Residents at the aged care facility have access to a full range of allied health services and we ensure the people we support can access all the care they need to lead enjoyable, fulfilling and connected lives. Sister Catherine was assessed by the occupational therapist for specialised equipment, and she attends a group exercise class conducted by the physiotherapist. She also spends a lot of time doing her own activities that

are challenging, such as crossword card games on the iPad, and enjoys Facebook and knitting, which she does for the homeless.

Sister Catherine can also enjoy the communal areas, which are always full of friends meeting for meals and social activities.

Sharing Yadu's challenging journey

Fearing for his life, Yadu* fled his home in Sri Lanka to seek safety in Australia. Being of Tamil identity and living in Sri Lanka, Yadu's life included many experiences of extreme systemic discrimination and severe trauma. For many decades now, thousands of Tamils have been fleeing Sri Lanka to seek asylum and safety outside their home.

To make the difficult journey to seek safety in Australia, Yadu had to sell all of his possessions and like many others, he crossed the sea and arrived in Australia by boat. He knew that the journey was risky and that he needed to do it alone. He ensured that his loved ones were transported to a safe place and said goodbye to his wife and daughter not knowing when and if he would see them ever again.

Yadu arrived in Australia in 2011. Having been through traumatic experiences, Yadu developed complex mental and physical health issues. He experienced social isolation, grief and high levels of stress while facing an uncertain future regarding his asylum in Australia. Yadu was then diagnosed with brain cancer which further affected his

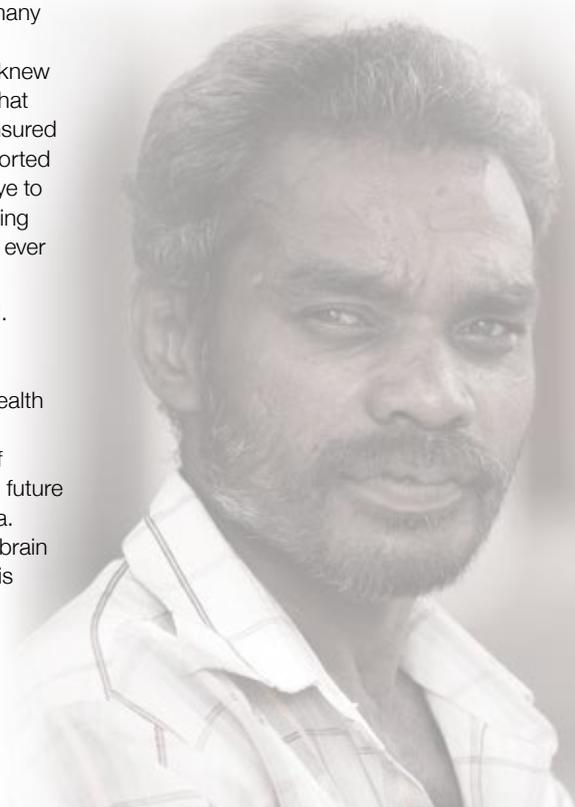
health and emotional wellbeing.

The limited income support he was receiving often didn't meet his basic needs, and he continued to worry about his wife and daughter who had sought refuge in India but had no access to support.

Yadu's uncertainty regarding his asylum continued until recently when he was informed that he did not have to return to his country. While this was life-changing news for him, he still faces an intensive health battle and needs ongoing support for his journey towards mental health recovery.

Our case coordinators at Romero Centre were there for Yadu when he needed assistance most. Yadu received weekly packages of basic food and hygiene items. We also provided Yadu with transport cards to

* Name changed to protect the privacy of the individual





enable him to attend crucial medical appointments.

Thanks to the generosity of people in our community, we were able to provide Yadu with exercise equipment so he can improve his physical strength. Yadu also attends Romero Centre's Men's Group and he has expressed his satisfaction at being a part of this supportive group, which reduces his social isolation and improves his emotional wellbeing.

While the future is still uncertain for Yadu as he remains separated from his family and deals with a significant health condition, positive steps have been made to ensure Yadu is connected to the right support and feels welcomed in the community.

With your support, we can continue to provide support and create a sense of belonging for people like Yadu. Your donation can give hope to people seeking a safe and healthy life in our community.

Support Coordination gives Alicia more choice and control in her life

Our NDIS Support Coordination and Plan Management Services ensure NDIS participants are supported to achieve greater independence and control over their lives. During the year, we met with Alicia*, a lady in her mid-30s who was experiencing severe mental health issues and some intellectual impairments.

Before the introduction of the NDIS, Alicia felt she had never had any choice or control over the support she received, and said she had been



“stuck with a service I was unhappy with”.

Once Alicia engaged with MCS' NDIS Support Coordination service, we supported her to find another provider including interviewing prospective workers and services. We supported her to engage the new provider and begin to make some significant changes in her life.

Alicia previous had medication locked up, but is now able to self-administer her medication. Her home is now clean and organised and she participates in more mainstream community activities than ever before.

The NDIS enabled Alicia to engage with several allied health professionals including a speech and language therapist, an occupational therapist and ongoing psychological support which she had previously never accessed. Alicia recently spoke at a conference where she talked about her experience with the NDIS and how having choice and control has changed her life.

“I will always have plan management in my husband's plan because the opportunities for real choice and control are endless, when I have the whole market to source services and products from to assist my husband to achieve his goals, not just registered providers.”

Wife of an NDIS participant using MCS' NDIS Plan Management Services

* Name changed to protect the privacy of the individual

Our strategy

2017 saw a review of the organisation’s strategic direction and the development and release of a strategic plan positioning Mercy Community Services (MCS) for future growth in response to significant changes and reform in the community services sector. The MCS Strategic Plan 2017-20 focuses on the following strategic initiatives and key aims:

<p>01 </p> <p>ENHANCE EXISTING AND DEVELOP NEW SERVICES AND ACCOMMODATION</p> <p>Mercy Community Services will be guided by the Vision of the Sisters of Mercy and utilise contemporary business and property development methodologies to grow and expand services.</p> <p>Key strategic aim: 4500 people supported every day</p>	<p>02 </p> <p>IMPLEMENT AND MANAGE NEW CUSTOMER FOCUSED STRUCTURES</p> <p>Mercy Community Services will have the governance and organisational structures that support our leaders to implement the strategic initiatives.</p> <p>Key strategic aim: people supported by MCS seamlessly access person-centred services</p>	<p>03 </p> <p>DEVELOP OUR PEOPLE</p> <p>Mercy Community Services will invest in our people to ensure our culture remains aligned with the ethos of the Sisters of Mercy as we deliver the strategic initiatives.</p> <p>Key strategic aim: 80% or more of staff would recommend MCS as a place to work and our services</p>
<p>04 </p> <p>CREATE AND MANAGE OUR BRAND</p> <p>Mercy Community Services will be widely known and recognised as a solutions-focused Catholic organisation that inspires and supports people in need.</p> <p>Key strategic aim: 70% or more of people in the communities we survey have a positive view of our brand</p>	<p>05 </p> <p>ADVANCE PARTNERSHIPS AND INNOVATIVE PRACTICE</p> <p>Mercy Community Services will work in partnership with other Catholic and values-aligned organisations, undertake evidence-based research and implement innovative service models to provide or facilitate person-centred supports.</p> <p>Key strategic aim: MCS is a valued partner and thought leader in the human services sector</p>	<p>06 </p> <p>STRENGTHEN OUR BUSINESS SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES</p> <p>Mercy Community Services will invest in business processes, practices and enabling technology that enhance services efficiency and efficacy.</p> <p>Key strategic aim: Technology is used to continually improve service outcomes.</p>

OUR CULTURE: *Mercy Community Services values the human dignity of every person and is committed to enhancing the quality of life and wellbeing of those who access our services, believing that through actions of merciful love, Mercy is given and received. Our culture reflects the ethos of the Sisters of Mercy and promotes service, mercy, humility, diversity, transparency, open accountability, collaboration and cooperation, flexibility and adaptability, fearlessness and growth.*



Highlights

Prior to the release of the new Strategic Plan in April 2017, the organisation was guided by its previous strategic plan and continued to carry forward and drive innovative, integrated, inclusive, coordinated and responsive social services in the communities we serve.

Included below are a number of key highlights during the year.

NDIS Services

During the year, MCS successfully responded to an area of unmet need, particularly around complex support coordination for people with a disability. We established multiple sites across Queensland to provide NDIS Support Coordination and Plan Management Services and plan to grow this service to new regions over the coming year to support NDIS participants.

Romero Centre – We Are Here

'We Are Here' is a series of poems and songs published by Mercy Community Services' Romero Centre, comprised of true stories from people seeking asylum who have interacted with the Romero Centre. The moving poems and songs skilfully communicate the many complications and struggles that people seeking asylum encounter.

On Friday 28 October 2016, Australian Catholic University students performed a play based on the Romero Centre's 'We Are Here' series, crafted to include verbatim stories of hope, loss and horrendous inhumane treatment faced by people seeking asylum. The audience was deeply

moved by the performance and many expressed that they gained a greater understanding of the challenges faced by people seeking asylum and refuge.

Pilgrimage to Dublin

In 2016, eight people from Mercy Community Services were given the opportunity to partake in a Dublin Pilgrimage, hosted by the Sisters of Mercy Brisbane Congregation. The Pilgrimage offered significant insight into the life and works of Catherine McAuley, as the participants journeyed through the remarkable places of ministry and prayer, including the first house of Mercy built by Catherine in Baggot Street in 1824.

Our leaders were deeply moved by the experience and grateful for the unique opportunity to follow in Catherine's footsteps and gain a greater understanding of the role we play in continuing the works of mercy and compassion that originated in Dublin.

Formation for volunteers

The 2016 CLRIQ grant has enabled us to provide a number of formation workshops for volunteers with an invitation to pastoral companions for the Sisters of Mercy and Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Sacred Heart. The workshops have been facilitated by Dr Ann Morgan focusing on the Gospel values and how, as carers, volunteers should action and witness these values.

It is very rare that one can take 10 days to explore and so intimately experience the legacy, history and significance of an organisation's founder/s and how this in turn influences our future focus. It was both personally and professionally impactful and something that I will remember and reflect on for a long time. I cannot thank Liz Orupold and Sr. Catherine enough for the wonderful experience.

- John Hoffman

Meaningful Ageing Australia membership

In accordance with our aim to deliver best practice pastoral and spiritual care to older people, Mercy Community Services has attained membership with Meaningful Ageing Australia. This membership provides access to helpful resources, events and personnel to successfully respond to the pastoral and spiritual needs of those we support through aged care services.

Our people



Our people are the foundation of our organisation and therefore cultural alignment is of great significance through recruitment, orientation and the ongoing employment journey.

Mercy Community Services (MCS) prides itself on a culture that reflects the ethos of the Sisters of Mercy and promotes service, mercy, humility, diversity, transparency, open accountability, collaboration and cooperation, flexibility and adaptability, fearlessness and growth.

To achieve this cultural intent, MCS has developed a number of cultural alignment initiatives and interventions. For example, a focus on implementing cultural support strategies such as the

Sanctuary Model, an organisational culture model that promotes employee safety and wellbeing through core commitments such as open communication and social responsibility along with practical tools. The facilitation of a servant leadership focus has been developed within the context of our Integrated Leadership System (ILS) that provides for a leadership map identifying a set of core leadership capabilities and behaviours for every level within the organisation.

In addition we deliver mission and values training at orientation and staff have the opportunity to participate in formation programs such as the Mercy Yesterday Today and Future program to encourage staff to nurture a compassionate heart in their everyday life at work.

These activities, along with our management teams' commitment to driving these cultural development programs ultimately leads to more engaged and energised staff who understand and are aligned with our culture. They also experience a sense of organisational wellbeing resulting in improved outcomes for the people we support.

Our teams are employed through a values-based recruitment model with a diversity focus, whereby we actively

Division	Number of staff	Permanent full time	Permanent part time	Casual	Volunteers	Gender (female as % of total)
Aged Care Services	253	19	198	36	108	92%
Intermediary Services	62	50	11	1	0	87%
Disability Services – Core Supports	77	10	37	30	20	83%
Family Services	324	207	92	25	34	73%
Integrated Shared Services (ISS)	71	57	13	1	0	54%
Total	787	343	351	93	162	79%

recruit staff from different cultural backgrounds. To complement this employment model, our workforce is made up of a variety of specialised professional and experienced staff with many holding relevant vocational and tertiary qualifications (including certificates III and IV, Diplomas, Bachelors, Masters and PhDs) in areas such as community services, aged care services, counselling, social work, disability services, human resources, psychology, health and behavioural sciences, policy and governance, business, marketing and management.

Mercy Community Services employs almost 800 people who support more than 4,000 people in Queensland communities.

Commitment to staff development and building leadership

Mercy Community Services (MCS) is committed to ensuring our employees engage with learning and development opportunities. This promotes a safe workplace and contributes to a healthy and positive culture enabling our employees to achieve positive outcomes for people who access our services.

The learning and development journey commences with engaging with the Mercy story through our MCS induction, which includes our history and heritage and contemporary mission and values, followed by orientation to role by a blended learning process. This



includes online access and face-to-face experiences that provide foundational learning of key policy and procedures and models of practice.

Ongoing professional development is supported through internal and external opportunity through training events, professional development sessions, conferences and practice forums.

Training events during the year included:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Trauma by Dr Derek Chong
- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills
- Domestic Violence Responsiveness
- Psychological First Aid
- Therapeutic Crisis Intervention and Circle of Security.

During the year, special internal events were conducted including the Registered Nurse (PD) Day, Family and Child Connect Conference, and the Foster and Kinship Care Conference. Delegations were sent to several state conferences including the Foster Care Queensland Conference in Cairns, Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Child Protection Peak Conference Gold Coast and over 200 of our employees accessed external events such as Introduction and Advanced PACE Workshops, Mentoring in Violence Prevention, Bringing Baby Home and Safe and Together.

The organisation made a strategic commitment to focus on and build our organisational leadership culture founded on our mission, vision and values and sought to ensure our people, every day, made inclusive leading choices regardless of role. On 26 July 2016 the Integrated Leadership System (ILS) was launched including a leadership map

and framework which provides a foundation for developing capabilities and leadership across all areas of Mercy Community Services (MCS).

The ILS has been progressively implemented targeting formal and emerging leaders and over 90 people have completed the self-reflection tools and reflective session. These confidential sessions assist each individual to reflect upon their leadership profile, to affirm strengths and to identify leadership capabilities that may provide areas for growth, both with the aim of future learning and action.

Aligned with the ILS, the emerging leaders program Leading Edge commenced on 23 March 2017. The program consists of six workshops, input from our executive and self-coaching sessions guided by a committee which currently supports 13 employees to develop and pursue

their leadership capabilities both personally and within the workplace. The first session of the program focuses on the catholicity of the organisation, discussing leadership the 'Mercy way', and learning about the people and places of Mercy.

Learning and development will continue to be a priority within MCS to contribute to the satisfaction of our people and successful outcomes for the people we support.

“I was privileged to be selected as part of the Leading Edge program, which has already been invaluable as part of my role here as Admissions Manager at MCS Aged Care Services. My peer group has provided a safe environment to discuss, reflect and learn from each other. The program has been not only been a great learning experience but also enjoyable to be part of a group of people who are passionate about the services we provide.”

*Madonna Treloar
(MCS Aged Care Services)*

Celebrating staff achievements

Mercy Community Services would like to acknowledge and recognise people in our organisation who have made outstanding contributions in supporting and inspiring people in need to live healthy, connected lives.

Award for Vocational Excellence

Gail Reardon, Team Manager of our Intensive Intervention Placement Service in Toowoomba, was recognised this year with Rotary Vocational Excellence for her outstanding contribution and years of committed service to families on the Darling Downs. Gail's lifelong passion for supporting vulnerable families has motivated her work with Mercy Community Services in Toowoomba since she joined us in 2007. Her highly-regarded skills, expertise and dedication to strengthening families and children have been invaluable in our foster care, placement support and family reunification teams.

Mercy Moment Awards

Each year, we present Mercy Moment awards to those people who exemplify our values in action.

In 2016, our award winners were:

- **Cherie Johnson, Family Services, Toowoomba. Award winner – Outstanding Service category.** This award recognises above and beyond dedication and initiative, and delivering exceptional service to enhance the MCS experience for the people we support and other team members.
- **Noelene Rosengren, volunteer. Award winner – Volunteer category.** This award recognises and honours a volunteer who has passionately and selflessly made an extraordinary contribution to support aged care clients through volunteering.
- **Olivia Fernandez, Aged Care Services Award winner - Innovation at Work category.** Awarded for providing a breath of



fresh air through the passionate and innovative environment she developed by introducing music therapy, which has made a significant difference to resident outcomes.

- **Family and Child Connect (FaCC) team, Townsville. Award winner – Living the Values category.** This award recognises employees who, through their attitude and behaviour, inspire others and embrace the organisation's values of mercy, acceptance, excellence, dignity, empowerment and integrity.

“I believe wholeheartedly in assisting people to believe in themselves and recognise their strengths. Everyone needs to know they are worth something and belong somewhere.”

*Gail Reardon
(Team Manager Intensive
Intervention Placement Service)*

Long Service Awards

Mercy Community Services acknowledges the following people for their long service and commitment to the organisation and the people we support.

5 years' service

Cindy McKenzie
Paul Shakespeare-Finch
Susan Talbot
Uailangilala Vi
Srikanth Jambula
Dianne Faulkner
Susan Akauola
Lusand Sapolu
Tony Jain
Shelley Wall
Alana Palm
Alby Waititi
Alison Stone
Tabitha Smith
Tracey Foley
Karmen Bruce
Valerie Whitbourne
Madonna Treloar
Sagaitu Kauata
Lynne Shearn

10 years' service

Deanne Denman
Robert Mallac
Joanna Boyce
Barbara Zimmerlie
Sally Foote
Richard Tiatia
Elisha Garcia
Anne Wakefield
Elaine Jackson

15 years' service

Anthony Ryan

20 years' service

Frances Klaassen

25 years' service

Stewart Redshaw



Our partners

Mercy Community Services works in collaborative partnerships with all tiers of government, community organisations, businesses, and local communities throughout Queensland. These partnerships are critical to ensuring we are delivering the best possible outcomes for people as we support and inspire people in need to live healthy, connected lives within inclusive communities.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service (ATSICHS)
 ACAG (Agencies CALD Action Group)
 ACSA (Aged and Community Services Australia)
 Access Community Services
 AccessEAP
 Advantage Salary Packaging
 Aftercare, The Poppy Centre
 Australian Catholic University
 All Hallows' School
 Ascot Optical
 Audiology Trio
 Australian Government Department of Health
 Banyo Clinic
 Boboto Connections

BreastScreen Queensland – Brisbane Northside Service
 Brisbane City Council
 Brisbane City Football Club
 Brisbane North PHN
 Burnie Brae
 Caboolture Regional Domestic Violence Service Inc
 Carbal Medical Services
 CareConnect
 Care Agency Services
 Centacare Brisbane
 Cleansweep Lawn and Property Maintenance
 Community Living Association
 Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart, TransPacifico Region
 CREATE Foundation
 Department of Social Services

Domestic Violence Action Centre
 East Creek Community Centre
 Edmen Community Staffing
 Empire Theatre
 Endeavour Foundation
 Essilor Vision Foundation
 Food Solutions
 Foster Care Queensland
 Griffith University (Southbank Campus); School of Medicine and Health Services Management Department
 Healthmetrics
 Hire a Hubby Murarrie
 HumeRidge Church
 Ipswich Independent Youth Service
 Just Bettercare
 Kambu Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation for Health

Kedron Wavell RSL
 Emergency Medical alarms
 Kummara Association Inc
 Kurbingui Youth Development Association Inc
 Lawn and Order Property Maintenance
 Lifeline Darling Downs
 Logan Elders
 Mater Hospitals and Health Services Brisbane
 Mercy Partners
 MICAH Projects
 Mission Australia
 Mobile Attendant Care Services (MACS)
 Mobile Dentistry
 Multicultural Affairs Queensland
 Multicultural Development Association (MDA)
 Mununjali Housing and Development Company Ltd
 North Queensland Domestic Resource Service
 Nundah Activity Centre Digital Community Visitors Scheme
 Nundah Community Centre - Digital Community Visitors Service
 OzHarvest
 Palm Island Community Company
 Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak Limited (QATSICPP)



Queensland Congregation of the Presentation Sisters

Queensland Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services

Queensland Department of Housing and Public Works

Rachel Henry Podiatry

Refugee and Immigration Legal Service (RAILS) Inc

Sarina Russo

Secretariat National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC) –

Family Matters Campaign

Stacey Gossip (Psychology)

Staffing Options

Tafe Queensland – South West (Toowoomba)

Telstra Health

Think Pharmacy

Toowoomba African Multicultural Association

Toowoomba Regional Council

Townsville Aboriginal and Islander Health Service (TAIHS)

Tufnell Rd Pharmacy

Working Against Violence Support Service (WAVSS), the Regional Domestic and Family

Violence (DFV) service for Logan and the Redlands

Vital call

WWILD (Working Alongside People with Intellectual and Learning Disabilities)

Engagement with tertiary institutions

As part of our commitment to quality and excellence, we continued to engage universities and other tertiary education institutions in research and practice partnerships, and student placements, including:

- Student placements in Family Services, Disability Services, and Romero Centre (Queensland University of Technology, Australian Catholic University (ACU) and Queensland TAFEs)
- Student placements in Aged Care Services: nursing students (Australian Catholic University, Griffith University, Mater Health Services, and Mackay Medical College Taiwan), and dietitian, physiotherapy and occupational therapy students (ACU)
- Australian Catholic University (ACU) International (Internship Program)
- Students completing Advanced Masters Health Services Management - final semester clinical placement or project (Griffith University)
- NDIS Services – partnerships with TAFEs across Queensland
- University of the Sunshine Coast – Instrument for the Classification and Assessment of Support Needs (ICAN) assessments, mobility assessments, user testing of National Disability Insurance Agency Avatar for participant interaction with portal.

Our volunteers

Mercy Community Services' volunteers are instrumental to the important work we do in local communities. Volunteers are involved in many of our events and programs, and in carer and friendship roles in the areas of aged care and disability support services.

At Romero Centre, volunteers provide extensive support including legal, administrative, and English teaching support to people seeking asylum and refugees.

We would like to acknowledge all of our volunteers for their talent and skills in supporting people and thank them for their time, passion, commitment and kindness.

Mercy Community Services has 162 registered volunteers.

To find out more about joining our valued volunteer team, please call 3866 4160 or visit www.mercycs.org.au



MCS volunteers are instrumental to the important work we do in the community.

Volunteer story

Volunteers play a vital role in Mercy Community Services' (MCS) commitment to enhance the quality of life and wellbeing of residents within Aged Care Services.

Brandon* is a university student who volunteered his time with MCS and participated in the Narratives of Hope Program. Throughout his time volunteering with MCS, Brandon collaborated with Simon*, one of the residents at our Aged Care Services residential facility in Nudgee. Brandon assisted by collecting and collating Simon's life story and producing a short film, including recent and historical photographs from Simon's collection. Though Simon was quite ill at the time, he enjoyed Brandon's company and was always positive and cheerful. Brandon worked on the film throughout a number of visits and finally completed a first draft to present to Simon.

Upon watching the film, Simon looked at him inquisitively and said, "That's great mate, but it is only five minutes. Do you think you could make it longer?"

Brandon laughed and happily agreed. "Sure, I'll work on it for you Simon and make something for you and your family to enjoy."

Unfortunately, Simon passed away just three days after this encounter. However, amidst the discomfort of his final months, he was able to find a friend in Brandon, who had presented him with the opportunity to have his story listened to and leave a legacy for his family to remember with fond memories.

While Brandon's visits and assistance gave Simon something to look forward to, Simon was not the only one impacted through this journey. Brandon felt profoundly honoured to work alongside Simon and document the important historical moments in Simon's long life. Brandon's involvement in the Narratives of Hope Program proved to be a rewarding experience, giving him insight, compassion and a spirit of generosity. Brandon is currently working on the production of the longer film to present to Simon's family and is grateful for the opportunity to shed a glimmer of joy into an otherwise sorrowful circumstance and pass on Simon's remarkable legacy.

* Name changed to protect the privacy of the individual



Thanking our supporters

We would like to thank and acknowledge those individuals, groups, businesses and other supporters who donated to Mercy Community Services during the year or provided in-kind support. We value tremendously your contribution to what we do and the positive impact it has on the lives of the people we support.

During the year, we received donated goods and services valued at almost \$60,000, along with \$136,302 in cash donations.

We are pleased to report that during the year, we officially launched a formal fundraising program for Mercy Community Services. This program includes a framework that guides all our decisions and activities when connecting with donors, fundraisers and supporters. The framework ensures all donations are well-governed, used appropriately and directed to services that donors specifically request they be directed to, whether it's to support people living with a disability, or towards case coordination for a family seeking asylum, or to support a child or young person.

Presented now is a snapshot of some of our amazing donors and supporters, and how their contributions made a difference in the lives of the people we support.

Corporate and community heroes

We would like to thank all our corporate partners and community groups who supported us during the year. We value their support and the positive impact they're having on the community through their contributions.

Brisbane Girls Grammar School – Romero Centre Fundraising

- Brisbane Girls Grammar School presented Romero Centre with a \$500 donation and \$500 in supermarket vouchers as part of their Diversity Day celebrations where they engage in conversation about social justice matters.

CS Energy

- CS Energy Wivenhoe Power Station donated \$1,000 as part of their Christmas Giving Program to help bring the spirit of Christmas to those in need. This donation supported MCS' Lowood Hub programs to provide practical, immediate support (such as school books and uniforms) to vulnerable families in the local area.

KAB Seating Australia

- Thank you to Kab Seating for their donation of office furniture valued at \$21,000, which will be utilised at various facilities across the organisation.

Sisters of Mercy Brisbane Congregation Office \$40,000

- We thank the Sisters of Mercy for their donation, which supported our Romero Centre to provide vital case coordination services to people seeking asylum facing complex challenges and uncertain futures.

Presentation Congregation Brisbane \$20,000

- This donation supported the running of a sewing group at our Romero Centre, which supports people seeking asylum and refugees. This group is one of Romero Centre's social connection programs which enhances social connection and wellbeing, provides an opportunity to create new friendships, and acquire new skills.

We also extend special thanks to other Sisters who donated cash and goods to Mercy Community Services to support people in need.

Mums for Refugees

- Mums for Refugees are ongoing supporters of Romero Centre both through donations of cash as well as rallying their communities to donate food items for Romero Centre's food pantry along with donating sanitary products. We are grateful to this community group for their willingness to engage their networks in support of Romero Centre.

“Consider me a lifelong donor.”

Kate

Fundraising hero

Murray Henman – Trivia Nights in support of Romero Centre

Murray loves trivia and has been supporting Romero Centre by organising fundraising trivia nights. He organised two trivia night events during the year and we thank him for his commitment and support. Around \$3,000 was raised for Romero Centre to support families seeking asylum in need of our urgent support.

Individuals and regular giving heroes

Thank you to all the individuals who donated to Mercy Community Services during the year. Your contributions went towards MCS programs and services to support families, people with a disability, older people in residential aged care and people seeking asylum in need of urgent support. Your contributions all make a big difference in the lives of the people we support.

We extend a special thank you to our MCS Regular Giving Heroes who generously give on a regular basis. This provides Mercy Community Services with a reliable, ongoing source of funds to extend the reach of our services.

Donated goods and services

Thank you to those who contributed goods and services to support the delivery of programs and services to people most in need in local communities.

Contributions to MCS Romero Centre during the year included:

Essential non-perishable food items for the food pantry, supermarket vouchers, nappies, toiletries and hygiene products, stationery resources for English classes and school students, sewing machines, material and resources for the Sewing Group, Go Cards to assist clients with transport.

In addition, we are grateful to organisations who offered Mercy Community Services not-for-profit discounts on services they provided us including website development costs.

MCS Movie Night

Mercy Community Services' first fundraising event saw almost 70 people gathered at Palace Centro Cinemas in March for a special screening of Hidden Figures to help raise funds for the organisation's Romero Centre, which supports families, individuals and children facing complicated challenges while seeking asylum and living in Brisbane.

Funds raised through Movie Night ticket sales went to the Romero Centre to provide vital individualised case management support for people seeking asylum, including emergency assistance such as food and hygiene packages, access to accommodation, and legal connections.

They need us. We need you.

The donations and support we receive allow us to extend our reach in the community and continue to develop and deliver innovative, flexible and person-centred services.

There are many ways in which you can support Mercy Community Services:

- Donate
- Fundraise – raise funds at your workplace, school or club
- Partnerships - we are committed to working with you (and your team) to build a long-lasting relationship.

Your support means we can be there for people when they need us most. There is much to do, and your contribution helps to improve the lives of the people we support. We value you and appreciate your generosity as we work towards a world where people, families and communities are strong in spirit, healthy and connected.

To find out more about how you can support our efforts, please call 07 3866 4167, email fundraising@mercycs.org.au or visit www.mercycs.org.au



Governance Statement

Mercy Community Services SEQ Limited is a company limited by guarantee and the sole company member is the Corporation of the Trustee of the Order of the Sisters of Mercy in Queensland. The member approves the statement of mission, philosophy and values of the company and appoints the Board of Directors.

The role of the Board is to; set the strategic direction of the company, approve the strategic plan, appoint, guide and monitor the performance of the Chief Executive Officer in achieving the company's strategic objectives and; oversee good governance practice.

The Board is supported by an independent Company Secretary and as part of effective governance processes all relevant governance documents are reviewed on a regular basis.

Board operations

The Board of Directors meets at least ten times per year in scheduled meetings where Directors receive monthly, quarterly or annual reports on key performance indicators relating to operations, strategy, risk and compliance from the Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer, service stream Executives and support service Executives. In addition to attending meetings, Directors read and analyse Board papers and reports prepared by management, engage in strategic planning sessions, visit service offices and locations and participate in discussions with management, staff and other key stakeholders.

The Board of Directors has established a Finance, Audit and Risk Committee and a Mission, People and Culture Sub-Committee to assist it fulfil its responsibilities. Each committee has its own terms of reference defining the authority delegated to it by the Board and outlining how the committee is to operate.

Finance, Audit and Risk Committee

The purpose of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee is to monitor, review and advise the Board in relation to the company's internal and external control procedures with particular regard to financial policies, practices and reporting protocols as well as business and operational risk. The Committee meets ten times per year.

The Committee consists of four Directors and meetings are attended by the Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer, General Manager People, Culture and Organisational Development and other senior staff by invitation. Directors of the company who are not members of the Committee may attend the meetings.

Mission, People and Culture Sub-Committee

The purpose of the Mission, People and Culture Sub-Committee is to monitor, review and advise the Board in relation to the company's mission and culture formation policies and practices and as well as human resource management, and safety policies and practices. The Sub-Committee meets four times per year.

The Committee consists of three Directors and an external representative nominated by the Company Member. Meetings are attended by the Chief Executive Officer, General Manager Mission Integration, General Manager People, Culture and Organisational Development and other senior staff by invitation. Directors of the company who are not members of the Sub-Committee may attend the meetings.

Financial performance

Our financial focus during the year was to create a strong foundation for a planned period of substantial growth over the next four years.

Mercy Community Services SEQ Limited delivered a strong set of results with an operating surplus from 'business as usual' operations of \$3.8M (5.6%) from revenue of \$67.4M, up from \$63.4M in the previous year. Our net result after exceptional items and targeted investments in missional activities and developmental projects was \$0.9M (1.3%) reflecting our intent to reinvest our operating surpluses into new areas of need and disadvantage which may, at the point of our investment, be unfunded.

In 2016-17, these projects included:

- new initiatives in the less heralded area of the prevention of domestic violence through education and support for perpetrators (\$0.2M)
- Our continued unfunded support of refugees and people seeking asylum in the Brisbane area through our help and advice service at the Romero Centre, Dutton Park (\$0.4M)
- New service pilots to support New Families where potentially vulnerable new parents are supported and given guidance in their entry into parenthood (\$0.2M)
- The rapid growth of MCS' new Intermediary Services under the

NDIS in North, Central and South West Queensland which are new areas for MCS in the area of disability operations (\$0.5M).

The above were amongst other projects where MCS seeks to find and address areas of unmet need in support of people in the community.

Our main areas of service growth included:

- providing out-of-home child safety support for young people with increasingly high and complex needs
- more work with young people living with complex intellectual disabilities

- growth in MCS' foster care services.

The sectors of child safety, disabilities and aged care have faced a number of challenges in 2016-17 through changes in funding models, the roll-out of the NDIS and changes in the support available to the aged and infirm. In the midst of these changes and financial headwinds which face all service providers in our sectors of operation, we would like to recognise the prompt action of the Queensland Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services in helping to mitigate the impact of increases in payroll costs faced in the Child Safety sector through measures announced in the June 2017 budget by the Queensland Parliament. This prompt action across that sector has helped protect the number of places available for those young people in need of out-of-home-care and their families.

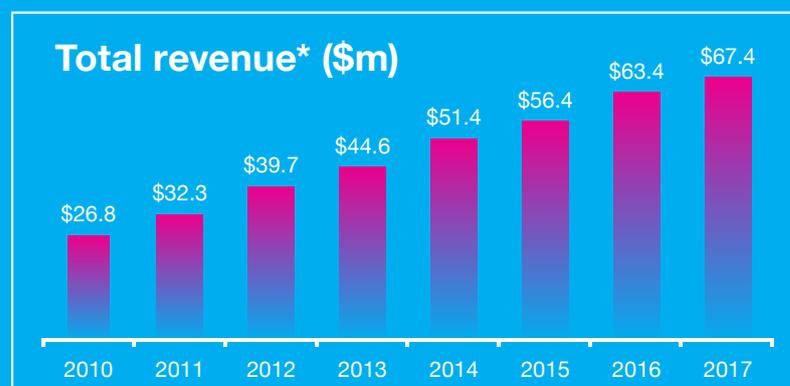


Figure 1

* The revenue from 2010-2014 reflects the consolidated separate service stream results, as Mercy Community Services SEQ Limited was incorporated on 28 October and commenced operations on 1 December 2013.

Financial summary

Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income For the year ended 30 June 2017

	2017 (\$)	2016 (\$)
Income		
Revenue	64,994,034	59,436,141
Other income	2,359,658	3,935,026
	67,353,692	63,371,167
Expenses		
Employee benefit expenses	(51,444,571)	(46,314,174)
Client service expenses and consumables	(2,245,493)	(2,512,739)
Administrative expenses	(1,702,138)	(1,207,390)
Utility and property expenses	(3,753,646)	(3,154,245)
Motor vehicle expenses	(1,362,822)	(1,290,812)
Computer and communication expenses	(1,348,067)	(898,767)
Insurance expense	(720,107)	(542,264)
Depreciation and amortisation expense	(2,462,889)	(2,490,656)
Impairments	(903,823)	(2,543,746)
Winding down of subsidiary	-	522,673
Finance costs	(153,406)	(351,420)
Other expenses	(391,787)	(183,247)
Total expenses	(66,488,749)	(60,966,787)
Surplus for the year	864,943	2,404,380
Other comprehensive income		
<i>Items that may be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss</i>		
Change in fair value of financial asset	8,020	3,466
Other comprehensive income	8,020	3,466
Total comprehensive income for the year	872,963	2,407,846

Financial summary

Statement of financial position as at 30 June 2017

	2017 (\$)	2016 (\$)
ASSETS		
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	37,108,237	32,472,125
Trade and other receivables	7,398,959	6,085,005
Other current assets	767,135	431,490
Total current assets	45,274,331	38,988,620
Non-current assets		
Financial assets	458,416	623,659
Property, plant and equipment	50,486,648	52,238,122
Intangible assets	3,562,300	2,597,104
Total non-current assets	54,507,364	55,458,885
Total assets	99,781,695	94,447,505
LIABILITIES		
Current liabilities		
Trade and other payables*	45,647,894	41,664,756
Employee benefits	4,112,208	3,882,063
Other current liabilities	5,110,448	5,010,941
Total current liabilities	54,870,550	50,557,760
Non-current liabilities		
Employee benefits	511,212	402,775
Total non-current liabilities	511,212	402,775
Total liabilities	55,381,762	50,960,535
Net assets	44,399,933	43,486,970
EQUITY		
Contributed equity	36,039,929	35,999,929
Other reserves	14,931	6,911
Retained surplus	8,345,073	7,480,130
Total equity	44,399,933	43,486,970

* Total Aged Care Accommodation Bonds/Refundable Deposits = 2017: \$43,794,761 (2016: \$40,283,818)

Aged Care Accommodation Bonds/Refundable Deposits expected to be paid within 12 months = 2017: \$8,758,952 (2016: \$8,056,764)

Aged Care Accommodation Bonds/Refundable Deposits not expected to be paid within 12 months = 2017: \$35,035,809 (2016: \$32,227,054)

“We must strive
to do ordinary things
extraordinarily well.”

Catherine McAuley
Founder of the Sisters of Mercy





Mercy Community Services
22 Morris Street
Woolloowin Q 4030
PO Box 508, Lutwyche Q 4030
Ph 07 3866 4160
Fax 07 3866 4189
www.mercycs.org.au