

# Social Outreach

2009-2010 Annual Report



Cabrine Health

Cabrini Health is a Catholic health service sponsored by the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Founded by Mother Cabrini in Italy in 1880 to be bearers of God's love in the world, today the Sisters are present in 17 countries and are involved in a wide range of human services.

Cabrini Health is a not-for-profit healthcare group based in south-eastern Melbourne. We serve people across all stages of life, striving to provide an outstanding experience encompassing physical, spiritual, social and emotional aspects of care. Our Cabrini identity also directs us to look beyond our local community to those on the margins of our society and others who are under-served. We respond to these needs through our social outreach program.

Our social outreach program was formalised in 1992 with the establishment of Cabrini Centacare, a partnership with Centacare Catholic Family Services. The success of this experience set the model for the program, which has expanded over the years as we have partnered with other agencies with similar values and goals. We seek to contribute to the relationships through our human, financial and material resources and by leveraging our skills, knowledge and services. The results reflect that strong partnerships are an effective way to address economic and social disadvantage.

We actively seek opportunities for our staff to be engaged in the program. Working on the premise that most people want to do good, our social outreach program provides a vehicle for staff to make a contribution to the broader community. In turn, this has assisted in the development of a strong culture within the organisation that brings to life our Catholic and Cabrinian values.

Our strategic plan 2010-2012 commits us to "strengthening existing social outreach and community initiatives, and further aligning these with core organisational activities and services". In 2009-2010 the program comprised 45 projects across four target areas. We are pleased to provide the following report on our activities.

## Serving the most marginalised in our community

In direct response to the Vision of the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, our first area of focus is those on the margins of the community, in Melbourne and overseas. In 2009-2010 we have:

- Supported the provision of services to homeless/marginalised people in Melbourne through Sacred Heart Mission, St Mary's House of Welcome, The Way Community and The Wellington Community Centre
- Contributed to the Food Rescue program coordinated by Jewish Aid Australia and supported the Malvern Emergency Food Program
- Created a sense of community for the clients of the St Kilda Parish Mission Drop In Centre
- Assisted in providing services to 'at risk' youth in Melbourne through Cabrini Lighthouse and the Open Family Chatterbox Bus
- Supported Project Respect's work with women in Victoria who have been victims of human trafficking
- Knitted woollen hats, scarves and jumpers for Kogo to distribute through their network of agencies and services
- Provided Christmas meals and gifts to clients of some of our social outreach partners
- Funded programs supporting street children in the Philippines and Vietnam
- Assisted in funding refugee services in the USA in response to the Haiti disaster
- Supported the establishment of a new MSC mission on the Mexico-USA border

In this area we have spent \$331,000 which accounts for approximately 25% of our direct expenditure. In addition, we have donated more than \$10,000 worth of goods and our staff have contributed many hours in voluntary support, providing direct service in the Sacred Heart Mission dining hall, raising funds for the St Kilda Drop In Centre and knitting woollen items for Kogo.



## Community development projects

We recognise that we are part of a community with complex needs. As a large, not-for-profit organisation, we are committed to sharing our resources for the benefit of the community at large. This has resulted in a second stream of projects, those aimed at strengthening and developing community capacity and sustainability. Here we have:

- Assisted in funding Cabrini Centacare, a family counselling centre in the City of Stonnington
- Supported the MacKillop Family Services Youth Mentoring Program in the City of Bayside
- Assisted in funding a community development worker in Flowerdale, the area most severely affected by the Victoria bushfires in 2009
- Provided funding for bursaries for young people at Catholic colleges whose studies are in jeopardy because of financial pressures
- Helped Very Special Kids, an agency supporting families throughout their experience of caring for children with life-threatening illnesses
- Supported Knoxbrooke Inc in the provision of services to people with disabilities
- Provided employment opportunities to refugees in Australia and others who find it difficult to compete for work on the open market
- Supported the ongoing formation of the Missionary Sisters and their collaborators throughout the Stella Maris Province

This area accounts for approximately 30 percent of our expenditure (\$468,000). The development of a new relationship with Family Life (a community organisation working with families in southern metro Melbourne) and strengthening the relationship with MacKillop Family Services will provide greater opportunities for staff engagement in the year ahead.



### St Kilda Parish Mission Drop In Centre (SKDIC): annual art exhibition

The minibus pulled up outside the Cabrini Linen Service and the clients piled out. The man struggling with anxiety had to be coaxed into the building whilst others couldn't wait to see their works of art mounted and displayed. Thus began the fourth annual art exhibition hosted by the Cabrini Hawthorn staff. From a small beginning in 2006, where the culture shock of both groups was evident in the tentative interactions, friendships have grown and are eagerly renewed each year. Despite the hard work behind the scenes, there is a sense of celebration and achievement. This is how you build community. When you know the 'other', there is no longer anything to fear.

### Employment Integration: meaningful work makes all the difference

It started in 2001 with the conviction that – to coin a phrase – we needed to ‘put our money where our mouth is’. With all of the reservations of any new potentially high risk project, we decided to offer a supported employment program for clients of our partner organisations who were experiencing barriers to employment. Nine years and more than 70 participants later, this has become part of what we do here at Cabrini. Whilst some participants have been successful and have gone on to permanent employment at Cabrini or elsewhere, others have not been able to complete the program for one reason or another. However, what has been most striking, is the commitment of our staff who support and mentor the participants on a day to day basis. This is when we are at our best. This is when we really live our mission, which is to be a community of care.

## Indigenous Projects

We want to make a real difference to the lives of Australia’s indigenous people. By focusing on small, achievable goals, we found a place to start. We have also found that we have been blessed - and changed - in the process. In this area in the last 12 months we have::

- Assisted in funding an Indigenous Tutoring Program at Stonnington Primary School in Prahran
- Supported the Indigenous Hospitality House to provide a homely environment for indigenous people with a relative in a Melbourne hospital
- Established a relationship with Ngwala Willumbong, a key service provider offering specialist alcohol and drug residential rehabilitation and outreach support services to Aboriginal communities in Victoria
- Enabled a group of staff to spend time in the Western Arrente desert in the Northern Territory to learn about Australia’s indigenous culture
- Strengthened our relationship with the Santa Teresa community, in the Northern Territory

- Supported St Kilda Youth Services to establish a multimedia computer lab to provide education and recreation activities for young people in Hermannsburg
- Provided funding and qualified personnel to assist the Menzies School of Health research ‘gECHO’ project, which is identifying the incidence of rheumatic heart disease amongst children in remote indigenous communities

Our indigenous projects account for \$78,000 of our direct expenditure. Although the smallest area of the program in dollar terms, because of their nature, our indigenous projects have a very high level of staff engagement.



### Intjartnama: an Indigenous cultural experience

Sitting and looking out across the vast outback landscape, sharing meals over an open fire, sleeping under the stars – doesn’t sound much like work! But, each year, a group of Cabrini staff make a pilgrimage to Intjartnama, an Aboriginal outstation 120km west of Alice Springs. Although there is a service component to the trip, which involves cleaning up the grounds and buildings, the real purpose is to have an opportunity to sit and learn from Australia’s indigenous people about their rich heritage and culture. This simple, short activity has a profound effect on the participants: there is a glimmer of insight into the spiritual connection to the land, the endless sense of time, the strength of extended family relationships and the deep hurt that our indigenous people have experienced. It changes attitudes forever. This is our reconciliation story.

## International health projects

Australia really is the lucky country when it comes to access to good quality healthcare. Through our social outreach program we strive to improve the health and wellbeing of people in other, less well-resourced parts of the world. With a strong presence in the Victorian health care sector for more than 60 years, we have expert knowledge and skills and access to resources that we are able to share. In this area we have::

- Entertained the children brought to Australia by Children First Foundation with social and educational outings
- Provided funding, training and support for visiting clinicians from China and the Philippines
- Undertaken profoundly life-changing surgery for Joyanto from Bangladesh, Martin from the Solomon Islands and Panu from PNG
- Enabled 40 girls and women in rural Afghanistan to undertake basic literacy and health training
- Helped fund Cabrini Ministries' health outreach service to people with HIV/Aids in Swaziland's low veld and sponsored orphaned and other vulnerable children so that they have a chance to build a life
- Sponsored orphaned and other vulnerable children in Swaziland so that they have a chance to build a life
- Supported Interplast's plastic and reconstructive surgery service/education programs in the Asia-Pacific region
- Conducted an orthopaedic service/education program to Modilon Hospital in Madang, PNG and looked for ways to extend our involvement
- In partnership with Melbourne Overseas Mission, provided financial support to Kanabea Hospital, a remote service in the PNG highlands, and instituted a mentoring program for the young doctor there
- Provided scholarship funding for healthcare training for the Clarist Sisters in India
- Provided funding and medical support to a primary health service in Wapenamanda, PNG
- Shipped medical and surgical supplies to the National Referral Hospital in the Solomon Islands
- Supported the development of a biomedical engineering service for hospitals in Timor Leste

With a strong focus on international health in the last 3 years, this area of the program has grown significantly and accounted for approximately 40% of our expenditure or \$535,000 in 2009-2010. There is strong staff support here also. The relationship with Cabrini Ministries in Swaziland needs a special mention, as staff fundraising and donations account for nearly \$100,000 of our total contribution. In addition, staff have participated in local activities and the overseas service programs, taken responsibility for managing the relationship with a partner agency or organised and motivated others to retrieve and recycle goods.





**Medical Evacuations:  
the chance to change someone's life forever**

We heard about Panu, a 20-year old boy from Kar Kar (an island north of Madang in PNG) long before we met him. Panu has Blount's Disease causing severe bow legs, which restricts his ability to walk – a fundamental need on a remote island! He was first seen by Mr John Griffiths in 2007 during the annual orthopaedic outreach program to Madang Hospital. Unfortunately corrective surgery was not possible in PNG, so Panu was referred to Children First Foundation who began the process of obtaining a visa for him to enter Australia for medical care. He finally arrived in April 2010 and began the first of a series of corrective surgeries in May, where an external fixation device was applied to his left leg. A similar device was applied to his right leg in June and these will be used to straighten his legs over time. For those not used to orthopaedic surgery, these devices look barbaric but Panu is excited because, one day soon, he will be able to stand up straight and tall, and walk like everyone else. Whilst the hospital provides the pre and post operative care on a pro bono basis, the support from our doctors and nurses who volunteer their time to perform the surgery and the companies who donate the prosthetics and equipment enables us to offer this type of life changing service to three or four medical evacuation cases each year.

**We acknowledge our social outreach program partners and thank them for another year of working productively together**

**Australian-based organisations:**

Afghan Australia Development Organisation  
Centacare Catholic Family Services  
Children First Foundation  
Family Life  
Indigenous Hospitality House  
Interplast Australia & New Zealand Inc  
Intjartnama Aboriginal Corporation  
Jesuit Mission Office  
Jewish Aid Australia  
Kogo  
Knoxbrooke Inc  
Lighthouse Foundation  
Malvern Emergency Food Program  
MacKillop Family Services  
Mannix College  
Melbourne Overseas Mission  
Menzies School of Health Research  
Newman College  
Ngwala Willumbong  
Open Family Australia Inc  
Opening the Doors Foundation  
Project Respect  
Sacred Heart Mission

Santa Teresa Health Clinic  
St Kilda Parish Mission Drop In Centre  
St Kilda Youth Services  
St Mary's College  
St Mary's House of Welcome  
Stonnington Primary School  
The Way Community  
The Wellington Collingwood Inc.  
Very Special Kids

**Overseas organisations**

Cabrini Ministries, Swaziland  
Catholic Health Services, Diocese of Kerema, PNG  
Modilon General Hospital, Madang, PNG  
Save Our Street Children Foundation, Baguio City, Philippines  
Sir Run Run Shaw Hospital, Hangzhou, China  
Wapenamanda Centre for Primary Health, Enga Province, PNG

## **Cabrini Health Social Outreach Program**

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**“Our Cabrini family today is challenged on many levels: the cry of the poor and the excluded, the suffering of children and the elderly at risk, the disintegration of the family and the disorientation of youth, the tragedy of so many of our immigrant and refugee brothers and sisters, the exploitation of women and human trafficking.”**

(Excerpt from the Vision Statement,  
Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, 2008)



# **Cabrini Health**

Sharing the healing mission of the  
Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus