



ANGLICAN
MOTHERS UNION
AUSTRALIA

New Possibilities

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People are being pushed into homelessness, many for the first time in their lives.

They're living in overcrowded homes, crisis accommodation, in tents or their car.

Australians known to be at risk include those who have experienced family and domestic violence, young people, children on care and protection orders, Indigenous Australians, people leaving health or social care arrangements, and Australians aged 55 or older

At the height of the Covid-19 crisis (March to June 2020), about 6,000 people each month were forced to seek out homelessness services. There were 11,201 children under 10 who missed out on support in 2020.

Ex prisoners are at risk of becoming homeless. A post-release support program provides assistance for up to 12 weeks. Research suggests this needs to be extended.

ACTING LOCALLY – SUPPORTING FAMILIES

Our local branch of AMUA (St Luke's Toowoomba) has for several years facilitated a 'Pyjama Drive' during May. The new warm pyjamas are blessed and then distributed to those who need them by a local charity. This year we discovered the charity was no longer operating in our community. What to do? Should we abandon our pyjama drive or seek out another distribution point? It goes without saying that the need for warm clothing still exists, given the cold weather we experience, and the reality of homelessness and poverty in our community. One suggestion was to approach Protea Place, a local women's support centre.

Two AMUA members visited Protea Place and found it was a welcoming and non-judgemental place to just relax and not have to worry about anything for a while. It is open 3 days a week from 10.00 am to 2.00 pm. A nutritious lunch is prepared for the women who drop in and they can watch tv or use the computer. There is a room full of donated clothing, shoes, bags etc and they are welcome to help themselves to things they need from a cupboard full of personal items. Hot showers and laundry facilities are provided. There is no Federal or State Government assistance so anything they have is donated through the community. A representative from Protea Place was quite enthusiastic about a load of fresh new pyjamas! When asked about the greatest areas of concern she saw in her work, she quickly answered, 'Two things - the lack of social and affordable housing, and the need to end gender violence.'

This is just one example of 'thinking globally and acting locally.' There are many similar local projects in branches around Australia: memory boxes and fiddle rugs for aged care, school bags and supplies for children uprooted by family violence, knitted rugs for victims of natural disasters, fresh start baskets for people moving from shelter to accommodation, toiletry packs for hospital patients, cuddle bears for children in distress and many more. Although as AMUA members we are called upon to support the mission of AMUA worldwide, it is also very important to support local families. The needs in your community may be very different; there may be no need for a pyjama drive. But there will be a need. Look around. Identify a need that can be addressed by your branch, taking into account the capabilities and resources of your current membership.

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*May we always see the world
through the eyes of Christ
speak to those we meet with the
words of Christ
and take with us on our
journey the peace of Christ*

