

MAGAZINE INTRAS YD

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2020



DREAMS & VISIONS IN *TIMOR LESTE*

P 18





Terry Johnson

When I was younger, our family sang songs from the *Happy Songs for Boys and Girls* hymnal. When Kimberly and

story of salvation again and again, so that no-one can say that they've not heard its beautiful message.

Which brings me to that song. It tells the story of two young people who share the gospel with a dying boy who has never heard about the "good news!"

*Into the tent where a gypsy boy lay,
Dying alone at the close of the day,
News of salvation we carried;
Said he, Nobody, ever has told it to me!*

*Did He so love me, a poor little boy?
Send unto me the good tidings of joy?
Need I not perish? My hand will He hold?
Nobody ever the story has told!*

*Bending we caught the last words of his
breath,
Just as he entered the valley of death.
God sent His son! Whosoever said he;
Then I am sure that He sent Him to me!*

*Smiling he said as his last sigh he spent,
I am so glad that for me he was sent!
Whispered while low sank the sun in the
west,
Lord I believe, tell it now to the rest.*

*(chorus) Tell it again, tell it again!
Salvation's story repeat o'er and o'er,
Till none can say of the children of men,
Nobody ever has told me before.*

It's my belief that the antidote to the anxiety and fear of 2020 is to share the story of salvation over and over—at home, work and in play. Tell it again, tell it again, salvation's story repeat, o'er and o'er . . . Thank you for being the gospel in shoes, GSC.

Terry Johnson

I became parents, we sang those same songs with our children and still do. There's one that always brings my emotions to the surface! It's called "Tell It Again".

As we reflect on what's been an eventful and dramatic year, we clearly see God leading through it, here in our Conference. Through the devastating fires, COVID-19, lockdowns, and church closures God has led souls to the Kingdom. We've gone from 6700 people attending church in March to more than 25,000 watching our services each Sabbath now!

There have been terrible impacts—emotionally, physically and financially—throughout Australia and many in our nation have deep anxiety about our future, and people are suffering through desperate circumstances. Many are trying to find meaning amidst the chaos when there's none apart from the scriptures: that God is love and His plan of salvation will vanquish the schemes of Satan and fallen angels who rage against the kingdom and it's disciples. We've seen many come to Jesus because of love, compassion and empathy they've shared. This is a unique time to be "the gospel in shoes"!

As a Christian and Seventh-day Adventist who believes that Jesus is coming back, daily study of the Bible sustains me and calms any fear or anxiety that arises. It reminds me that the battle belongs to the Lord and He asks me to share this truth, particularly when the going in life is treacherous. He wants me to share the

PRESIDENT

Terry Johnson

Editors

Joyce Taylor

Lee Dunstan

Graphics

Lynda G. Abreu

Katrina Jorgensen

Nathália Lima

Other Contributors

Kathryn Carey

Linda Ciric

Lee Dunstan

Pr Raymond House

Beryl Landers

Daniel Lavaiamat

Leisa O'Connor

Melissa Sciberras

Craig Vanas

Cover pic by James Tay

Next content
deadline 20 JAN
bit.ly/intraSYD



@SYDNEYADVENTISTS

COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT

ADDRESS

Shannon Bldg, 185 Fox Valley Road, Wahroonga NSW 2076

PHONE

(02) 9868 6522

EMAIL

GSCComms@adventist.org.au



SUNSET TIMES



Remember the Sabbath

19-12 / 8:03 Friday to 8:04 Saturday
26-12 / 8:07 Friday to 8:07 Saturday
02-01 / 8:09 Friday to 8:09 Saturday
09-01 / 8:10 Friday to 8:10 Saturday
16-01 / 8:09 Friday to 8:08 Saturday
23-01 / 8:06 Friday to 8:06 Saturday

OFFERING



eGiving.org.au

21-12/ Fund for the Needy
28-12/ Local Church Budget
02-01 / Local Church Budget
09-01 / Local Church Budget
16-01 / School Evangelism
Read more at bit.ly/2nL4CtY

★ ISSUE FEATURE



Timor-Leste Mission

Two years ago, a number of Australian conferences adopted Timor-Leste to Australia's immediate north, as their "Sister Mission" for support, replacing Mission Mongolia, which is now well established. Page 17

▼ ARTICLE



SAW Breathes Again

Restructured out of the necessity, the annual conference ventured in to uncharted territory. The surprising results will shape the way the is done in the future. Page 16

▼ ARTICLE



Making Our Children Count

"Every home has been impacted in some way. And this is also true across our schools, churches and aged care entities. Yet, God is always at work, seeking to do a good work both within and through us." Page 19

1 UPCOMING EVENTS

SUMMER 2021 CAMP



Save the Date

A number of events are returning in a COVID-safe way. Follow us on social media or bookmark our website to stay up-to-date on the events we're bringing back. The 2021 GSC Calendar will be out shortly!

NEWS



Renovation Complete

Adventist Healthcare welcomes healthy lifestyle advocate ELIA Wellness under its corporate umbrella. Here's what residents can now expect. Page 10

NEWS



Health & Wellness

Adventist Healthcare welcomes healthy lifestyle advocate ELIA Wellness under its corporate umbrella. What this means for the community and for you. Page 18



EDITORIALS



GENERAL SECRETARY **CHEONNETH STRICKLAND**

With restrictions easing across our city and state, some churches have returned to worshipping in their buildings. At present

we have 30 congregations worshipping in person.

This number is growing each week, which is wonderful to see. If your church is open, about to open or considering opening, ensure that you have a COVID-safe plan following all protocols and have registered your plan with NSW Health!

A FEW HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LAST FEW MONTHS

- Ministers and pastors are continuing to meet for prayer meeting every Wednesday at 10am. This is a special time of sharing prayer requests with each other and taking some intentional time to pray for one another.
- Our WHS Coordinator for the Conference, Mr Roger Fairfax, has been visiting local churches to assist with plans for

returning to in person worship. Contact us if you'd like help.

- A new software package to store membership data, facilitate transfers and church office positions is being rolled out. This package, called Adventist Church Membership System (ACMS), is replacing Membership Online. Church clerks will receive specific training in the coming months.

FROM SCHOOLS LTD

- Schools are continuing to adapt well to COVID, following all procedures outlined by the NSW Department of Education.
- Mrs Jo Medbury has been appointed as the Associate Executive Director of Education for Seventh-day Adventist Schools (Greater Sydney) Ltd.
- Schools camps have resumed for some groups in Term 4.
- Schools are a mission field and we are always seeking to develop closer synergies between local churches and schools.

FROM AGED CARE LTD

- The COVID response of staff and families in keeping Covid out of our facilities has been outstanding and we praise God for His hand over this.
- Kings Langley Aged Care has completed its latest build, adding an extra 45-bed facility, including dementia beds.
- The Aged Care company is looking to expand into Home Care on Lord Howe Island. This is a great opportunity to broaden our influence on the island.
- The Aged Care company is looking to expand into Home Care on Lord Howe Island. This is a great opportunity to broaden our influence on the island.

Adventist Hospital to house our office while we wait.

Currently we are in negotiations with the developer, Southern Han, to see what options our Conference has, other than waiting out the pandemic and seeing whether the market improves. These options must conform to the decision made by the Special Constituency meeting held in September 2015, that we are to redevelop the Conference Office at 4 Cambridge Street, Epping, into a mixed use development, that the Conference office remains at that location, and that the surplus on the redevelopment be invested with earnings to be used for mission.

We are indeed blessed in our Conference with members who have expertise in real estate development, a number of whom form our Real Estate Committee, which is a subcommittee of the Executive. This Committee has been an invaluable source of wisdom to Conference administration. We are also blessed with excellent professional legal and property advisors who guide our decision making. And finally, we know that, "all things work together for good, to them that love God" (Romans 8:28).



CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER **EVA ING**

As we look back on 2020, we can see the Lord's hand. We thank Him for His hedge of protection around our schools, aged care and

churches where our communities have remained healthy and safe.

One area where we've not fared so well is in our Conference office development. This has stalled, with investors and home buyers being cautious in purchasing off-the-plan apartments. Thankfully, we've not been significantly financially exposed, with all development costs worn by the developer and in that we have a favorable leasing arrangement with the Sydney



CONFERENCE TRANSITIONS



PHIL YATES



MOSES DEPAZ



JO MEDBURY



JADE RASMUSSEN



JULENE RAYMOND



JOSE ARGUEDAS

Pathfinders/Adventurers /Adventist Outdoor Director **Pastor Phil Yates** is soon to depart. Says, Pastor Phil, “This decision has been very prayerfully considered and, I believe, led by God. I want to thank all the advisories that have worked tirelessly serving the Greater Sydney Conference in their areas.

The way you have supported me in this ministry has been outstanding. I cannot express gratitude enough. . . . I just love these people. It’s with a heavy heart that I step out of this role.”

Replacing Pastor Phil as Associate Youth Director is **Pastor Moses Depaz** from the Western Australian Conference, where he served as Chaplain of the Victoria Park Christian School and pastor of the Spanish Church, following which he worked as Regional Minister for the churches of the Midwest-Gascoyne Region.

Says Pastor Moses, “We’re grateful to all former youth leaders and acknowledge their impact in aiding a spiritual journey for the youth of Sydney—which had a positive effect on both my wife, Gez, and me in our formative years.”

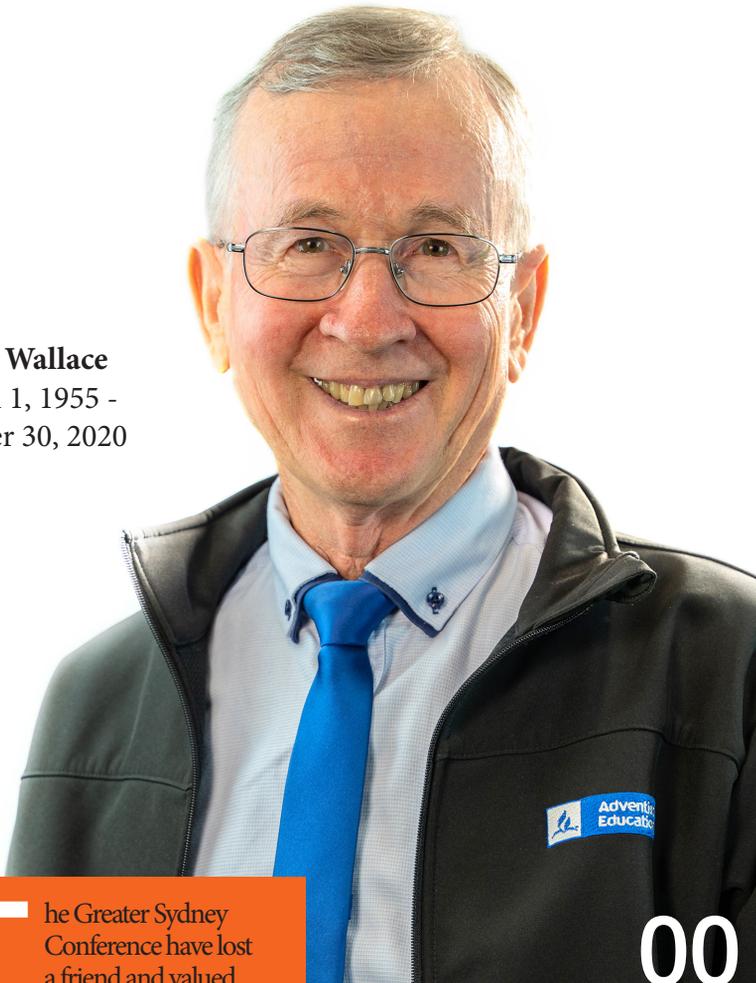
Jo Medbury joins the Education team as an Associate Executive

Director. Jo comes from the Sydney Adventist School, Auburn, where for the past five years she served as Deputy Principal, and previous to that as a teacher at Mountain View Adventist College. It was while working at Mountain View that, inspired by its staff and students, that she made the decision to become a baptised member of the Seventh-day Adventist church. Jo has two children, and is currently working towards a Masters in Educational Leadership through Avondale University College.

Says Jo, “I’m excited about the opportunity to be part of the Greater Sydney Conference educational team alongside David Hobson, working to strengthen the schools in the Greater Sydney and South New South Wales Conferences. I look forward to visiting each of our schools and getting to know the staff and providing support as need-ed.”

In other staffing news, **Jade Rasmussen** joined the sales team of the Epping Adventist Book shop as Sales Associate. She takes up the mantle from **Julene Raymond** who retired from the post after 30+ years of service. Lastly, **Jose Arguedas** has joined the Conference finance team as Assistant Accountant.

Peter Wallace
March 1, 1955 -
October 30, 2020



The Greater Sydney Conference have lost a friend and valued colleague in the Education Department. Peter Wallace, e-Learning Specialist for Sydney Adventist School, died unexpectedly late afternoon on 30 October, 2020. Peter's positive attitude, ever present smile, and desire to be of service to others were a joy to experience.

Our hearts and prayers go out to his wife Jennifer and the Wallace family. Until we meet again, brother.

Have news or a story to share? Email us at GSC-Comms@adventist.org.au.



Tithe has bounced back in the SPD in recent months. Overall, tithe up 2.19 per cent for the year to July compared to the same time last year. Most of the Church's world divisions are reporting declines of between 5 and 10 per cent. The Australian Union Conference, which includes Greater Sydney, has reported a 6.69 per cent rise in tithe for the year to July. In the Trans Pacific Union Mission tithing had halved by the mid-year, with most local missions now less than 10 per cent down.

Adventist schools in the SPD are continuing to operate well in the challenging economic environment, according to Mr Brady. "Our schools have generally held up with student numbers and finances. In other divisions schools have been hard hit, with parents unable to pay fees and withdrawing students, leading to school closures."

The biggest financial concern for the world Church is a significant reduction in offerings, with the General Conference forecasting a drop of around \$US20 million in mission offerings in 2020. CFOs from every division are reporting that offerings have declined. Globally, the drop in mission offerings has been much greater than tithe. Sabbath school offerings are the biggest source of mission offerings, but many Sabbath schools have not been functioning.

The outlook for 2021 remains unpredictable. "With the pandemic lasting longer than [we] expected and the impact on the global economy the biggest since the Great Depression, it makes planning for 2021 difficult," Mr Brady said. "Many organisations are preparing budgets based on multiple scenarios for 2021, due to so much uncertainty, but the Church across the SPD is not in crisis mode. There's just more pressure on management with uncertainty around forward plans."

(Reprinted with permission.)

02. OFFERING REVIVAL AT WAITARA CHURCH

Waitara Church has "revolutionised" its approach to the 13th Sabbath missions

01. CHURCH FINANCES HOLDING UP EXTRACTED FROM RECORD (SEPTEMBER 28)

Church finances are holding up well despite the economic fallout from the coronavirus pandemic, says South Pacific Division CFO Rodney Brady, pictured, although its finances have taken a hit.

"There has been a lot of stress applied to Church finances . . . we are seeing the wisdom of policies that have required us not to use debt for operating and to have working capital in hand," he said. "Many CFOs who were apprehensive in March are feeling more confident to face the future. God has sustained."

offerings, encouraging its members to put money aside for the offerings weekly the old-fashioned way, instead of relying on whatever was in pockets and purses on the day.

Local church member Marilene Stevenson (pictured) recalls how, way back, people did all kinds of things to raise money for 13th Sabbath and wondered if she could do something similar.

Having neither the time (or inclination) to bake cakes and grow vegetables, she sought a convenient idea. She'd been using a particular olive leaf throat spray that she found helpful and had been recommending to others, who expressed interest in the product for themselves. Marilene came up with the idea of buying it wholesale and selling it to the interested parties, with the profit going to her 13th Sabbath Offering. Marilene also visited flower markets regularly, so she began making floral arrangements for special occasions such as Mother's Day, again, offering the arrangements for sale with the income going towards her offering.

"It really began with me buying stuff that I wanted," laughs Marilene. "But it turns out that the things that I like to buy are the things that other people want to buy too—they just don't have the time to go and buy them!"

Now she's buying boxes of exotic fruits, fresh tofu and specialty vegan items for sale—all proceeds to the

13th Sabbath Offering. And since she set out, Marilene has raised more than \$300 each quarter, with more than \$600 on occasions.

"Everything we own really belongs to God. He can multiply our meagre offerings. He just wants us to give freely," Marilene adds. "Just start and do something, and God will do the rest."

03. PATHFINDERS TURNS COVID TO ETERNAL ADVANTAGE

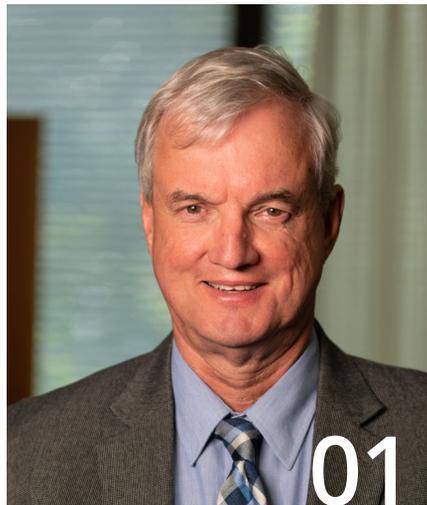
BY LINDA CIRIC

Eighteen Pathfinders from the Blacktown Church club were baptised on October 10, in part a result of COVID regulations that prevented the club meeting in a regular fashion.

"When COVID came in March, it became very difficult for us to have our regular hall meetings," reports club leader, Eleanor Murillo. "We became isolated, locked up in our homes, full of fear and worries of how this pandemic could affect our lives. Pathfinder staff thought of ways to stay connected as a club despite the social isolation, and this is when the idea of a Bible baptismal class via Zoom came up."

The Sabbath afternoon Bible study class, which was initially intended for the teens only, was joined by many junior Pathfinders, with up to 30 "attending".

"The class ran over six months, and when Pastor Marty [name] asked the kids for a decision regarding baptism, 13 responded. Another four weeks, and we had another five—a total of 18



03

who wished to publicly proclaim that they wanted Jesus as their Saviour and go where He leads," said Mrs Murillo.

04. COMMUNITY GARDEN OPENS IN CONCORD

After years of planning and dreaming, the Concord Church community garden finally became a reality.

"Our small backyard will now be a living place growing a large variety of herbs and vegetables, for the use in our cooking and health programs," says Dani Piot. "We also have plans to turn this into an active community garden, in which we hope to form strong relationships with our community and in turn show them the love of Jesus."

05. SIGNS OF THE TIMES & RECORD NOW ON CD

The SPD's Christian Services for the Blind and Vision Impaired (CSFBHI) produces a monthly audio compendium of articles from recent Record, Adventist World and Signs of the Times, along with the Sabbath School lessons, for the vision impaired. If you or someone you know could benefit from this service, write or email Christian Services including your details and postal address: <CSFBHI@adventist-media.org.au> or write to Christian Services for the Blind, Locked Bag 1115, Wahroonga NSW 2076.

For the legally blind in Australia and New Zealand, CSFBHI also has a large library of Christian and denominational books available via Vision Australia.

06. ADRA BLACKTOWN BY MALCOLM REA

"Hello, Grace? Can I come drop a food donation to ADRA this afternoon?"

Nizam's story flashed before my eyes. As a counselor at the ADRA Community Centre, I vividly recalled our first meeting months earlier at reception. His depression was so thick he could not speak. That morning he

had tried to commit suicide, again. Somehow, he ended up in hospital, but they discharged him two hours later, because on a bridging visa, he had no Medicare.

A week earlier his landlord had told him to be out by Sunday. By Monday Nizam had already sold the last of his valuables. Having trusted the wrong agent with his visa, he found himself with no work rights. COVID had just hit, so he couldn't fly home. He had often said: "I feel like I'm drowning, and my hands are tied." But the last blow had come from his partner. She had left him weeks earlier when his funds dried up. Alone, homeless, penniless, and broken hearted, how do you not drown?

That day, the whole team had gone into action - chaplain, case worker, counselors, immigration lawyer, even the guy with the trailer. Everyone had risen to the challenge of empowering him and giving his life back. Blessed by a generous church member, three months accommodation was secured, and intense therapy begun.

Returning to the present, "Nizam, that's a very kind offer, but you don't have to." I said.

"How can I not, Grace, how can I not?"

I had the privilege of seeing Nizam's bright face that afternoon as he handed me the donation, working visa reinstated, safe in his fully furnished home, new friends, connections, and ... a beautiful sense of self-worth. I like to think that this was because God just would not let him think otherwise.

Says Grace Copoceanu, counselor at the ADRA Community Centre, "Indeed, our mission is to bring hope to many people facing similar hardships. "Blessed by generous donors, the Centre supports and empowers thousands of clients every year with emergency food parcels, free counseling and advocacy."

You can help ADRA community services by donating to another "Nizam" at www.ADRA.org.au

PHOTOGRAPHY CAPTIONS/CREDITS

00 Peter Wallace

01 South Pacific Division CFO
Rodney Brady

02 Marilene Stevenson of
Waitara Church

03 Some of the 18 Pathfinders
getting baptised at Blacktown
Church

04 Concord Church members
preparing garden beds & plant-
ing crops for the new commu-
nity garden

05 Christian Services for the
Blind and Hearing Impaired
now delivers Signs of the Times
and the Record on audio.





Shop & Share Savings Program

A Local Church Fundraising Program*

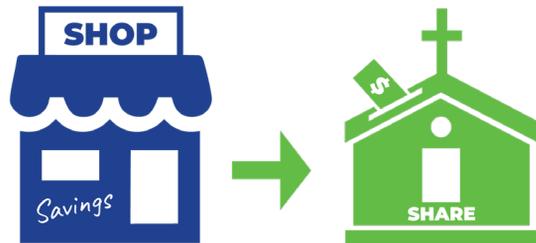
**ACA Health Benefits Fund welcomes you to register for the
Shop & Share Savings Program**

Join the growing church community raising much needed funds for their community projects.

At ACA Health, we believe in contributing to local churches who support our community, whilst simultaneously providing Church Members with savings on everyday living expenses, particularly now given the financial hardship for so many.

We are doing this through our Shop & Share Savings Program, with two key components – Church Member Savings and Local Church Fundraising.

As a Registered Church Member the community can generate fundraising revenue by shopping online, where on average 2% of their spend is paid to their local church.



**Register at shop.acahealth.com.au
Registration is FREE for all Church Members.**

To join ACA Health Benefits Fund visit acahealth.com.au or call 1300 368 390.

ACA Health is an Adventist company that provides for its people to support the mission of the church.

Deuteronomy 15:7-11 describes a radical plan for generosity and reciprocal economics where 'You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land.' (vs 11)

Health Insurance is simply an organised way for many people to contribute to the specific needs of a smaller group during a difficult time.

*Supported and approved by GSC



\$28M KINGS LANGLEY UPGRADE COMPLETE



A secure outdoor entertaining and relaxation area, adjacent to the dementia unit.

The Greater Sydney Conference's Aged Care and Retirement Villages innovative \$28m rebuilding and refurbishment of its Kings Langley Aged Care and Retirement Village complex is now complete.

The project included construction of 21 independent living units as well as complete refurbishment of its existing Residential Aged Care Facility including building a new 45-bed wing. The entire complex is fitted with an advanced security system. To add to resident's piece of mind the complex is secured and gated with video intercom for all units.

The new Residential Aged Care Facility now hosts a total of 123 beds, including two wings designed to cater for the needs of residents with dementia and Alzheimer's. In addition, there are 72 independent living units in the complex. The units consist of either one or two-bedroom apartments, or one, two or three-bedroom villas, all with modern conveniences, access to recreational and social activities and nurse call points in case of emergency.

“This is an ideal arrangement for couples when one partner required a higher level of care than the other. Having one integrated campus ensures that all residents needs can be catered for and that both residents have ease of access to each other says Adventist Aged Care Sydney Managing Director, Brain Swanepoel.

“The residential facility includes a number of sophisticated design features that allow staff to set parameters for the management of an individual residents' needs, eliminating the outdated one-size-fits-all approach,” Mr Swanepoel noted “And further to aiding a client's experience, in some areas staff don't wear uniforms, often sharing meals with residents. This helps to create a home-like environment, so clients with memory loss are more relaxed.”

This empathetic and calming environment extends to the out-of-doors, where fresh landscaping includes some 200 trees and shrubs, purpose-built gardens and a number of resident veggie gardens. The garden encourages active participation by residents in daily



activities, adding to the homely and relaxed atmosphere.

At the core of Adventist aged care is its spiritual heart, with the chapel receiving a \$500,000 hi-tech upgrade that includes a new bridge linking it directly to the residential facility. The newly installed state of the art AV system facilitates live streaming of programs across the campus.

“Residents, families and staff were all invited to give input at the design stage, with many of their ideas included in the final design” says Mr Swanepoel. “We believe that everyone should live with dignity and compassion in a home that is safe, but most importantly that home should be part of a community.

“With immediate access to the nearby shopping village and public transport at hand the newly renovated and rebuilt Kings Langley Aged Care and Retirement Village is ideally situated and ready to serve the residents of greater western Sydney into the future”.

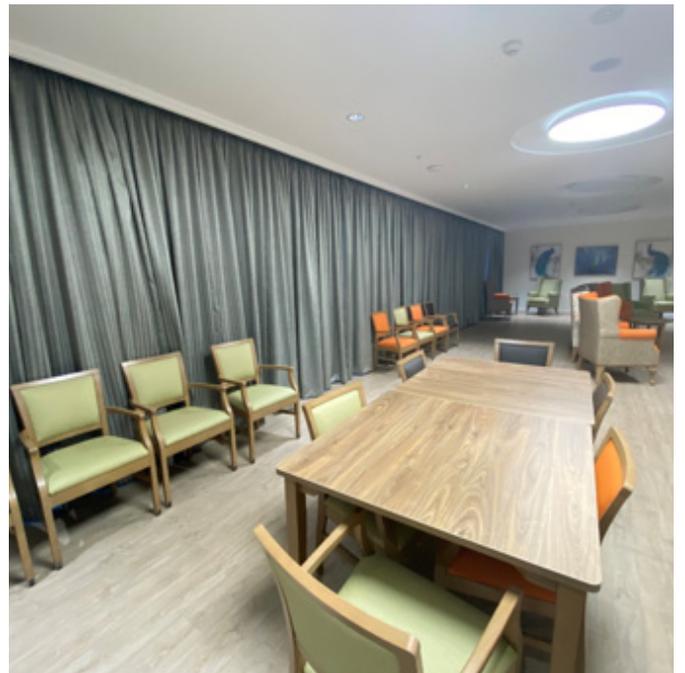
- Kathryn Carey
Senior Advisor, Social Impact Institute



Waist high veggie garden beds allow residents to work them without bending or kneeling, and supply them with ample produce.



A well-equipped activities room awaits its first residents. Lighting plays an important function in managing clients with memory loss. The innovative lighting changes colour and intensity throughout the day, mimicking the path of the sun—sunrise, daytime and sunset.



A number of one-, two- and three-bedroom units were built. On-site facilities include a small gym, a community hall and BBQ facilities.

If you or a loved one are asking yourself those hard questions about the future, we welcome you to visit us at Adventist Aged Care Kings Langley. To arrange a personal tour please call us on 02 8834 6100 or email <aacsyd@adventist.org.au>.



SHOEBOXES FOR CHRISTMAS



The annual Week of Spiritual Emphasis at Hurstville Adventist School (HAS) always includes a practical element, usually a community service project. In 2020, while forgettable for some reasons, it will be remembered at HAS for its shoe boxes—some 214 of them—packed by students for the Samaritan's Purse "Operation Christmas Child".

The project involves providing six small gifts—"something Wow!, something for hygiene, something to wear, something to play with, something arts and crafts—that will fit into a shoe box, which is lovingly Christmas wrapped and dispatched along with a personal letter written for their peers living in poverty overseas.

"Our students were incredibly generous, and we're proud of their willingness to be involved, giving to children who are less fortunate than they are," says school Principal, Mrs Neva Taylor. "We think it's a great achievement, as our school has only 150 students."

STUDENT RECEIVES HSC MUSIC A COLADE



HSC student Michelle Vele of Mountain View Adventist College has been nominated to perform at Encore, a program of outstanding performances and compositions by students from the HSC Music examinations, as determined by the NSW Education Standards Authority. Michelle's goal is to become a high school teacher specialising in Music and English.

Born in Port Moresby, PNG, Michelle was ready to drop out of school before her arrival at Mountain View at the end of 2018. Embarking on a whole new system of education and not knowing what to expect, Michelle joined the school choir. As Michelle was encouraged along the way, her voice was discovered.

Encouragement from her school community, hard work and God's grace, has reaped the benefits, says Michelle's music teacher, Stephen Erceg, "Michelle is a disciplined musician and singer who is willing to work hard. She's achieved her great HSC result through the consistent daily practice of her craft."



HILLS ADVENTIST COLLEGE

Thanks to the fundraising efforts of its Home and School Association, Hills Adventist College (HAC) recently welcomed a much anticipated addition to its Technology Department—a laser cutter, which will benefit students across multiple learning areas, such as Textiles, Art, Science, Engineering and Digital Technologies

“This amazing piece of technology will help students to continually improve the quality of their practical work and help them to bring their ideas and designs to life in a more professional and refined way,” says Principal Mrs Carlie Deppeler. “It will particularly assist HSC students who are required to complete major works in Year 12. It will be used by students in Middle and Senior School under the guidance of teachers specifically trained in its use. It isn’t only students who are keen to use it; teachers are creating new lessons that take full advantage of all the features that the high tech cutter offers for improving student learning.



RESILIENCE THRU ONLINE LEARNING

When COVID hit, students and teachers at Macarthur Adventist College were suddenly thrust into an environment where lessons were delivered online, with most students working at home.

“Resilience is the buzzword in education,” says Macarthur Adventist College principal Anna Calandra, “and it’s easy to see why. Overnight, everything changed,” says Mrs Calandra. “There’s been one positive outcome of this year, with both students and staff growing in resilience. It was amazing to see our staff going above and beyond to find ways to engage students and deliver content during the learning from home period—that growing confidence and surety when using technology, the greater collaboration with peers, and seeing how creative and adaptable our teachers have been has been inspiring.”



PRIME MINISTER SCOTT MORRISON VISIT

Graduating Mountain View Adventist College Year 12 student Ethan Robinson-Jones (pictured) received a surprise when Prime Minister Scott Morrison dropped by to speak with his Horsley Park Rural Fire Brigade, which tragically lost two of its members in the Green Wattle Creek fire, in December 2019. Ethan has served as volunteer with the brigade for a number of years. The PM’s visit to the Brigade was to recognise its sacrifice in protecting lives and property during the fires, and Ethan got to chat with him—“It was quite a surprise,” he said. “We honour Ethan for his commitment to the Rural Fire Service,” says principal Julia Heise. “Ethan! We are proud of you.”





CHRIST-CENTERED TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

Led by GS Conference president Pastor Terry Johnson and head of Schools Chaplaincy Pastor Richie Reid, the staff of Sydney Adventist School Auburn spent two days learning about “Abide,” a program developed by Adventist Schools Australia that aims to strengthen staff and student connections to God by helping to identify a person’s spiritual goals and purpose.

“Its aim is to improve a school culture by allowing God to guide in the development of a ‘spiritual’ master plan,” says Auburn school principal Mrs Danyel Efstratiou.

Staff were reminded of their honoured positions as God’s disciples with the responsibility of leading students to be followers and disciples of Jesus.



WELCOME TO INAUGURAL YEAR 12 COHORT

Year 12 students of Wahroonga Adventist School were honoured as its first Year 12 cohort at the commencement assembly at the beginning of Term 4. To mark the milestone, the school presented the students with their Year 12 jackets.

Said Emily, a Year 12 student, “At Wahroonga Adventist School, our high school experience has been a lot

different to most other students of our age. We began High School with just three demountable classrooms and three teachers. Five years on, we’re creating history, building a legacy, and pioneering the culture and traditions of our school. We’ve had the responsibility of being role models for the lower grades, but it’s so rewarding to see the school develop and grow as we grew with it.”



WAHROONGA
ADVENTIST SCHOOL

Quality Christian Education for All

- Enquire Now -

Phone (02) 9487 2100 | wahroonga.adventist.edu.au





Seventh-day
Adventist Church

Greater Sydney

KINGS LANGLEY CHURCH SEEKS ADVENTIST FAMILIES

Meeting at chapel hall of the Kings Langley Adventist Aged Care, the Kings Langley Church serves the Lalor Park, King Langley, Bella Vista, Glenwood, and Kings Park suburbs of Western Sydney. It is a church of faithful and devout followers of Jesus, but it is a graying one and numbers are quickly dwindling. With the exception of two young couples, a majority of the members are in their 80s and 90s. What they need are new members.

"We'd really like more younger members, individuals and families, especially those with children. We're very open to changes". Hazel

Would you be willing to mission at this church for at least a year? Send us an email at sydney@adventist.org.au.

SYDNEY ADVENTIST WOMEN BREATHE AGAIN

Some 4000 participants tuned into the inaugural BREATHE ONLINE program for Adventist women on Friday night October 2, hosted by the Conference's Women's Ministries Department. The restructured program was born out of the necessity of having to cancel BREATHE 2020, scheduled for July 2020 at the TOPS Conference Centre in Stanwell Tops, due to COVID restrictions.

"The result was new opportunities, a greater impact and wider reach," says BREATHE organiser Beryl Landers, Women's Ministries director. "Viewers to the program spanned the South Pacific Division and overseas, and included many non-church members."

Keynote speaker Charissa Torossian (nee Fong), presenting on the theme of "More Than Conquerors," challenged participants to "make the choice for Jesus," in each of her sermons. Other presenters included Cathy Hookham (Galston) and Karla Randall (Wahroonga), who shared compelling and inspiring testimonies, giving God glory for His amazing grace, love and patience in His pursuit of them. The presentations were punctuated with worshipful music, each with its own message, performed by singers and musicians representing different congregations—Kellyville, Stanmore, Waitara, Fox Valley and Mt Druitt Samoan—ages and nationalities.

According to Mrs Landers, BREATHE ONLINE was a "completely different experience," as women participated together with husbands and children in their homes, and friends in groups, while others watched the weekend later. "Our mobilising M.A.D.—Make A Difference—panel sessions gave insights into the lived experience of a number of women 'conquerors'. They bravely shared their experiences, describing what someone had done that was meaningful for them in bad times, as well as what they wished and hoped someone would or could do for women experiencing such issues as domestic violence, homelessness, depression and anxiety, grief, singleness and disconnection from church."

Commented one viewer*, "I'm just discovering the Adventist Church; I'm so inspired by these women and seeing how God has supported them in their journeys. I feel very blessed to have heard their stories."

According to Landers, the program was only possible due a large number of volunteers, adding, "We're grateful to all the participants, speakers, tech crew and director Rod Long of Kellyville Church, who so generously gave their time, talents and expertise to deliver an amazing high quality production and experience for God's glory. But we give God the glory for what He accomplished through BREATHE." – *Adventist Women*



The M.A.D. Session: a panel of women shared their experiences, facilitated by Dr Thembi Dube.

* The BREATHE ONLINE programs can be viewed on our YouTube page at www.youtube.com/c/SydneyAdventists or Sydney Adventist Women's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/sydneyadventistwomen.

BREATHE CONFERENCE 2021 is scheduled for July 30-31, 2021. Watch the Conference website the Sydney Adventist Women's Facebook page for all upcoming announcements.



DREAMS & VISIONS IN EAST TIMOR

Two years ago, a number of Australian conferences adopted Timor Leste (Timor East) to Australia's immediate north, as their "Sister Mission" for support, replacing Mission Mongolia, which is now well established. The Greater Sydney Conference continues to support the Timor Leste Mission with donations to projects and visits, and is looking forward to more when travel restrictions are lifted.

Pastor Raymond House, president of the Timor-Leste Mission, recently reported on the partnership in this largely Muslim country, with people coming to Christ in some unusual ways. Including Zered, who experienced the Spirit's call in a dream. Pastor House, who would baptise Zered, tells the story.

For as long as he could remember, Zered had been looking for two great finds: God and hidden treasure. Raised in a Muslim household, he was accustomed to think of God daily, but something kept him looking beyond his family religion for more of God. Supplementing this search was a zeal to find hidden treasure.

Then in a dream, Zered was "visited" by an old man who told him of a treasure of two golden statues hidden in a place no one else had searched, also warning him to "be careful."

When he was offered work on a building project in Timor-Leste, Zered felt that it would be there that he would find God. While working on a convent, he observed the compassion and kindness of the nuns as they cared for orphan children and wondered if Christianity might have answers for him.

Then Zered experienced "a miracle." He'd borrowed a friend's car, but it became bogged in the loose sand. A dozen Timorese men tried unsuccessfully to get him out. Then Zered remembered the prayers of the nuns he'd

observed and in desperation offered his first prayer in the name of Jesus:

"Jesus, please help me drive out of the sand and return this car to my friend!" Then, as if he'd engaged four-wheel drive, he drove right out, his first step toward his new faith.

Then the warning of the old man echoed in Zered's head. But he was too curious about this new faith "treasure" to turn back. He prayed a second prayer, "Jesus, if You are real, show Yourself to me!"

That night, his prayer was answered when Jesus appeared to him in another dream. He couldn't see His face, but he saw His robe and a shawl over His head. Jesus said, "I am Jesus Christ, the One you wanted to see. What is it that you seek?"

Excitedly, Zered sought Bible studies from a friend. At that point Basti, a local pastor, and [Pastor House] got involved and baptism followed. Tears of joy were shared at the ocean-side where with his friend Avram, he was baptised. It was then that he admitted that "he'd found the greatest treasure of his lifetime, Jesus."

Zered has shared how dangerous his life has become as a result of his conversion, as when he returns home he could be killed, something that has happened to many before him: "Please pray for Zered and Avram," pleads Pastor House. "Pray that they will continue to serve Jesus under trying circumstances, and that they will be bold enough to share Jesus' love with whomever they meet."

– Pr Raymond House, Timor Leste Mission President



SAYS CONFERENCE PRESIDENT PASTOR TERRY JOHNSON:

“

Our Conference office staff have had a fantastic time working with the Timor Leste Mission. This included a Stop Smoking clinic run by Pastor Adrian Raethel and staff, and a medical clinic run by Dr Ken Landers, which were both well attended! But we've also experienced heart-wrenching times listening to the stories of persecuted Adventists there. There are only 650 Adventists in the entire country, with most living on less than \$150 a month. The need is huge, but they are evangelising with what they have to the glory of God. If you are interested in donating, please do so through the Australian Union Conference to help this fledgling mission make a lasting impact.

”

ADVENTIST HEALTHCARE & ELIA WELLNESS ALLIANCE



Emotional



Physical



Social



Vocational



Intellectual



Environmental



Spiritual

By Leisa O'Connor

Adventist Healthcare welcomes healthy lifestyle advocate ELIA Wellness under its corporate umbrella.

Promoting a healthy lifestyle has been a priority of Adventist HealthCare's Sydney Adventist Hospital since the hospital first opened in 1903 as a Sanitarium - a place where people learned to stay well. It has also been a continuing aim of Adventist HealthCare's other healthcare service, San Day Surgery Hornsby, which was the first purpose built day surgery in NSW when it opened in 1986.

ELIA Wellness was formed in 2016 to champion the cause of lifestyle medicine in research, policy and practice. Its advocacy to help individuals achieve whole-person health includes the 7 Dimensions of Wellness Index™ an analysis tool which is utilised in their wellness-enhancing programs.

"This is an exciting advance for both Adventist HealthCare and ELIA Wellness" says Adventist HealthCare Chief Executive Officer, Brett Goods.

"At Adventist HealthCare we relish our role as a provider of acute, comprehensive and expert care to meet the needs of our community when they are most vulnerable.

ELIA Wellness's resounding success with its Live More Project, Wellness App, Lifestyle Medicine Summit, Partner training program, and proactive educational health and wellness resources, provide an opportunity to respond to community interest.

Adventists today welcome the growing body of scientific evidence confirming that lifestyle interventions can help prevent, manage or arrest disease, with lifestyle medicine being one of the most exciting and fastest-growing disciplines in healthcare today.

This new alignment brings evidence-based acute clinical and lifestyle medicine together, building on both Adventist HealthCare's rich heritage and ELIA Wellness's innovation in the area of health and wellness to create a stronger platform to bring health, hope and healing to the community."

A part of Elia Wellness, Lifestyle Medicine is the fastest growing discipline in healthcare today and can prevent, arrest, or in some cases even reverse chronic illnesses. It incorporates the whole person, with the understanding that factors in one area of life impact the other areas.

Discover how it can help you transform your life at <https://eliawellness.com>.

Forgive To Live

Understanding and practicing forgiveness can literally save your life.

Learn more >



Wellness

Your wellness partner in your pocket. Start your wellness journey today.



Making OUR CHILDREN COUNT

It's been a really different and challenging year for everyone around the globe, says Craig Vanas, director of Children's Ministry. "Every home has been impacted in some way. And this is also true across our schools, churches and aged care entities. Yet, God is always at work, seeking to do a good work both within and through us. We've been greatly encouraged by the resilience, commitment and creativity we've seen displayed (mostly online) by parents, and school and church leaders despite the less than ideal situation of the past months."

In order to help better resource homes, schools and churches, extensive collaboration took place all across Australia to help parents and leaders to grow the children in their respective circles of influence. "It's been amazing to see messages and photos shared by families and leaders showing how they have been engaging with these resources over the past few months," he says.

The Greater Sydney Children's Ministry is committed to five focus areas of individual and Church nurture and growth. Following are two.

1. Raising our spiritual temperature and empowering members

Many families have commented that, as difficult as the pandemic has been, some surprising positives have emerged, including more time with those we love and in personal devotions and family worships.



Pastor Craig Vanas, Children's Ministries Director, surrounded with the unusual acoutements of his ministry.



Some of the "inflatable" activities in use and available for booking from the GSC's Children's Ministries Department.

In order to better resource our homes, schools and churches, the Conference has developed resources aimed at supporting the spiritual growth of our children in their circles of influence. It's been amazing to see the messages and photos shared by families and leaders (available at disciple.org.au/resources) showing how they've been using these resources over the months of the pandemic.

2. Impacting our communities

As we've cautiously emerged from social restrictions, some of the resources can now be launched and be effective. If you're interested in connecting with families in your school or church communities through initiatives like a Family Fun Day, Kids Club or Open Day, we have some helpful resources (pictured) that can be hired through the Children's Ministry Department. Your kids will love them!

Jesus went out of His way to acknowledge children as disciples in the now (not in the future). We've been called to help in shaping a life-long faith in our children. So let us remain consistently focused in this regard, faithfully developing those in our care and keeping as disciples for Christ.

More information and resources are available at our website disciple.org.au/resources.



WE NEED YOUR HELP

Many members are continuing faithfulness to God by returning tithe during COVID-19 restrictions. However, two central parts of the church only operate on offerings and this is seriously impacting:

1. **Your** Local Church, and
2. **World** Mission Budget

We invite you to schedule regular offerings on the eGiving website or app to your Local Church (Local Mission) and to Sabbath School Offerings (World Mission).

THANK YOU

Your participation changes everything!



Seventh-day
Adventist Church

South Pacific



Australia: www.egiving.org.au
New Zealand: www.egiving.org.nz