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## MERCY MAIL

'CONNECTING US'

*'Mercy Connect exists to enable each person we support to live a connected and meaningful life'*

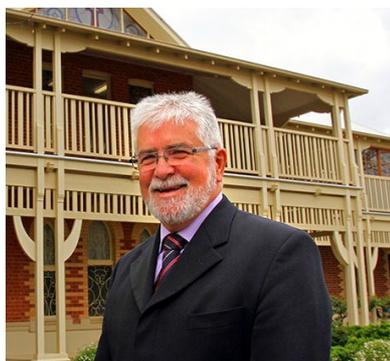
Welcome to our brand new look family newsletter *'Mercy Mail - Connecting Us'*. Here, you will continue to receive important updates about Mercy Connect every month.

Mercy Connect would like to undertake sustainable practices, if you are currently receiving the newsletter by post and would prefer it to be sent via email or would like to express your ideas or feedback - Contact us at:

[jasmine.cappellari@mercyconnect.org.au](mailto:jasmine.cappellari@mercyconnect.org.au) or 02 6043 3500.

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### A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



Our Board held a two day strategic review this week at which a number of exciting opportunities were explored in the context of increasing demand we are experiencing under the NDIS. Two external facilitators Sr. Karon Donnolon, who led the Directors in a discussion of what it was to be a Mercy service and Mr. Billy Kang, an NDS Consultant, who facilitated sessions on the NDIS and the new environment we are travelling in. Billy assured all that the current transition phase would eventually be over and the positives of the NDIS were worth our perseverance as the benefits for all people with disability in Australia will be huge.

The Board is keen to refresh:

- How we are different to any other service provider?
- If we are to stand for a truly different choice for participants and families - what is it we currently do or should do better than others?
- Does our Mercy heritage require us to go that much further?

Discussion at the sessions suggested we are a unique provider within the NDIS market with a strength and focus on participants with complex needs, and a willingness to embrace all who seek our support, however:

- What is it that we offer that is "beyond" the regular expectations?
- If you do agree we offer something different, how would you describe it?
- If you don't agree, what do you suggest we do to make this difference?

I extend an invitation to all staff and families to let me know your point of view. You can email me at: [Damian.Lacey@mercyconnect.org.au](mailto:Damian.Lacey@mercyconnect.org.au).

Regards,  
Damian

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## Big Review TV

Last year, Mercy Connect with the help of Big Review TV created two short films about our organisation, starring staff and participants.

We are pleased to be able to share the finished footage if you haven't had the chance to view it before.

### [About Mercy Connect](#)



URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0qvDP96ByYM>

### [Careers at Mercy Connect](#)



URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3IHxo0RynU0>

We are on the look out for participants, families and staff who would like to feature in our next Mercy Connect footage shot by Big Review TV.

We still have 2 full days of filming left and would love to get more shots showcasing Mercy Connect and who we are. Some of the areas we want to focus on include: recruitment based ads, families and participants, NDIS experiences and more time in front of the camera for our participants doing the things they love.

If you would like to be a part of this please contact Jasmine on 02 6043 3500 or [jasmine.cappellari@mercyconnect.org.au](mailto:jasmine.cappellari@mercyconnect.org.au)

Dates and times will be confirmed once we have a list of staff, participants and families who want to be a part of this exciting project!

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## RAHAMIN VISIT TO ALBURY

Earlier last week, Mercy Connect had a visit from Jen Ringbauer from Rahamim Ecology Centre. Rahamim is an environmental education, spirituality and advocacy ministry of ISMAPNG (Institute of the Sisters of Mercy Australia and Papa New Guinea). They are going to share their wealth of knowledge with us as we continue to explore the potential of our Down to Earth Project to implement the seven sustainability principles of ISMAPNG.

Jen will work with us at Thurgoona to transform the areas of St. Johns and Catherine's Corner. She spent the morning meeting with a few key people before heading out to have a look at both grounds with Orisha and Geoff, getting her creative juices flowing and coming up with the beginning of a 10 year plan. Geoff and the crew at St. Johns have already started implementing some of her suggestions!

Jen also visited the Mercy Connects Orange office on the 6th February and discussed what they wanted to achieve there. As a result, Jen provided the team in Orange with a plan for an orchard and vegetable garden so they can follow their dream of being self-sustainable through providing fruit and veg for the outlets which will be fed with worm juice from their worm farm and chook poo from their chooks; passionfruit vines, a herb garden and in the not too distant future a sensory garden.

As part of the ISMAPNG there is a real push for a focus on sustainability, one that we as an organisation are embracing and really hoping to move forward with. The partnership with Rahamim will compliment this with plans being developed to become more self-sufficient through developing organic vegetable gardens, selling the produce at the markets or perhaps with a stall at St. Johns, harvesting seeds for and then growing local native seedlings to sell on, creating sensory gardens with some animal husbandry thrown in.

All of the work Rahamim is suggesting closely ties in with our Down to Earth committee which will be meeting again shortly.

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### DOWN TO EARTH

The Down to Earth (DtE) committee's purpose is to help us as an organisation operate more sustainably through reducing waste, becoming more energy and water efficient and providing advice on reducing our global impact. It closely ties in with the policy created by ISMAPNG that aims to achieve sustainable living across seven key areas: energy, waste, procurement, infrastructure, water, transport and investment. It will also help us achieve our Strategic Plan Priorities for the next 3 years: for participants by offering more meaningful opportunities and for staff by supporting further training and opportunity for meaningful, productive and values based work.

DtE will assist by providing advice on our current practices, help gather information and advice, recommend training and help set targets. To be a success we need all stakeholders to be active in promoting and living sustainably, to staying informed and to commit to agreed goals.



## MEET OUR STAFF: Suzanne Block

Q: *What is your role at Mercy Connect?*

A: I am a Disability Support Worker for Day Program. I have been in this role for most of the time I have been at Mercy Connect.

Q: *How long have you worked for Mercy Connect?*

A: In 2018, I have worked for Mercy Connect for 20 years!

Before working here, I had a range of jobs from Home Help for a local shire in Gippsland, Assistant Manager at HBA, cook at a pub and doing dishes at Food on the Move - where from there I got involved with Mercy.

Q: *What do you enjoy about your job?*

A: The clients make my day, every day. I love interacting with them and that every day is different.

Q: *Who is your favorite sports team?*

A: Sydney Swans.

Q: *What hobbies do you have?*

A: I love quilting and patchwork in my spare time.



Nominations are now open for the 2018 Victorian Disability Awards!

The Victorian Disability Awards recognise and honour the achievements and contributions of individuals, teams and organisations that provide support, leadership, advocacy, service and education to increase the social, economic and civic participation of people with a disability living in Victoria.

The awards are a partnership between National Disability Services (NDS) and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

There are 7 award categories. To see what each award entails, [please visit the Victorian Disability award website.](#)

Emerging leader award  
Excellence in creating inclusive communities  
Excellence in employment outcomes award  
Excellence in promoting health, housing and wellbeing  
Excellence in promoting rights, fairness and safety  
Volunteer award  
Lifetime achievement honour roll

If you would like to nominate a individual or a team of people, who you believe fit into the award categories above, follow the nomination process via the [Victorian Disability website.](#)

Before nominating, please read the [nomination guide.](#)

Entries close at Midnight on Sunday 8th April 2018, so make sure you get your nominations in before the cut-off date.



Happy Birthday to all of our participants and staff who celebrated their birthday throughout February!

We hope your day was filled with love and laughter (and lot's of cake!)

## NDIS UPATE

*REMINDER:* Accommodation agreements and Service Agreements are in the process of being sent out to all families/guardians of our participants.

These agreements are a requirement of the NDIS, so if you could please fill in and send back to us **as soon as you can**, it would be appreciated so we can continue to move along with the NDIS.

Completed agreements can be sent back via the following options:

Postal: 30 Bottlebrush Street, Thurgoona, 2641, NSW

Email: [enquiries@mercyconnect.org.au](mailto:enquiries@mercyconnect.org.au)

OR delivered in person to our headquarters at 30 Bottlebrush Street, Thurgoona

## IMPORTANT CONTACTS

**Jeff Edmondson** - Manager Support Services - Accommodation, Albury (Webb St-Oak and Pine, Coolock Court, Dick Road, Kambora 10/12, Sylvania Ave and Vickers Road 1)

**Jenny Birthisel** - Manager Support Services - Accommodation, Albury (Wattle House, Rose House, Azalea House, Vickers Road 2, Worsley Place and Bell Street)

**Glen Mackinnon** - Manager Outreach and Respite, Albury

**Jennifer Peers** - Manager Community Inclusion and Lifestyle Support, Albury

**Sheryl Meredith** - Clinical Governance Implementation Coach and Intake Officer

**Suzanne Hogan** - Manager Clinic Risk and Safeguarding

**Elizabeth Gill** - Support Coordinator

**Fiona King** - Support Coordinator

**Megan Scheetz** - Support Coordinator

You can contact the above Mercy Contact staff by phoning reception on 02 6043 3500

Mark Peacock - Brand Manager, Orange - 02 6360 2948  
Margaret Gleeson - Branch Manager, Narrabri - 02 6792 5793

VISIT OUR FACEBOOK PAGE - [www.facebook.com/mercyconnect/](http://www.facebook.com/mercyconnect/)

VISIT OUR WEBSITE - [www.mercyconnect.org.au](http://www.mercyconnect.org.au)

### OUR VALUES

**Compassion** in taking time to listen to and understanding each story;  
**Hospitality** in our friendly, caring and non-judgmental support;  
**Respect** for individual decisions and choices;  
**Innovation** in finding better ways to meet needs; and  
**Teamwork** to provide consistent high quality support



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