

# Believe.

Barnardos Australia Newsletter  
Volume 11 - 2018



**Barnardos**  
**Australia**



## Our Time Capsule

Barnardos Australia Auburn Children's Family Centre opened in 1974. The Barnardos Auburn Centre provides nine safety and prevention programs and a specialist child support and early learning and care centre. Using an integrated service delivery approach, families with children experiencing difficulties can access a number of programs that meet their children's needs. Situated in Sydney's western suburbs, Auburn is rich in

cultural diversity, but poor socio-economically. It is home to high numbers of newly arrived migrants and refugees and has over 100 culturally and linguistically diverse communities living within its area. Programs include: Child and Adolescent Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Family Support and Preservation, Kinship Care, Long Day Care, Temporary Family Care, Transitional Accommodation – Family and Youth and Youth Support.

On Wednesday, 20 June 2018, our Auburn Children's Family Centre Manager, Mary Haiek hosted a morning tea for staff, Barnardos Executive Manager, Mel Andrews and special guest Barnardos CEO, Deirdre Cheers, to witness the unveiling and opening of a 'time capsule'.

In 1995 when the Centre was celebrating its '21st', managers and staff working at the Centre created a time capsule. As discovered when unveiling the

**Continued over...**



## Our Time Capsule (cont'd)

contents of the time capsule, it was originally intended the capsule would be opened ten years later in 2005. Renovations to the Centre and staff changes delayed the opening as the capsule itself became buried in a storeroom; only to be uncovered in 2018. When it was realised what had been uncovered, a ceremony was planned to officially open the capsule and reveal its contents.

Centre staff were excited as they shared contents including old photos and newsletters; letters of accreditation; reviewer reports; newspaper cuttings from the day; and open letters from staff to the future centre staff.

The event was particularly special for those in attendance as Deirdre shared her own experiences working at the Auburn Centre in the 1980s and 1990s. Deirdre provided insight into the work of Barnardos family centre at the time – "...Barnardos then as is the case now is child and family focused and a great place to work..."





# Our Children Being Kept Warm During Winter

Children and families at our Auburn Centre are feeling a lot warmer, thanks to the kind gesture of the Breakfast Point Knitters. This wonderful community group has provided colourful, handmade blankets to Barnardos.

Our Auburn Centre was in desperate need of warm blankets, particularly for the two to five year olds in their Long Day Care program and some of the mums in the domestic

violence program. It is often the case when mothers with children flee domestic violence that they forget to pick up many essentials, including warm blankets.

It is a beautiful way to show these children and families that they are cared for. Thanks to this wonderful community minded group of very talented knitters, children and families in need have a lovely blanket to keep them warm.



## Our Mother of the Year – Noelene Lever



The Barnardos Mother of the Year Award celebrated its 23<sup>rd</sup> year this May, with the event showcasing the work of everyday mums and the positive difference that they make in the lives of children.

We believe mothers deserve to be recognised and celebrated for the enormous contribution they make in shaping Australia's future through providing a safe environment and nurturing children to help them realise their full potential. Just prior to Mother's Day on Thursday, 10<sup>th</sup> May, 2018 Barnardos staged their national event announcing this year's national winner.

**Congratulations to Noelene Lever, Barnardos Mother of the Year 2018, nominated by her foster child, Sarina Kapeli.**

Noelene Lever 78, is a strong Aboriginal woman who has dedicated her life to caring for children from all walks of life. As a young widow, Noelene raised five children while working two jobs. She has fostered more than 50 children, some until adulthood, in a home where "her door never closes". "My mother is my role model and I am the woman I am today because of her," says her nominator and foster daughter, Sarina Kapeli.

Noelene began caring for Sarina when she was just two weeks old, ensuring Sarina knew about her birth mother and family through stories and a journey to North Queensland to meet them.

"She always made sure that I knew where I came from," says

Sarina. "This was very important because she didn't want me to lose my connection with my family. By doing this, she gave me the knowledge of my identity – of who I am and where I belong."

"I love her so much and I am thankful for how she has raised me," Sarina says.

Nominations are opening shortly for 2019 – please think about nominating that special mum, wife, partner, sister, daughter or friend in your local community.

For information go to [motheroftheyear.com.au](http://motheroftheyear.com.au)



## Our CEO sends a message

At Barnardos we believe in children. Without the generous support of our wonderful donors and corporate partners, we could not continue to work hard to provide children in need in Australia with a safe, loving family and a stable home, free from abuse and neglect.

We are grateful for your commitment to our mission to protect and nurture vulnerable children, to keep thousands of children safe in their own homes and find new homes for children who cannot remain safely with their own families.

Thank you for your support.



Deirdre Cheers  
Chief Executive Officer

## Our People – Youth Worker, Mele Sulaki-Latu



**"Barnardos is not just work, it's like my family. The young people I've worked with over my ten years at Barnardos have become a big part of my heart."**

- Mele

**Barnardos Senior Practitioner Youth & Family Programs, Mele Sulaki-Latu is one of our dedicated youth workers, working alongside young people through Barnardos Reconnect Program.**

Mele states: "the early intervention element of the program is particularly important. If we can connect with young people before they become involved with the criminal justice system, it is very satisfying. We build a relationship with young people and their

families in order to usher them in the right direction.

The understanding I have with many of my clients is around our shared cultural background. I am able to talk to young people about things that they wouldn't normally speak about with their parents. We live in a melting pot of different cultures. If you aren't able to understand it and embrace it, then it's difficult to know who you are as an individual. The most important thing is where you come from and where you belong.

You can't put a price on seeing the young peoples' faces and how far they've come. They often tell me if it wasn't for the support of our programs, they don't know where they'd be today. My work with the Reconnect Program allows me to support and strengthen families through the young person, aiming to prevent youth homelessness. If we don't invest in our young people, we will lose them. We need to empower and encourage them. It starts with us..."



# Jack's Story



**Jack's parents battled drug and alcohol abuse. Jack's dad would often fly into a violent rage and beat his mum. Jack and his little brother would find a safe place to hide, cowering together for comfort.**

One day when Jack was five, his dad grabbed a kitchen knife, and held it to his mother's throat. Jack was so scared that he called the police. His Dad was arrested and jailed for domestic violence and drug offences. Jack and his brother were taken into care. His mother had been sick with a mental illness and was unable to continue caring for the family.

Jack felt like he had failed to protect his mother. He thought the family break up was his fault for calling the police.

After a short time in crisis care, Barnardos found a permanent family for Jack and his younger brother.

Everyone tried to make Jack feel settled in his new home but he wasn't coping. Barnardos introduced Jack to a specialised child therapist who has worked with Jack to help him deal with his emotions. The therapist has helped Jack understand that it isn't his job to care for his little brother, he just needs to be a child. They talk about the things that worry

him and the things that he blames himself for.

Jack is a very thoughtful and considerate boy. He's now seven and learning to play and have fun. His foster family take him horse-riding and his favourite sports are swimming and soccer.

Jack tries hard not to 'parent' his little brother now. He knows his foster family love him and he can talk to his foster parents about any worries he has.

**Jack is still learning how to be a child, but he is happy and secure in his new permanent home. He hopes to get a pet this year.**



## Our Programs – Reconnecting Youth



Your generosity has helped Barnardos continue our Reconnect Program. This early intervention service helps young people aged 12-18 years who are homeless or at risk of homelessness due to family breakdown.

It's a free and confidential service for youth living in the Canterbury and Marrickville local areas that offers accommodation, educational and vocational support, family support and much more.

The Reconnect Program endeavours to connect young people back with their families. However, there are some

young people who find they are unable to live at home due to various circumstances; family abuse or violence, personal and financial problems.

In this instance, help is given to secure alternative living arrangements, through supported independent living or alternative living support.

Often many complex circumstances have led them to this situation where they desperately need support.

Key to the program's success is that young people are given

support and instruction on life skills so they can start to gain some independence. They also receive personal support to address the difficulties that saw them need the Reconnect Program in the first place.

Our senior practitioner within the Youth and Family Program, Mele Sulaki-Latu has worked with young people for over ten years. In a heartfelt interview included on page four of this newsletter, Mele provides an understanding of the work undertaken, as well as the commitment and connection of the staff involved.

## Our Bequests Program

Your legacy, a child's future! Gifts made in wills are very important to Barnardos being able to continue vital support work. They make up more than one-third of all individual donations. These incredible

gifts keep children safe through services that otherwise might be at risk of closing.

By including a gift to Barnardos as part of your legacy, you can make sure that young people in Australia can have a safe future.

For more information about how gifts in wills make a difference or what it means when you leave one, please contact Erik Pill [bequests@barnardos.org.au](mailto:bequests@barnardos.org.au) or call (02) 9218 2336