



St Anthony's Family Care

# HEART matters



Easter 2018

## An Update From Our CEO



Dear Friends,

2018 is shaping up to be a big year for St Anthony's Family Care. Following much preparation and a very long lead up time, we are nearing completion of our transition into the National Disability Insurance Scheme. This has been a very

trying time for many of our families, and without doubt, some have fared better than others in the process, but on the whole most families have been very pleased with the final results of their funding allocations. Many families are now able to purchase more support in the form of additional hours of afterschool activities and vacation care programs, have had the opportunity to try new and exciting sports and leisure pursuits based on their child's or young person's interests and for some, even have a stay away home away from home for the first time.

With families having the right to choose their own provider we have seen an increase in support

hours delivered and have needed to expand our staffing to meet the level of demand. As the year progresses, we hope to further expand on our groups and activities and be able to offer services to a greater number of families.

The site re-development project is continuing and much of December and the new year was spent working with a raft of consultants. I am very pleased to advise that the Development Application was lodged with Burwood Council this week and now we anxiously wait for a response. The design is based on a pre-fabricated product which has a strong focus on sustainability, functionality and clever construction to best meet our needs. To ensure that services can continue with as little disruption as possible, the construction process will be staged. I hope to have some further progress to report when I write to you later in the year.

Easter time has arrived very quickly this year, and with this I would like to extend to you all every blessing for the season. May the miracle of Easter bring you much love, joy and happiness.

**Joanna Najdzion**  
Chief Executive Officer

## Message From Sr Carmel

On the 21st March the Caring Hearts group met for the annual appreciation luncheon. The Caring Hearts group are individuals who have advised that they will be leaving a gift to St Anthony's in their will and our major donors. It is lovely to come together with these special friends every year, exchange stories and thank them for their wonderful support while enjoying a special meal together.

Easter greetings to all,  
**Sr Carmel Whybrow**



# Evolution of Early Learning at St Anthony's...



St Anthony's has been providing centre based Early Childhood Education and Care programs for over 50 years. In 1974 St Anthony's commenced providing Day Care services for families living in Croydon and the surrounding suburbs.

Children of parents needing relief were welcomed to St Anthony's with the first priority going to poorer families. By 1979, St Anthony's Home had obtained a licence to conduct a childcare centre and the Early Learning Centre formally began operating.

In 2007 the inclusive early childhood service began when the special preschool and the childcare centre for typically developing children were merged. Over these past 10 years, the Early Learning Centre has worked towards providing programs that acknowledge each child's strengths while helping in the development of new skills, particularly where children have a diagnosed disability or developmental delay.

For many children, St Anthony's is the only centre that is willing and able to provide a program that meets the child's range needs. This is done through the dedication of our team of educators and in partnership with the child's family. Our educators work to collaborate with families and other early intervention professionals as we share information about the child and collectively work towards the development of new skills.

As time has passed and the sector's understanding of inclusion has continued to develop and change, children with disabilities are now seen as contributing members of our community and are being welcomed into mainstream services. St Anthony's environment actively supports the development of meaningful and positive relationships between all children; and with our team of educators, this opportunity is being offered to more children each year. The children's active participation in our programs and their ability to engage with their peers is truly reflected through the 'Peers & Play' program offered at St Anthony's.

Now, in 2018, our Peers & Play program is well established and embedded as part of our

mainstream childcare centre. The Peers & Play program helps to ensure that children receive the additional support they require to be able to actively participate within the mainstream learning environment and that adjustments to support their learning are made wherever possible. This year we have been able to offer 13 children the opportunity to take part in the Peers & Play program and families have been pleased with the way the program has been adapted to support their children's range of needs.

Two of these children are Dimitri and Stavros, twin brothers who were first diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder when they were just two years old. After receiving the diagnosis of Autism for her boys, their mother Zoi, began the search for a centre that was not only able to provide child care for her children, but also a service that was able to provide additional educational supports. Zoi wanted to find a place where her boys could grow, be happy and help develop the vital life skills needed for their future. Now in their second year at St Anthony's, the boys are well settled and greatly enjoy their time at the centre. They are able follow routines, have developed a range of self-help skills and have the ability to communicate with their family and carers. Zoi has seen a significant improvement in the boys' development in the past 12 months and the next step is to prepare them for their transition to school in 2019.



St Anthony's commitment to supporting children with disabilities to participate in the Peers & Play program is only possible due to the support of our donors and benefactors. The cost of the additional staff required to meet the individual needs of children is met through your generous contributions.

**Teresa Petrone**  
Manager Early Learning Services

**For more information and to provide your feedback:**

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