



St Anthony's Family Care

# HEART matters



Christmas 2020

## An Update From Our CEO



Dear Friends,

The year 2020 was certainly not one that any of us expected and as the festive season approaches rapidly, we are all anticipating a Christmas like no other.

Without a doubt, every single person has been affected in some way by

Covid. Some have lost loved ones, fear and anxiety has preoccupied us and for many, the loneliness of isolation has caused great despair. It truly has made us recognise the small pleasures in life that we all took for granted.

As many workplaces and schools closed, the Board, Management and staff at St Anthony's Family Care turned to Mary MacKillop for inspiration and collectively made the decision to continue to operate without disruption. With every precaution taken to ensure the safety of all and with a continuous focus on government guidelines and recommendations, I am very pleased to report that we continued to operate, without interruption, the Inclusive Early Learning Centre and Disability Services.

Despite anticipating a downturn in demand, families needed our services more than ever. We have had a steady increase in both service user numbers and requests for services, particularly in Disability Services.

In May, the new Figtree Early Learning Centre officially opened and has been received exceptionally well by existing families, new families, and the community as a whole. It has given us much joy to be able to provide the children with state-of-the-art facilities, a beautiful outdoor play space and areas for new learning experiences.

The children have adapted exceptionally well to their new environment and particularly love the safari themed outdoor playground.



The remainder of the site re-development is progressing well and in the new year we will be nearing completion. Families accessing our Disability Services are particularly excited about three new cottages opening for short term accommodation and we anticipate being operational in early April.

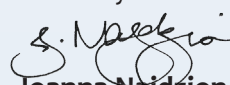
The new Activity centre will provide a great space which is accessible, has access to an outdoor play space and can be used for multiple uses including cooking programs, life skills development and recreational activities. All these options have us exploring new programs that we can introduce for children and young adults in addition to our existing offerings.

Throughout the course of the year and with all the challenges, I have found myself being thankful for the staff at St Anthony's who have so willingly put their own health and safety at risk in order to continue the mission to support those in need.

The new development has certainly reinvigorated many of us with the excitement of new opportunities for children and young people in the years ahead. The new St Anthony's Village has only been possible due to the support of our donors, such as yourself.

I sincerely thank you for your ongoing commitment to the work of St Anthony's and for being part of this exciting chapter in our history.

Wishing you all a very Merry and safe Christmas, may 2021 fill you all with hope, joy and every happiness.

  
**Joanna Najdzion**  
Chief Executive Officer

We have recently built a website and will be providing a building update once we commence. Please follow our progress at [www.safc.org.au](http://www.safc.org.au). For those of you on Facebook, we often post our latest news to our page so you can read about our regular news here.



# Supporting Our Community Through Crisis



St Anthony's Family Care (SAFC) supports children and young people with disabilities to achieve their greatest potential. We do this through our 'EPIK' Disability Services, an acronym for Encouraging Potential In Kids. Our commitment to deliver EPIK services goes hand in hand with the mission of the organisation which is to continue the work of Mary MacKillop in caring for children and young people.

SAFC offers a portfolio of services to meet individual needs, these include both one to one and group services that can be delivered in-home, in the community or onsite at SAFC. In addition, SAFC provides Short Term Accommodation to allow participants the opportunity to develop skills and independence away from home. SAFC services operate 365 days per year and 24 hours a day.

The year 2020 presented many challenges to us all, and we were fortunate to have a strong culture and mission at SAFC, which despite the many hurdles, enabled us to fix our sights firmly on the needs of our service users and their families and persist through adversity in delivering much needed services.

As the new year commenced, we had a clear vision for the coming months which was to continue with the major site development of SAFC grounds and to work towards external accreditation.

As we watched the news from abroad and how the COVID-19 pandemic took hold of the world, little did we know that this too would quickly become our reality. As we poured over the constant emails and advice from government bodies it became

apparent that we needed to prepare for what lay ahead.

We considered immediately how we could continue to support participants despite the various restrictions being placed on our movements and way of life, whilst continuing to ensure the safety of our participants, families, and Support Workers.

Our mission was at the forefront on our minds as we determined how to move forward. We considered our services to be "essential" and devised strategies and implemented systems which would enable us to continue to deliver services uninterrupted.

Changes were necessary to ensure we abided by restrictions – we ceased group programs and community access and increased our efforts for in home support. Armed with facemasks, sanitiser and antibacterial wipes, we were able to support the families to continue to work, shop for groceries and conduct other necessary tasks while our Support Workers cared for their sons and daughters.

We prioritised families based on a hierarchy of needs. Those children and young people most at risk, siblings with disabilities and parents who were essential workers were assured the support they needed. With many of our participants having parents who are front line hospital staff, we committed to ensuring that they could continue to work at this critical time.

As the situation began to ease, we were able to re-establish our group programs and community access and are pleased that we are now largely back to business as usual, albeit with lots of additional precautions in place.

As we reflect on the year, it has been both challenging and rewarding. Keeping in mind the new climate, it has kept us present and, in many ways, added depth and understanding to the importance our services provide in the community.

**Simon Bartholomew**  
Manager, Disability Services

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

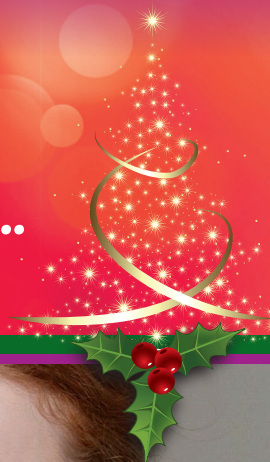
Ph: (02) 9747 5782 Email: [enquiries@safc.org.au](mailto:enquiries@safc.org.au) Web: [www.safc.org.au](http://www.safc.org.au)





St Anthony's Family Care

Thank You for your support in helping children  
with disabilities to reach their greatest potential...



Wishing you all the blessings of a wonderful Christmas season...

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☐ I would like to donate via a monthly direct debit. Please forward me information on how to arrange this.



St Anthony's Family Care

You can also donate online at [www.safc.org.au](http://www.safc.org.au)  
by clicking on the donations link.