



November 2025



### **November Reflection: A journey undertaken in light of a story**

**Annette Schneider rsm, MMC Formation Coordinator**

The 2025 Jubilee Year, with its theme and call for each of us to be 'pilgrims of hope', will conclude on January 6, 2026. What a gift it is to be celebrating the season of Advent in the weeks leading up to Christmas and the closure of this special year in the Church.

HOPE, JOY, PEACE and LOVE are usually associated with the four weeks of Advent. Perhaps it is our attentiveness to the messiness and struggles, to the small successes and the triumphs of daily life which gives deeper meaning to these words than might otherwise be the case.

HOPE has been a major focus during 2025. There have been many words written and images shared. Across Mercy Ministry Companions there are stories of hope everywhere! Each of us can be a source and sign of hope to people through our simple daily interactions which reflect our commitment to show respect, compassion, justice, and hospitality – hope does not stand on its own. It is part of the fabric of our Mercy story which we continue to bring to life each day. In the face of difficulties and vulnerabilities, we continue to show up and to 'be there' for people.

Mercy Ministry Companions



**Congratulations to Emma Llewellyn on her Perpetual Profession**

On Saturday, 22 November, Emma Llewellyn rsm made her Perpetual Profession at St Monica's Church, Moonee Ponds, in the presence of many Sisters of Mercy, family and friends and ministry colleagues. Three of our Trustee Directors, Margaret Bounader, Paul Linossier and Gabrielle McMullen, were among those who gathered on this significant occasion when Emma made her vows of Poverty, Chastity, Obedience and Apostolic Service through the works of mercy.

Archbishop of Melbourne, Peter A Comensoli, was the chief celebrant and Institute Leader, Karon Donnellon rsm, accepted Emma's vows. We congratulate Emma on taking this significant step in her faith journey and ask God's blessing on her in the next stage of her Mercy ministry.

[Watch Emma's Perpetual Profession](#)

*Save the Date*

2026 MMC  
CONFERENCE

**4pm Wednesday 9 September -  
4:30pm Thursday 10 September  
2026**

**@ Catholic Leadership Centre - East Melbourne**

## Mercy Education



## Mercedes College

### **Mercedes College Plans for 180<sup>th</sup> anniversary next year**

Mercedes College recently welcomed Carmel Ross, Trustee Director Mercy Ministry Companions, for a special visit to plan for celebrations and events for the school's historic 180th anniversary in 2026.

Joined by Principal Dr Lucie McCrory and Director of Community Relations Leili Marshall, Carmel engaged in a meaningful conversation about honouring the arrival of the Sisters of Mercy at the Swan River Colony and the founding of Mercy Education. As Australia's oldest school established by a religious congregation still on its original site, Mercedes continues to embody the enduring values of faith, service, and community.

## Mercy Community Services



### **Mercy Connect's 'Together We Grow Safely Month'**

Throughout October, Mercy Connect delivered a series of weekly initiatives under the banner of *Together We Grow Safely Month*, aimed at promoting a holistic approach to safety and wellbeing for all staff. Each week focused on a different theme, combining education, engagement, and practical tools to support the workforce.

The month began with Financial Safety and Wellbeing. The Mercy Connect team welcomed representatives from SalaryPackaging Plus for onsite consultations. This coincided with the launch of our Mercy Connect's new Workplace Banking Partnership with Westpac, who also attended in person to meet with staff and provide financial wellbeing support.

Week 2 centred around Emergency Management and Fire Safety. Staff participated in a hands-on demonstration at the Albury office, learning how to use fire blankets and extinguishers. The local fire brigade also visited with their fire truck, providing an engaging and informative experience for all.

Week 3 concentrated on Mental Health and Cultural Safety and promoted *Sonder*, Mercy Connect's employee wellbeing platform, and a cultural yarn with Aunty Ruth. We also launched the *People at Work Psychosocial Survey*, inviting all staff to contribute their insights.

The month concluded with the promotion of *My Fitness Passport*, encouraging staff to prioritise their physical wellbeing through accessible fitness options. Together We Grow Safely Month was well received across the organisation and reinforced Mercy Connect's commitment to creating a safe, inclusive, and supportive workplace.



### **MacKillop join's 'The People Behind Property' Podcast**

What's life really like in foster and residential care? In this conversation, host of *The People Behind the Property*, Andrew Martin sits down with Sam Patterson from MacKillop Family Services and Kaisha, a former young person in care turned youth advocate. Together they break down the challenges, bust the myths, and share moments of hope that prove change is possible.



### **MacKillop recognised by NSW Council of Social Services (NCOSS)**

MacKillop has been awarded the NCOSS Excellence & Impact Award in the 'Organisations' category for delivering innovative, creative, and impactful programs making a difference to individuals, families and communities.

MacKillop was recognised for its Spotlight Project, which channelled comprehensive carer feedback into ten endorsed recommendations.

NCOSS celebrated [MacKillop's initiatives](#) to raise practice standards and initiate similar improvements across the foster care sector. It recognised MacKillop for a “commitment to continuous improvement... and for clear and measurable outcomes already influencing practice.”

[Continue reading](#)



### **Tiny steps, big impact: new role at McAuley supports children's growth after family violence**

*In August 2024, McAuley employed an Enhanced Maternal Child Health Nurse (EMCHN), dedicated to supporting the needs of babies, young children and their mothers residing in our family violence refuges.*

Working with children (up to 11 years of age) and their mothers to support developmental milestones, assess and identify risks and needs, and strengthen the bond between mother and child, McAuley's EMCHN supports families in our two refuges – Heywood House and Jan's Place – as well as some families living in the community supported by McAuley's Outreach Program.

[Continue reading](#)

Mercy Health



**Mercy Health**  
*Care first*

### **Bethlehem Celebrates 60 years of service**

Mercy Health Bethlehem Home for the Aged has marked a remarkable milestone, celebrating its Diamond Jubilee with a community high tea and widespread media attention.

For sixty years, the “home on the hill” in Golden Square Bendigo, Victoria, has stood as a beacon of Catholic care, compassion, and hospitality. From its humble beginnings in the 1960s with just five patients, to its transformation into a modern, community-connected facility, Bethlehem's journey reflects both tradition and renewal.

The jubilee celebration brought together residents, families, staff, volunteers, civic leaders, and Sisters of Mercy, honouring a legacy of faith while looking ahead to a future of continued service.

From the Formation Coordinator

### Middle Leaders Implementing their mini-projects

We are grateful to the 2024 Cohorts of Middle Leaders for sharing details of their mini-projects with us in recent editions of Connections. This month we thank **David Maloney** from MacKillop Family Services and **Kristy Carrington** from McAuley for their contributions.

### A Call to Lead - Kristi Carrington - Cohort 1, 2024

A Call to lead is a reflective workshop with senior practitioners, team leaders and practice leaders from MacKillop Family Services, working in the Orange Door service.

**Why I chose the project:** The Orange Door can be a challenging space to work due to the Matrix management framework. This means that practitioners are in integrated teams with two other partner agencies. It also means that our team leaders have teams or practitioners that include practitioners from our two other partner agencies.

My leaders are made up of those who have a strong sense of social justice and want to support the vulnerable people/ families of our communities to increase their safety and stability. Their hearts are in the right place, but the complexity of the environment in which they work, can sometimes take the focus away from why they chose to work in this area.

My project was to create an opportunity for leaders to reflect on why they chose to do this work, to take some time out to reflect on their leadership style, and identify some goals which they would focus on for the next six months.

## Why did you choose this type of work?



## **Sharing the story of St Mary MacKillop – Dave Maloney – Cohort 2, 2024**

At the Canberra Office in Belconnen, a special space has been created in the front lobby dedicated to St Mary MacKillop. This area features a picture of St Mary MacKillop adorned with her rosary beads, alongside prayer cards, medallions, and a binder filled with photographs and information about her life. Young people, staff, and visitors are warmly invited to take prayer cards or medallions if they wish, making the space both reflective and interactive.

St Mary MacKillop holds a significant place as one of the founders of MacKillop Family Services, alongside Catherine McAuley and Edmund Rice. Her legacy continues to inspire through her pioneering work in social justice, education, and healthcare for the poor. She demonstrated extraordinary courage and resilience in the face of adversity, and her commitment to empowering marginalised individuals – particularly women and children – remains a guiding light.

Her vision was deeply rooted in serving remote communities, ensuring that poor, isolated, and underprivileged children in rural Australia had access to education. The Josephite Sisters, whom she founded, embodied this mission by living among those in need and responding directly to the challenges they faced. Despite fierce opposition, including a temporary excommunication by a bishop, Mary remained steadfast in her mission, showing remarkable resilience and a spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Her enduring motto, “Never see a need without doing something about it,” continues to serve as a practical roadmap for compassionate action. It is a powerful call to engage with the realities of the world and respond with empathy and courage.

Today, St Mary MacKillop inspires MacKillop Family Services to provide hope and support for young people in our care. We advocate for their rights and dignity, striving to leave a legacy that not only transforms their lives but also encourages other community service organisations to follow in her footsteps.



Please share this Mercy Ministry Companions Newsletter with your colleagues and [opt-in for further communications.](#)

*In the spirit of reconciliation, Mercy Ministry Companions acknowledges the Traditional Owners of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of the country where we live and work today.*

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