

April 2026



## **April Reflection: Heritage and Inheritance**

**Jennifer Stratton, MMC Trustee Director**

On 25 April all across Australia, many people make an effort to attend an Anzac Day ceremony or, in some other way, pause to reflect on and give thanks for those who serve and have served Australia in the armed forces. They particularly remember with gratitude the sacrifice of men and women who paid the ultimate price and lost their lives in the call of duty; and the suffering of the loved ones they left behind.

These ceremonies often take place at a war memorial, with those attending aware they are standing at a "sacred place". The ceremonies are important and valued gestures of recognition of our heritage and our inheritance - the freedom to live in a humane and democratic society.

Recently, I came across a tribute to the life of Sir Victor Windeyer, a former judge of the High Court of Australia. Windeyer had enlisted in the Australian Imperial Forces the day after his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and went

on to lead his unit in the defence of Tobruk in 1941. Later in his life, Windeyer wrote about heritage and inheritance.

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From the Formation Coordinator



### **Ongoing formation opportunities through the *Engaging Your Faith Online Series***

Experienced lecturers from Catholic Theological College (CTC) are offering a series of 12 short (60-90 mins) online sessions in May 2026. These sessions would be an ideal opportunity for ministry leaders and other interested people in MMC to engage in some personal, theological, and spiritual development. Educators participating in the sessions can apply for teacher accreditation in some Catholic dioceses. Further information can be found on the [CTC website](#).

[Engage Your Faith 2026 flyer](#)

### **Mercy Alliance online seminar series 2026**

Registrations have opened for the June 15 seminar led by Pip McIlroy and the October 2 seminar led by Dan Fleming. These seminars provide networking opportunities for our Mercy heritage MPJP Trustees, Board members and ministry leaders in a cross-ministry context.

Learn more about [Mercy Alliance – June Seminar \(15 June\)](#).

Learn more about [Mercy Alliance – October Seminar \(22nd Oct\)](#).



### **Projects undertaken by Middle Leaders in 2025**

We are grateful to **Karen Lata from Mercy Health** for sharing the details of her mini-project undertaken as part of our 'Middle Leadership: empowering Middle Leaders' Program in 2025.

#### **A year of mercy**

##### **Karen Lata, Regional Manager, Mercy Health**

Hi I'm Karen Lata. I am proud to work with Mercy Health as a Regional Manager, overseeing the delivery of in-house aged and community services to people living in their own homes across my region. Our carers help people with maintaining their home, their personal care and grooming, medications, shopping,

an outing, or sometimes just a much-needed cuppa and a chat. We do this work across a large region in Victoria, spreading from Werribee, down through Geelong & the Bellarine, through to Colac and Warrnambool and across to Ballarat and surrounds.

Just prior to starting the Middle Leaders Program, I had seen a staff feedback survey that highlighted our care worker team did not feel well connected to the Mercy Mission and Vision. With hundreds of carers working for our team across four cities, most of whom rarely attend the office, this saddened me but did not surprise me. It struck me as an opportunity to take my learnings from the program and grow my team's connection to Catherine McAuley and the spirituality that underpins Mercy's work. To really connect these front-line carers to *why* we do what we do.

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## Mercy Ministry Companions

### AMSSA Student Conference 2026

The Australasian Mercy Secondary Schools Association (AMSSA) Student Conference, with the theme of *"Mercy in Motion: Turning Compassion into Action,"* is being held online over four sessions this year. The Opening Session was held in March this year, led by Annette Schneider rsm and assisted by Belinda Cooney. The session explored the topic *"Catherine McAuley's legacy is shaping the Mercy charism as it unfolds in our time"*.

Over 150 students from Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand and Papua New Guinea gathered at approx. 28 sites joined the session and were enthusiastic participants in both the online activities during the presentation and afterwards on site.

Maddie Kelly from St Aloysius College in Adelaide, a member of the Conference Planning team, commented that the *'invitation for students to see themselves as a "face of Mercy" in their own time and place resonated strongly, and gave them a clear and hopeful sense of how they can live out the Mercy charism in practical, everyday ways.'*

We look forward to hearing about the remaining sessions across the year.

### Formation Day for Catholic Leaders

The Global Centre for Catholic Leaders (GCCL) is hosting a formation day for Catholic Leaders in Melbourne on Friday 15 May at the Catholic Leadership Centre, East Melbourne. The title is *"Bridges of Hope"* and GCCL would love to host friends and colleagues from throughout the AMPJP and Religious Institute world.

## Mercy Education



### **Premier and Minister Visit St Aloysius College, North Melbourne**

On 1 April, St Aloysius College, North Melbourne, welcomed Victorian Premier Jacinta Allan MP and Deputy Premier and Minister for Education, Ben Carroll MP, for an announcement regarding proposed changes to the use of mobile phones and wearable technology in Victorian schools.

The College also hosted VCEA CEO, Professor Elizabeth Labone, and Independent Schools Victoria Chief Executive, Rachael Holthouse.

The Premier and visiting representatives connected with students and staff, including Year 12 school captains Fadzai Bako and Amelie Ellerton, who spoke at the announcement.

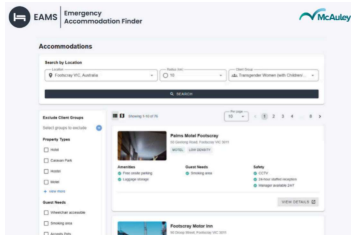
## Mercy Community Services



### **Duchess of Sussex pays a visit to McAuley House**

In April, McAuley welcomed Meghan, Duchess of Sussex to McAuley House Footscray to join staff and residents for a shared meal in the community kitchen. The Duchess spent time with residents, hearing about daily life at McAuley House before taking a guided tour to learn more about McAuley's work to support women and children experiencing homelessness or family violence.

[Continue reading](#)



### **McAuley's new emergency accommodation system improves safety for women and children**

McAuley has launched the new Emergency Accommodation Management System (EAMS) – a centralised list of all private, external emergency accommodation used across the community services sector. With around 100 Victorian women and children sleeping in motels each night because of family violence, EAMS provides frontline workers with the information they need to find the most suitable placement – keeping women and children safer when a motel is the only option.

[Continue reading](#)



### **Paw Pals Appeal helps struggling children find a safe path back to learning**

For some children, school isn't a place of curiosity and growth, it can be a source of fear and anxiety. This April, MacKillop Family Service's [Paw Pals Appeal](#) is raising funds to help vulnerable children rediscover confidence, connection and a readiness to learn. "A classroom can feel unsafe or simply too overwhelming for some children," said Brona Walsh, MacKillop Family Services. "Paw Pals meets children where they are. The presence of a therapy dog helps lower anxiety and build trust, creating the emotional safety children need before learning can begin."

To date, the Appeal has supported more than 1,700 children in Victoria.

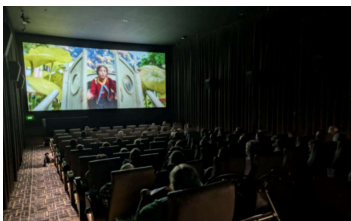
[Support the Paw Pals Appeal](#)



### **MacKillop Seasons - 30 Years of Seasons for Growth**

For 30 years, MacKillop Seasons has accompanied children, young people and adults through times of change, loss and grief. Grounded in evidence and compassion, the program equips practitioners to lead safe, structured, small-group sessions that build emotional literacy, resilience and connection. To mark this milestone, promotional offers and funded training opportunities are now available, supporting schools and organisations to strengthen wellbeing by walking alongside those in their communities.

[Continue reading](#)



### **Connect Cinema – The Magic Faraway Tree**

On 31 March, Mercy Connect held their third Connect Cinema event and took a magical trip down memory lane to watch The Magic Faraway Tree. Connect Cinema is a wonderful opportunity for staff, participants, families and friends to enjoy a fun film together while supporting our inclusive community events. Around 80 people took the opportunity to attend and share in the evening of connection, comfort, and a little bit of magic.



### **Mercy Connect's Pizza Party at the Park**

On 24 March, participants, staff, and families in South Albury, came together to enjoy an afternoon of delicious food at the Mercy Connect Wood Fire Pizza Party. Everyone got the chance to create their own pizza and it was a great opportunity to spend time together, enjoy the outdoors, and share some delicious food fresh from the woodfire oven!



### **Easter at Mercy Connect**

Mercy Connect celebrated Easter in style this year, bringing together a range of events and creative activities for everyone to enjoy. Participants and staff took to the catwalk to show off their Easter hat designs and other themed creations. After the parade, the celebrations continued with an afternoon tea prepared by Mercy Connect's Bottlebrush Café staff.

This year, Head Office staff also enjoyed an unexpected visit from the Easter Bunny! Moments like these bring a sense of fun and connection to the workplace, and Mercy Connect is very lucky to have the Easter Bunny take time out of their busy schedule to decorate our offices and hide treats for everyone to enjoy.

## Mercy Health



### **Music in the NICU brings comfort and connection**

Mercy Health has commenced a four-month pilot at Mercy Hospital for Women, exploring how live, responsive music therapy can support regulation, development and bonding for babies in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU).

Developed with consultant neonatologist Dr Nat Duffy and delivered by music therapist Lauren Salib the pilot introduces live, responsive singing and gentle instrumental music guided by each baby's cues and clinical needs and reflects Mercy Health's commitment to holistic, compassionate neonatal care.

[Listen to the news story on ABC Melbourne](#)



### **Job Opportunity: Group Formation Lead**

Mercy Health, is looking for a new **Group Formation Lead**. Applications are encouraged from individuals connected with MMC, including those who may be open to a fixed-term secondment from their current ministry.

Those who may be interested, or who know someone suitable, are encouraged to apply or share this opportunity within their networks.

[Learn more](#)

## Conferences and Events

*Save the Date*

2026 MMC

CONFERENCE

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

@ Catholic Leadership Centre - East Melbourne

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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