

# Together

SPRING 2026



*God grant us the compassion to care deeply for others; the wisdom to discern how best to help; the energy to transform emotion into action, and the joy of wholehearted service. Amen.*

- Anglicare Prayer for Anglicare NSW South, NSW West & ACT

## IN THIS ISSUE

|                                                  |    |
|--------------------------------------------------|----|
| A parochial community                            | 2  |
| From our CEO                                     | 3  |
| A Community Hub success story                    | 4  |
| Investing in Goulburn from the ground up         | 6  |
| Nicotine Knockout                                | 7  |
| Reinforcing the need for further gambling reform | 8  |
| Cake, community, and connection                  | 10 |
| What's new in Pantry Appeals?                    | 11 |

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which we meet throughout our journey together.

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Cover photo: The Junction team.



## A parochial community

*May you know the joy of connecting with others for the sake of something better*

I long to be part of a community that is parochial.

Before you scratch your head, let me explain what I do and don't mean. By "parochial" I don't mean narrow, exclusive or unwelcoming. No-one should want that kind of nation or neighbourhood. We are all the poorer when we put up walls rather than build bridges.

Rather I have in mind the original meaning of the word, which dates back to the earliest days of the church when a "parochial" person was someone who lived as a sojourner. Sojourners were located somewhere – maybe Rome, or Corinth or Jerusalem. At the same time they saw themselves as citizens of what they called the Kingdom of God – a realm characterised by love of God and love of neighbour.

This dual perspective enabled the early Christians to have a profound impact on their local communities as they cared for the sick and the vulnerable, and as they welcomed slaves and free people, rich and poor into their common life. Over subsequent generations that same parochial mindset has led to the founding of hospitals and schools and aged care facilities. It is the same mindset I encounter in the work of Anglicare as children are nurtured and educated and as all people are enabled to live with the dignity that is rightfully theirs. It allows us to join with other community members as we celebrate the good things that come from sharing life together.

May you be encouraged by all that you read in this magazine, so that wherever you are located you will know the joy of connecting with others for the sake of something better.

**The Right Reverend Dr Mark Short**  
Diocesan Bishop of Canberra & Goulburn



## From our CEO

*Strengthening communities through connection—together*

For communities, as for individuals, connection is vital to wellbeing, especially when times are tough.

Across the regions we serve, many individuals and families are facing increasing pressure. The rising cost of living, housing instability, and financial strain continue to affect people in different ways, often compounding existing challenges and making everyday life harder to navigate.

In the midst of this, one thing remains clear: connection matters. It is through connection that people find belonging, dignity, and the strength to move forward.

Connection begins early. Research consistently shows that quality early childhood education helps build strong foundations for learning, wellbeing, and community participation. That is why we are excited to be expanding our commitment to children and families in the Goulburn region through the development of the new Bradfordville Early Learning Centre. By creating places where children can learn, grow and belong, we are investing not only in individual futures, but in stronger and more connected communities.

We are also responding to emerging challenges among young people. Vaping has become embedded in daily life, often linked to stress, socialising, and mental health. Through programs like Nicotine Knockout, we are creating supportive, non-judgmental spaces where young people can seek help and make positive changes, reinforcing the role of connection in building healthier futures.

Across our services, we see every day how powerful community connection can be. At Gordon Community Centre, partnerships between local organisations, volunteers, and social enterprise are creating spaces where people can not only receive

support, but also contribute and belong. Simple moments like a shared coffee, a community meal, a conversation, are helping to reduce isolation and strengthen the fabric of local communities.

At the same time, we are seeing communities respond generously to growing need. Through our Pantry Appeals, people are finding practical ways to support one another, whether by volunteering, donating food, or contributing financially. These collective efforts, supported by the generosity of our donors and the dedication of our volunteers, ensure that help is available when it is needed most.

Connection also means creating opportunities to come together around shared interests, experiences, and causes. From community gatherings and fundraising initiatives to advocacy efforts that seek better outcomes for vulnerable people, these activities remind us that positive change is strongest when it is driven by people working together.

While the challenges before us remain significant, so too does the strength within our communities. With your continued support, we remain hopeful. Together, we can build a more connected, compassionate future where no one has to face hardship alone.

To our volunteers and donors, thank you. Your generosity, commitment, and belief in this work create lasting impact in the lives of individuals, families and communities.

Thank you for being part of this work.

**Trevor Ament**  
Anglicare CEO

*"In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"*

**Acts 20:35 NIV**

# A Community Hub success story

## Gordon Community Centre

Running a successful Community Hub takes a village...and a church, a community service organisation, and a social enterprise.

Gordon Community Centre (GCC) in Canberra's south is a thriving example of the community hub model in action. It's motto—community resource meets community need—goes beyond simply asking for food pantry donations or volunteers. It is a way of looking at the community from the inside out; engaging at every level, and building connections that benefit everyone.

Run as a partnership between Anglicare and the Lanyon Valley Anglican Church—and co-located with social enterprise café Little Luxton—GCC connects with people on multiple, overlapping levels.

### The ABCD Model

While the centre's Food Pantry is a key entry point for people experiencing disadvantage, it is also a place where generous local residents and church members volunteer their time. When individuals access the pantry, they are offered a free coffee card from Little Luxton—removing barriers and inviting them into spaces shared by the wider community. These coffees are often made possible through a pay-it-forward system funded by café customers who want to support their neighbours in a practical way.

This simple act—sharing a cup of coffee—beautifully illustrates GCC's approach. People who may not otherwise cross paths find themselves welcomed into the same space, receive the same hospitality, and are part of everyday community life.

While many community centres do an excellent job supporting those who need their services most, traditional service models can struggle to connect with a broader cross-section of the community. Gordon Community Centre is intentionally working to address this through an Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach.

This model starts with the assumption that the resources required to meet local needs already exist within the community—generosity, skills, local knowledge, relationships—and that the role of the centre is to help connect those resources with opportunities to give, participate, and belong. Whether that is through church led, service-led or social enterprise-led initiatives.

Operating without ongoing government funding, GCC relies on these community assets, alongside fundraising and local partnerships, to sustain its work and grow its impact.

Regular programs such as community lunches, social drawing groups, playgroups, and coffee-and-chat sessions foster wellbeing and connection week by week. The gentle exercise class is a great example of how low-cost, low-pressure activities can become a cornerstone of people's lives.



### Gentle Exercise at Gordon Community Centre

For the past five years, Janelle's gentle exercise class at Gordon Community Centre has been more than just a weekly session for participants—it's a space for connection, encouragement and wellbeing.

Initially funded through a grant, the class has grown into a thriving, self-sustaining activity, where participants not only build strength and mobility, but genuine friendships. It is designed to be inclusive and low-pressure and welcoming to people of all abilities—which is particularly important to those who may feel out of place in a traditional gym.

"I don't feel stupid if I don't do the exercise right," said one participant. "There's no mirrors!"

With laughter, shared stories and often a coffee catch-up afterwards, it's no surprise many describe it as the "rock" of their week. Another participant shared, "Just being together and doing something good for my body, while having fun, is a big drawcard." Beyond the physical benefits — improving balance, coordination and confidence — it creates a space where people feel known, supported and motivated to stay active and connected.

The class is a simple but powerful example of how community-led initiatives can help people live healthier, more connected lives.

### Trivia Night at Gordon Community Centre

On a Saturday afternoon in autumn, Little Luxton Café in Gordon buzzed with laughter, friendly competition and plenty of head-scratching, as around 90 locals gathered for a trivia night with a difference.

For social enterprise café owner Nate Swift, trivia nights are a perfect example of what the café is all about.

"The whole point of the café is to build community and create opportunities for people to get together," he says. "Trivia nights are one of those cool things that exist in our culture where you get a range of different

backgrounds hanging out together and interacting. This really hits a lot of what we're aiming for in terms of being a place that brings people together."

Beyond the laughs and lively competition, the night also delivered real impact. Nearly \$1800 raised on the day went directly to supporting the Gordon Community Centre's service initiatives.

Events like this strengthen relationships across the local community, and with such a great turnout and atmosphere, there's strong interest in doing it all again.

### Social enterprise as social connection

Having Little Luxton being located onsite helps create a welcoming environment where people naturally gather and connect. Alongside the centre's programs, the café broadens the cross-section of people coming through the doors.

Good coffee is just the start of the conversation. Over time, regular café customers learn about the Food Pantry, the gentle exercise class, community meals, and opportunities to give back. Slowly and sustainably, community awareness grows—and participation follows.

The partnership between Little Luxton and GCC is expanded through community events such as trivia nights, which bring together neighbours from different walks of life in a way that is light-hearted, accessible, and fun.

### A growing network of partnerships

GCC continues to expand its impact through partnerships that address social isolation and mental wellbeing. Initiatives such as Coffee and Chat, facilitated by the Community Chaplain on the first and third Fridays of each month, Wednesday playgroup and partnerships with groups like The Man Walk and The Men's Table, provide inclusive spaces where people can simply show up and connect.

Each collaboration strengthens the relationships across Lanyon Valley, reinforcing that community wellbeing is built through consistency, trust, and shared ownership.



Donate to Gordon Community Centre.  
Scan the QR code.



## Investing in Goulburn from the ground up

### *Building Anglicare's new Bradfordville Early Learning Centre*

At Anglicare, early learning is about more than childcare. Research consistently shows that access to quality early childhood education can have a lasting impact on a child's development, creating stronger foundations for learning, wellbeing, and lasting community engagement.

That's why we are excited to be expanding our commitment to children and families in the Goulburn region with a new, purpose-built early learning centre in the suburb of Bradfordville.

The Bradfordville Early Learning Centre will accommodate up to 91 children from birth to five years and has been developed in response to ongoing shortages of early learning places in the area. For many years, local providers—including existing Anglicare centres—have operated with substantial waiting lists, leaving families searching for quality early learning options close to home.

Investing in early learning is one of the most effective ways to help break cycles of disadvantage and create opportunities for children to thrive. By supporting children during their earliest years, we are helping to build stronger foundations not only for individual children, but for families and communities as a whole.

Located at 2 Record Street and adjacent to Hudson Park, the new centre will provide modern learning environments specifically designed to nurture children's development, wellbeing and sense of belonging. The facility will include six indoor learning rooms connected to outdoor play spaces, dedicated infant facilities, and family areas designed to support meaningful relationships between children, educators and parents.

The two-storey development has also been carefully planned to fit within its local setting. Dedicated basement parking and internal access for families will help streamline daily drop-off and pick-up routines while reducing parking demand on surrounding streets.

As a not-for-profit organisation, Anglicare uses income generated through its services to support its charitable mission, sustain operations, and invest in services that strengthen communities. The Bradfordville Early Learning Centre therefore represents not only an investment in early learning, but also a commitment to the long-term wellbeing, resilience and connectedness of the Goulburn community.

Construction is expected to be completed in 2027, and Anglicare is already inviting families to register their interest and receive updates on the project's progress.



Learn more and  
register your interest.  
Scan the QR code.

## Nicotine Knockout

### *Anglicare program helping young people break free from vaping*

For many young people, vaping has become a daily habit that is surprisingly difficult to give up. Despite clear evidence to the contrary, vaping was once touted as being healthier than smoking and quickly became highly normalised and easily accessible among young people. Now, health workers are seeing the impacts everyday: young people presenting with persistent coughs, disrupted sleep, rising anxiety, and a growing dependence on nicotine.

To meet this emerging need, Anglicare has begun operating Canberra's first dedicated program designed specifically to support young people who want to reduce or quit smoking and vaping.

Nicotine Knockout, based at Anglicare's Junction Youth Health Service, is open to Canberrans aged 24 and under. The program provides two streams of support—one-on-one assistance for young people ready to make a change, and education sessions delivered in schools and community settings for young people, educators, and youth and health workers.

Nurse Practitioner Diane Bowden, who works closely with participants, says many young people already want to quit but feel overwhelmed by how difficult it is.

**"Most of the young people we see don't want to be vaping anymore,"** she explains. "They've often tried to stop on their own and found it incredibly hard. What they need is

support that recognises how nicotine fits into their daily routines, their stress, and their mental health."

Bowden says the way vaping is woven into everyday life makes quitting even harder.

**"For many young people, vaping becomes linked to studying, gaming, socialising, or managing stress. When it's always within reach, breaking the habit is far more challenging."**

Nicotine Knockout takes a non-judgmental, harm-minimisation approach. Young people work with a multidisciplinary team—nurses, GPs, mental health clinicians and youth workers—to create a personalised plan. This may include counselling, regular check-ins, and free nicotine-replacement therapies. Progress is measured by persistence, not perfection and is based on the individual young person's own goals.

Alongside individual support, the program delivers evidence-based education in schools and community organisations. These sessions help young people understand the risks of vaping and where to find help, while also equipping teachers, youth workers and other professionals to respond with consistency and compassion.

Nicotine Knockout is free, confidential, and available to anyone aged 24 or under. To learn more, visit [nko.org.au](http://nko.org.au) or contact The Junction Youth Health Service on 02 6232 2423.



Visit the  
Nicotine  
Knockout  
website.  
Scan the  
QR code.



Sr Coordinator at The Junction, Narelle Luff, Sr Manager Child Youth and Family Services, Jasmine Woodland, Rachel Stephen-Smith, MLA, and Anglicare CEO, Trevor Ament at the Nicotine Knockout launch.

# Reinforcing the need for further gambling reform

## An Anglicare case study

Gerry is 24 years old and works full-time as a labourer for a fencing company in regional New South Wales. While his take-home pay is reasonable, he regularly finds himself unable to cover basic expenses such as food, rent, and bills.

For Gerry, the problem began with his love of sport. From participating to spectating, games have always provided him with a sense of belonging and a way to socialise. After finishing school, betting on sporting events with mates became a regular activity, and it wasn't long before online apps like Sportsbet became part of the routine.

But like most people who gamble, Gerry soon found himself losing more than he won. As financial pressures mounted, he struggled to afford essentials. To make ends meet, Gerry turned to buy now, pay later schemes like Zip Pay for food and everyday necessities. However, this only increased his overall spending and led him further into debt. Meanwhile, his gambling continued.

Gerry couldn't get ahead, and he couldn't break the cycle. And he was far from alone.

Men aged 25-49 make up the largest proportion of online gamblers\*. Sports betting, in particular has become highly normalised among this group, supported by advertising that is frequently targeted specifically towards young men across television, streaming services and digital platforms. This, combined with the constant accessibility of online gambling platforms and the social stigma of admitting there is a problem—and the result is a growing number of young men facing significant financial harm.

Fortunately, Gerry decided to seek support.

An Anglicare Financial Counsellor worked with Gerry to reduce the financial harm he was experiencing. Together, they established direct debits and automatic repayments for major debts, while also setting up a separate transaction account. Each payday, a predetermined amount

was transferred into this account to cover daily living expenses such as food, fuel and recreation.

Gerry was also assisted to register with BetStop, enabling him to self-exclude from online and phone gambling services. Additionally, he was referred to Uniting Gamble Aware for face-to-face therapeutic counselling. This combination of financial stabilisation and behavioural support was critical to reducing ongoing harm and helping Gerry regain control of his finances.

When Gerry first sought support he was behind on his rent and on the verge of losing his car, which was essential for his continued work. Without intervention, he may have become unemployed and at risk of homelessness.

Anglicare Financial Counsellor Chris Heckenberg, who is trained in gambling-specific financial counselling, says: "This case reinforces the importance of financial counsellors understanding the psychology of gambling, behavioural triggers and the rapidly evolving digital gambling landscape. Understanding these dynamics is essential for identifying harm early, engaging clients effectively, and delivering interventions that address both the financial and behavioural drivers of gambling."

While specialist support services play an important role in helping people already experiencing gambling harm, Anglicare supports broader reforms aimed at preventing harm before it occurs.

“If a product causes widespread harm, governments have a responsibility to make it safer.”

Anglicare Australia CEO  
Kasy Chambers

We join Anglicare Australia in calling for a number of practical measures to better protect individuals, families, and communities, as outlined in its recent paper, *Gambling and Gambling Harm*.

- A phased ban on gambling advertising;
- Stronger regulation of online gambling, including a ban on inducements and promotions;
- A national gambling regulator with stronger enforcement powers;
- More funding for gambling harm support services; and
- National leadership on mandatory cashless gaming systems for poker machines.



Read the paper,  
*Gambling and  
Gambling Harm*  
Scan the  
QR code.

\*Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS), *Regular online betting in Australia, 2022: National Gambling Trends Study* (October 2023).



If you or someone you know is experiencing harm from gambling, help is available.

- **National Gambling Helpline**  
Call 1800 858 858 anytime for free, confidential and non-judgemental support.
- **Gambling Help Online**  
[gamblinghelponline.org.au](https://gamblinghelponline.org.au)  
Access 24/7 live chat, email counselling and self-help resources online.
- **Anglicare Financial Wellbeing**  
Call (02) 6245 7100 for financial counselling and support.

# Cake, community, and connection

## 35 years of shared lunches

Andrew and Wei met over pumpkin soup, chicken with rice, and birthday cake. Both had come alone to a special community lunch hosted by Anglicare partner St John's Care, celebrating 35 years of supporting vulnerable people.

It was Wei's first time at a community lunch, having learned about it through social media. Andrew had been before but also arrived by himself. Sitting at a table together, they began to share their stories, discussing family, where they grew up, their hopes for the future, and how they came to be there that day.

Despite very different backgrounds, Andrew and Wei discovered things in common. Born and bred in south Canberra, Andrew is a 22-year-old student who wants to travel and get married someday. But at the moment, with money very tight, he barely has anything left over after paying rent on his share house. He comes to St John's for the free community lunches, and sometimes for additional food support in between.

"I'm studying social work," he says. "I want to help people like me. I know so many people who don't have enough."

Wei came to the community lunch for similar reasons. Born in China, his family moved to Australia after members of their community group faced persecution. When he arrived, he knew very little English. Both his parents were working two jobs each and he often spent long hours alone.

Today he lives in a small, shared apartment in Canberra's north. Although he lives with others, he says it can feel lonely. Like Andrew, Wei is a student struggling to make ends meet.

Anglicare runs community lunches like the one at St John's at centres in Gordon and Ashmont. While part of their aim is to give people a warm, nutritious meal, an equally important aspect is to provide an opportunity for connection.

**"Most people who experience disadvantage also experience social isolation. When you're unable to afford to be involved in community life, it can be devastatingly lonely,"** said Gordon Community Centre Facilitator Rose Flintoft.

Community lunches provide people like Andrew and Wei a chance to speak to others in a similar situation. **"Social engagement is essential for wellbeing,"** says Rose. **"It builds a sense of belonging and encourages hope for the future."**

Over the years, we've seen many people like Andrew and Wei build meaningful connections through the simple act of sharing a meal. With your support, we hope to continue this tradition for another 35 years.

To get involved with our community centres as a volunteer or participant, contact 02 6245 7100.



**Left:** Rev'd Dave, volunteer Glenda, and St John's Care Managing Director Jason, cutting the cake.  
**Right:** Anglicare Australia CEO, Kasy Chambers delivering pumpkin soup.

# What's new in Pantry Appeals?

## How we're updating our efforts to meet the times

By now, the conversation about rising living costs can feel familiar—even repetitive. But for many Australians, the situation isn't standing still—it's getting harder.

Across the country, we have less take-home pay than at any time since the 1980s—and those on low income are struggling to fill their pantries.

So are we.

With demand for emergency food relief at record levels, here's how we're adapting our Pantry Appeals to ensure no one is turned away.

### Doubling the Impact: Food and Financial Donations

Inspired by the incredible annual efforts of Telopea Park School in Canberra—who donate both 1,000 food items and \$1,000 each year—we're encouraging a new approach to giving.

Combining food donations with financial contributions gives our teams the flexibility to purchase exactly what is needed, when it is needed.

While we value every donation, we invite Pantry Appeal supporters to consider matching their bag of groceries with a financial gift. Together, these contributions allow us to respond more efficiently and effectively to the needs of our communities.

### Pre-Packed Hampers: Supporting Volunteers and Clients

From Moruya to Ashmont and across Canberra, demand for emergency food relief is so high that queues often form before we open. Meeting this need places significant physical and emotional demands on our volunteers.

To help manage this, teams have begun pre-packing hampers the day before distribution.

This simple change reduces waiting times and eases the strain on volunteers—while also creating more opportunity for meaningful connection with those we serve.

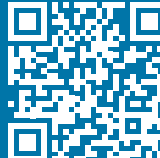
### Responding Together

As demand continues to grow, we remain committed to adapting and responding with compassion and care.

If you're able to organise or take part in a Pantry Appeal in your area, we would love to hear from you. Together, we can ensure no one in our community goes without.

Learn more: [anglicare.com.au/pantryappeal](https://anglicare.com.au/pantryappeal)

Thank you to the many schools, churches, businesses, community groups, and individuals who have already supported or committed to a Pantry Appeal this year.



**Donate today.**  
Scan the QR code.

**Top:** Students helping with collection of their Pantry Appeal donations for collection.  
**Bottom:** Contents of a pre-packed hamper.

# Together

"Bear one another's burdens,  
and so fulfill the law of Christ."  
Galatians 6:12



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