



Manna News

28th February 2018

Dear Volunteers and Members,

This is the first edition of ***Manna News***, which is intended to be our primary means of communication with our wonderful team of volunteers as well as our members and other stakeholders. We will issue ***Manna News*** on a regular basis and will distribute it by email, by posting it on our website and our Facebook page and by having hard copies available in the kitchen. Please also feel free to share ***Manna News*** with anyone you think may be interested.

Apologies in advance that this edition of ***Manna News*** may be a little long, but there has been quite a lot happening! Also, please don't be afraid to give me or any other Board member feedback on ways to improve ***Manna News***. It is meant to be a means of keeping everyone informed so please let us know if it is missing the mark.

Sad farewell, but many thanks to Bev & John

As I am sure most of you have heard, our founders Bev and John Lowe have decided it is time to focus on their passion to help seniors and as a result, sadly, they stepped down from the Board in January. We all know what a great legacy they have left and we all very much appreciate all they have done in establishing Manna in 1996 and then growing it through good times and bad to the amazing organisation that it is today. We wish Bev and John all the best and will be forever thankful for the inspiration they have given us to continue and grow their great work.

As a gesture of appreciation, we announced a proposal to establish the *Bev and John Lowe Award* to be given annually to someone who has made a significant contribution to helping the underprivileged in Perth.



With typical humility, Bev and John have asked not to be in the limelight and so accordingly, the award will be known as the Manna Award. The recipient will be chosen by a panel of senior leaders in the sector. We plan to make the first presentation at our flagship event, Homeless For A Night on Saturday 5 May.

The Board is also considering establishing a Manna *Volunteer of the Year* award to recognise the efforts of an individual who goes above and beyond to contribute to the Manna team. In an organisation full of so many great people, choosing this will be no easy task! We will send out some more information on this in the next couple of months, so please start to think about who you might like to nominate.

In addition, Karen (Kaz) Castle who managed Corporate Volunteering and our part time bookkeeper, Elsie Payne, have moved on. Many of you will know that Kaz has been a volunteer on and off for Manna over many years. In recent months, Elsie has also worked as a volunteer in the office. We thank them both for their dedication to Manna and wish them all the best for the future.

Rejuvenated Board

Bev and John's departure presented an opportunity to make some changes to the Board and for us to enhance the skills and experience that are required to run an organisation that is as important and complex as Manna. In addition to myself as Chairperson, the other members of the Board are now:

Duncan Calder (Deputy Chairperson)
Janet Weeden (Secretary)
Garry McIver (Treasurer)
Damian Burton
Sheena Cher

Individual biographies for our Board members will be available shortly through our new website, and I invite you to view them once we launch it over the next couple of weeks. The new Board has extensive skills gained in the not-for-profit sector and in business, including in hospitality, logistics, law and finance.

Like you, the Board members and myself are also volunteers. Also like you, we are all passionate about being part of such a great organisation and we are very keen that the great work done by Manna continues and grows and the values of compassion and care flourish.

In addition to our legal responsibilities as Board Members of a registered charity, our main responsibilities include:

- that the "workplace" is **safe for all employees and volunteers**. Put simply, this is our most important task and includes all aspects of what we do, including the preparation of food in the kitchen, vehicle movement and activities at Weld Square.
- Ensuring the organisation is **financially viable** i.e. we raise enough money through fundraising, sponsorship, donations etc. so that we can cover our costs. As we would all appreciate, this is the least appealing aspect of running any organisation like Manna. As we would also understand, it is also vitally important.



- That we continue to honour the spirit and intent of Manna. In short this is best expressed as **helping the homeless and underprivileged in the Perth area**. This is an enormous task, so it is important that we put our scarce resources to good use and focus on the areas of particular need.

We are all available via email (firstname.surname@manna.org.au) so please let us know if you have any ideas for making Manna even better than it is.

Management and Support Staff

Pleasingly, our financial position is improving under the new Board. However, at this stage we still are not in a position to engage a full time/paid General Manager or CEO. For some months, the Board members have been managing the organisation themselves and this is likely to continue for a while yet. This involves a heavy time commitment from the Board members who are all working hard to keep the balls in the air. You can find one or more Board members in the office most days.

I am also delighted to welcome several other new team members to the office/support teams:

- The role of Administration Officer will be shared between:
 - **Aleisha** (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday), and
 - **Kaytlin** (Thursday, Friday)
- Bookkeeper, **Renee**. Renee is a certified practising accountant (CPA) and is doing the books on a volunteer basis, so she will be in and out of the office.
- Logistics Officer, **David**. David is standing in for our casual employee and volunteer Mal Heafey who is attending to family matters interstate. We hope that Mal will decide to rejoin us. David's main activities are dropping off and picking up donated supplies for the kitchen and supporting the Manna Kids (aka the school breakfast programme) activities.

Aleisha and **Kaytlin** are both available on email (info@manna.org.au) and by phone on 1300 626 624. They will be in and around the office from 9am till 3pm on their respective days and are the primary point of contact for internal and external queries about Manna. Both will regularly pop into the kitchen.

Despite all being relatively new, **Aleisha, Kaytlin, Renee** and **David** are doing a superb job and I want to publicly thank them for their efforts.

Volunteers

As a volunteer with Manna myself for over 22 years, I fully recognise that our volunteers are the heart and soul of Manna. I continue to be humbled to be part of an organisation where there are so many good people giving their time to help the needy in our community. The Board members and myself want you to know how appreciative we are for the work and help you give, particularly given the difficult times we have had, at times, in the last 12 months.

For the short term, fellow Board member, Janet Weeden, will continue to act as the Volunteer Coordinator. Janet is an experienced and committed volunteer herself and will be well known to many of you, having



spent the last five years as part of the Wednesday kitchen team, and so understands well issues of concern to volunteers. Janet can be contacted through Aleisha and Kaytlin in the office or via email janet.weeden@manna.org.au or mobile, 0439 406 120. We hope to find someone to take on this role permanently in the near future.

Whilst all volunteers are special, could I please put out a special note of appreciation to our Team Leaders:

- **Annie Vine** (Previous Monday's Team Leader)

Monday's team hasn't had a team leader for a while and we would like to commend the team on doing fantastic work collectively (Monday)

- **Penny Hooper & Julia Zongaro** (Tuesday)
- **Julie Hetherington** (Wednesday)
- **Brett Halvorson** (Thursday)
- **Indira Aramandla** (Friday)

The Board & myself are very grateful to this wonderful group for coming in week in, week out and taking care of their team and preparing such wonderful meals: many thanks! We thank Indira as she prepares to join her husband, Paul, in his new role in the Middle East.

On a sad note, I would also like to mention the passing of the daughter of one of our long time volunteers in our Food Hamper programme, Irene Indich. Irene remains in our thoughts and prayers.

Financial Position

I won't go into too much detail, but I did want to give you an insight into our financial position. Several of you received our annual report at the AGM late last year. The practical reality is that in Financial Year 2017, the organisation spent more money than we took in.

Our financial position as reflected on the Profit and Loss Statement in October 2017 showed a cash on hand balance of approximately \$13,000, placing Manna in a very vulnerable financial position.

There are many reasons for this situation, but I want to give you some assurance that the Board and I are very aware that we must be financially sustainable and that the new Board has made significant progress in getting us to that position. We thank our key sponsors and donors for their ongoing commitment and are delighted to have welcomed many new donors.

I am pleased to report that for both of the first two months of 2018, January and February, our position has stabilised and the money received through donations and sponsorship has exceeded our costs. The Profit & Loss Statement in January 2018 reflected a better financial position for Manna, with our cash on hand balance increasing to approximately \$87,000. This has been a positive turnaround over a period of three short months, and we expect this to continue over the next few months as our fundraising and cost management initiatives bear fruit.



As a Board we are very focused on increasing donations and sponsorship as well as managing our costs. We very much appreciate all the help given to us by our donors and sponsors and, of course, the work being done on a daily basis by the volunteers.

New Kitchen Premises

Our kitchen lease at Connect Victoria Park expires on 30 June 2018 and we need to find new kitchen premises as Connect VP looks to expand its services. The Board has been actively looking for a commercial kitchen that is affordable and convenient to Weld Square. Whilst this is not an easy task, the Board is confident and we look forward to sharing details of our new location with you. We are also mindful of issues such as parking for volunteers. Of course, we would love to hear if you know of a suitable kitchen that might be available for our use.

New Website (www.manna.org.au)

Board member Sheena Cher has spent many tens of hours developing a brand new Manna website which will be launched in mid March. Watch this space! One of the goals in setting up the website, in addition to providing general information on Manna, is to make it easier for volunteers to engage with the organisation and obtain relevant information and also to make it easier for people/organisations/businesses to donate.

We will send word out when it is done, so please spend some time having a look and give us some feedback on what you think. Please also highlight it to your own personal and work network.

Manna Kids

Whilst our core activity remains feeding the homeless at Weld Square, it is my absolute intention that we also keep our efforts focused on our other key effort, **Manna Kids**. **Manna Kids** is our program that provides a healthy breakfast to needy children at 16 different locations (given co-location this actually equates to 20 schools) around Perth. Given the clear link between eating a healthy breakfast and all aspects of school performance, the Board and I really want to continue this activity.

In that light, thanks to more excellent work by Sheena, we have partnered with Foodbank WA to provide most of the supplies for our school breakfast program. This will allow us to achieve compliance with a program developed by a team of professional nutritionists.

We will also save on approximately 70% of the direct food costs associated with the program and the savings are in turn being put to great use. Manna will continue to provide additional supplementary fresh fruit & snack vegetables, dairy products, fresh bread and eggs where available to all our schools. In addition, we will also continue to provide all the logistics of food pick-up/delivery etc. from suppliers to the schools and so on.

Most importantly there is absolutely no reduction in the quality of the food provided to our schools.



As this will result in significant cost savings for Manna, we are going to trial an extension to the schools' program using donations that would previously have funded the breakfast program. Details of this exciting new program will be made available in the next months.

Sheena Cher is the Manna Kids Coordinator.

Homeless for a Night

This year, our major fundraiser, **Homeless for a Night**, is being held on **Saturday 5 May**. More details will be available on the website, but in short, the aim is to get as many people as possible to sleep "rough" and become aware of the work we do. Thanks to the generous support of the Western Australian Trotting Association, we again have the use of Gloucester Park as our venue. There will also be food stalls and other family entertainment.

Details will be on the new website so please encourage your families and friends to join in the sleepout and start your plans to generate sponsorship for your participation. We will update our website weekly on this exciting event.

Environmental Impact

All of our stakeholders and us would like to see us being as environmentally responsible as possible. Whilst this remains a work in progress, some of our plans include:

- Serving food at Weld Square in biodegradable packaging. In the next few weeks we will do some trials of various options, and hopefully shortly after that, we will adopt this as our standard protocol. Again, please don't be afraid to give your advice and feedback on this important initiative as we conduct the trial and error phase. It is important to note that this change is possible due to a significant donation from Crown Perth, specifically for this purpose.
- Kitchen waste. Many of the kitchen teams will be aware that our fruit and vegetable waste is now going to a worm farm. This free service, which saves us the cost of disposing of the waste, also ensures the waste is being put to good use and not creating landfill. We appreciate the help and support from the kitchen teams in managing and segmenting their waste and ensuring **only** fruit and vegetable waste is put in the small green wheelie bins. Egg shells are to be put in a plastic bag and the bag can be put in the food bins. The worm farm will crush the egg shells before using them.
- Large red waste bin. After reviewing the kitchen waste protocols, including the fruit and vegetable initiative above, we think we can get by without the large red waste bin, currently in the alley way. To make this happen, we will need to ensure that we do all the same things as we are all doing in our homes i.e. crushing and folding, stacking meat trays etc. In addition to reducing our environmental footprint, releasing the large red waste bin will provide us with some cost savings.

Engagement with the Manna Office/Support Team

For those unaware, the Manna office is at 249B Albany Highway, Victoria Park. You enter off Mackie Street, just a few doors down from the kitchen.



Please visit the office if you have any queries or would like to meet Aleisha, Kaytlin, Renee and any Board members who may be there.

Thank You!!!!

Over the last year there have been many changes and challenges in the Manna kitchen.

Despite this, our dedicated and hardworking volunteers haven't let any of this interfere with their objective of ensuring that a hot and healthy meal is served at the park. I want to once more thank all the volunteers for their patience, dedication and hard work during these trying times.

Again, special thanks to the Team Leaders who have been wonderful, as usual.

Thanks must also go to Gary Jackson who has been a great help through this difficult period and in the process, done such a lot to improve our kitchen practices.

Finally, we wish to thank those members who renewed their memberships or took out new membership.

Your loyalty and support for Manna will make Manna a stronger organisation that contributes powerfully in helping the needs of the homeless.

Yours Truly,



Heather Stewart-Johnson
Chairperson

heather@manna.org.au

0450 636 413

1 March 2018