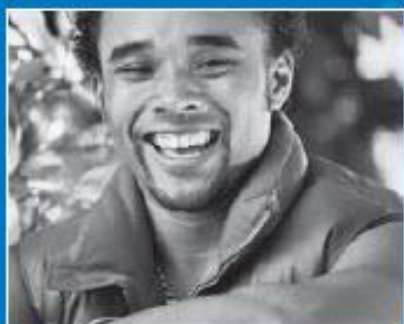


# *canberra men's centre*

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*working for men and our community*



*annual report*  
**2008**

## Directors Reports for Annual General Meeting 2008

### 1. Director – Community Services

#### **Men's Accommodation and Support Service (MASS), Accommodation, Outreach, and Individual Case Management Programs**

##### **Accommodation Program**

The year has given us all many opportunities to participate in the positive outcomes that the ACT Homelessness Initiative has achieved.

Over the last twelve months we have managed 35 tenancy placements which included relocations to more appropriate units and exits from the program. Exits represent both successful transitions from the program and our inability to support some individuals during this time. However, the flexibility of the program will ensure that those individuals will reenter the program when their personal circumstances are such that they are once again able to take advantage of the service.

Referrals to the program have been received predominantly from Mental Health Services, Corrections ACT, PSU, The Canberra Hospital, Office of the Community Advocate, and from several prisons in NSW. The case managers have worked tirelessly to achieve excellent results for all of the men that have joined the program, and they have maintained critical, professional linkages with all of the support agencies that have contributed to the successful outcomes of our accommodation service.

It is with pleasure and pride that I report that the MASS program was nominated in the Australian Crime and Violence Prevention Awards 2008 and received one of seven state and territory Certificates of Merit.

##### **Outreach**

We engaged a new outreach worker in the second half of 2007 and in keeping with the nature of the program they hit the ground running. The successes of this program can be attributed to the flexibility of the service but more so to the commitment and professionalism of the case-worker. It is self-evident that homeless people aren't to be found in stable locations and so effective outreach is the primary means of engaging with some of the most marginalised people in our community. Outreach services are fundamental to successful interventions for homelessness.

##### **Individual Case Management**

The individual case management program has now been in operation since November 2003 and continues to provide the team with a variety of challenges. The opportunity to work closely with a particular group of men has highlighted the fact that there are no short-term answers to the needs of some people with complex issues. The program has an underpinning principle of flexibility and perseverance and this principle is fundamental in achieving successful outcomes for the target group.

It was acknowledged at the outset of this program that the nature of the issues with regard to tenancy would indicate a long-term involvement with those clients who suffer a range of specifically complex needs. In recognition of the need for that long-term involvement we successfully negotiated with Disability ACT to secure base funding that will ensure that our particular client group will benefit from long-term and stable support.

**Management**

I wish to acknowledge my appreciation for the effort, and often unrecognised contributions, made by my colleague and co-director Greg. We commenced this program trusting that we would be able to make a success of a somewhat unusual arrangement as we believe in the concept of a synergy of skills and expertise. The successes that have been achieved over the past four (4) years are a testimony to that belief. I also acknowledge the successful partnership that we have enjoyed with Canberra Fathers' and Children Services (CANFaCS) since 2004 and look forward to sharing more exciting times with them in the development of the ACT men's sector.

I wish also to express my sincere gratitude to all members of 'the team' new and old for their professionalism, commitment and support as we continue to grow through some trying times. I particularly wish to express my deepest gratitude to Jaymmie Midegs and Michael Malyszko for their unstinting commitment to the MASS Accommodation Program since the beginning which led to our ACVP award - thank you!

**Gerald Franks****Director Community Services****November 2008**

## **2. Director – Men’s Centre**

### **Counselling Services**

Of all the Men’s Centre events and activities this year, the most significant by far has been the success of our 2008 budget submission. Each year in our Performance Reports to the DDHCS Community Services Program we have raised the need for a significant increase in our counselling capacity to enable us to better meet the needs of a very diverse group of men living in the ACT and region. Our submission to the 2008 ACT Budget included a proposed budget of \$235,000 (\$227,000 for recurrent operating costs and \$8,000 for establishment costs). Our persistence paid off and the Men’s Centre started the 2008-09 financial year with recurrent funding increasing from \$52,000 to over \$200,000. Several months into this financial year, we have been able to offer the position of Counselling Services Manager to Alistair Jones, former President and Vice-president of the CMC Board of Directors. His experience in family counselling, mediation and the wider community services sector will make him an invaluable addition to our team.

In the 2007-08 financial year, we employed 3 part-time counsellors for 61 hours per week to provide an information and referral service and intake and ongoing counselling. During this period the Men’s Centre provided phone and face-to-face support to 720 individuals for a total of 1234 contacts. In 2008-09 we will employ one full-time and four part-time counselling staff for a total of 124.4 hours per week. The level of support offered by the Men’s Centre to men in the ACT will rise proportionately, with a significant commitment of our new capacity to be reserved for the intake service, offering phone support and up to two appointments for people needing to be seen immediately or requiring only brief support. This service has proved an extremely valuable one for men in crisis, as it has for men requiring practical support and advice for anything from dealing with depression and suicidal ideation or recent separation from their families to help with writing application forms or dealing with CentreLink.

Earlier in 2008, the Men’s Centre also signed what we hope is just the first MOU with another organization – SIDS’n’Kids – to provide counselling support to fathers who would prefer to be supported by male counsellors.

### **CMC promotion and Sector Development**

CMC’s public profile has increased significantly this year for a number of reasons – one being the excellent work being done by the MASS program and covered by Gerald in his above report, and a second being our first meeting of the Men’s Policy Group, a CMC initiative which requires urgent attention to restore momentum in early 2009.

A notable third is the Men’s Centre continued involvement with the White Ribbon campaign, which has given us a more visible community profile through the Canberra Times, television and radio, and broadened our network to include major ACT sporting codes, the media, ACT unions, the private sector and ACT government. When the Board was reviewing the CMC Strategic Plan earlier this year, we expressed a desire to become the men’s community service organization that government or the media would contact as a first port of call to provide advice or comment, and we seem to be on the way. For example, we were invited (along with MensLink and CANFaCS) to consult with the ACT government on the development of a men’s health policy, a project which we believe will resume soon now the ACT elections are over.

## **Administration**

This year has brought several new challenges for the administration of the Men's Centre, in particular the development of our reception service. Intake counsellors naturally carry the greater proportion of the workload for this service, and have the maturity and the professional skills and training required to deal with the frequently complex presentations of current and new CMC clients. This has led to an increase in reception capacity, but with limits still imposed by the need for intake counsellors to provide support sessions with clients.

Another challenge has been ensuring all staff have adequate work space, given that the Griffin Centre has no other rooms available to assist us with expansion. Some modifications to our office layout, including the construction of two new walls, have allowed a better utilization of the space available and have improved security at the same time. Any further expansion will only be possible if we convert our group room to office use, which will require the hiring of other rooms elsewhere in the Griffin Centre for larger meetings.

The Men's Centre has recently replaced all of our old desk chairs, second-hand when we bought them in 2004, with new and better quality chairs which better meet our OH&S responsibilities to employees. We have also recently completed a computer upgrade program, replacing surplus old MASS laptops with newer desktops by taking advantage of recent price falls. The new office network set up with the installation of our server last financial year led to significant increases in IT servicing and maintenance costs, and will require close monitoring in 2008-09 so future budget projections can be based on a full year's actual service costs.

The Men's Centre staff have this year proven themselves again to be committed to providing a professional standard of services to every individual who has contact with the Men's Centre – whether MASS or ICM clients, casual visitors, walk-in referrals, case workers or management staff of other agencies, partners, families and friends. They are the face of Canberra Men's Centre to the external world, and they do us justice.

**Greg Aldridge**

**Director Men's Centre**

**November 2008**