

ST MERKORIOUS CHARITY

Issue 33 Jan - March 2025

FROM THE FOUNDER

PAULA NICOLAS

We hope you all had a restful and joyful Christmas break surrounded by loved ones. As we step into 2025, we are filled with excitement and gratitude for the journey ahead at St. Merkorious Charity (SMC).

This year has already begun on a high note with our special Australia Day celebration, held at the SMC Head Office in Strathfield South. Thanks to the generous support of the National Australia Day Council, whose \$10,000 grant made the event possible, we were able to host a day full of fun, food, and laughter, with generous hampers for guests to take home. It was a wonderful way to bring the community together and celebrate what makes Australia so special.

I would also like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all our amazing volunteers. Your continued dedication ensures that our service runs smoothly and reaches those who need it most — we couldn't do it without you.

In celebration of the Lunar New Year – Year of the Snake, St Merkorious Charity was honoured to be invited by the Multicultural Community Association to host a stand at the vibrant Rhodes Foreshore Park festival. It was a day of cultural celebration and community spirit — enjoyed by all who attended.

Finally, a very special thank you to Gamble Aware NSW for providing informative and engaging seminars. These sessions have been incredibly valuable not only for our clients but also for our volunteers and staff, helping us all better understand the risks of gambling and how to support those affected.

We're looking forward to a fulfilling and impactful year, and we thank you for continuing to support the mission of St Merkorious Charity.

With heartfelt thanks,
Paula Nicolas



**St. Merkorious
Charity**



Parramatta Outreach Service - Every Monday Evening

PRINCE ALFRED SQUARE

Every Monday evening, our Parramatta outreach blossoms into fellowship and generosity. With the dedication of our wonderful volunteers, we share love—and around 80 care packs and nourishing meals—with neighbors who need it most. We were thrilled to be joined by Viliami Foketi from the NBL1 Sydney Comets Basketball team, whose presence added to the spirit of community and care. Thank you for making it all possible.



Fairfield Service - Every Monday Lunch Time

FAIRFIELD COMMUNITY CENTRE

St. Merkorious Charity proudly supports culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities. Every Monday lunchtime in Fairfield, we host a welcoming space where 50–80 locals can enjoy a free morning tea and lunch. More than just a meal, our Fairfield service offers a chance to connect, socialise, and celebrate both shared and diverse experiences in a warm, inclusive environment. A sincere thank you to the amazing students from Australian Catholic University (ACU) who joined us recently at our Fairfield community service.



Woolloomooloo Outreach & Fellowship Service - every Friday evening

164 CATHEDRAL ST. WOOLLOOMOOLOO (NEXT TO POLICE STATION)

Every Friday evening, our outreach service at Woolloomooloo provides more than just essentials—we offer warmth, connection, and care. Our dedicated volunteers serve healthy hot meals, desserts, drinks, tea and coffee, along with clothing, pillows, blankets, and care packs. Through heartfelt conversations, they bring comfort and companionship to around 60–80 individuals in need.



Rhodes Outreach Service

2 CAVELL AVE RHODES

Occasionally, St. Merkorious Charity hosts a special evening dedicated to supporting Sydney's disadvantaged. We transport around 80–100 individuals, including rough sleepers, from Redfern, Martin Place, and Parramatta to the St. Merkorious Church hall in Rhodes. There, guests enjoy a warm, sit-down meal, free haircuts, clean clothing, and take-home hampers. The evening is filled with laughter, connection, and hope—offering a safe, welcoming space to relax, share stories, and experience kindness without judgment.



VOLUNTEERS

A huge shoutout to all the amazing boys from St. Patrick's College Strathfield who generously volunteered their time and energy over the past two weeks at St. Merkorious Charity. Your dedication, hard work, and compassion have made a real impact in helping us deliver vital food relief to those in need. Whether it was sorting, packing, or lending a hand in the kitchen, you've been an invaluable part of our mission. We're incredibly grateful for your support.



A big thank you to the incredible KPMG staff who volunteered with us on 20th February. Your time, effort, and enthusiasm were invaluable in helping us prepare meals to those doing it tough. We truly appreciate your support and commitment to making a positive difference in the community.



VOLUNTEERS

A huge THANK YOU to the amazing staff from St. Francis Xavier Arncliffe who generously gave their time on Tuesday, 28th February to help us prepare meals for those in need!

Your kindness and generosity truly make a world of difference. We're so grateful for your support— together, we're making a meaningful impact in the lives of many.



A heartfelt thank you to Dane and his teammates Jake, Ned, and Harry from Sydney Uni Football Club for volunteering on 24 January at our Woolloomooloo service!

It's dedicated volunteers like you who help keep our service running smoothly and make a real difference in the lives of those we support. We truly appreciate your time, energy, and kindness.



Australia Day Celebration at SMC

With the incredible support of the Australian Government through the National Australia Day Council, St. Merkorious Charity proudly hosted a heartfelt Australia Day celebration on Sunday, 25 January 2025, at our headquarters. We were honored to welcome Jing Hong from the office of Sally Sitou MP and Metro Assist and the President of the Chinese Dance group to join us on this special day. Their presence added great warmth and meaning to our celebration.

The event was filled with connection, joy, and community spirit. Guests shared a delicious meal, exchanged stories, and each received a special Australia Day hamper to take home. It was a day that truly embodied the spirit of togetherness.

Australia Day is more than just a celebration—it's a time to reflect on and honour the diverse cultures, histories, and experiences that shape our nation. From the First Australians to long-standing families and recent arrivals, we embrace the richness of our collective journey.

May this day remind us of the values that unite us as Australians: unity, inclusion, and the shared hope for a brighter, more compassionate future.

Here's to continuing that journey together—toward a stronger, more inclusive Australia.



Lunar New Year - Ashfield Bowling Club

On 29 January, St. Merkorious Charity was delighted to join in the Lunar New Year celebrations at Ashfield Bowling Club, thanks to a kind invitation from Jing Hong at Metro Assist.

It was a vibrant and joyful cultural experience—filled with dumpling-making, lawn bowling, and the chance to connect with local service providers. The event was a wonderful celebration of diversity, community, and the rich traditions that bring us all together. Thank you for having us!



2025 RHODES LUNAR NEW YEAR SNAKE CARNIVAL

On 8 & 9 February, St. Merkorious Charity was honored to take part in the 2025 Rhodes Lunar New Year Snake Carnival at Rhodes Foreshore Park, thanks to the generous invitation from the Rhodes Multicultural Community Association and Jing Hong from Metro Assist.

We had the pleasure of hosting vibrant stalls featuring delicious food, our charity, and a second-hand market—celebrating community spirit and cultural diversity.

A heartfelt thank you to the Rhodes Multicultural Community Association for organising such an unforgettable event and for showcasing the incredible talent within our community. We wish the Chinese community a prosperous, joyful, and blessed Lunar New Year.



NSW Parliament House

We extend our heartfelt thanks to Dr David Saliba, MP, for his gracious invitation to attend Question Time at Parliament House on Tuesday, 18 February, and for the warm and generous official welcome. It was an honour to share a delightful luncheon afterward with Jason Yat-Sen Li, MP, and Mayor John Faker of Burwood Council.



C3 Church Ryde

A heartfelt thank you to Helen Maguire for inviting us to the C3 Business Spheres evening at C3 Church Ryde on 27 February 2025.

It was a truly enriching experience where we had the opportunity to connect with others, reflect on the purpose of work, and worship together in the spirit of Christ. The evening was both inspiring and uplifting.

May our work continue to be a vessel through which we serve others, reflect Christ's love, and share the gospel.



International Womens Day

We had the privilege of joining the CBCC Chamber on 7 March 2025 to celebrate International Women's Day, embracing this year's powerful theme: 'Accelerate Action'.

An inspiring panel highlighted the strength, resilience, and achievements of women in leadership, reminding us of the continued urgency to drive gender equality and empowerment forward.

Together, let's keep pushing for progress and strive toward a world where every woman and girl has the opportunity to thrive.



One & All

It was a pleasure to welcome Romy Wolman and Basil Klevansky from One & All to our centre. Based in Rosebery, NSW, One & All is an inspiring creative hub that supports people of all abilities through a range of inclusive services and programs.

We're excited about the opportunity to collaborate and strengthen the support we offer to our vibrant community!



Women in Health Network

We were grateful to welcome Vani and Bharathi from the Women in Health Network (WiHN) to our centre. WiHN is committed to eliminating gender inequities and advancing the health, safety, and wellbeing of women and gender-diverse people.

We're excited about the potential of this collaboration and the opportunities ahead to drive meaningful change and promote gender equity—together.



Gamble Aware NSW

On Monday, 24 February, we were pleased to host a workshop in Fairfield led by Djimi Barber, a Financial and Gambling Counsellor with Gamble Aware NSW. Djimi, who works closely with Arabic-speaking clients, shared valuable insights, research, and support strategies to address gambling-related harm in our communities.

With the strong link between gambling and homelessness, this issue is deeply aligned with our mission. We remain committed to raising awareness and providing support where it's needed most.



Waterloo Autumn Festival, hosted by Danks St District and Dasco Australia

We were thrilled on Sunday 30 March 2025 to participate in the vibrant Waterloo Autumn Festival, hosted by Danks St District and our Major Sponsor, DASCO Australia. This fantastic event brought the community together with lively music, delicious food, and engaging activities, all in celebration of DASCO's exciting new project in Waterloo.

We're especially grateful to DASCO Australia for their unwavering support over the past 12 years. Their dedication has been instrumental in helping us carry out our mission, and we simply wouldn't be where we are today without them.

Despite the weather keeping us on our toes, the atmosphere was buzzing! Our stand was a hit, featuring crowd favorites like extra virgin olive oil, za'atar, date biscuits, and za'atar toasts, adding a delicious touch to the day.





**St. Merkorious
Charity**

2025 Easter Appeal

ESSENTIAL ITEMS FOR DONATION

PACKAGED FOOD:

NOODLES, TUNA, CHICKEN, SPAM, BEANS, LENTILS,
SOUPS, CANNED FRUIT, SWEET AND SAVORY
BISCUITS, HONEY, JAM, SUGAR, TEA, COFFEE, HOT
CHOCOLATE, PASTA, RICE, LONG LIFE MILK,
CEREAL, BOTTLED WATER

HYGIENE PRODUCTS:

BODY WASH, SHAVING CREAM, SOAP, TOOTHPASTE,
TOOTHBRUSHES, TISSUES, SHAMPOO/ CONDITIONER,
DEODORANT, HAND WASH, SANITIZER AND WIPES.

OR

DONATION OF FUNDS

ST. MERKORIOUS CHARITY ASSOC.

BSB: 032 069

ACC: 427 906

0478 760 450 or 0421 743 220

charity@stmerkorious.com.au



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