

FROM THE FOUNDER

PAULA NICOLAS

I hope everyone had a blessed Christmas and New Year spent with loved ones. As we step into a new year, we look ahead with excitement and gratitude for all that is to come.

Firstly, I would like to sincerely thank our dedicated staff, volunteers, and sponsors for their ongoing commitment and hard work. Your support continues to make a meaningful difference in the lives of so many within our community.

The first quarter of the year has already been filled with memorable moments. We were proud to celebrate Australia Day at Prince Alfred Park, where a wonderful time was shared by all who attended.

We also marked International Women's Day with a special morning tea, recognising and celebrating the incredible women across our organisation whose contributions inspire and uplift our community every day.

In addition, we officially launched our Easter Appeal 2026. I extend a heartfelt thank you to all the generous individuals and schools who have already contributed. Your support will go a long way in helping families in need during this important time.

A major milestone for us this quarter was the opening of our very first social enterprise, Olive Tree Cafe in Hudson Park, Strathfield. The grand opening was a truly special occasion, bringing together our community in a beautiful and welcoming space. From the warm atmosphere to the great coffee and delicious food, it was a joyful celebration and a proud moment for us all.

As we move into the next season, I wish you and your families a blessed and peaceful Easter.

With heartfelt thanks,

Paula Nicolas





Parramatta Outreach Service - Every Monday Evening

PRINCE ALFRED SQUARE

Every Monday evening, something special happens in Parramatta. At Prince Alfred Square, our volunteers bring the space to life, creating a place of kindness and connection for people doing it tough. Together, they prepare and distribute around 80 meals along with essential care packs, offering not just food, but dignity and support.

We are deeply grateful to our volunteer team whose consistent dedication, generosity, and teamwork underpin this service each week. Their presence helps foster a strong sense of belonging and provides vital support to members of our community.



Fairfield Service - Every Monday Lunch Time

FAIRFIELD COMMUNITY CENTRE

St. Merkorious Charity is committed to serving and uplifting people from all cultural and language backgrounds within our community. Each Monday lunchtime, our Fairfield service opens its doors to around 50 to 80 locals who come together to share a free morning tea and lunch.

This is more than a meal service, it is a welcoming space where people can meet, talk, and feel part of something bigger. Within this friendly environment, conversations flow easily, new connections are made, and the richness of different cultures is embraced alongside the values and experiences we all share.



**St. Merkorious
Charity**

Woolloomooloo Outreach & Fellowship Service - every Friday evening

164 CATHEDRAL ST. WOOLLOOMOOLOO (NEXT TO POLICE STATION)

Each Friday evening, our Woolloomooloo outreach brings people together in a safe and welcoming environment, supporting around 60–80 individuals facing difficult circumstances. With the help of committed volunteers, a range of hot meals, desserts, drinks, and essential care packs are provided, alongside warm conversation and sincere care that help create moments of comfort and connection.

We are truly grateful to our wonderful volunteers. Your ongoing kindness and commitment make a real difference each week, sharing far more than food, you are also sharing respect, encouragement, and a sense of hope and humanity.



Rhodes Outreach Service

2 CAVELL AVE RHODES

Once every quarter, St. Merkorious Charity brings people together for a dedicated evening of care and support for some of Sydney's most vulnerable residents. Around 80–100 guests, including individuals experiencing homelessness from areas such as Redfern, Martin Place, Parramatta and nearby suburbs, are welcomed into the St Mary & St Merkorious Coptic Orthodox Church Hall in Rhodes.

The evening offers a sit-down meal in a warm and respectful setting, along with access to free haircuts, clothing, and takeaway hampers. As the night unfolds, the place fills with conversation and connection, creating a safe, inclusive environment where guests can relax, be heard, and experience compassion and dignity in a non-judgmental space.



Australia Day 2026

In the lead-up to Australia Day, we delivered meals and hampers in advance to families and individuals so they could celebrate the day in their own homes with comfort and support. On Australia Day we celebrated at Prince Alfred Park in Parramatta, where we provided hot meals, care packs and haircuts to those in need within the community.

We are grateful for the support of the National Australia Day Council, whose \$10,000 grant helped make this initiative possible. The week also offered an opportunity to reflect on and acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, past, present and emerging, while celebrating Australia through practical acts of care and community support.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all our amazing volunteers, including Nora and Curls for generously providing haircuts, and Frankie from Saltshaker Films for capturing the service and helping share these meaningful moments.



Certificate of Appreciation

We sincerely thank Bankstown Community Corrections for their Certificate of Appreciation and for recognising our ongoing work and contribution to the community.



International Womens Week

For this year's International Women's Day, we hosted a special morning tea to honour and celebrate the incredible women in our community. The occasion recognised our dedicated staff, Amira, Jackie, Joya, Carolina and Ghada, along with our regular Tuesday morning volunteers from the Sovereign Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem, Knights of Malta. We also extend our heartfelt thanks to our chef for preparing a beautiful selection of refreshments, and to all those who continue to give their time, care, and support to our mission.



Community Student Graduation from SMC

Congratulations to our Community Students - Star who graduated from SMC on 11 March 2026! This is a wonderful achievement and a testament to your hard work, dedication, and perseverance. We are incredibly proud of all that you have accomplished and the determination you have shown throughout your journey with us at St. Merkorious Charity. As you move on to the next chapter, we wish you every success and happiness. May your future be filled with exciting opportunities, continued growth, and many achievements.



Donation - Mayor Benjamin Cai

We extend our sincere gratitude to Benjamin Cai Mayor of Strathfield for his generous donation received on 13 March 2026.

Your support helps us continue providing vital services and assistance to individuals and families in our community. Contributions such as yours make a meaningful difference and enable us to expand our impact where it is needed most.



Easter Appeal 2026

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who generously donated to our Easter Appeal 2026. Your kindness and compassion helped bring hope, relief, and support to individuals and families facing hardship during the Easter season. Thanks to your contributions, we were able to provide essential food, assistance, and care to those who needed it most. Every donation, big or small, made a meaningful difference. On behalf of the entire St Merkorious Charity community, thank you for standing with us and helping us make a positive impact in the lives of others. Together, we are building a stronger, more caring community.

Homebush Boys High School



St Patricks College Strathfield



St Marthas Catholic Primary



Grand Opening of Olive Tree Café

We extend our sincere thanks to everyone who helped make the Grand Opening of Olive Tree Café in Hudson Park Strathfield on Saturday, 21 March 2026 such a memorable occasion.

We are deeply grateful to our generous sponsors — PAYCE Foundation, DASCO Australia, and Skylife Foundation. We also warmly acknowledge our distinguished guests — Sally Sitou MP, Mayor Ben Cai, Councillors Rory Nosworthy, Ester Kim, and John-Paul Baladi. Special thanks go to our dedicated café managers, Jean and Paul, as well as our committed staff, committees, and volunteers for their ongoing support.

Your presence, encouragement, and generosity played an important role in the success of this milestone event. We truly appreciate your contribution in helping bring Olive Tree Café to life and in strengthening our impact within the community.





St. Merkorious Charity

2026 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

OLIVE TREE

Grand Opening



21ST MAR 2026

HUDSON PARK, STRATHFIELD
LOCATED OPPOSITE 22 MITCHELL ROAD

* EVENT HIGHLIGHTS *

- Spin to Win with Food Menu Purchase
- Face Painting for Kids
- Giveaways Throughout the Day
- Free Babycinos & Puppycinos All Day
- Flower Decorating Classes



PROJECT BY



ST. MERKORIOUS
Charity



**St. Merkorious
Charity**

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!



TASKS WILL INCLUDE...

- Assist in our commercial kitchen
- Assist in the warehouse with sorting and packing
- Hamper packing
- Various outreach services
- **Hours are flexible**

Get in touch: Unit 3, 6-20 Braidwood St. Strathfield South
charity@stmerkorious.com.au

www.stmerkorious.org.au

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