

40 STORIES IN 40 YEARS

Anne Turley



Palliative Care Victoria Life Member, Anne Turley, first began working in the sector almost 37 years ago, just as palliative care was emerging in Victoria.

Ordained in 1977, and following a number of years in Church Ministry and Chaplaincy, Anne was appointed to the role of Chaplain Grief Counsellor at Melbourne City Mission Palliative Care – the first palliative care program in Victoria. The objective of the position was to explore ways of facilitating spiritually sensitive care to people across faiths and cultures. Under that umbrella she also coordinated the Volunteer and Bereavement support programs.

Anne says that piloting and evaluating the first palliative care program in Victoria was a natural project for Melbourne City Mission to undertake.

“Melbourne City Mission was established as a non-denominational organisation in 1854, by the city churches of Melbourne. It has a long history of advocating and caring for people in the community.”

“We all strongly believed in the program and wished to see the development of palliative care in Victoria.”

“The palliative care pilot program at Melbourne City Mission began in 1981 with a small inpatient unit and home care program. Medical direction was provided by the Royal Melbourne Hospital and the University of Melbourne was engaged to undertake an evaluation into the cost effectiveness of the program.”

“Right from the beginning, the program adopted an action/reflection practice model. Over the years a culture, maintained today, was established where the interdisciplinary team would seek feedback and ask questions like; whose needs are being met? How did that work? What can we learn from our mistakes? What could we do differently? How could we operate more effectively, more efficiently? Who has access? Who is missing out? How do we allocate resources equitably?”

Late in 1984, the initial three-year funding grant given to Melbourne City Mission by the Kellogg Foundation and Federal Government to establish the program ran out. Anne says that the Melbourne City Mission's Board decided to provide "bridging finance" to keep the program operating until an ongoing funding stream could be established.

"It was a tricky, risky time for the organisation, our partners, and interdisciplinary team members. We all knew that if an ongoing funding stream could not be found the program would have to close."

"We all strongly believed in the program and wished to see the development of palliative care in Victoria. We developed what would now be called a strategic plan. We expanded our advocacy initiatives with all levels of Government, developed community awareness campaigns, spoke at conferences and public meetings and lectured in tertiary institutions."

"Eventually, the plan and Melbourne City Mission's work with other members of the Victorian Association of Palliative Care succeeded, and permanent funding streams that sustained existing services and facilitated the development of other services were established."

Anne's involvement in the sector didn't stop there. In August 1988, Anne was appointed to the role of Manager of Melbourne City Mission Palliative Care. She held the position of Honorary Secretary for the Australian Association of Hospice and Palliative Care and President of the Victorian Association for a number of years. On top of this, she was involved in advisory committees to establish Banksia Palliative Care service and Mid-Eastern Palliative Care (now Eastern Palliative Care), as well as the North Region Palliative Care forum. For a short period of time, Melbourne City Mission became auspice agency for the South Port Community Hospice until Bethlehem Hospice was funded to operate the service.

In 2000, Anne was appointed as the first women Chief Executive Officer of Melbourne City Mission, a position she held for nine years. In this role, she was responsible for the wider organisation, including its Palliative Care service.

Currently, Anne is a Volunteer Family Support worker at Tui House, part of Harbour Hospice on Auckland's North Shore. Through the business she owns with her husband: *Expanding Horizons Consultancy & Coaching*, she seeks to develop leaders in the Not for Profit sector.

When looking back on her journey within the sector, Anne has a few highlights, but it is namely the people she has worked with who have made the biggest impact.

"Working in such a dynamic team environment and standing alongside patients and families was always an enormous privilege, impacting on and informing my life journey ever since."

“Patients, families and colleagues have taught me so much about caring for one another, listening to each other’s stories, seeing the world from other people’s perspective, embracing and celebrating difference and diversity as part of God’s creation.”

“In the mid 1980’s a need for a manual on palliative care was identified. My good friend Patty Hodder and I co-edited and worked with thirty health professionals to create the manual, ‘Creative option of palliative care: a manual for health care professionals.’

“It was funded and published by Melbourne City Mission in 1988 and became a best seller, reprinted five times and translated into Japanese. Proceeds from the sale of the book were used by Melbourne City Mission to fund palliative care research.”

When reflecting on 40 years of Palliative Care Victoria, Anne says it is important for us to take a moment to pause, reflect on and celebrate all that has been achieved by many people over the years

“As well as reflecting on the positives, the 40-Year Anniversary can be a touchstone moment used to identify the strategies and resources needed to build on the amazing achievements of the last 40 years. There is still much to be done to ensure that all people have access to high quality palliative care when and where they need it.”

