

Urgent and practical care for Victorians in crisis

52-year-old John* knows what it's like to live in homelessness.

And unfortunately, there's thousands of Victorians just like him who are in need of urgent care and support.

Right before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, John was forced to leave his home which had become unsafe, and he was thrown into life on the streets.

"It's hard. Especially at my age. Sleeping in shop windows, or in doorways, bus stops... even in a church. It's not that crash hot. You just do what you've got to do to stay warm and have good rest," says John.

After three years of sleeping rough, John also understands that finding somewhere safe to spend the night is only one part of the story.

"Having people look at you sideways... trying not to worry about what people say to you or how people look at you. Living on the streets is difficult."



Each year in August CatholicCare Victoria runs their annual Sunday Appeal - their major fundraising appeal of the year – to enable them to continue supporting vulnerable families and individuals just like John.

When John first reached out to CatholicCare Victoria, he was wary. He had found it hard to trust or rely on people before, because he felt that his needs were not often understood or heard. But with a bit of encouragement from a friend, John took a leap of faith and asked CatholicCare for help.

“Thank goodness that I did. It’s been a big Godsend. At CatholicCare, a caseworker works alongside you. It’s good because they listen. And they ask you what you want to do and how you want to do things. They don’t just tell you. So I feel comfortable and relaxed enough to reach out whenever I need help. I can just make a phone call,” says John.

Fortunately, John was granted crisis accommodation through the *From Homelessness to a Home* program, and today he lives in affordable housing provided through CatholicCare Victoria’s social housing services.

CatholicCare Victoria have been able to provide additional supports to help John get back on his feet, including dental and eye care, food vouchers, and mental health support. And now they’re supporting John to get his drivers license and to find part-time work as an artist.

“Before I ended up on the streets, I was an artist. My caseworker learned this and asked if I’d like to get back into it. She even offered to get me some art supplies. To be honest, I thought she was joking... but then she showed up at my door with a voucher,” says John.

“We went shopping and I got some canvas and paints. It would have taken me six to eight months to save up for those supplies without CatholicCare’s help. I’m grateful because I know that I could sell my artwork (like I used to) to buy more supplies and help me pay my bills.”

“But as someone who struggles with mental health, what’s even more important to me is the fact that getting paint to canvas helps ease my anxiety. It’s so good for my mental health... and for CatholicCare to understand that and act on it is really amazing.”

Your support during the Sunday Appeal will enable CatholicCare Victoria to reach out and support more people just like John, who are experiencing not only homelessness but job loss, mental health issues, and relationship breakdown.

Your generosity will also enable CatholicCare to support newly-arrived refugees and people in prisons and hospitals, and other vulnerable members of our community.

“Without your generosity, a lot of people like me would be a lot worse off than what they are. Thank you. I’m just so glad that I am where I am now – growing old gracefully! I have a bed to sleep in and food in the cupboard. I have a full life.”

- John

To donate to the CatholicCare Victoria Sunday Appeal, please click [here](#)

The Sunday Appeal will run in Catholic parishes across the Diocese of Ballarat during weekends of either 6-7 August or 13-14 August. To donate in your local parish, keep a look out for a Sunday Appeal envelope.

*At CatholicCare Victoria, we respect everyone who comes to us for help and many are working towards a fresh start in life. While the stories and quotes are true, the client’s name and image have been changed to protect their privacy.