



# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2020

1 July, 2019 —  
30 June, 2020



more than a meal



**P:** 02 4926 1758

**W:** [www.soulcafe.org.au](http://www.soulcafe.org.au)

**E:** [admin@soulcafe.org.au](mailto:admin@soulcafe.org.au)

P.O. Box 686, Newcastle 2300

ABN 67 385 398 045

# A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

**Soul Cafe** was established in 2003 to serve the needs of the poor, needy and vulnerable. We have stayed true to the origins and continue to pursue this with passion and energy to do all we can with what we have. Today more than ever the increasing disadvantaged in our community need the help and assistance Soul Cafe offers. We are committed to being **more than a meal** delivering a wide range of help and support to everyone who comes.



We are a **Compassionate community response to some deep community needs**. We couldn't do what we do without the community support we receive. This is a constant source of energy and encouragement for us all. People offering their professional skills to those who donate goods for our everyday needs. The many who fundraise and financially donate as well as those who are ongoing sponsors of our work. All this creates a brilliant community response meeting real needs and helping vulnerable people!

**There's no day the same at Soul** is another phrase we use. This is reflective in what we are called upon to tend too which is varied and at times emotionally impacting. Soul Cafe is a volunteer-based run charity with a management team structure (mainly volunteers) who have done an outstanding above and beyond job again this year. Our volunteer teams grew and our culture is outstanding. Our volunteers, over 185 of them alone contribute every week to help make Soul happen. All of them carry a great passion to serve and help others that is world class!

Our **'guests'** and meeting their needs is what compels us. Soul Cafe has become a safe place, a refuge, a family. Its a place where **everyone's welcome because nobody's perfect and anything is possible**.

We are a non-government local charity doing what we can with what we have to help as many as we can!

**Thank you** to you our community for your support! **Thank you** to our amazing staff and volunteers who have done a brilliant job especially navigating 2020 in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic! Together we've made a significant impact; we've brought help, hope and healing to some of the most vulnerable people in our community.

RICK PROSSER CEO SOUL CAFE TRUST CHAIRMAN



# LOCATION

Soul Cafe is located on the corner of Hunter and Watt Streets Newcastle, occupying Levels 1 & 2 of the Westpac building. This location has been donated by Westpac, rent-free, since 2012 and the lease was renewed for 2 more years early in 2020.

This is a significant annual in-kind donation, equating to an estimated saving of \$250,000 in value, being donated by Westpac to the local community through the work of Soul Cafe.

The Soul Cafe trustees, staff and volunteers are greatly appreciative of the ongoing support and contribution of Westpac, and its staff, for their commitment to Newcastle's most vulnerable.



# A YEAR LIKE NO OTHER

Soul Cafe provides free meals to the highly disadvantaged members of our community, many of whom are homeless, have a mental illness and or substance abuse challenges. The meal is the medium to be able to work with people in a greater way. As people come for food, relationships and trust are built that enable them to connect with other supports and services that elevate their circumstances.

Soul Cafe began the financial year expecting to serve more free meals than ever before, 40,000+. We at Soul Cafe saw that as 40,000+ opportunities to be **more than a meal** through investing in the lives of vulnerable people.

Early 2020 saw COVID-19 gain momentum across the world and Australia entered a phase of restrictions. People and businesses across the world were affected and Soul Cafe was no different. The primary impacts of the COVID-19 restrictions were both Operational & Financial.



Initially Soul Cafe reinvented itself to limit total numbers in the cafe to 1 person per 4sqm and went to a 3 sitting lunch service model. On 24th March Soul Cafe was forced to reinvent itself again and close the dining room altogether. Soul moved to a street-based express takeaway service and our hours of operation changed. In this period all of Soul Cafe attending services closed as well.

In response to the ever changing COVID-19 environment and the changing needs of vulnerable people in Newcastle, on the 9th April Soul Cafe added a pantry service to the street based express takeaway service. This new pantry service has been providing on average 145 hampers per week. With the closure of Soul attending services it was necessary to find new ways to support guests. In the COVID-19 period Soul Cafe has averaged 81 guest welfare phone calls per week.

The second major COVID-19 impact was financial. The Coronavirus and its associated restrictions have particularly impacted Soul Cafe's ability to fundraise and Soul Cafe gets no government funding. In this COVID-19 period there would normally be income from significant fundraising strategies including Friday Chill (cut short in 2020 by COVID-19), Wests Canteen, Corporate Breakfasts & Sleepout for Soul (Major Fundraiser).

The inability to fundraise as normal left a significant gap in the Soul Cafe budget. But with change comes opportunity and there have been a number of COVID-19 related grants that Soul has been able to successfully apply for. Early in the COVID-19 period Soul Cafe launched an extraordinary Appeal to which there was a strong community and corporate response. Aware of Soul Cafe's financial needs, Collective Heart stepped in and ran *Sleepout for Soul at Home* which was a tremendous event.

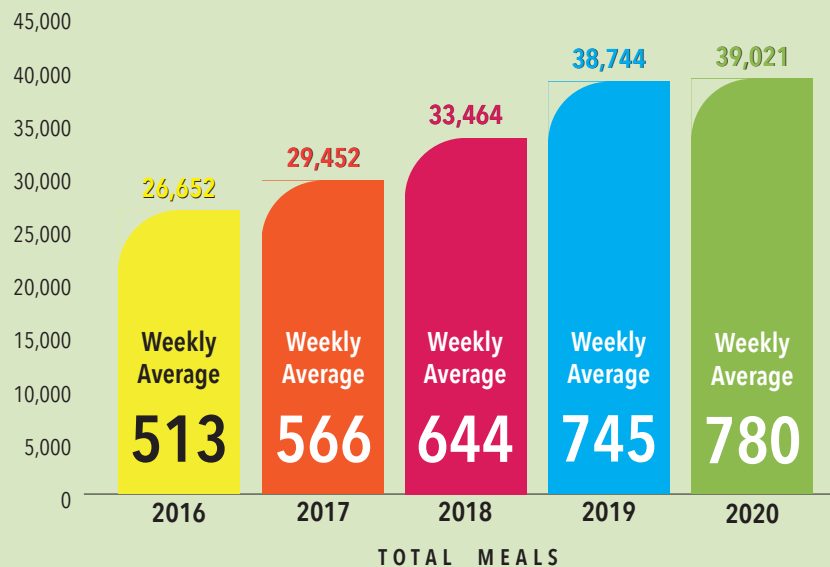
## MEAL DATA JULY 2019 - JUNE 2020

Soul Cafe is more than a meal however the free meals are a significant part of Soul Cafe's contribution to the vulnerable community in Newcastle. This financial year, prior to the COVID-19 period, demand for meals at Soul Cafe was as high as it has ever been.

<b>35,973</b>	<b>Total meals, food care packs &amp; hampers 2019-2020 financial year</b>
<b>734</b>	<b>Average weekly meals &amp; food care packs pre COVID-19 period</b>
<b>490</b>	<b>Average weekly meals, food care packs &amp; hampers during COVID-19 period</b>
<b>145</b>	<b>Average weekly pantry hampers during COVID-19 period</b>
<b>39,021</b>	<b>Total meal equivalents considering a Hamper equates to 3+ meals.</b>

# TOTAL MEALS per FINANCIAL YEARS

Includes All Meals, Takeaways & Care Packs



Food is purchased or is donated by food rescue organisations, businesses and the community including valued supporters Top Cut Foods, Alan Steggles Food Services & the Newy Burger Co. Food rescue contributors include, Second Bite at Coles Kotara, Waratah, Marketown & Edgeworth, Nando's Kotara, Ozharvest and Foodbank.

## PANTRY STORY: ANDY

Andy has struggled with a few things including addiction, going outside and group situations. Like many of us, in the COVID-19 environment, Andy was doing it tough and so his neighbour Mark, a Soul Cafe volunteer, collected a hamper of mixed perishable and non-perishable goods, including a good number of potatoes. The following night there was a knock on Mark's door and there was Andy with a fresh hot potato bake as a way of saying thank you.

Mark invited Andy to pop down to the Soul Pantry for more groceries. Though initially anxious and reluctant Andy came down to the Soul pantry service with his mum and made some new Soul friends. The third time our new friend Andy came down to see us at the Soul Pantry he came to see us on his own.



## SOUL VOLUNTEERS

The heart and soul of Soul Cafe is our volunteer team. Every week Soul Cafe teams and volunteers seek to change the lives of disadvantaged people for the better. There is not always a solution, but at Soul Cafe every person is treated with respect, dignity and kindness as they work through the challenges they face.

**185** Volunteers pre COVID

**448** Volunteer Hours (avg per week pre COVID)

**This is the equivalent of almost 12 full time persons saving \$13,680+ weekly in wage costs.**



The volunteer roles include administration, kitchen hands, cooks, team leaders, cleaners, drivers, guest support and services. Soul Café is so appreciative of all our volunteers and could not be more proud of how they handled the COVID-19 period.

## VOLUNTEER STORY:

*"My name is Onyx, I started volunteering at Soul Cafe back in February because I wanted to take the opportunity to help people.*

*Before COVID-19 I had a steady part time job and was studying and volunteering, now my job hours have been reduced and my study has been deferred until I can go back to face to face learning when all this is over.*

*I like volunteering here because it is easy to see the direct impact of help to our guests, sometimes the help they need is food but sometimes it's just a smile and a chat but it all makes a difference to someone's day.*

*For me, time is easy to give and especially right now I have plenty of it. When I come to Soul Cafe everyone is so nice and I enjoy talking to our guests and the other volunteers and right now it's really good to have a purpose... and it gets me out of the house."*



## SOUL STAFF

**1** full-time and 4 part-time staff (Maria, Sue, Suellen, Matt & Tim)

**103** Hours per week the equivalent of **2.7** full time persons.

**24%** of staff hours are funded by Port Waratah Coal Services for a Mental Health Clinician who provides direct guest support.

**22%** of staff hours also provide direct guest support.

The remaining **55 hrs** or the **FTE of 1.5** persons support all other aspects of Soul Cafe operations.



# MORE THAN A MEAL

The meal is the beginning of the story. A kind word, smile and time spent over a meal builds trust and a bridge to help connect guests to services and supports that can move them up and out of their current situation. Something as simple as a haircut can lift a person up into a better day and SMART Recovery can empower them to escape addiction.

## SERVICES & PROGRAMS

### ATTENDING SERVICES:

- **1404** Total occasions of service Pre COVID-19 period
- **37** Average weekly occasions of service Pre COVID-19 period

Accommodation Assistance  
Alcoholics / Narcotics / Gamblers  
Anonymous  
Barber  
Blankets, Swags, Jackets, Socks, Beanies  
Centrelink Outreach  
Chiropractic Clinic  
Community Service Program  
Department of Community Justice (Housing Outreach)  
Employment Services (APM)  
Flu Vaccines  
GROW Recovery Group  
Hairdressers  
Hearing Screening / Audiology  
Hygiene Care Packs  
Internet/telephone access

Women's Refuge Outreach Service  
Laundry Service for rough sleepers  
Legal Aid / Legal Services  
Love your Liver Clinic  
Medical Clinic  
Mental Health Clinic  
NDIS  
Podiatry Clinic  
Random Souls Music Group  
Share the Dignity  
SMART Recovery  
Support for letters and forms  
SWAGS  
School, TAFE & University Student Programs  
Women's Connect Group  
Work Development Orders

## COLLECTIVE HEART

*"Collective Heart was looking for a regular meeting place. Soul Cafe was suggested and embraced us with open arms. That was about four years ago and ever since we have enjoyed a loving, respectful and mutually beneficial relationship. For those who don't know about Collective Heart, we are a community of people who empower each other to love others through acts of service, kindness and generosity. Soul Café supports and enables us to fulfill this purpose. Thank you Soul Cafe for all you do."*

Matt Linnert, Founder

# SOUL MEDICAL CLINIC

## Brunker Road General Practice

At Brunker Road Medical Centre

**105** Total occasions of service Pre COVID-19 period

**3.4** Average weekly occasions of service Pre COVID-19 period

Soul Cafe is a much needed convergence of help for the vulnerable who 'slip through the cracks' of health and other services accessed by the broader community. The Soul Medical Clinic, established in 2010 by Dr Milton Sales from Brunker Road Medical Centre, provides weekly medical care, prescriptions and referrals to Soul guests. In 2020, this clinic has continued to transform lives.

Volunteer doctors provide free medical care for Soul guests one lunch time per week. The Medicare rebate is donated back to Soul for the provision of equipment and services for the clinic, to cover prescription costs and the medical expenses of the guests who attend the clinic.

On 227 occasions the Soul Medical Clinic covered the costs of prescription medications for guests who might not otherwise have been able to afford them. Thank you to all the GP's who have volunteered their time and skills again this year to care for some of the most vulnerable in the community.

Dr Milton Sales

Dr Peter Miles

Dr Peter Coleman

Dr Lee Fong

Dr Michelle Mitten

Dr Fiona Middleton

Dr Catherine Hollier

Dr Hilary Brown

## NCIG

*"Soul Cafe does such profound work supporting some of the most vulnerable in our community. What we appreciate most is the integrity and respect they give to every single person who walks through their door, and the level of social and physical care they provide is outstanding. NCIG is very proud to provide support to Soul Cafe to undertake such inspiring work in our community."*

Aaron Johansen, CEO of Newcastle Coal Infrastructure Group



# SOUL MENTAL HEALTH CLINIC

**639** Occasions of service  
**189** guests served  
**3.4** average sessions per guest  
**26%** female guests  
**74%** male guests



The purpose of the Soul Mental Health Clinic is to provide Soul guests with mental health support in a non-threatening, friendly, familiar environment. It is a vital service for the population that attend the cafe helping to assess when they are in crisis, giving advice on medications for addictions and making referrals to health services. In the COVID period the Soul Mental Health Clinic adapted by moving to the street across the road from our meal service and connecting with on average 13 guests per week.

In April 2020, Port Waratah Coal Service approved a two year cycle of funding, \$40,758 per year, for the Mental Health Clinic through to the end of 2021. This generous grant ensures that the Soul Mental Health Clinic will continue providing our guests with support 25hrs a week until the end of 2021. The work done by Tim Hennessy in a dynamic and challenging environment has been outstanding.



## GUEST STORIES FROM THE SOUL MENTAL HEALTH CLINIC

An older gentleman began dropping into Soul for meals. He was quite shy but as the Soul floor team got to know him it became clear that he was quite alone and suicidal. Over a few short months, his wife died after a long battle with cancer, there was a legal battle over her estate, he lost his job of 25yrs when his employer went bust, his entitlements were being withheld by a bankrupt ex-employer and when his wife died his pet ran away and could not be found. The resultant anxiety and depression had seen him admitted to a mental health unit on two occasions.

Over the weeks that followed the Soul Mental Health Clinician regularly assessed his level of suicidal ideation, the Soul Cafe Floor Team built a relationship with him and he made friends with other guests. Soul Cafe became his support community. The Soul Mental Health Clinician regularly connected with him, allowing him to share his stressors and battles and over time his demeanour improved markedly.

At Christmas 2019 he was enthusiastically helping out two mornings a week at Soul. To see him enthusiastic about something was just such an amazing contrast to when we first met him.

These days we don't see him much as he has 3 days work with another charity, and to our knowledge is doing well.

A 38yr old guest was a regular at Soul cafe for meals. This guest's assessment took place over a period of months and the foundation to gaining that information was the meal served and during that time the personal relationship built. This Guest was reticent to divulge any information regarding his mental health diagnosis or previous treatment, however he did acknowledge that he will need lifetime support.

Over months the Soul Mental Health Clinician gained further insight into the guests background. He has an acquired brain injury and four mental health diagnoses. The Soul Clinician has been able to support treatment and referral to various clinic's in which the guest clearly saw the benefit.

Over a period of time, Soul Cafe has assisted this guest with access to appropriate accommodation, podiatry care, review at our medical clinic, our mental health clinic and chiropractic care.

At present, in the COVID-19 period Soul is supporting this guest at a drop-in mental health clinic on the street corner, via regular telephone welfare calls and through communication with his careers to facilitate ongoing support.

In the future we hope to re-engage him with our clinics.

## Guest Feature Story: Scotty

Scotty was sleeping rough and featured in our last Annual Report. This year we are excited to report that Scotty has a home.

Soul Cafe met Scotty 2+ years ago now and in 2019 we had the privilege of being able to live on the streets with Scotty for a week, hearing his story, experiencing some of his world and engaging with his journey. At that point in his life Scotty was struggling with personal issues, the ongoing consequences of a head injury and finding a place to stay each night that was safe and dry.

At Soul Cafe we were helping Scott day to day with food, a friendly chat, and occasionally podiatry, medical & laundry services. Scotty was very much apart of our family. We were excited when towards the end of 2019 Scotty made the decision to get off the street and find a permanent place to stay.

Happily, we can say Scott has found a place to live, he is paying rent and looking after himself well. He has been off alcohol, pot and cigarettes for some time now and he is fit, healthy, loving life and in the process of trying to find work.

We are so proud of Scotty and cannot wait to continue his journey with him.



# SMART RECOVERY

## 33 PARTICIPANTS Pre COVID-19 period

Soul Cafe is more than a meal and many who come to our meals are dealing with drug and alcohol addiction. At Soul Cafe we want to empower guests to escape addiction and embrace life to the fullest. Pre COVID-19 this financial year the Soul SMART Recovery program grew from 1 to 3 groups. SMART Recovery participants meet weekly, setting their own goals and path to success using a range of evidence-based tools and techniques.



## CORPORATE BREAKFASTS

Early Tuesday mornings, several times a month, a Soul volunteer team, headed by Sue Prosser, caters a breakfast for business groups including NFP Connect and Collective Heart. This is a great connection for Soul Cafe with business people, charities and agencies. The proceeds of these breakfasts are generously donated to Soul Cafe.



Soul Cafe wants to offer a special thanks to Matt Linnert, Jodi O'Connor & the team at Collective Heart. When Soul Cafe had to cancel its major fundraiser, Sleepout for Soul, Collective Heart launched the *Sleepout for Soul At Home* initiative which was great fun, had 241 fundraising participants and raised an amazing \$87,783.



# SOUL CAFE IN THE COVID-19 ENVIRONMENT

As previously mentioned, the primary impacts of the COVID-19 restrictions were Operational & Financial requiring Soul Cafe to implement some creative strategies like the ones below.

## GUEST WELFARE

Pre COVID-19 the majority of guest welfare checks took place in the building and around meals but with the COVID-19 closure of the dining Soul had to find new ways to support guests. In response to the changing environment Soul put together a team (with our Mental Health Clinician) and began making welfare calls to our guests averaging 82 welfare calls a week.

Without gathering, and with appropriate social distancing, Soul set up a street based guest Welfare Station across the road from our express takeaway meal service.

At that station volunteers supported guests with a friendly chat, advocacy services and the provision of information. The Soul Mental Health Clinician connected with an average 13 guests a week in a street based drop-in mental health clinic.



## SOUL CAFE APPEALS

Soul Cafe is a grassroots organisation and does not get any government funding but is solely funded by our friends in the Newcastle community. COVID-19 and its associated restrictions impacted Soul Cafe's ability to fundraise and so Soul Cafe asked our friends to support us through the launch of an extraordinary Soul Cafe Appeal (#BetterTogether).

At Soul Cafe we are so grateful to everyone who contributed to our appeal and we are pleased to announce that \$232,647 was raised to support our



Guests. Every donation, large or small, is gratefully received but we also want to acknowledge a number of our Corporate friends who supported Soul Cafe with grants or sponsorships.

- **CITY OF NEWCASTLE**
- **MARITIME UNION OF AUSTRALIA**
- **NEWCASTLE COAL INFRASTRUCTURE GROUP**
- **ORICA**
- **PORT WARATH COAL SERVICES**
- **TOMAGO ALUMINIUM**
- **WESTPAC**

As previously noted, when Soul Cafe had to cancel Sleepout for Soul due to COVID, Collective Hearts launched the *Sleepout for Soul At Home* initiative which was raised an \$87,783.

The generosity of Newcastle individuals, families and businesses through these two appeals has essentially secured Soul Cafe financially for the year to come and we are so grateful for everyone's support.

## DARACON UTE

The Daracon Group have provided Soul Cafe with a Toyota utility vehicle since 2007, including covering the expense of fuel, maintenance and servicing. The vehicle is used to pick up rescued food that has helped Soul to put more than 25 tons of food on the plate this financial year. In 2019 Daracon upgraded the vehicle to a more recent model and the volunteer drivers are thrilled to be driving the replacement Toyota Hilux. Thank you, to all the team at Daracon, your support of Soul is greatly appreciated.



# GOVERNANCE

Soul Cafe is a business name held by LifeShapers Family Services Trust which is a registered charity. Life Church Ltd (ACN: 069 609 356) is the corporate trustee for Life Shapers Family Services Trust (ABN: 67 385 398 045). The charity is part of the vision and mission of Life Church. The trust is managed by a board of Trustees.

## RICK PROSSER: TRUST CHAIRMAN

Rick has had twenty plus years experience in leadership of churches and charities. He was awarded the 2014 Newcastle City Council Citizen of the Year for his work. In 2015 he was Interim CEO of Soul Cafe and then in 2016 he was appointed the Soul Cafe Chairman and CEO. Over five years under his leadership the charity has risen to every challenge, strengthened and grown.



## HOWARD MOLE: VICE CHAIRMAN

Howard has held a number of social service roles in the Newcastle area, including welfare management, counselling, financial counselling, and homeless accommodation. In 2018 he was awarded 'Freeman of the City' by Newcastle City Council for his contribution over decades to local charities and the community.



## KEVIN BERGER OAM: TRUSTEE

D.A.L.E. Christian School founder and Executive Director. In 2015 Kevin was awarded the 'Order of Australia Medal' for his work in establishing an alternative learning environment for students struggling in mainstream education.



## DAVID ZAMMIT: TRUSTEE

BSc (Arch) B.Arch (Hons), Architecture from the University of Sydney. David has over 26 years of experience, serving on not for profit boards, international missions boards and church boards/elderships.



## ANTHONY CUMMINS: TRUSTEE

Anthony is a chartered accountant volunteering his time to support the financial management of the charity. He accepted an invitation to become a Trustee in 2018.



Lifeshapers Family Services Family Services Trust Fund ABN 67385398045 is Registered with the 'Australian Charities and Not for profits Commission' and has the 'Charity Tick.'

Lifeshapers Trust has Tax Deductible Gift Status and it's 'Charitable Fundraising Authority' No. is 16338.

# THE FUTURE

Our energy and focus will continue to be what we can do to serve our guests as effectively as possible: the building and empowering of volunteers teams and the appreciation of our supporters and volunteers.

We are in a strong position with the employment of a General Manager that will create for us a greater capacity to plan, strategize and work towards adding to our work. This will include building stronger and more cohesive administrative processes while focusing on effective collaborative partnerships that deliver better outcomes for our guests.

At the same time we will look at options and possibilities to build our capacities that could create some greater level of sustainability for us into the future.

Again thank you for your interest and partnership with Soul Cafe.

RICK PROSSER

SOUL CAFE CEO | TRUST CHAIRMAN



## NFP CONNECT

*"I'm a big fan of Soul Cafe, the team and their work. NFP Connect is an organisation that supports and connects not-for-profits, it's really important that we walk the talk and be an example of how collaborations and partnership are done. Holding our monthly breakfasts at Soul Cafe is a no brainer, it helps us, showcases the amazing work they do for the community and helps them financially to help others. The team and volunteers work tirelessly to help others so this is just our little bit to give back."*

Grace McLean, CEO & Founder

## WELFARE CALLS FROM A VOLUNTEERS PERSPECTIVE

*"The guest welfare phone calls I have been making over the past 6 weeks have resulted in some amazing conversations. I do think these calls have really made a difference and a great initiative by Soul Cafe. Guests are very appreciative of the call and often want to share their stories telling you how they are not doing so well. Many guests finish by saying 'this call has really made my day special' and also asking 'when the services will be opening again'? There is no doubt that although the food at Soul Cafe is great, Soul Cafe is far more than a meal."*

Tess Martin (Volunteer)



**If you would like to make a donation to Soul Cafe:**

**Online**

For an automatic tax deductible receipt go to: <https://soulcafe.org.au/>

**Direct Deposit**

**BSB:** 032-505

**Account:** 299497

**Account:** Lifeshapers Family Services

**Reference:** your name

*If you would like a receipt for your direct deposit please  
contact the Soul office on (02) 4926 1758 (Monday-Thursday) or  
email [admin@soulcafe.org.au](mailto:admin@soulcafe.org.au)*