



ANNUAL REPORT

2021

1 April, 2020 —
31 March, 2021



more than a meal



P: 02 4926 1758

W: www.soulcafe.org.au

E: 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. Our culture is shaped by this, **"We will do all we can with whatever we have for whoever comes through our doors"**. Today more than ever the increasing disadvantaged in our community need the help and assistance Soul Café offers. We are committed to being **"more than a meal"** delivering a wide range of help and support to everyone who comes.



"There's no day the same at Soul" is another phrase we use at Soul. The pandemic changed everything and while most doors closed, we kept going. 2020 delivered both challenge and change for us all and our team pivoted brilliantly to continue our work. This impacted our teams in every way. Street service became our new normal with additional work added like our "Open Pantry." We sensed this pandemic would affect more than our regular guests and this was our experience with 80%+ new people accessing this service.

Soul Café 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 and our culture is outstanding. All of them carry a great passion to serve and help others that is world class!

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! From our amazing volunteers to 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 helping vulnerable people!

Our **'Guests'** and meeting their needs is what compels us. Soul Café 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 funded 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

OUR NEW SLEEPOUT EDITION ANNUAL REPORT

On the release of this report in 2021 our major fundraiser Sleepout for Soul is happening. This includes hundreds from throughout our community and with the inclusion of our 'Virtual Sleepout' includes many that couldn't be present and those from outside of our region.

Thank you to everyone who's participated in this along with the hundreds who have given financially towards the raising of significant funds. This will enable us to launch into the new financial year with great confidence, Thank you!

To the team who have brought this together, thank you! Your time, talent and commitment make it happen!



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.



SOUL CAFÉ, COMING OUT OF COVID-19 LOCKDOWN

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 launched into 2020 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. But before we knew it, like everyone else, Soul was thrust into Covid-19 lockdown and we had to move to a street-based express takeaway meal service. Throughout the uncertainty of the Covid-19 lockdown period perhaps the only thing Soul Café was sure of was the fact we would somehow keep our doors open to support our family, our guests.

Adversity, however, tends to give birth to innovation. In response to the ever changing COVID-19 environment and the changing needs of vulnerable people in Newcastle, Soul Cafe added an open pantry service to the street based express takeaway meal service. This new pantry service has been providing up to 164 hampers per week and is still running today.



As the Covid-19 lockdown eased and we were able to return meal services to the dining room our thoughts turned to our 2020 Guest Christmas party. Typically, when held in the Soul Café dining room, our Guest Christmas party had roughly 1 person per 1 square metre which was not going to fit with Covid guidelines. Many of our homeless, addicted, mentally unwell, lonely & vulnerable guests never get invited anywhere and so we could not cancel our Guest Christmas party. So with the help of our good friends the WESTS Group we moved our Guest Christmas party to the huge NEX auditorium and our guests had a spectacular Covid-safe Christmas. Some weeks later one of our guests Molly was still thinking about the Christmas party and in tears she said to one of the Soul staff "that is the best Christmas party I have ever been to in my whole life".

In addition to innovations with our guest services Covid-19 also forced financial innovations on Soul Café. With the inability to gather our annual fundraiser Sleepout for Soul went online with the help of our friends at Collective Heart and became Sleepout for Soul at Home raising \$87,783

At the time of writing Soul services have essentially returned to normal and guest numbers are gradually returning to pre-Covid levels.

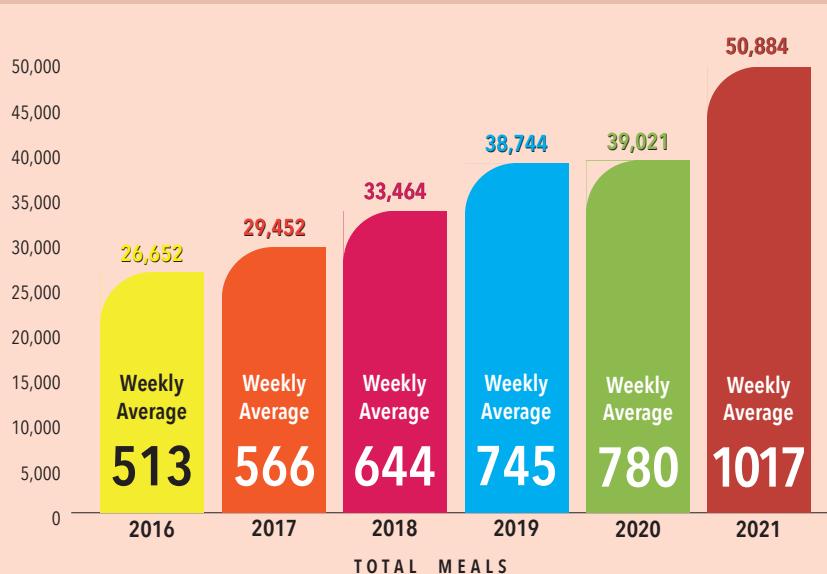
MEAL & PANTRY DATA 1 APRIL 2020 - 31 MARCH, 2021

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. As restrictions continue to ease, post-Covid demand for meals at Soul Cafe continues to slowly increase.

34,594	total meals & food care packs 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021
479	average weekly meals & food care packs in 2020 post-covid reopen period
595	average weekly meals & food care packs in 2021
7524	total hampers distributed 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021
2094	Christmas and holiday hampers distributed
5430	open pantry hampers distributed 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021
111	average weekly open pantry hampers distributed 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021
50,884	Total meal equivalents 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021 (if an open pantry hamper is considered as equating to 3 meals).

TOTAL MEALS per FINANCIAL YEARS

Includes all Meals, Food Care Packs and Open Pantry Hampers



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, Marketown, Mayfield & Waratah, Nando's Kotara, Ozharvest and Foodbank.

SOUL VOLUNTEERS

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

165 Volunteers

616 Volunteer Hours (avg per week)

This is the equivalent of 15+ full time persons totaling an estimated \$19,096 weekly in wage costs.

The volunteer roles include administration, events, reception, 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.

Soul Café was established in 2003 by LifeChurch and recognising the importance of volunteers in Nov 2020 LifeChurch provided Soul Café with Chris a part time Chaplain to support the wellbeing of volunteers serving at Soul.



VOLUNTEER STORY:

Vaughan – Breakfast shift volunteer

Vaughan has been volunteering at Soul for more than 2 years now. He has a huge heart, full of compassion for vulnerable people and he has a real gift for connecting relationally with guests. On a breakfast shift you will usually find Vaughan sitting at tables chatting to guests.



What prompted you to join Soul café as a volunteer?

I've always felt the need to reach out and help people that are less fortunate than myself.

Why do you want to help people that are less fortunate than yourself?

Because many of those less fortunate than myself did not choose to be in the vulnerable situation they find themselves in and many just need someone to care and offer them a hand up.

How has volunteering at Soul contributed to your life?

Volunteering is so valuable. Life is not always easy for anyone and volunteering has become such a big part of my own self-care. Volunteering at Soul really puts in perspective how well I have it in life. No matter how bad I am feeling, I always reflect on my experiences at Soul for perspective.

SOUL STAFF

Sue, Suellen, Lorraine, Liz, Tim & Matt

1 Full Time and 5 Part Time Staff

148.5 hours per week the equivalent of 3.9 full time persons.

16% of staff hours are funded by Port Waratah Coal Services for a Mental Health Clinician who provides direct guest support.

31% of other staff hours also provide direct guest support.

The remaining 76.5 hrs or the FTE of 2 persons support all other aspects of Soul Café operations.

Soul Café is a genuinely volunteer driven charity with lean administration costs.

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. SMART Recovery can empower them to escape addiction.

SERVICES & PROGRAMS

ATTENDING SERVICES:

• **83% of guests male** • **17% of guests female** • **989 TOTAL OCCASIONS OF SERVICE 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021** • **26.5 AVERAGE WEEKLY OCCASIONS OF SERVICE post COVID-19 lockdown**

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

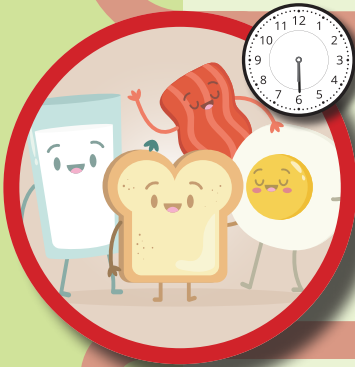
Women's Refuge Outreach Service
Laundry Service for rough sleepers
Legal Aid / Legal Services
Love you Liver Clinic
Soul Medical Clinic
Mental Health Clinic
NDIS
Podiatry Clinic
Random Souls Music Group
SMART Recovery
Support for letters and forms
SWAGS
School, TAFE & University Student Placement Programs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

One of the most exciting new attending services at Soul has been the dental scans provided Sagar, Mike and the crew at Dental Passport. Although the dental scan service is still in its infancy at Soul guest Steve (picture) has had his smile and self confidence transformed by the scans and subsequent dental work.



MORE THAN A MEAL

A Wednesday (07/05/21) in the life of Soul



BREAKFAST at SOUL 6.30am

It's cold outside but comfortable inside Soul. The dining room lights are on, the whole place is fresh & clean and cheerful music is playing to provide atmosphere. The breakfast crew are on site cooking eggs, cleaning tables, talking to guests and managing Covid checkin. The breakfast crew are catching up with regulars and meeting new guests who might have just had a cold, hard night out on the streets.



RECEPTION at SOUL 8am

The level 2 dining room has been full of activity for a while now but around 8am reception and level 1 springs to life. Staff & volunteers are answering phones, responding to emails & voice messages, accepting donations / deliveries and the Soul laundry is making sure guests clothes are clean, dry and folded ready for guests to pick up at Lunch Service.



CHANGEOVER at Soul 9am

Stomachs are full, the kitchen & dining room is clean again and as the breakfast team roll out the lunch team rolls in. The deliveries team are out and about already and in the next few hours they will pick up from Coles Waratah, Marketown & Mayfield. They will also make stops at Top Cut meats and The Butchery on Brunner.



TEAM MEETING at Soul 10.15am

At 10.15am the whole family (staff & volunteers) get together for morning tea and a team chat. It's our Soul equivalent of the whole family turning off the TV and having dinner together. It's not unusual for the meeting to be cut short by a Coles delivery or Oz Harvest delivery



LUNCH at SOUL 11am

There are 20 people already at the door when Soul opens for lunch. Wednesday is 'Roast Day' and guests enjoy tea / coffee, a large roast lunch and dessert. The Kitchen team handle the cooking, serving and cleaning. But Soul is much more than just a meal and the Floor team are talking with our guests and making them feel welcome. The Mental Health Clinician is speaking with Guests. Soul Café is a convergence of help and as the Floor team chat to guests they let them know that we have a doctor, dental scans and 2 barbers in today. The Reception team are still answering calls, accepting donations, booking guests into services, helping with prescriptions, managing the laundry and helping guests with general enquiries.



BREAK TIME at Soul 12.30pm

As the Cafe closes staff and volunteers take a break for lunch before the big clean up & Covid clean. The Pantry team is rolling in and starting to prepare for Pantry Service



GUEST SUPPORT MEETINGS 1pm

Soul Café has two meeting rooms on Level 1 and today SMARTRecovery is meeting in one and Gambles Anonymous in the other.



OPEN PANTRY SERVICE at SOUL 1pm

There are 25 people already at the door when Soul opens for pantry. Guests come into the Pantry 3 at a time and fill shopping bags with the staples that will help them make it through the week. Reception is still open to help guests.



NEARLY DONE at Soul 2pm

Pantry Service closes and the team clean up. Staff start getting their admin done and everything starts to go quiet.



NO TWO DAYS ARE THE SAME AT SOUL

And while this represents a typical Wednesday in the life of Soul on top of the usual Wednesday activity this day (07/05/21) Soul also put the finishing touches on organizing Sleepout for Soul 2021 and hosted a film crew for 6 hours capturing video content for a future project.

No two days are the same at Soul but we thought we'd show you what a Wednesday looks like.



Fundraising with the Knights



Good times at Soul serving meals



Soul, back from Covid lockdown



Soul partnering with other charities



Soul hosting UON Business School Students



Soul serving Newcastle side by side with LifeChurch



Volunteer Christmas presents



Story of Soul Calendar



Soul... it is just fun



Suicide Prevention workshop

SOUL MEDICAL CLINIC

Brunker Road General Practice

At Brunker Road Medical Centre

44 TOTAL OCCASIONS OF SERVICE Mid January – March 2021

3.4 AVERAGE WEEKLY OCCASIONS OF SERVICE

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 by Dr Milton Sales in 2010, provides weekly medical care, prescriptions and referrals to Soul guests. Closed most of 2020 due to the impact of Covid-19 the Soul Medical Clinic has recently reopened and has begun supporting the medical needs of Soul's vulnerable guests.

On 199 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.

SOUL MENTAL HEALTH CLINIC

315 OCCASIONS OF SERVICE



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 was unable to conduct its regular face to face sessions and adapted by moving to the street across the road from our meal service to connect with guest. Post – Covid sessions have been returning to normal and provided on average 12 occasions of service per week in 2021.

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.

GUEST STORY

Johnny – Regular Lunch attender

Johnny's smiling face has been a regular sight around Soul for the last 3 years.

What first brought you to Soul Café 3 years ago?

My circumstances changed, I lost my job and found myself in acute financial difficulty.

How were you feeling at that time?

Not great. I was feeling completely overwhelmed by my situation and searching for a little bit of help or support.

How has Soul Café helped you?

I came to Soul Café and found a safe place. The volunteers are so friendly and I have made good relationships with the Soul staff. I particularly enjoy the conversations at Soul.

What services at Soul Café are most helpful to you?

The meal services in the café, the open pantry service, haircuts and the counsellor (Mental Health Clinician). The Soul Café Christmas dinner is awesome.

What would you say to people about Soul Café?

I'd say it has a strong sense of community and lots of kind, caring people who work there.



“The staff themselves are beautiful. They’ll treat you like family once they get to know you. I can guarantee you a lot of good friends up there and a jolly good time.”

Bill, Guest

“Soul to me means family. If you are someone that’s never been here before; if you are a volunteer, a donor or guest the minute you set foot through the door you’ve become part of a family that cares & looks out for each other without judgements. It’s a family you feel has got your back not only for now but forever.”

Ian, Volunteer who was a guest once

SMART RECOVERY

26 PARTICIPANTS meeting in 2021

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. Like so many other things, Covid impacted the ability of SMART recovery groups to meet but in 2021 Souls two SMART Groups are supporting guests wanting to make a change. SMART Recovery participants meet weekly, setting their own goals and path to success using a range of evidence-based tools and techniques.



SOUL CAFÉ CHRISTMAS APPEAL

Soul Café is a grassroots organisation and does not get any government funding but is solely funded by our friends in the Newcastle community. The wonderful support of the Newcastle community enabled Soul Café to traverse the Covid period with relative ease and our recent Christmas Appeal was strongly supported.

In November Soul put the Christmas Appeal out and resourced flooded in from mums, dads, kids, schools, scout troops, businesses and corporations. In fact we were nearly swamped by it all. By the end of 2020 \$70,641 had been raised and 1954 hampers (provided by the people of Newcastle) had been handed out to homeless, addicted, mentally unwell, lonely & vulnerable people in Newcastle. For many of our guests the hampers were the only gift they received last Christmas and so a big thank you to Newcastle for making it possible for Soul guests to receive hampers.



Many of you reading this report supported the Winter Appeal, Sleepout for Soul at Home and / or Christmas Appeal and so we just want to say thank you. Soul could not do all that it does without your generous support.

FRIDAY CHILL

Each Summer at Pacific Park Newcastle, Soul Cafe hosts a free music event, Friday Chill. Artists from across the local region perform chilled out tunes from 6:30pm till 9:00pm and we invite our community to come along and join us for a picnic in the park! BYO picnic food and beverages or take advantage of the gourmet food served by a selection of local food vendors. Newcastle supports Soul Café so well and so this is just one way we try to give back to the community that does so much for us.



DARA CON UTE

The Daracon Group have provided Soul Cafe with a Toyota ute since 2007, including covering the expense of fuel, maintenance and servicing. The ute is used to pick up rescued food that has helped Soul to put more than 31 tonnes of food on the plate this reporting period. In 2019 upgraded the ute to a more recent model and the volunteer drivers are thrilled to be driving the replacement Toyota Hilux ute. Thank you, Adam Kelly, Ken Blundell, Brian Bourne and 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 comprising of:

RICK PROSSER: TRUST CHAIRMAN

HOWARD MOLE: VICE CHAIRMAN

KEVIN BERGER OAM: TRUSTEE

DAVID ZAMMIT: TRUSTEE

ANTHONY CUMMINS: TRUSTEE



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

In some ways when considering our future, we are in a vulnerable position. Our location generously provided free by Westpac for many years isn't guaranteed beyond February 2022. This however will not deter our energy and focus to do all we can do to serve our guests as effectively as possible.

'Building and Empowering of Volunteers Teams' and 'Volunteer and Supporters Appreciation' will continue to be major day to day priorities that will enable our work with Guests.

We aim to engage with and add a specialized Social Worker to our team. We know this specialised work with produce better outcomes for all our guests. We have brilliant connections with services for women that provide great support. Our data shows that our guests are increasingly predominately male (83%). With up to seven men taking their lives every day in our nation we aim to lean into this space in a greater way. We are dreaming and planning what an intensive 'LifeShapersInternship' might look like for vulnerable men.

This will include building stronger and more cohesive administrative process's while focusing on effective collaborative partnerships that deliver better outcomes for our guests. Sustainability for us into the future remains a constant.

Again, thank you for your interest and partnership with Soul Café

RICK PROSSER
SOUL CAFE CEO | TRUST CHAIRMAN



more than a meal

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*