



# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2023

1 April 2022 -  
31 March, 2023

# SOUL HUB



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# A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

This Annual Report attempts to capture what's happened at, and through Soul from April 2022 to March 2023. It's a small reflection of the everyday engagement with some of our city's most vulnerable. No day is the same.

**"Our Guests"** are our motivation. Everyone is welcome. Real people, all with unique life stories and circumstances. Our staff and volunteers are highly motivated, passionate and compassionate doing everything they can with whatever we have for anyone who walks through our door.



**"Our Community"** is our encouragement. We say, "Soul is a community response to some deep community needs". Whilst hundreds volunteer at Soul we know hundreds more think and act generously toward Soul. Every donation made and partnership established is a vivid reminder that we are in this together.

## **2023 A NEW NAME, A NEW FUTURE!**

We are now **Soul Hub**. We are a grassroots charity, community resourced creating a convergence of help, hope and healing.

The generosity of the Ian and Shirley Norman Foundation providing a building will see us move into a new home. A home for our community! This will enable us to envision a new future. A purpose-built facility for our guests. A game changer!

When Soul was established in 2003 to reach out to those on the streets with a hot meal has become much more than a meal. A destination location that lovingly cares for and serves our vulnerable guests.

**THANK YOU** for partnering with us this year. Some for the first time and, some who've journeyed with us for a long time, Thank you!

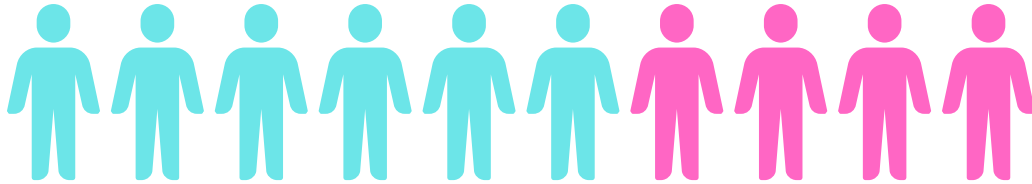
*RICK PROSSER CEO SOUL HUB and TRUST CHAIRMAN*

# SOUL AT A GLANCE

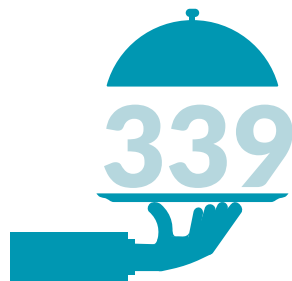
## LUNCH SERVICE

**64% Male**

**36% Female**



**Increase in meals  
in 2023**



**Most meals served  
in one lunch service**



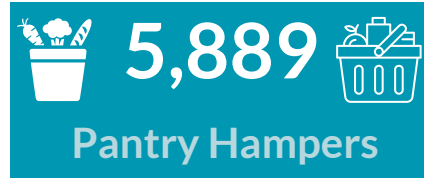
**Highest weekly  
meals**



**of our meals  
are takeaways**



\*equivalent



**Average 388kgs of  
food rescued weekly**



**3,998 guests  
accessed pantry**



**276 loads of  
laundry**

**48,677\* total  
meals provided**

\*equivalent

**207 active  
volunteers**

**419 weekly  
volunteer hours**

**6,661  
hygiene items**

**300,000+ conversations with vulnerable people**



# MEAL AND PANTRY DATA

## 1 APRIL 2022 - 31 MARCH 2023

Soul Hub is more than a meal, however the free meals are a significant part of Soul's contribution to the vulnerable community in Newcastle. A hot meal and a welcoming conversation is not just a full belly, it can be a self-esteem boost, it can prepare a guest for a meeting with Centrelink, it can be respite from a frustrating experience, it can free up money in a tight budget for medication. For a vulnerable guest at Soul, each meal is actually much, much more than a meal.

**31,010** total meals 1 April 2022 - 31 March 2023

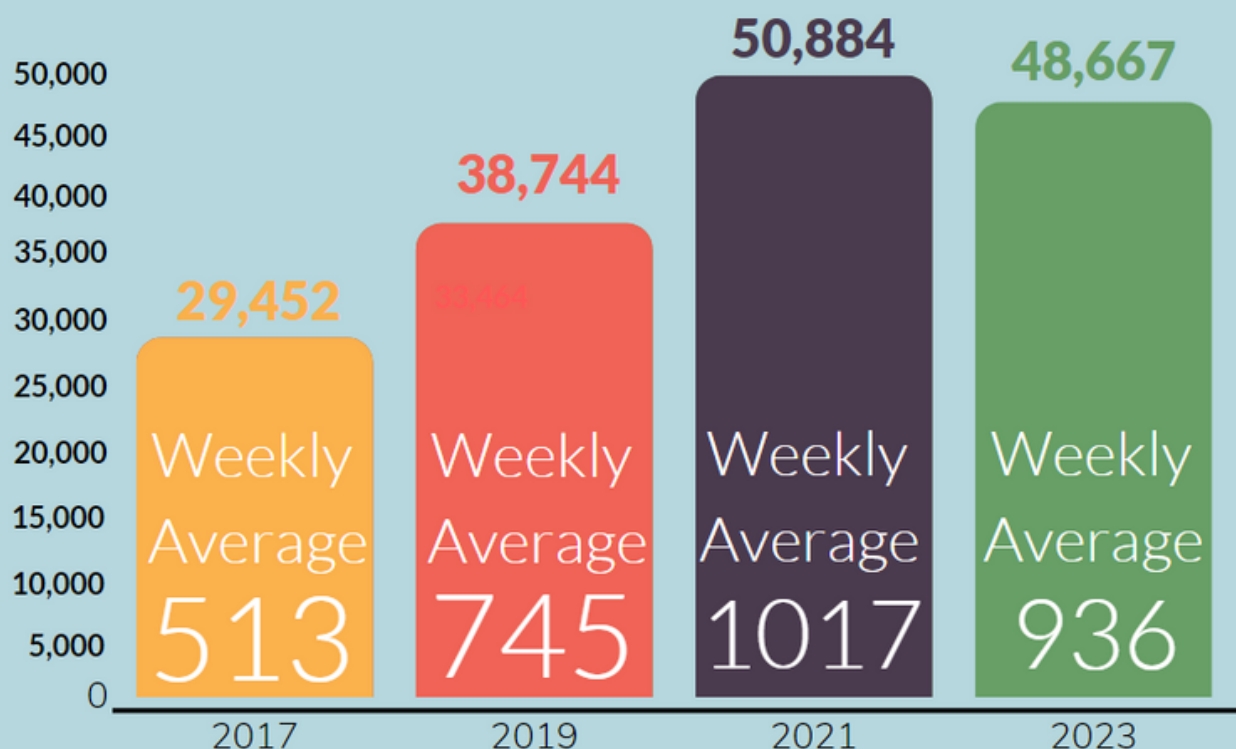
**5,889** total open pantry hampers distributed 1 April 2022 - 31 March 2023

**1,606** Christmas and News Years hampers distributed

**48,667** total meal equivalents 1 April 2022 - 31 March 2023 (if an open pantry hamper is considered as equating 3 meals)

### TOTAL MEALS

Includes all Meals, Food Care Packs & Open Pantry Hampers



Initiated in response to the first Covid lockdown, the Soul Open Pantry Service provides much needed grocery support to vulnerable guests. Guests are offered the opportunity to attend Pantry and select the groceries that will best support their needs.

Much of the food for both meals and Open Pantry comes from mums, dads, kids, schools and businesses in the community including valued supporters Alan Steggles Food Services, Nandos Kotara and the Butchery on Brunker. Soul also benefits from regular Coles SecondBite & OzHarvest donations.

Additional food required is purchase.



# GUEST STORY: ANGE & DANIEL

Ange and Daniel have faced more adversity in 18 months than most people have in their lifetimes. They're a couple who have stuck together through thick and thin and found Soul together.

6 years ago, they found themselves homeless after their rent spiked to an unaffordable and unreasonable amount. They were forced to leave the place they called home and lived in their vehicle for years during the pandemic. Ange struggled greatly with mental illness over that time and is now journeying through the recovery process. She has a beautiful smile, and we have loved seeing it much more often lately.

Just as their luck started turning back around and they found affordable and safe accommodation, they were then in a near fatal bus crash where Ange broke her spine in three different places, she also suffered dozens of other critical injuries. They were both hospitalized, but due to Angeles significant injuries, she spent a substantial amount of time in hospital.

Ange and Daniel first walked through our doors a bit over 12 months ago, describing that they were previously "too stubborn to get help". Since then, Soul has helped them with meals, food support, laundry, hairdressing and just as important social interaction and friendship.



"Soul just gets you though", Daniel said. "You leave with a full belly and a smile on your face."

## **"Soul took us under their wing."**

"We are incredibly grateful to Soul. They are so unjudgmental, every volunteer is so kind and caring. Thank you, just thank you." Ange & Daniel said.


We are so happy and grateful to have Ange and Daniel part of our Soul Family, we still love seeing them whenever they have time to pop in for a cupper.

## **Scan for more Guest Stories**




# A WEDNESDAY IN THE LIFE OF SOUL

## BREAKFAST - 7AM




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

## RECEPTION - 9AM




Staff & volunteers are answering phones, responding to emails & voice messages, accepting donations, the Soul laundry is making sure guests' clothes are clean, dry and folded ready for guests to pick up. The reception crew are also working with our attending services (chiropractors, audiologists, doctor clinics, hairdressers, etc) to support guests by booking and directing guests to their door here at Soul.

## CHANGEOVER - 9AM




Stomachs are full, the kitchen & dining room is clean again and as the breakfast team rolls 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, Kotara & Mayfield. They will also make stops at The Grumpy Baker, The Butchery on Brunner and an array of other donors.

## TEAM MEETING - 10AM



At 10.00am 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. This is a time to invest into our volunteers & community, encouraging, equipping and sharing stories. It's also a chance to thank our volunteer workforce for donating their time to serve at Soul.

## LUNCH AT SOUL - 10:30AM



Guests are welcomed through the door at 10:30am for tea and coffee. The Kitchen team handle the cooking, serving and cleaning. The floor and social work teams are talking with our guests and making them feel welcome. As the floor team chat to guests, they let them know what attending services are available today. The reception team are booking guests into services, giving hygiene packs and other toiletry items out to guests and helping our guests with general enquiries.





## GUEST SUPPORT MEETINGS - 11:30AM

Soul Hub has two meeting rooms on level 1 and today SMART Recovery is meeting in one, Healing Wave Chiropractors are meeting in the other and Gamblers Anonymous will be in straight after. We also have our Social Worker and working alongside our guests through the afternoon.



## BREAK TIME - 12:30PM

As the café closes staff and volunteers take a brief break from serving for lunch before they clean the dining room and prepare for Open Pantry services.



## OPEN PANTRY SERVICE - 1PM

There is a queue of eager Soul guests when we reopen our doors for pantry. Guests come into Pantry and fill shopping bags with the staples that will help them make it through the week. Reception is still open and assisting guests alongside other attending services we may have in.



## ALMOST DONE - 2PM

Pantry service closes and the floor team ready the dining room for breakfast tomorrow. Staff turn their focus to admin work while everything starts to go quiet and preparation for the next day's service begins.



## NO TWO DAYS ARE THE SAME AT SOUL

And while this represents a typical Wednesday in the life of Soul, in May 2023 Soul is also putting the finishing touches on organizing Sleepout for Soul 2023, preparing for the Winter Appeal, applying for several major grants and preparing to move to a new home with the Ian & Shirley Norman Foundation.



# A NEW LOOK FOR SOUL (HUB)

Soul Café was established in 2003 but the word Café has never really adequately described what we hope to achieve at Soul. For 20yrs Soul Café has helped the most vulnerable in our community providing so much more than a meal. Today Soul Café delivers all kinds of help, to all kinds of people, with all kinds of needs.

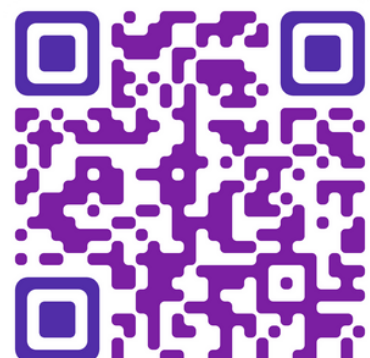
Earlier this year Soul Café became Soul Hub (with the help of **Out of the Square Media**). Soul Hub will continue to do everything we've done in the past plus so much more. But most importantly Soul Hub will continue to be a place where 'everyone's welcome, because nobody's perfect and anything is possible.'

The Soul Hub brand will be a new look for our new building. Soul Café is grateful to **Westpac** for providing us with a rent-free home for the last 10 years. In the home Westpac provided countless guests were welcomed and lives transformed. As we become Soul Hub we are deeply grateful to the **Ian and Shirley Norman Foundation (ISNF)** who will provide us with a rent-free home for the next 10 years at 437 Hunter St. The new space will be all on one level, significantly larger and custom fitted out for our purpose. Soul Hub will be celebrating Christmas 2023 in our new home.

On behalf of our vulnerable guests Soul wishes to thank both Westpac and ISNF for their astounding generosity to the Soul Hub community.



WATCH OUR EXCITING  
ANNOUNCEMENT VIDEO



# SOUL VOLUNTEERS

Our volunteer force is the heart and soul of Soul Hub. Every day, the Soul volunteer crews seek to change the lives of broken and vulnerable for the better. There is not always a solution, but at Soul Hub every person is treated with dignity, kindness, and respect. Our mission is to help whoever we can however we can, and we cannot do this without our volunteers.

**207 Volunteers**

**419 Volunteer Hours per week**

**37 new Volunteers in the last 3 months**



This is the equivalent of 20.55 full time persons totaling an estimated \$27,818 in weekly wage costs. The volunteer roles include kitchen, pantry, cooks, reception, administration, events, team leaders, drivers, cleaners, attending services, coaching and guest support. Soul Hub is so appreciative of all our volunteers and could not be prouder of how they are constantly adapting to provide our guests with the best possible support we can offer.

At Soul we are often asked, 'do you have enough volunteers?' And the answer is both 'yes' and 'no'. Yes we have plenty of volunteers, 207 volunteers get a lot done each and every week. And 'no' we don't have enough volunteers because there is always someone else to talk to, something else to clean, someone else to help.

## VOLUNTEER STORY: NETTI & BEZ

Nettie and Bez have been friends for over 5 years and view themselves as sisters.

On a recent coffee trip in town, they decided to go to a place called Soul Cafe. They quickly discovered when attempting to order a 1/2 strength soy latte that Soul isn't a traditional cafe. A situation which isn't awfully uncommon - one of the reasons we have recently rebranded to Soul Hub.

Embodying our "everyone's welcome" culture our floor team volunteers started talking to them and encouraged them to stay for lunch (seeing they had come all this way and all) and they absolutely loved it. They came downstairs to leave a donation for their meal, and they were then offered a full tour of Soul, which they gladly accepted and thoroughly enjoyed.

They went home and researched Soul and fell in love with the place. They came back a week later to collect a volunteer application form (one they filled out whilst enjoying another delicious Soul meal, that they also left another donation for). Now part of our Thursday lunch service (funnily enough on tea and coffee), Nettie and Bez describe Soul as a place of "no judgement, home of guests that are lovely to work with."



They get filled up every time a guest thanks them for a coffee and love that they get to give something back to the community.

**"This cup of coffee will make your day".**

# CONVERGENCE OF HELP

At Soul the meal is just the beginning, it serves as a catalyst for something much bigger. A kind word, a friendly gesture, a smile, and time shared over a meal builds trust creating a sense of belonging. That sense of belonging & community is a valuable end in itself but is also acts as a bridge to help guests connect to services. We refer to our services and programs as our Convergence of Help.

## SOUL MEDICAL CLINIC

Ideally in the Soul Convergence of help we invite other services (or professionals) to volunteer their skills to empower our guests. The Soul Medical Clinic, established by Dr Milton Sales in 2010, is one much appreciated example of this. The Soul Clinic provides weekly bulk billed medical care, free prescriptions, and referrals to Soul guests.



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 our community.

## SERVICES & PROGRAMS

1,642 TOTAL OCCASIONS OF SERVICE 1 APRIL 2022 - 31 MARCH 2023

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Audiology                                | Laundry Service                              |
| Barber                                   | Soul Medical Clinic                          |
| Blankets, Swags, Jackets, Socks, Beanies | Narcotics Anonymous                          |
| Centrelink Outreach                      | Podiatry Clinic                              |
| Chiropractic Clinic                      | Random Souls Music Group                     |
| Coaching Program                         | SMART Recovery                               |
| Community Service Programs               | Social Work Hub                              |
| Discovering Faith Group                  | Senior Rights Service                        |
| Gamblers Anonymous                       | Support for letters and forms                |
| Hairdresser                              | School, TAFE & University student placements |
| Hygiene Care Packs                       | Work Development Orders                      |
| Internet/telephone access                | WHOS Rehab Outreach                          |

## SPECIAL EVENTS

- 43 guests received a free birth certificate at our Birth Certificate Day
- 31 guests received free Hep-C testing through our collaboration with Peers on Wheels and NSW Users and Aids Association



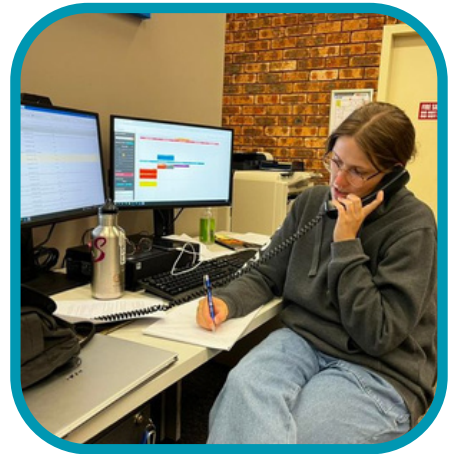


# SOCIAL WORK AT SOUL

Just before Christmas, our Social Worker Jocelyne, began supporting a new guest at Soul called Tony\*.

Tony\* arrived for lunch one day reporting that he was living in his car after leaving his home due to family breakdown.

Although he was doing his best to engage with other services, Tony found himself on a lot of waitlists and was running out of options. He needed support to get out of his car due to severe health issues.



Tony's medical concerns meant that he required a unit with appropriate modifications that was accessible and could accommodate his unique needs. Tony also needed somewhere cool to store medication, which was not possible in his car.

Tony was able to be assessed by an Occupational Therapist who, along with Jocelyne, provided substantial supporting evidence for Tony's housing application. Tony was able to be rapidly rehoused and is now living in an accessible unit. He continues to work with the Soul Social Work Service with the goal of applying for the National Disability Insurance Scheme. Our hope is that Tony will be able to receive much needed ongoing support through the NDIS as he moves forward in his new home.

When we cannot find an external service (or professional) to provide supports our guests require we consider trying to provide them ourselves, we call this Souls 'convergence of help.' With the financial support of **ElectroDry, Bondi Chai, Orica, PWCS & an anonymous benefactor** Soul is able to employ two social workers to assist our guests.

The Soul social work service is a proven effective support for guests and an essential part of Soul Hubs convergence of Help providing dozens of occasions of service each week.

## SOCIAL WORK STATS

- 217 individual guests have received intensive casework support
- An average of 480 hours annually spent on information, referral, and service navigation for drop-in guests
- 27% of the guests that attend the Soul Social Work service are rough sleepers
- \$14,548 of state debt cleared for guests through our WDO program, which is run by our social worker



# SOUL DONORS

If our volunteer force is the heart and soul of Soul Hub then our Donor community is probably the lifeblood of Soul. Most people are surprised to hear that Soul doesn't get any government funding and that the vast majority of our corporate support goes towards the wages of our Soul Social Workers. The budget for the day to day Soul operations comes from kids, schools, mums, dads, clubs and businesses around Newcastle.

## DARACON

The Daracon Group have provided Soul with a utility vehicle since 2007, including covering the expense of fuel, maintenance and servicing every year.

The vehicle is used to pick up rescued food that has helped Soul to put more than 37 tonnes of food on the plate this financial year alone. In 2019 Daracon upgraded the vehicle to a more recent model and the volunteer drivers are thrilled to be driving the new Toyota Hilux.



## TESS & LYNETTE

Many guests use our meal and pantry services to collect food to feed to their pet when they get home, so when we receive donations of pet food and kibble, it's a welcome sight for our guests (and their dogs).

Meet Tess, our only four-legged donor. Tess and her owner Lynette are from the PETStock Family and today they dropped off a boot load of dog food, leads and accessories for our four-legged guests (of which there are a few).

A lot of our guests have pets. There's not a human alive that can compare to the companionship, love and loyalty of a pet and for several guests, their pets provide them with purpose. In fact, many of them only access services like Soul Hub because of their pets. I recall one guest telling me "I need my dog and it needs me, it's nice to feel needed. It needs me to feed it, it needs me to walk it, it needs me to get out of bed."



For most of our guests, their dogs aren't considered much of a pet, but family. When no one else has the time of day for them, they can always count on their dogs to be waiting at the door with a smile and a wagging tail.

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT  
SOUL SPONSORSHIP





# YOU MIGHT BE SURPRISED...

You might be surprised by some of the things that happen at Soul Hub. We host student placements, we ran a huge Supercars event, we have a guest coaching program, we do laundry for guests, and we do table service for guests.



## FRIDAY CHILL

You might be surprised that every Friday night from Dec 2022 till Feb 2023 Soul hosted live music in Pacific Park. We call it Friday Chill.



With live local bands, food truck and a family friendly atmosphere Friday Chill is Soul Hubs way of saying 'thank you' to Newcastle for supporting us all year round.

A huge 'thank you' to NCIG & PRDnationwide for sponsoring Chill so we can make it free to Newcastle.

## CLONTARF FOUNDATION

You might be surprised that Soul hosts regular workplace volunteers, university placements, work experience and school visits. Everyone visits for their own reasons, but we try to give them a real 'Soul Experience'. Most visitors leave having had their eyes opened to the realities of life for Newcastle's vulnerable people. One of our favourite regular visits is the young men from the Clontarf Foundation.



## GUEST CHRISTMAS PARTY



You might not be surprised that many of our vulnerable guests don't get invited a lot of places. That's why, with the support of the **WESTS Group** & **Newcastle Limousines** we love to invite them all to a huge Guest Christmas Party at NEX each year. Last Christmas the auditorium looked spectacular, the food was delicious, there was live music (carols) and everyone left with gifts & a smile.



# the **BIG ASK** DONATE TO 1.8

We have an ambitious goal. To fully finance a purpose designed new home move in ready by the end of October this year. This location, 437 Hunter Street comes with an estimated \$1.8 million cost.

Our DA (at the time of writing) is nearly complete. Our principal builder Luke Finlay, Insight Building are well into planning and preparation. Together with the **ISNF**, **Life Church** and the **Sleepout for Soul** we have already raised close to \$450k. An amazing start!

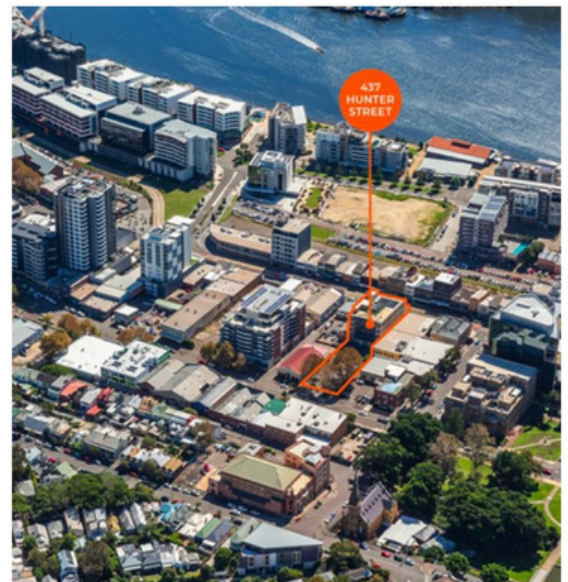
September 1 we are hosting 'The **BIG ASK Soul Gala**'! This will be a culmination of the largest community response we will have ever experienced!

## Our **BIG ASK** is, can you help us move and donate to 1.8?

### Some ways you can help:

- Fundraise for us.
- Become a 'Soul Mate' by becoming a regular giver.
- Sponsor 'The **BIG ASK Soul Gala**'.
- Donate an auction item for 'The **BIG ASK Soul Gala**'.

Visit [www.soulhub.org.au](http://www.soulhub.org.au) for more detailed information and other opportunities to partner with us.



# STAFF AT SOUL

Matt, Lorraine, Jocelyne, Kylie, Nic, Michelle, Mary and Sue (on leave).

1 Full Time and 6 Part Time Staff.

The staff work an average of 182 hours per week, the equivalent of 4.8 full time persons.

Jocelyne & Kylie, the Soul Social Workers are sponsored by ElectroDry, Bondi Chai, Orica, PWCS and an anonymous contributor to provide direct guest support.

49% of Soul staff hours is directly invested in supporting guests. The remaining 51% of Soul staff hours is invested in management, supporting volunteers, fundraising, admin and thus indirectly invested in supporting guests by keeping Soul Hub operating.

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



## SOUL GOVERNANCE

Soul Hub is a business name held by LifeShapers Family Services Trust which is a registered charity. Life Church LTD (CAN: 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:

TRUST CHAIRMAN: RICK PROSSER

VICE CHAIRMAN: HOWARD MOLE

TRUSTEES: DAVID ZAMMIT, ANTHONY CUMMINS, LINDA ROLLAND, TONYA HUEN

# ON THE ROAD WITH SOUL

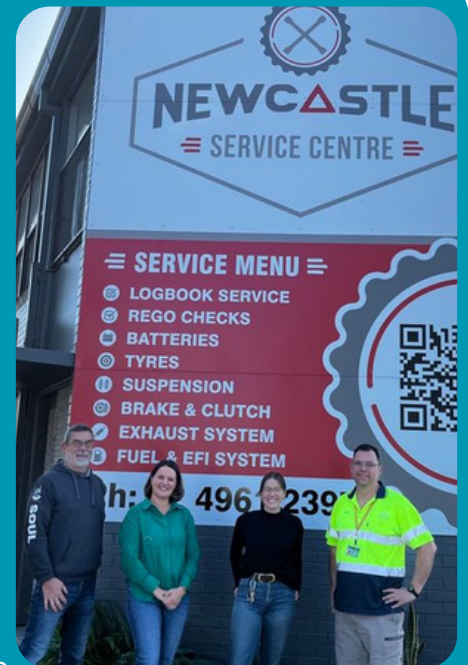
Soul Hub is excited to announce the inception of a new guest service called "On the Road with Soul Hub".

We are offering this program in partnership with the incredible folks at Newcastle Service Centre. Andre and Vanessa, who are the owners and operators of a fully equipped garage in Wickham as well as a roadside assistance service, approached a few months ago with the desire to help our guests. After a few brainstorming sessions "On the Road with Soul Hub" was born.

The concept of the program is to provide our guests with free assessments by licensed mechanics to diagnose any issues with their vehicles. The service centre will then help guests with minor repairs or registration so they can drive their cars safely on the road.

This is a crucial service, especially for those guests whose cars not only serve as transportation, but also as their home.

Recently, we had our first guest participate in the program. He currently lives in his vehicle and has been assisted with some essential repairs. He was delighted with the high-quality service he received through the program. A HUGE thanks to Andre, Vanessa, and their whole team for keeping our guests on the road!



## FOR MORE SOUL STORIES SCAN



### If you would like to make a donation to Soul Hub:

#### Online:

For an automatic tax-deductible receipt go to: [soulhub.org.au](https://soulhub.org.au)

#### Direct Deposit:

BSB: 032-505  
Account: 299497  
Account: Lifeshapers Family Services  
Reference: your name



For your tax-deductible receipt, email: [finance@soulhub.org.au](mailto:finance@soulhub.org.au)