



**A MINISTRY OF OUR LADY'S NURSES FOR THE POOR**

December 2023

***Dear Friends of the Brown Nurses***

This year has seen the Brown Nurses team continue to grow and the work of the Ministry expand to provide hope and compassion for more clients in our community.

Many have struggled with cost-of-living pressures and raising inflation, significantly impacting on their ability to manage day to day, with many often going without meals or being able to pay to access medical care and assistance. Financial challenges, coupled with health challenges, have meant that many have an ongoing risk of losing their tenancies, which in turn significantly increases their risk of homelessness and risks their health, safety, and well-being. Most of our clients are very isolated, living alone, with few or no family or friends. Offering hope and compassion is critical to our mission and helps sustain our clients when times are difficult. Sharing Simon's story below will demonstrate the difference connection, advocacy and support can make.

Simon\*, a client who has been in our care since July 2022, has a range of chronic and complex health conditions which significantly impact on the quality of his life and his ability to undertake many activities. He struggles to walk for more than a few minutes due to his shortness of breath and severe lymphoedema which has caused enormous swelling of his legs and feet. When we first met Simon, his poorly maintained unit was on the 14th floor of a public housing block where the single lift was often broken, preventing him from leaving his unit and the building. He was physically unable to use stairs. His poor mobility and the maintenance issues in the unit block posed a significant personal safety risk for Simon. Together these factors led to extreme social isolation and an inability to interact with others in the building and the wider community.

His social isolation exacerbated his mental health problems and subsequently his resilience. Simon often said that he had no one to support or advocate for him except for the Brown Nurses "you haven't given up on me. That's what usually happens, people give up on me". He appreciated being able to speak honestly and openly with the Brown Nurses about his life without judgement or feeling shame.

Due to the nature of his accommodation and his health, over the last year we strongly advocated on his behalf with relevant agencies to improve his living conditions. In October, success! Our advocacy resulted in Simon being moved to another unit in a well-maintained apartment block with appropriate amenities and ease of access. We continue to work with Simon to find activities that lessen his social isolation, such as shopping or enjoying a cup of coffee but his new surrounds have led to better engagement with his treatment team, improved his resilience and offered greater hope that things can improve.

*(\*Simon is a pseudonym used to ensure our client's anonymity)*



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None of this would be possible without the dedicated professionalism of our Brown Nurses team.

We are now looking forward to 2024 and continuing the pioneering spirit of Eileen O'Connor, Father McGrath, and the Ministry of Our Lady's Nurses for the Poor. We remain committed to providing compassionate and wholistic care, enabling hope for those in the community, like Simon, who we serve. Our values will continue to underpin all that we do, and we hope, this will be demonstrated through our everyday actions, giving our Brown Nurse mission and vision life.

***"True charity is never idle for if we wish to be really charitable there is always someone, we can make happy, or happier, someone we can help a little- make things a little easier for them... Let us give happiness, help and strength".***

*Eileen O'Connor – A Saintly Inspiration*

**EILEEN O'CONNOR ANNIVERSARY MASS – Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2024**

Please join us at 10am on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2024, to celebrate the anniversary mass commemorating Eileen's life and devotion at St Brigid's Church, corner Brook and Waltham streets, Coogee.

Thank you again for your ongoing support of the Brown Nurses. Don't forget to visit our website for more information on the Brown Nurses and our important work.

Merry Christmas and Seasons' Greetings. Wishing you all the very best for the year ahead.

*Elisabeth*

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CEO & Director of Nursing Services, Brown Nurses



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# **BROWN NURSES**

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*The Brown Nurses team CEO Dr. Elisabeth Black, CNS's Jessica Saayman, Annie Black, Nurses Eunhee Nivelteau, Sarah Sweeney, Laura Penny, Vanessa Collins, Kristin O'Brien, Business Operations Manager Roxanne Jimenez as with Sr Greta Gabb oln and Sr Pat Malone oln*



*CEO Dr. Elisabeth Black (right) with Sr Gabriel Bast oln, Sr Pat Malone oln nurses Rebecca Anderson, Eunhee Nivelteau.*

