



From the Chair, Dr Vern Harvey

Dear supporters and volunteers

Sometimes it is nice to not only be able to say thank you but also to show you what your support has been able to achieve.

On Saturday 22nd June 2019 there will be a service of celebration for 20 years of Kairos Outside Programs in Australia. The celebration will be at St Patrick's Hall, cnr Victoria Road and Marist Place Parramatta, NSW at 2.00pm. What a wonderful achievement and worthy of celebration and thanks for your support which made it possible.

While Kairos Prison Ministry is well known for its programs inside Australian gaols (Kairos Inside) our parallel programs outside the gaol walls are equally important.

Kairos Outside Women (KOW) programs are designed primarily for women who have been impacted by incarceration, primarily of men in their families. The families of the incarcerated 'do time' along with their relatives and friends – often a lonely vigil of shame and isolation. Kairos Outside provides a safe place for these women to honestly confront their pain and begin healing, by experiencing Christ's love through the Weekend experience and in forming their own small reunion groups.

More recently Kairos Outside programs have been adapted for men (KOM) but the demand has not been as great as that for women. However the programs which have been run have proven as popular and as beneficial to the participants.

From the first 2 KOW programs in Sydney in 1999 to 2018 KOW has completed 231 Programs. Around 400 volunteers serve on KOW weekends each year. In 2018 KOW ran 17 programs in 12 regions located in NSW, South Australia, Queensland, ACT and Western Australia. What a remarkable achievement.

Thank you volunteers and supporters. Thank you God.

As well as our usual material, this newsletter looks back over past years to collect some of the testimonies from Kairos Outside participants demonstrating the contribution KOW has made to the lives of their participants.

As well as looking backwards for a moment we are also looking forward for the next five years. The Board has released a Five Year Plan 2019 – 2023. You can find a copy of the Plan on www.kairos.org.au

There is more detail of the Plan later in the Newsletter and an exciting report from the new Regions Development Officer.

After a review of our operations through 2018 the Board is committing to generational change in our people, our

systems, our communications and fundraising. Two decades of operation have made Kairos Prison Ministry the largest, volunteer, external provider of life style programs inside Australian prisons. Yet we have barely scratched the surface of the need and we are being requested to do more. If we are to meet these requests we need to improve how we manage our resources.

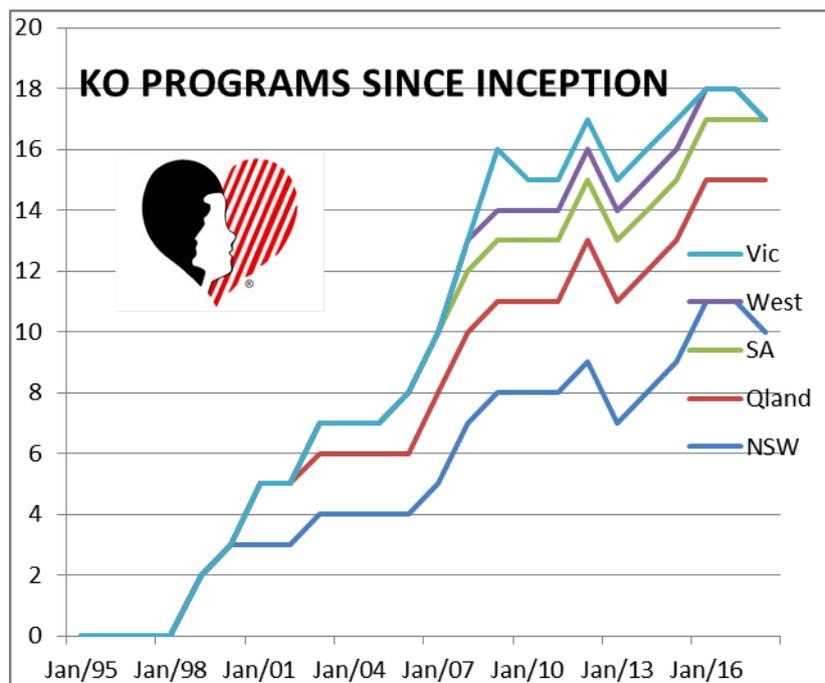
This is THE CHALLENGE.

I know there are many

worthy Christian causes seeking your support at this time. As directed by Jesus in Matthew 25:36 our volunteers take the message of salvation directly to a very needy community often just down the road from where you live.

Please continue to support us with your contributions for our regular operations. If you can spare some more go to our website www.kairos.org.au and [donate](#) to THE CHALLENGE for our growth plans.

God bless
(Dr) Vern Harvey
Chair of the Board
KPMA



A KOW Guest reflects on her story

“My youngest child had behavioral problems as far back as I can remember. When he was growing up, even something as simple as asking him to clean his room always became a battle. His behavior eventually became so bad that I had to put him in a school for children with behavioral problems. But he just got worse.”

“When he was finally arrested on drug charges, I went to visit him at the Police Station. I distinctly remember my first thought, At least I know where he is and that he has a bed and three meals a day.

But [his bad behavior] continued in prison, which caused me to become even angrier with him. I was going through so much and he did not even seem to care! I just couldn't do this anymore. Then I learned that God was with me through all of this and that He loves my son as well. So that day, I handed him over to God and things slowly started to get better. I found that once we accept the fact that we feel anger, we can deal with it and move towards forgiveness.”

“Today I don't try to rescue him anymore. I love my son and it touches my heart when he tells me that he loves me. But I can say no to him and he knows that I still love him.”

“I have given my son the gift of life. I pray for him and I now have a peace because God knows my heart and what's best for my son. So I continually trust in Him every day of my life.”

Fundraising

On behalf of all those who have benefited from our programs over the years I want to thank our financial supporters. As you can tell from the testimonies your contributions have changed lives and more importantly helped men and women come to know God and Jesus in a meaningful way. You and our volunteers together are living out Matthew 25:36. Enclosed with this Newsletter is our regular end-of-financial-year reminder of our need for your continued support. It is a busy time for requesting tax deductible donations and we are small compared to others who are seeking your support.

This year we are seeking support for two reasons: the regular one to keep us functioning in our small support office but also for our growth program, THE CHALLENGE, set out in our Five Year Plan available at www.kairos.org.au

Support for either one or both will ensure even more people get to hear the message of redemption.

Vern (Chair)

A KOW guest finds a way forward (names have been changed)

Kate and Mick had met as teenagers, married early, and had three beautiful children. Life was good. But it all came crashing down when Mick was sentenced to prison.

In his attempt to provide everything he could for his family Mick had used unlawful means to attain funds. Kate and her children were faced with the excruciating prospect of living life without their beloved husband and father for the next nine years.

Thankfully, Mick's sentence was eventually reduced to five years with a three year parole period. But that didn't make those long years away from him any easier for Kate and her family.

“From the moment he was sentenced... I struggled through the looks of shame and unkind comments and ultimately felt isolated and rejected. The worst blow of rejection came from my own family”.

Kate carried these feelings of shame and rejection with her until she was invited to attend a Kairos Outside program for families who are left on the outside when their loved ones go to prison.

“At Kairos Outside I entered into a whole new world. I faced a family of caring people who listened to my story and did not want to judge me. I felt care and love that I never knew existed. Kairos Outside raised me to a level of hope that renewed my feeling for life and it made me smile from the inside again.”

“At Kairos Outside I learnt that we were going to be okay and that the gift of hope was ours for the taking. When I returned home I shared my Kairos Outside experience with our children and they too realised that with God's love there is hope.”

2019 Kairos Prison Ministry Conferences

Australia

30 August – 1 September 2019
Bonny Hills NSW

USA

23 – 27 July 2019
Florida USA

For more information go to
www.kairos.org.au

Kairos Outside Men

In 2009, Pat Benefield was a guest on the first pilot program for Kairos Outside Men. Following that experience he wrote:

“The past incarceration of a family member has impacted on me and my family’s life in a ripple like effect, like tossing a stone in the pond; the ripples do impact negatively on many lives, family and community.”

“I was apprehensive and to be honest told myselfI didn’t really need to go. Now that I have attended I know I definitely needed to go. The Kairos Outside Men’s experience was a life changing experience for me. No gimmicks. It was wonderful to be in the presence of so many caring, gentle, loving and humble Spirit filled men, team and guests alike.”

“We were lead on a journey of self discovery that was a safe place to take a risk, take our masks off and share personal and intimate things.”

“We spent a lot of time on relationships and how God wants to have a relationship with us and it is only by surrendering our lives to God that that becomes possible.”

A family finds new strength through KOW

“We never thought we would experience having someone in prison, but life changed when the police knocked on our door. When the main bread-winner of our family was imprisoned, not only was there not enough money for rent, but the legal bills began mounting up.”

“Before all this happened, I had planned to purchase a small property for myself. However, I now needed to buy a house that could fit my mum and sisters too, as they had nowhere else to go. There was also the pain of living in a community that knew our family and where we experienced gossip and judgement. I felt so ashamed and hid away in isolation.”

“My mum and I came to a Kairos Outside weekend exhausted and with our hopes in tatters. For us, to find a place where we could openly share without judgement allowed us to finally start processing the events that had led to such grief, loss and shame. It felt amazing to hear others share their past journeys and where they were at now. It gave me hope again.”

“My Kairos Outside weekend reminded me of the truth that my identity is not found in what happened to me and my family but, rather, in what God thinks of me. After my weekend I found new strength, through His grace and my new Kairos family, to face the world again.”

A Guest on a Kairos Outside for Women Sydney weekend

Report from a Kairos Inside team member

At a recent Kairos reunion inside the gaol which I chaired I was asked by a new inmate if he could speak. He seemed very keen so I said yes.

He got up in front of the team members and other inmates and spoke.

“I went to the ‘barber’ (inside the gaol) on Thursday to get a haircut and came out not only with a new look but a new life. I accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as my personal saviour.”

This in itself is exciting for all of us; the ‘barber’ is a lifer who came along to a KI program nine years ago and became a foundation member of the Christian Community inside the jail, after attending a Kairos Inside program.

His hair cutting role sometimes stops him from attending the monthly reunions, but he is very active in spreading the joy and hope of knowing Jesus.

This is what our mission is about, establishing and nurturing Christian groups within the jail.

Praise the Lord.

Kairos Inside in the country—Thank God for supporters

Hi Ken, [addressed to the Program leader]

My name is Leanne from Whyalla Baptist Church and I am emailing you about the Kairos Course to be held in Port Augusta July 8th – Aug 12th.

In 2017 my Home Group baked biscuits to be distributed to people who would be attending the course and we are wondering if it would be appropriate and helpful for us to do that again. We also wrote short letters of encouragement which we could do again.

Last time I was in contact with Gerald and we dropped the biscuits off in Port Augusta. Our family could do that because we will be passing through on Fri July 5th.

Looking forward to hearing from you,
Leanne

[Country Life! Whyalla is 80 Km from Port Augusta, about an hour’s drive. Ed]

Relocating or Moving home

Please advise the Kairos Office of your new contact details, so that KPMA can keep you informed and up to date with the Ministry.



Tel: (02) 9987 2016 or Email: operations@kairos.org.au

Goals for the Ministry

On 6 May 2019 the Board released its Five Year Strategic Plan 2019 -23. Its purpose is to implement generational change in people, fundraising, systems and communications to achieve our mission faster and more effectively. The key goals set by the directors to accomplish this over the next five years are:

1. Sustain our existing programs and progressively establish new ones
2. Enhance and continually focus on the spiritual health of the ministry
3. Implement the 'new' Manuals for all three programs
4. Achieve sustainable financial health of the ministry particularly for the Kairos Support Office
5. Improve communication internally and externally
6. Continually recruit and retain qualified Christian volunteers
7. Build brand and awareness of the ministry in external audiences
8. Create, fund and maintain training that supports all aspects of the Ministry

A key initiative under Goal 1 is the appointment of a Regions Development Officer (RDO), an in-the-field resource to assist Regional committees, particularly new ones. Our first RDO, Vicki Buchanan, took up her role on 29 April 2019 and hit the ground running with a trip to Grafton on the north coast of NSW.

Twelve km from Grafton is the site of a huge new prison which will accommodate 1,700 inmates. It is expected to be complete mid-2020 and the Kairos Inside Regional Committee wants to be ready to provide the program there as soon as possible. With recent closures and reopening of the old prison we have not been able to run a Program there since 2012.

Working with the Chair of the Regional Committee, Pat Benefield, and the next KI leader, Maurice Avellino, Vicki has been assisting with ideas for promotion of the program in the region and the recruitment of volunteers.

The Committee is planning to take the program into the old prison in 2019 to get ready for next year.

Pat Benefield said "The help has boosted our confidence, knowing we have the latest information and support from the top. It is just what we needed and right on time.

Pat added "It has been a big encouragement. We would be in the wilderness without Vicki's help. We now know and feel we are part of something much bigger."

If you would like to support
THE CHALLENGE go to
www.kairos.org.au

A meditation for our ministry ?

A CANDLE IN THE DARK

It is better to light a single candle than to curse the darkness.

Sitting around moaning; complaining; about bad times; sad times, only achieves greater despair and feelings of helplessness.

Today, the light from a mobile phone is probably brighter than a candle, yet people still have a candle somewhere in case of a power failure. A candle brings light, but also calmness; feelings of well-being: a sense of "things are not as bad as they look" when all we see is darkness.

Sadly, many in our society may not even have a candle (figuratively speaking) to bring some light into their lives; they may be so beaten down by circumstances that all they can see is darkness; all around; all the time.

We may not own a lighthouse; but we all carry at least one "candle": a kind word; a hand on the shoulder; a time to sit and listen; a word of encouragement; an "I know how you feel" smile toward the harried mother in the supermarket aisle. For those who believe Him, Jesus taught "I am the light of the world and you can plug into my power" His care; His concern; His love; his gift of making things right between you and God; you and others can never be blown out, never goes flat; can shine into the darkest of places. He also taught "Don't hide your light under a bucket."

With thanks to Ruth for the idea.

Cheers, Kevin Schrapel.

Kairos Prison Ministry Australia is an interdenominational Christian ministry reaching out to incarcerated individuals, their families and those who work with them; to bring sustainable meaning and hope in the place of loneliness, isolation and despair. Building Christian Community.