



What's News — October-November 2021

L'Arche Hobart Beni-Abbes Community

Seasons of Community

L'Arche is a place of personal transformation – of change. Each of us who have entered into L'Arche – have been attracted to L'Arche and stayed – have grown. What is it that called us? Why do we come here on a Sunday afternoon when we could be elsewhere? Surely not just for the barbecued sausages? What makes this place – these people gathered – so important? We are all very different from each other yet here we are.

Many years ago as a Federation we entered into a worldwide discernment process called Identity and Mission – and it's out of this that we have the I&M statements that are our core principles.



At the beginning of that process we explored the notion that Communities, like nature, have their seasons. In our Community I feel we had a **springtime** with the beginning dreaming of people like Fr Terry Yard and Phil Vincent and Paula and Brendan Sullivan and Lilian Sutton and Ken Lowrie – and many others. The seeds were planted – we had a house. There was no government funding – our costs were covered by donations and fundraising. There was little money but there was joy and hope and a sense of expectation. We didn't know where exactly we were going but could see how other L'Arche communities around Australia and the world operated and we liked what we saw.



We welcomed Ann Huxley and Greg Burles, Caroline Webster and Ian Mackellar, and we had Peter Ryan as a live-in community leader and live in assistants – like Katrina Dick and Trish Parkinson. And a trickle of government funding. Our live-ins were essentially volunteers and overwhelmingly Australian volunteers. There was something about this radical call that attracted people to dive in. It feels to me like we had a very beautiful spring time where many people came and we put our roots down – our culture as a community was being built on the foundation of other L'Arche cultures but was also our own.



It feels to me that we then had a very long and lovely **summer** where we grew from one house to a second (Wilmslow Ave before 21). Some years later we had a dreaming day at Maryknoll and agreed we wanted to offer hospitality to people living with a disability living around Hobart.

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Special Event Saturday 30 October – L'Arche Australia Retreat – 11.45 am to 5 pm, 40 Pirie St – see page 8 for full details.

Thursday 4 November – Annual General Meeting, 6.00 pm, 40 Pirie St, followed by a light meal (annual membership fees will be received before the meeting)

Wednesday 17 November – Café L'Arche – 7 to 8.30 pm, St Therese's Hall, Moonah (venue to be confirmed)



Tuesday 7 December – Solidarity – 6 to 8 pm, 40 Pirie St

Thursday 16 December – Neighbourhood Christmas carols – details on page 12

Sunday 5 December – Christmas BBQ, 12 noon, 40 Pirie St



Seasons of Community *continued...*

We waited and waited and waited – and then when Chris Lewis decided he wanted to live independently we were approached by Disability Services to provide the support that would allow Chris to live out that dream.

At our first formal meeting Disability Services asked if we might support **six** people to live independently. And that was how Tenancy Support came to birth – later known as Outreach. And we grew and grew and grew – And then our third house – St Aubyn Square – that's where we welcomed Hannah and later Garry. It was a season of growth – we were a big community. The biggest in L'Arche Australia.



But things of course were changing – it had become very rare for Assistants to come from within Australia – we relied almost totally on live-ins from other countries. A beautiful gift. But not many could stay long term. And then the immigration regulations changed and our live-out employees became the new normal. And even when some people showed an interest in living-in there were hurdles. Our number of employees grew bigger and bigger.

This seems to me like an **Autumn** – when for me at least it seemed there wasn't that much making us different from any other disability service. The employees who came were people of goodwill and competence but not necessarily called to the values and practices of L'Arche. The culture of an organisation like ours is one that is caught and not taught. The live-in model, though not perfect, was by its very nature an embodiment of what it is to live in mutually transforming relationships – relationships are fast tracked when we live day by day alongside each other. There is nothing like having breakfast together after a disagreement the night before to really get to know each other – to accept each other as we

really are. Cracks were already there in autumn before winter came along.



Winter has its purposes. We can't live in any one season forever. Winter is a time for pruning. And we have been cut right back almost to the roots. But we are still alive. When we were faced with negotiating NDIS as well as a very large employee body many of whom simply weren't interested in the particular charm or identity of L'Arche, the stresses and strains and dissatisfactions that moved under the surface came into the light. Light is good. Truth is good however hard it might be to face. And so we had resignations and an exodus of long-term people. Some of our longest term Core Members and employees departed – we miss them deeply – it's a real source of pain.

It became clear that we couldn't manage to continue in the way we have been doing it for 35 years. It's a long story but financially we were in trouble. And at the last minute (as often happens in adventure/thriller stories) – at the last minute Greg and Suzie came forward and said they didn't want our Community to close because we have something very important and uniquely beautiful to offer the disability sector – the world actually! And so now we have us gathered here and those who support us who can't be here right now in this place.

I believe that L'Arche is a work of the Spirit. We have done great work and have shared love and care and inspiration to thousands of people. We have been living a winter.

What season comes after winter?

What will our spring be like?

What are the special graces that are coming out of what we have lived?

John Coleman



L'Arche Identity

We are people with and without intellectual disabilities, sharing life in Communities belonging to an International Federation.

Mutual relationships and trust in God are at the heart of our journey together.

We celebrate the unique value of every person and recognise our need of one another.

Mission

To make known the gifts of people with intellectual disabilities revealed through mutually transforming relationships.

To foster an environment in Community that responds to the changing needs of our members, whilst being faithful to the core values of our founding story.

To engage in our diverse cultures, working together toward a more human society.

On 19 September a large group of friends gathered for a hearty community barbecue and catch-up. Afterwards John talked about the seasons of our community (see pages 1 and 2) and then, in small groups, we reflected on the questions below and came up with a range of answers. Here they are...

Gratitude

We are grateful for:

the people who have committed to stay
the opportunities that we still have to gather as community
the spirit that exists among us
the music that binds us together
this place – 40 Pirie St – our foundation house
the spirit of hospitality that is still alive and for the guests who continue to come
this community of L'Arche which for many of us is a second family
gatherings that allow us to catch up with old friends
lovely interactions with a diversity of people
our shared meals
all our faithful and competent Assistants past and present
the traditions that are still alive – like welcome, hospitality, prayer and sharing, deeply listening
the wisdom, generosity and courage of our leaders
the cuppas and the chats
welcome and friendship
being a place where we are valued and loved as we are
our shared meals

Memories

Memories of community and 40 Pirie Street:

We remember:
mulberry pie from our very own trees
leaving here to go for walks on the beach and swimming with friends
Share a Meal nights
35 years of Christmas gatherings
the moving 35th anniversary celebration and the contribution of so many over the years
commitment and joy abounding
Community Weekends at Maryknoll

building and renewal of friendships and connections
the ongoing seasons of community – grief and loss – deep joy and wonderment
bushwalking adventures with Assistants from far away
going out for breakfast before church
our holidays and trips to Launceston
announcing L'Arche in churches and schools
Tenancy Support and the welcome of new people into community
quietly doing jigsaw puzzles with Sylvia
the special “first visit” welcomes
all the different people who have slept in the many rooms of 40
the wonderful assistants who have come (and some stayed!) from all over the world
weddings of Assistants and friends

Hopes and Dreams

Our hopes and dreams for the community

To especially honour and celebrate the gifts of people with a disability
To offer this space as a place for retreats, small groups and hospitality
To offer opportunities for holiday stays, programs / day activities
L'Arche Beni Abbes Distillery (*gosh!*)
To continue to gather as Community – coffee nights / Cafe L'Arche / Solidarity
To explore different community activities
To be financially viable to meet the needs of our mission
To plan and achieve our goals together – one body
To have FUN
To keep making music
To have opportunities for travel as Community
To welcome new people
To have Community working bees
To be outward looking



Community gathering
19 September



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- 11-12. Calendar of events, birthdays etc

L'Arche Hobart (Beni-Abbes)

Mission Statement (in conjunction with the International Identity and Mission Statement)

At Beni-Abbes we are people with and without disability who create homes and community.

We share our lives in real friendships, as we cook, share meals, pray together, talk, listen, help each other, through the good and the hard times in the spirit of love, as a sign of hope to others.

God is revealed to us when we celebrate and gather to pray and through relationships that are built on faithful, open and welcoming hearts.

Dear L'Arche friends,

Today is Show Holiday in Hobart – a Show that was on the brink of being cancelled because of a snap three day lockdown last weekend. Happily, we seem to be OK and the Show is on! Even the weather is cooperating – sunny and 24 degrees. Just a few days ago there was a fresh fall of snow on the mountain. Spring is a joyful lucky dip in Tasmania!

Our lockdown was a good reminder that, as we get closer to opening borders, it's really important to be vaccinated. If you haven't had a chance to do it yet, then please listen to the words of Pope Francis.

Claire Manthorpe
Editor



"Thanks to God's grace and to the work of many, we now have vaccines to protect us from Covid-19. They bring us hope to end the pandemic, but only if they are available to all and if we collaborate with one another."

Getting the vaccines that are authorised by the respective authorities is an act of love. And helping the majority of people to do so, is an act of love. Love for oneself, love for our families and friends and love for all peoples.

Love is also social and political. There is social love and political love. It is universal, always overflowing with small individual gestures capable of transforming and improving societies. Getting vaccinated is a simple yet profound way to care for one another, especially the most vulnerable.

*I pray to God that each one of us can make his or her own small gesture of love. **No matter how small, love is always grand.** Small gestures for a better future. God bless you. Thank you."*

Pope Francis, 18 August 2021

Prayer Points



This month we especially pray for:

- * all members of our community: core members, assistants, board members, community council, volunteers, families and friends.
- * David and Cindy Treanor as they grieve the loss of David's mother Margaret in Dublin.
- * The Treanor family as they welcome baby Mila, daughter of Alex and Emily.
- * Kate and Garrett Leitch as they make their new home in Queensland and welcome the safe arrival of their grandson, Oliver.
- * L'Arche Brisbane as they discern a new Community Leader.
- * L'Arche Bendigo as they make application to become a probationary community in the Federation.
- * L'Arche communities world-wide.



Garrett and Kate Leitch with their grandson, Oliver Garrett Smith, son of Hannah and David.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

October

Claire Lawler – 37 years – 1984
David Treanor – 31 years – 1990
Louise Pickering – 11 years – 2010

November

Felicity Rose – 31 years – 1990
Leanne Cowen – 21 years – 2000
Terry Watson – 21 years – 2000

Ritual of handing over to Greg and Suzie

Early in September, we had a ritual and celebration to formally hand over the provision of supported accommodation to Greg Harwood and Suzie Marston. The evening began with Board, Community Council and Suzie and Greg meeting to discuss some final matters and then they were joined by core members and other community members.

Lesley explained some of the symbols and traditions of L'Arche.



Garry lit the candle. Light is an important sign of the spirit of L'Arche.



Rosey presented napkin rings to Greg and Suzie. Napkin rings are a symbol of hospitality.



Stewart and Rosey prepared the candle which we then passed around and we all had an opportunity to offer Suzie and Greg our thanks, best wishes, blessings and support.



Stewart had some thank you gifts for people who've been doing an extraordinary job under difficult circumstances, and Beni-Abbes books and John Coleman CD's for Suzie and Greg. There were a few speeches and songs and THEN out came the tables and a magnificent meal for all to enjoy. *(No dinner pics as I was too focused on eating and nattering.)*



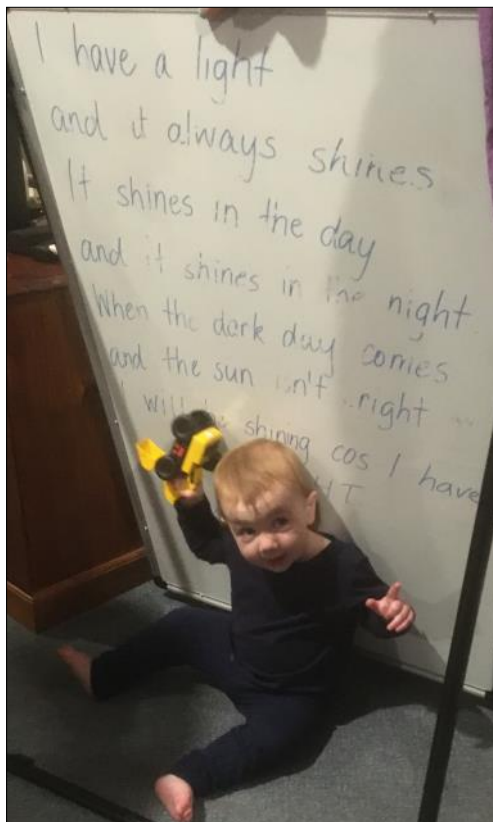
All in all, it was a very moving occasion. As we move from one phase of our 35 year history to the next, there were moments of sadness but also joy and hope as we move forward with Greg and Suzie.

Adieu and thank you

At September's Solidarity we farewelled Stewart Betts and his wife Mel and their children Jonathan and Georgina. Stewart is now Acting Community Leader with the Brisbane L'Arche community while they seek a replacement for the mighty Michael Hutchinson who has retired after many years at the helm. Hopefully Stewart and his family will be back before we know it!



Left: David, Louise, Paula, Mel and Maria, "passing the candle" for Stewart.



Fr Terry, Brendan, Peter, and Felicity.



I didn't get a shot of Stewart and his family, but here's one from our 35th anniversary.

How appropriate for the effervescent Georgina to nestle in to the words of "I have a light"!

Over the last few months, as we transition into our new way of being community, sadly we've had to say goodbye to some long-term and very capable, dedicated staff members. We are sorry to have to say goodbye but hope that they can continue to be part of the community. We value each and every one of them. Business Manager Kat Barrington, Finance Officer Bec Harding and Quality Coordinator Ash Kaur were farewelled with a lunch and presentations but, alas, there are no photos. Anyway, here are some archive shots of these three wonderful women.



For various reasons, not all of our Assistants have moved across to new positions and we will be thanking and farewelling them very soon. Watch this space!

L'Arche Australia Retreat Day – “Mud and Sunglasses”

Saturday 30 October 11.45 am to 5pm, 40 Pirie St, New Town

On 30 October, L'Arche Communities from across all of Australia are invited to take part in our very first Zoom linked retreat day. The theme of this day is “mud and sunglasses”. A mysterious title – but all will be revealed on the day! A little clue is that, as with all retreat experiences, one of our goals is to see in fresh new ways.

How do we do it?

We gather at 40 Pirie Street at 11.45 am for a 12.00 noon Zoom connection with our friends from around Australia. There will be 30 minutes of input and sharing followed by a shared lunch.

After our lunch together we will be invited to enter into quiet individual and small group time of reflection and creativity. We will have a little time of sharing how our time has been then **at 4 pm we gather again with our friends from L'Arche**

Australia via Zoom to see and hear how their time has been.

What do I need to bring? A pair of sunglasses and some food to share.

It has been such a long time since we have been able to gather as a big group of L'Arche Australia folk and the hope is that it will be a rich, peaceful and illuminating experience for each of us.

If you cannot join us in person but would like to join in the midday and 4 pm Zoom sessions please either phone John Coleman on 0401 489 728 or email manthorpecf@gmail.com for details of the links.

In prayer and solidarity,
John Coleman, Paula Sullivan, Maria Flynn and Leigh Delaney

L'Arche Hobart Retreat Planning Team

and some other bits and pieces

Here's to the Thing-Doers
The Show-Uppers
The Stick-Arounders
The Hand-Holders
The Truth-Tellers
The Heart-Fillers
The Laugh-Sharers
The Beauty-Makers
The Light-Bringers

They're all around if you look hard.
And remember: it's never too late
to be one yourself.

We have a very enjoyable little voluntary job available which fits all the above. It has long been a tradition that core members would make birthday cards and send them out to people whose birthdays are on the community calendar. Lately it has become a bit hit-and-miss. **Would you be willing to spend, say, an hour a month with some of the core members to help get the cards out for that month?**

An Invitation: Members of the L'Arche Beni-Abbes community are invited to the **2021 John Wallis Memorial Lecture, Around the Table with Pope Francis – a place and a voice for the poor**, to be delivered by educational leader and social change advocate Dr Wayne Tinsey, on **Wednesday 27 October, at 7 pm**. The event will be held at the Don Bosco Creative Arts Centre, Guilford Young College, Glenorchy (entry via Mill Lane, Glenorchy – good parking, flat access). Cost: \$10 donation (suggested). Supper will follow. Bookings (for seating and catering purposes): <https://www.trybooking.com/BUDQB>

If you are unable to attend in person, the lecture will be live-streamed. Please email spirit@graciousgenerosity.com.au to register your interest and so a link can be sent to you before

the event. Further information: graciousgenerosity.com.au or Eva Dunn eva.dunn@gmail.com or 0417 734 503

John Wallis was the founder of the Missionary Sisters of Service, who have long been friends of Beni-Abbes.

L'Arche Australia is having a raffle to support our mission and values. All the sales will contribute to support L'Arche Australia in solidarity with [L'Arche Zimbabwe](#). The prize is this magnificent Queen size quilt made by a member of L'Arche Brisbane.

Please note that online tickets are only available to NSW, ACT, TAS, SA and QLD residents.

For details and to buy tickets go to:
<https://www.raffletix.com.au/larchequiltraffle2021>

Tickets are \$2 each and the raffle will be drawn on 27 November 2021. Phone 0447 217 468 for more information.



Around the community



October solidarity – good food, good company, good washer-uppers ...



Peter Ramsden had planned a BBQ at his home to celebrate his birthday but the weather looked ominous so it was moved to 40. (And set off the smoke detector with all those candles!)



Hannah helping prepare dinner.

Do you have any aluminium cans?



Our friends Leanne Cowen and Terry Watson collect aluminium cans. If you ever have any, could you bring them along to any one of our events and we'll make sure they get to Terry and Leanne.



Congratulations Epi on successfully attaining further qualifications!





Rosey with, um, a big yellow something.

Louise enjoyed attending a family wedding recently.



We've been incredibly fortunate in Tasmania not to have had to wear masks very often. A recent situation had us digging them out though.

The recent L'Arche International Festival of Light featured Beni-Abbes singing "I Have a Light" – yes, we went global. Here are some people watching themselves singing on screen, and some screen shots of a few of the people who tuned in from around the globe.





October 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
24	25	26	27 Fr Terry Yard's birthday	28	29 Claire Lawler and Helen McKenzie's birthday	30 Retreat, full details page 8 Lauren Cutts' birthday
31						

November 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4 Board meeting 5.30 pm AGM 6.00 pm Ruth McCormick's birthday	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17 Café L'Arche, 7 to 8.30 pm, St Therese's Hall (venue to be confirmed)	18	19 David Treanor's birthday	20
21	22 Cameron Cutts' birthday	23	24	25	26 Deadline for December <i>What's News</i>	27
28 	29	30 Rosey Dean's birthday				

Events that look like this are open to all to attend. Bring your friends! The more the merrier!

Note: There will be no Solidarity in November. With the retreat on 30 October and AGM on 4 November, we would have had three events in six days.



December 2021



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5 Christmas BBQ 12 noon, 40 Pirie Street	6	7 Solidarity 6-8pm, 40 Pirie St	8	9	10	11
12 	13	14	15	16 Christmas Carols – details below	17	18
19 Rebecca Kaminski's birthday 	20 Helen Quinn's birthday	21	22 Jenny Coleman's birthday	23	24 Paula Sullivan's birthday	25 
26	27 Liza Schapira's birthday	28	29	30	31	

Christmas Carols – gather at Louise's house at 5 pm, then sing carols as we stroll to 40 Pirie Street for a light tea

What are Coffee Night and Café L'Arche?

Cafe L'Arche evolved from Coffee Night. Both are evenings of music and socialising.

Café L'Arche is usually held in a bigger venue and traditionally has a wider range of musicians and more of a café atmosphere. They're both joy-full occasions and guaranteed to get your toes tapping. Bring your guitar, your singing voice, your friends and family and have some fun.



What's Solidarity?

Once a month (usually the first Tuesday) we gather for a simple evening meal and make a small donation that goes to help support L'Arche Zimbabwe. After dinner we have an activity of some kind, sing a song or two, hear about upcoming events, and have a short period of reflection, always finishing with a song. It's always



If you want any information, please contact us ...



Facebook Message – our Facebook page is **L'Arche Hobart - Beni-Abbes**



P.O. Box132, Moonah. 7009



Board Chair, Brendan Sullivan
brendan@sullivansmail.com.au

What's News Editor, Claire Manthorpe
manthorpecf@gmail.com