

## **COVID-19 Update: Opportunities for Baptist churches to connect with BaptistCare HopeStreet in providing essential services**

We understand that the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in many challenges for local Baptist churches and that you are seeking to take up opportunities for ministry that express the love of Jesus and meet community need in safe ways. BaptistCare is working with the Baptist Association; sharing information, offering help and coordinating our responses where that is appropriate.

Over many years, local Baptist churches have been so important in helping BaptistCare HopeStreet to meet people at their point of need, whether domestic and family violence, homelessness, food support, counselling or one of the many other services we provide. Volunteering, prayer and donations have contributed greatly to our capacity to respond. Our clients need your support during this time that challenges us all.

We are committed to being part of the solution for the many individuals and families who are in need and who are increasingly vulnerable as we see the radical changes to employment and support services. There are opportunities for Baptist churches to be part of the solution in this crisis and into the longer term recovery phase. How the support from Baptist churches is expressed has needed to change, due to the top priority that needs to be given to the health and safety of our clients, volunteers and staff, who are essential workers.

To help prevent the spread of this virus, we have implemented our COVID-19 Prevention Strategy across all our sites.

In following the social distancing guidelines, we have had to change the way we provide support to our clients. At present, takeaway or frozen meals are available for collection at a number of sites, with some sites also being able to make deliveries to individuals or families in need. Low cost food stores including emergency relief packs are continuing to operate within these guidelines.

In addition, our No and Low Interest Loans, Casework, Chaplaincy, and Counselling services (including a focus on domestic and family violence) are conducting individual appointments using tele or video conferencing.

At a time when the level of disadvantage and distress is growing we are finding new ways to safely provide essential services. We invite Baptist churches to support the delivery of these essential services and to let their communities know of the help that is available.

## How can Baptist churches connect with BaptistCare HopeStreet in providing essential services to local communities?



### JOURNEY WITH US

- **Connect with a local HopeStreet site** - in your local area if a site is nearby or adopt a HopeStreet site in another community. Connect with the HopeStreet manager of the site and talk with them about what support is needed. **You can find out where our sites are located here: [hopestreet.org.au/locations/](https://hopestreet.org.au/locations/)**
- **Partner in prayer** – pray for the work of HopeStreet overall or focus your prayers on a local HopeStreet.
- **Mobilise volunteers** – At BaptistCare HopeStreet we support the most vulnerable in our local communities in providing essential services, whilst ensuring health and safety during this challenging time. Many of our crucial volunteers have understandably chosen to step down due to health and age vulnerabilities. To enable us to maintain our vital assistance we have volunteer opportunities in our key communities. **Please visit [baptistcare.org.au/get-involved/volunteering](https://baptistcare.org.au/get-involved/volunteering) or contact Liana Roccon on [Iroccon@baptistcare.org.au](mailto:Iroccon@baptistcare.org.au) or 0490 293 463.**



### GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

- Provide financial support – the need for food support and other forms of emergency relief is escalating and financial support enables us to help more people. BaptistCare HopeStreet is able to stretch financial support to maximise the impact by our relationships with suppliers and agencies including Foodbank, OzHarvest, SecondBite and Good360.
- Donations of material goods such as used clothing and blankets create major challenges for us in relation to health and safety given the need to comply with government directives.
- **Our strong preference is that donations be made through financial support.** If you have access to a non-financial donation which you believe could be useful, please check with your local HopeStreet manager before providing help in this way. We want to ensure that staff and volunteers are focussed on providing help to those who need it most and that their health and safety is not placed at risk – thanks for your understanding. **You can donate at [hopestreet.org.au/donate/](https://hopestreet.org.au/donate/)**



### BE IN TOUCH

- **Refer community contacts to BaptistCare HopeStreet** –Our No and Low Interest Loans, Casework, Chaplaincy, and Counselling services are conducting individual appointments using tele or video conferencing so are available to communities across NSW and the ACT. Food support and other forms of emergency relief are available to communities in close proximity to a number of HopeStreet sites. **You can be in touch with our Customer Engagement Centre on 1300 275 227 or visit [hopestreet.org.au/locations/](https://hopestreet.org.au/locations/) for contact details.**
- For other enquiries regarding support opportunities for churches please contact our Fundraising Team via email at [fundraising@baptistcare.org.au](mailto:fundraising@baptistcare.org.au)

Thank you for your commitment to expressing the love of Jesus, practicing kindness and generosity and living with hope. We believe that the goodness of God will be experienced more deeply as we work together in responding to community need with essential services.

Blessings,

Rob Ellis

General Manager Community Services