



The Winter Warmer: Homelessness Relief Campaign has raised \$56,944

Dharma Care's Mission:

Dharma Care is an Australian charity committed to creating life-changing opportunities for the destitute and disadvantaged. Our mission is to facilitate lasting change, creating a ripple effect that benefits future generations.

Campaign Summary: Winter Warmer Homelessness Relief Campaign

The Winter Warmer: Homeless Relief Campaign held from May to July 2023 had remarkable success.

Campaign Progress and Achievements: The Winter Warmer: Homelessness Relief Campaign has now raised \$56,944 well above our intended target of \$50,000. The campaign was fortunate to be supported by a very special donor who matched donations from \$25,000 – \$50,000.



As temperatures dropped and harsh weather conditions set in, Dharma Care recognised the challenges faced by individuals and families who struggle to stay warm and healthy.

The Winter Warmer Campaign aimed to raise at least \$50K to ensure everyone who finds themselves in that situation has access to adequate shelter, warmth, and nourishment through providing food, sleeping bags, hygiene packs, and tents.

Dharma Care has been working with our local partners, You Have A Friend, Pottsville Beach Neighbourhood Centre, Fred's Place – Vinnies, and Murwillumbah Community Centre, to ensure the resources go to where they are most needed across the Tweed region.

Warmth provided to many during the winter months: Funds raised have been put to good use and are supporting people sleeping rough in the region with new blankets, sleeping bags, tents, clothing, food and petrol vouchers provided to many people experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness.

Murwillumbah Community Centre – recipients of the Winter Warmer fundraising efforts

The funds donated by Dharma Care through the Winter Warmer fundraising event have been allocated to Nullum House, their social inclusion and drop-in centre at Murwillumbah Community Centre. This service provides a safe nurturing space for members of the community who may be facing social

isolation, homelessness, mental health issues or social and economic disadvantage. Nullum House services include, free community meals, shower and washing facilities, material aid, social programs and support groups.

The funds received from Dharma Care have been paramount in these times when more people are sleeping rough, couch surfing, or in their cars due to the housing crisis that our area has been experiencing for the last few years and made worse by the floods last year. The Nullum House team meets every month to discuss resources needed in the centre and emerging needs among its customers.

From Winter Warmer they were able to provide customers with material wellbeing and access food supplies for their meals program, providing an average of 120 meals per week.

A PERSONAL STORY

"I was living in Tweed and the place got sold in the middle of the rental crisis. It got sold within 2 months and I had to pack my stuff and put it on storage as I couldn't find anywhere else to rent. It was a dramatic time, no money to pre-book a shed... no one was helping then."

I went from couch to couch, scared of the streets, thinking I could maybe find a rental, garage, social housing, other plans...and then I ran out of couches and asking, stretching friendships. In the process I even suffered a bit of abuse, but I was safe. But then the judgement of being homeless crawled upon me, the stigma was appalling, and I didn't feel safe in Tweed Heads anymore.

I came to Murwillumbah as suggested by my caseworker, and although it was scary at first, I decided to give it a go. It is thanks to my caseworker and the staff at Nullum House that I have been able to survive. After two days living in a tent in Knox Park it was them who came to motivate me, have a shower...they gave me food. I have every support I most needed. The team here are angels, the services, the conditions of the centre are great. It would be amazing if it was open 5 days a week!"

J has been living in her tent for the past 2 weeks waiting for the assertive outreach team to take her case and find her more stable/transitional accommodation. The process of assessment and eligibility is complicated and involves the individual to abide by certain requirements and steps that sometimes are very difficult to follow without the appropriate support services.

Through Nullum House, J was able to get fed and provided with material wellbeing, emotional support and mostly linked to health outreach services to get a mental health diagnosis that provides further guarantees of individuals' engagement and responsibility to be successful in the process of accessing long-term housing.

Community Connections – Stories from our Partners for Winter Warmer

Darren Sutton, Dharma Care Deputy CEO, had a recent catch up with Angela Maxwell and Letechia Lucas from Pottsville Beach Neighbourhood Centre (PBNC) to talk about our partnership, how Dharma Care's Winter Warmer fundraiser made a difference, and heart-warming stories of love and compassion.



<https://youtu.be/R0VGKVJUIUQ?si=757SSD09wcyUtMgy>

PBNC is a vibrant human services community hub. It responds to the needs of people impacted by hardship, disadvantage, barriers to wellbeing, life challenges and changing circumstances.

Dharma Care's vouchers increase PBNC's ability to reach and help more people. It means the world to recipients and removes the immediate stresses of their situation through enabling them to purchase the material aid they need.

Our Deputy CEO, Darren Sutton, also recently caught up with one of our key local homelessness services partner – Fred’s Place / Vinnies to see how our recent fundraising has helped them support people in the local region.

Some lovely stories of success and transition were shared.



<https://youtu.be/bCP5K85r3OE?feature=shared>

For the complete article visit <https://dharmacare.org.au/community-connections-stories-from-our-partners-for-winter-warmer/>

