

For Immediate Release – 21 March 2018

Open Support Launches with Open Call for New Volunteers and Donors

After 28 years of actively addressing unmet social need in the community, the community-based, social welfare organisation Sisters of Charity Outreach has a new name – Open Support.

The not-for-profit organisation - which provides much-needed support services to vulnerable and disadvantaged clients from across regional NSW and metropolitan Sydney with the help of a dedicated team of 200-plus volunteers and through the generosity of its regular donors - launched its new name and brand today with an open call to find 40 new volunteers and 100 new, regular donors by the end of this year.

“Our name change from Sisters of Charity Outreach to Open Support represents an exciting and historic new chapter in the 28-year history of our organisation,” Lucy Riggall, Chair of Open Support, said at the launch of Open Support today.

“Our fresh and inclusive new name has been derived from the history and heritage of our organisation and its core purpose, which is: being ‘open’ to providing much-needed support to the poor and vulnerable in need. Open Support really conveys what this organisation has been providing to our community for the past 28 years, with our devotion to Compassion and Action.

“Open Support will continue to provide the same caring services all our clients have come to appreciate,” Lucy Riggall added. “But there’s still much work to do out there in addressing unmet social need in the community – hence our open call for new volunteers and donors to come on board and support the vital services we provide to those in need.”

Open Support is looking for volunteer drivers for its Country Care Link service (which provides no-cost transport to regional NSW people coming to Sydney for medical reasons); visitors for its Visit Program (which provides fortnightly visits to socially isolated people across Sydney); and guest services volunteers for Chisholm Cottage (which provides affordable shared accommodation at Westmead for regional people coming to Sydney for medical appointments and hospital stays).

“Open Support remains an integral part of St Vincent’s Clinic, its strategy and our mission,” St Vincent’s Clinic Chair, Associate Professor Janet Rimmer said. “Importantly, with the support of St Vincent’s Clinic and all its wonderful volunteers and donors, Open Support remains the same community-based organisation with the same compassionate mission it had when it first opened here at the Clinic in 1990.

“As Open Support embarks upon this inspiring new chapter, it’s important to remember that the Sisters have historically embraced change and flexibility – they’ve always tailored the various ‘feet-on-the-ground’ services this organisation has provided to the poor and vulnerable to suit the changing times and community needs. In doing so, they’ve long been at the forefront of caring for those who may not have always had a voice in society.

“With an injection of new volunteers and donors this year, Open Support will continue to be there for the marginalised and the disadvantaged.”

Open Support’s name change is part of a handover of Sisters of Charity ministries within the health, education and social welfare sectors to Mary Aikenhead Ministries. This process officially began in July 2009, and ensures the heritage, tradition and charism of the Sisters’ ministries - including St Vincent’s Health Australia and its various hospitals and other health care services - are taken purposefully into the future.

It was in mid-2017 that the Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries advised Sisters of Charity Outreach that it needed to change its name so it no longer included the words Sisters of Charity by July 1 this year. Today’s announcement that the organisation will now be known as Open Support means this request has been collaboratively achieved.

“Open Support provides services that complement St Vincent’s Health Australia’s hospitals and aged care facilities and we see the rebranding of Sisters of Charity Outreach to Open Support as an exciting new chapter in the organisation’s history,” said Toby Hall, CEO of St Vincent’s Health Australia.

“Open Support offers a great opportunity to open up the development and direction of the organisation and new volunteers and donors coming on board this year will allow it to be able to reach out to, and support, even more people in need.”

General Manager of Open Support, Gary Sillett added: “Today marks an exciting new era for all our dedicated staff, volunteers and supporters and we look forward to taking Open Support into the future with the same dedication, commitment and caring presence as the Sisters of Charity have done for so many years.

“We also look forward to welcoming our new Open Support volunteers and donors who will allow us to continue to address unmet social need in the community and join us as, with ‘Open Minds, Open Hearts and Open Hands’, we can continue to provide Open Support to those in our community in need.”

Lucy Riggall, Chair of Open Support, and Gary Sillett, Open Support’s General Manager, are now available for interviews.

Open Support Photography and Logos can be downloaded here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/89b7o357bjwyh7t/AAB71WU0nLAHIIQnWDYv22bha?dl=0>

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