



About ACSO

Established in 1983, ACSO is one of Victoria's leading community support organisations with a reputation for helping some of the most marginalised clients; those not generally welcomed or able to be supported by other services due to their behaviour, complex needs and/or offending history. Through a diverse range of programs, provided throughout Melbourne metropolitan and regional Victoria locations, we strive to achieve our purpose of making a difference in the lives of disenfranchised people and enable them to create another chance. **ACSO delivers more than 20 programs to approximately 20,000 disadvantaged clients every year.**

ACSO's Intensive Housing Support services provides a "step up, step down, step out" model of support for our clients, which includes intensive forensic and specialist disability supported accommodation programs, and community based outreach services which are all designed to address behaviour change, build residents resilience and confidence, adaptive living skills and independence. These services include the state wide Francis House program, a transitional Dual Disability service, and post release support housing programs for offenders re-entering the community from prison.

ACSO's Clinical services promotes a therapeutic and rehabilitative environment within all of ACSO's programs, and specifically includes the following clinical services:

- The specialist state wide forensic intake, triage and Drug & Alcohol Assessment service – COATS program;
- Therapeutic, psychosocial treatment programs for residential and community based clients;
- Specialist behaviour change programs for problematic sexual behaviour and clinical risk manageability.

ACSO's Community Based Complex Care services provides support for clients living independently in the community and includes a number of specialist outreach, case co-ordination and case management programs for clients with multiple and complex needs, including: offenders; people with mental health; dual disability; forensic disability; intellectual disability; homelessness and long term unemployment.



Artwork made by Mark

A Message from the Chair and CEO

We have set ourselves ambitious goals with a clear vision to “create another chance” for the people who need our support, and the community in which they live, and we feel privileged to lead this direction for ACSO.

An integrated complete-continuum service distinguishes ACSO from agencies that have a single-sector approach. We have a proven capacity to work across multiple sectors with particular emphasis on delivering specialist services that address the complex needs of our clients. Crucially we will continue to get results for those most disadvantaged and at risk.

“In my experience, ACSO willingly takes on exceptionally complex health clients that other services have difficulty with and/or will not provide service to. ACSO is committed to ensuring that their clients are offered the most innovative and appropriate interventions to maximise their opportunity to transition back into community life...”

“As the new CEO I am inspired by our Council, their passion for ACSO, their commitment to governance and the strategic vision they have set for us to follow.”

Most importantly, ACSO’s work continues because of the dedication of our staff to our client group, they not only walk the talk, they go the extra mile that really makes a difference in the lives of our clients. We are all moved by our clients, whose courage and determination allows them make some quite incredible life changes.



Michael



Karenza

Artwork made by Paul Sunderland



Last year alone over 16,500 men, women and their families, each with numerous layers of complexity, came through our specialist services for support.

"Our four key Strategic Priorities will focus on responding to client and stakeholder needs through innovation, re-developing our service delivery model, improving our organisational systems and enhancing ACSO's contribution to our external environment."

New Year's Revolution

We were thrilled to launch our strategic plan in 2011, from inside the cold, dark and confronting walls of Pentridge Prison. **Pentridge is a critical part of our history, as it was from a cell within those bluestone walls that the idea of an organisation was founded..... by a prisoner, and later with the support of a Supreme Court judge, ACSO was born.**

From a small organisation, initially providing a halfway house, ACSO has organically grown, pioneering interventions and support programs responding to emerging community problems and "hot potatoes" that no one else wanted to touch. As an organisation ACSO has been brave, committed and driven to lead change. ACSO has delivered results. These fundamental principles are the cornerstone on which our new strategic plan has been built.



JANUARY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 New Year's Day	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26 Australia Day	27	28
29	30	31				

Thank You SMS

To the ACE MR, twenty six months after I was sentenced to a twelve month I.C.O I've finished it. And I know u didn't do it 4 me but with your excellent people skills you've handpicked me the BEST EVER social worker's 2 support me thru this **and without u guys. I'd have not made it here.** EVERY other service has chucked me in the 2 hard basket, and believe me when I say I've been a social worker services slut, it mean's any many and every service has dumped me bar A.C.S.O. **I can honestly say that u guys have literally saved my life,** and 4 that I fully love and respect you guy's for being the ONE'S to turn the whole world around 4 me so i can live love and learn like a person. not just another criminal. Thank u so very very much. You guy's don't give yourselves enough credit. **As the saying goes, if u have an impact on only 1 life it's made your job worth. I'm definitely that!**

Rachel

Over 95% of our clients have a history of incarceration or are on community based orders.





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			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14 Valentine's Day	15	16	17	18
19	20 International World Day of Social Justice	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29			



Artwork made by Michael Delaney

Catch Me

Autumn is a time for change - not just encouraging people to change, but changing ourselves and the systems around us to help this to happen. This is how the CATCH program came to life. The ACSO team were spending a lot of time in court, and observing the many complex individuals walking in and out of court rooms with often limited assistance to make any sustainable changes. Their charges weren't always serious enough to bring them to the attention of justice programs, and their needs were too complex to label under mental health, disability or housing.

These people were falling through a gap, over and over again, and we were in a position to do something about it.

"As a worker, establishing the CATCH program has been a blind leap from what seemed a pretty comfortable cliff – leaving an established team and caseload behind to launch a brand new set of systems and processes in an unfamiliar environment. There is an old idiom along the lines of 'the only constant in the universe is change', and I am so glad that ACSO is doing their all to keep up with the changing needs of clients and stakeholders."



over 60% of our clients are homeless or at risk of homelessness on entry into our programs.

"If you do what you've always done, you'll get what you've always gotten."
- Anthony Robbins



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International
Women's Day

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Labour Day

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17 Start of
Celebrate our
Cultural Diver-
sity Week

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21 International
Day for the Elim-
ination of Racial
Discrimination

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Close The
Gap Day

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25 End of
Celebrate our
Cultural Diver-
sity Week

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Earth Hour



Junior to Senior

Artwork made by Paul Sunderland

At ACSO we strive to attract and retain talented staff right across the organisation. We are passionate about giving our staff opportunities to grow and develop with us.

Research and evaluation has been central to our commitment to ensuring evidence based best practice across all of our services.

2011 has seen ACSO review and build our organisation wide evaluation framework implementing a new case management system across every service that we deliver. In order to help drive this project, staff were offered secondment opportunities. One of the staff who leapt at the opportunity with great outcomes, had this to say...

"Exciting changes were taking place during my initial time at head office working on the Penelope project which I took on with gusto! During this time my manager and coordinator put me forward as a candidate for a new management position and I was quick to take up the new role the moment it was offered joining the new leadership team. This opportunity validated my efforts to be a productive member of ACSO's workforce. It's been a great opportunity for me to develop and grow and I look forward to fulfilling their expectations now and in the future."

Junior



AP RIL L

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6 Good Friday	7 World Health Day
8 Easter Sunday	9 Easter Monday	10 Easter Tuesday	11	12	13 Start of National Youth Week	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22 End of National Youth Week	23	24	25 Anzac Day	26	27	28
29	30					

It's All About Connecting

When you think about it, May is all about appreciating our core support systems – our Mothers and families. The role of a family or carer is often the most demanding yet it is often undervalued. ACSO is known for its work with complex individuals who have contact with the justice system and whilst this work is crucial, we know that **behind the individual and their complex issues are families and carers that have been at the forefront of the person's storm for a significant period of time.** In 2010 ACSO established RESTORE a program that appreciates the carers that have done the hard yards and provide them the needed support to create another chance.

RESTORE focuses on the needs of the families who have been impacted by complex forensic issues of their loved ones including impacts on their mental and emotional health, financial, and / or physical wellbeing providing families with emotional support, networking with health professionals, and advocacy.



Artwork made by Paul Sunderland

"I couldn't talk about my son, his illness and being in jail because of the shame. I now understand better that it is not my fault."

"We never have had that type of support (referring to outreach visit) from services before, that is great. I now feel more empowered to continue on a painful journey and not feel alone anymore. Having someone to take the time to listen to my problems has been a lifesaver."



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Mother's Day

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International Day
of Families

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National
Sorry Day

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Start of National
Reconciliation
Week

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U-R Amazing

“Being offered the Scanners R Us position changed my whole world. I hadn’t worked since before my children were born and being given the chance to work in an office at this stage of my life was a welcome gift and an opportunity that I thought would never be available to me.

To me I was a widowed single mother with a really bad criminal history with a drug history as well. As far as I was concerned, no-one would ever employ me to work in their company let alone give me a position of responsibility and trust. Now I was being offered a position that required complete confidentiality, responsibility and trust all in one. I wasn’t only responsible for myself but others as well. I had been disheartened for so long thinking that even with an education that I might never be employed because of the stigma associated with my criminal and drug histories.

After my work experience I have been blessed with the opportunity to work with ACSO, which is wonderful. Each morning that I was working, my youngest son Kyle and I would walk together to the tram station and then he would continue on to school. **Before I started working, Kyle had very little interest in his schooling but this all changed with the start of me working.** Kyle now has something to be really proud of, his mum working for the first time in his life that he can remember.

My life now has goals and dreams for the future. I see myself in the future obtaining a university degree and for the first time in my life become employed and actually love working. Working in the field of your choice is really fulfilling and an amazing feeling. For me it is quite a difference to want to go to work and be involved in work activities. I have always wanted to work in an office, but have never obtained the correct skills to be in the field that I love. Working at ACSO provides me with stability in my life. For the first time in years I can take my sons out on activities on week-ends and truly enjoy each other as a family. **My life has totally changed!!”**

ACSO’s Employment Services won a “roll over” JSA contract ensuring we support more people to achieve similar amazing life changes that Nicole has done.





JUNE

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End of National
Reconciliation
Week

4 International
Day of Innocent
Children Victims
of Aggression

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Queen's Birthday

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17 Start of
Refugee Week
&
Drug Action Week
2012 "Looking
After YOUR Mind!"

18
Start of
Careers Week

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23 End of
Refugee Week
&
Drug Action Week
2012 "Looking
After YOUR Mind!"

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End of
Careers Week

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World
Refugee Day

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Artwork made by ACSO staff + ACSO client

When Harry met Annie

A young guy called Harry approached ACSO for an opportunity to do some volunteer work. He had worked in an advocacy role for people with mental health problems and he was keen to get into case management and support services with offenders. Harry was given an opportunity to work in our Link Out program mentored by a senior member of the team. **Link Out addresses long term behaviour change ultimately leading to a reduction in recidivism.**

A major part of our success has been the great team we employ. Harry quickly proved to be an asset to the team and within a couple of months we offered him a full time job. Harry epitomises what ACSO is all about: **an enthusiastic, non-judgemental, smart, effective and kind young man respectful of the needs and complexities of our clients and willing to do what it takes to create another chance.**

"I am very excited to be part of the new Link Out program, and I am looking forward to working with the guys coming out of Fulham. It feels fantastic when you know you have helped make a difference in some-one's life and in the community."



JULY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 Start of NAIDOC Week	2	3	4	5	6	7
8 End of NAIDOC Week	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

A Safer Place

Fostering innovation in our work is not new to ACSO. **In the 1990's ACSO pioneered work with sex offenders, led by Sister Claire McShee, working in a space that no one else wanted to.** It was a brave risk that ASCO took with the view that if this group were released into the community they had a better chance of rehabilitation and our community would be safer with our strong support.

"We (staff of the Sex Offender Support program) have often fielded tough questions as to how, or in fact why, we could do the job that we do. The answer is simple – appropriate supports for offenders reduce risks of recidivism and makes the community a safer place. The job is tough at times, but it's important if you want to make a difference to be able to take risks – something ACSO has done from the very beginning."

These past 20 years has seen us work effectively with sex offenders and has not only provided ACSO with the skills necessary to manage the common risks and issues of this offender group, but also the capacity to address the wide range of complex needs and compounding factors that are often present as additional risks. **Most importantly it's our aim to ensure the community is safe from harm.**

ACSO client Artwork





AUGUST

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	3	4
5	6 Start of National Home- less Persons' Week	7	8	9 International Day of the World's Indig- enous People	10	11
12 End of National Home- less Persons' Week International Youth day	13	14	15	16	17	18
19 World Humanitarian Day	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	



Joining the Dots

Recently, ACSO accepted a young man into one of our specialist residential programs. During the intake process, it became clear that he would require us to wrap all of our support and expertise around him. **Presenting with a mild intellectual disability and paranoid schizophrenia, he had frequently come into contact with the Criminal Justice System** for violent offences in the community.

As a specialist disability services provider approximately 55% of our clients present with cognitive impairments including learning disabilities and ABIs



Through support provided by our multi disciplinary team and the staff at the Disability Justice Unit he was assisted to increase his community participation, engage in pro-social recreational activities and work towards attaining his goals. He made positive steps forward every day.

Today he has a casual job as a gardener, participates regularly in his chosen sports rugby and soccer, and has learnt new skills of independent living such as cooking and cleaning. He also got his learner's permit. Incredibly all these achievements were made within a time period of eight months.

Artwork made by Paul Sunderland

As for the future? His goals include a full driver's and forklift licence and moving into independent housing. **Most importantly not only has he not re-offended, he now has many reasons to keep going forward with his life.**



SEPTEMBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
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2 Fathers Day National Child Protection Week	3	4	5	6	7	8 End of National Child Protection Week
9	10 World Suicide Prevention day	11	12	13 National R U OK? DAY	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21 International Day of Peace	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
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Artwork made by TP 2009 'triangles'



ACSO's leadership team taking part in an intensive strategic planning retreat

Treading a New Path

We have built a new leadership team at ACSO to drive our vision into the next decade - a team made up of passionate, committed, talented and experienced managers and senior staff. **We believe that everyone needs to be given the opportunity to make change – make it sustainable – to make it real.**

We are seen by our clients, community, government & key stakeholders as a leading provider of dynamic, responsive, cutting edge programs. Drawing on our unique expertise **our team leads innovation and best practice across all of our work** and ensures that we deliver lasting outcomes for every single person who needs our support. These are outcomes for the clients we work with, their families and extended support networks and our community.



OCTOBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10 World Mental Health Day	11	12	13
14 Start of Anti Poverty Week	15	16	17	18	19	20 End of Anti Poverty Week
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31 Halloween			



Artwork made by G.R 'Untitled Horse'

"Significant numbers of offenders appearing before Magistrates in Victoria are affected by problems such as alcohol and/or drug dependency, homelessness, mental illness and a range of disadvantages. Appearing in Court is often a critical point of intersection in their lives and an opportunity for effective therapeutic and other interventions. Programs supported by ACSO (such as COATS) are able to provide, and have provided, services to offenders over many years with the aim of supporting them and in doing so reducing the risk of re-offending. The role ACSO plays in working with Courts and Community Corrections has been vital in the lives of many offenders and a significant support to the work of the Court in discharging its sentencing function."

Ian L Gray, Chief Magistrate

Hope and Recovery

The Community Offender Advice and Treatment Service (COATS) is a state wide program providing assessment and treatment of offenders with a drug or alcohol issue in their lives. **We aim to reduce the health risks, and the associated criminal impact that substance use has on an individual's life. It is a real opportunity to help explore these issues and start the process of making change.**

In 2010 / 11 over 15,000 referrals were made to the COATS program with almost 9,000 people completing drug treatment programs right across Victoria.



At least 80% present with significant substance abuse issues and almost 90% of these have a mental health issue as well.



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Melbourne Cup

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Remembrance Day

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White Ribbon day

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Start of Social Inclusion Week

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End of Social Inclusion Week

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TIDES POEM by Susie

We've crossed the seas to get here
Even when the floods have peaked

At times we thought to abandon ship
But a better path we sought

Even when the rolling waves seemed too high to fight
A lifeline is what was needed to keep focused on the
beach in sight

So when you're feeling lost and alone;
like "no one understands"
Just float in the water and go with the tides and you
will walk again on the sand

TIDES are a group of passionate consumers performing a leadership role amongst their peers. They play an integral role in assisting ACSO to develop a better understanding of how we can incorporate the voices of service users into the development and delivery of our services.

Members actively participated in ACSO's strategic planning processes and developed peer interviews for program evaluation and planning ensuring strong client feedback about all aspects of our work. **This experience has provided valuable learning for ACSO** ensuring we provide more opportunities for consumers to engage meaningfully in the development and delivery of ACSO programs and services.

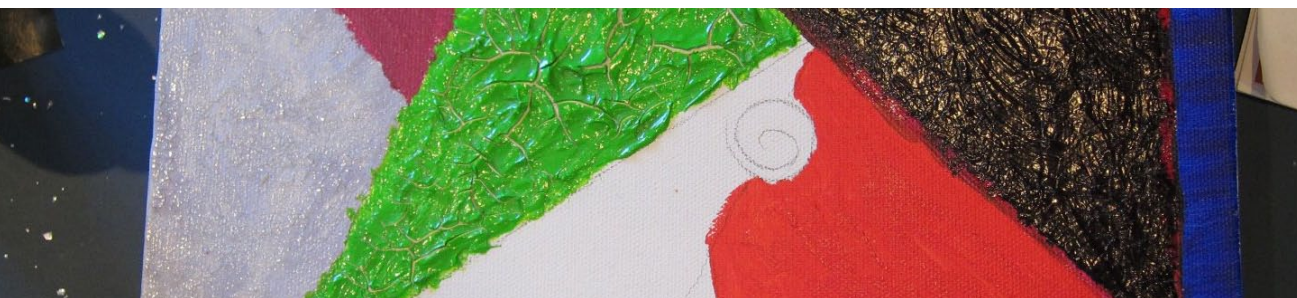
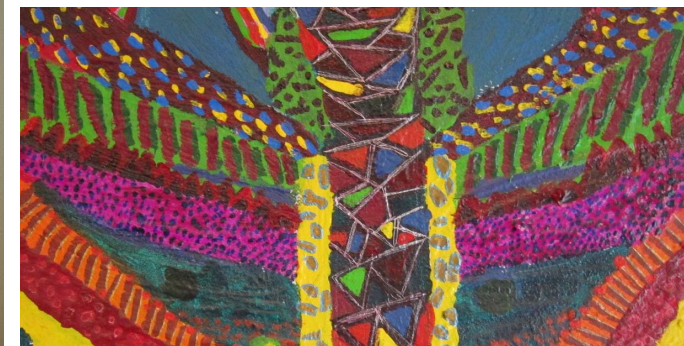
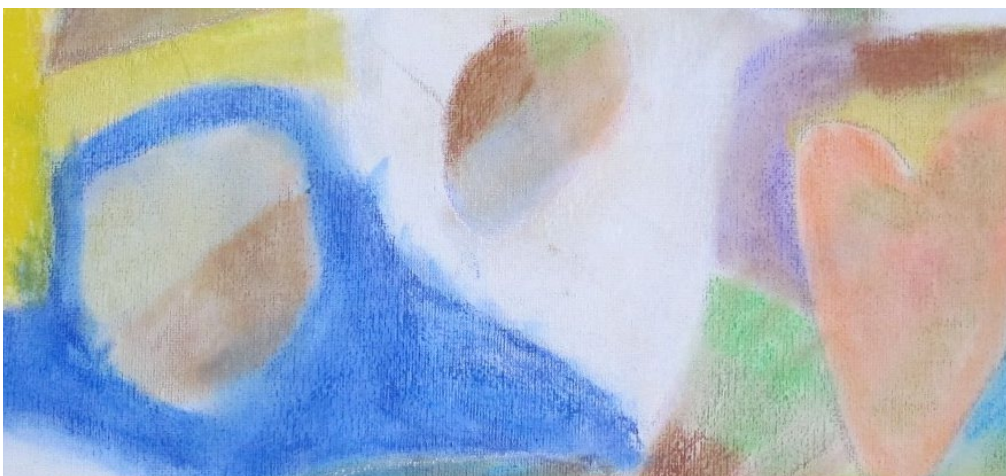
Most importantly, it ensures that we are delivering services and supports that make an impact when and where they are needed most.

Artwork made by Sunrise - NW



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SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
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2	3 International Day of Persons with Disabilities	4	5	6	7	8
9	10 International Human Rights Day	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18 International Migrants Day	19	20	21	22
23	24 Christmas Eve	25 Christmas Day	26 Boxing Day	27	28	29
30	31 New Year's Eve					



FIND US



CONTACT US

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ACSO Service Locations

Coburg, Armadale, Ormond, Noble Park, Yarraville, North Melbourne, Richmond, Dandenong, Bendigo Ballarat, Ararat, Stawell, Horsham, Hamilton, Portland, Warrnambool, Camperdown, Colac, Daylesford, St Arnaud, Bendigo, Kerang, Swan Hill, Echuca, Kyneton, Castlemaine, Maryborough Mildura, Robinvale, Ouyen, Wangaratta, Seymour, Shepparton, Cobram, Benalla, Wodonga, Mansfield, Warragul, Morwell, Lakes Entrance, Bairnsdale, Koroit, Leongatha, Omeo, Mallacoota, Wonthaggi, Cowes, Foster, Yarrum, Orbost, Moe, San Remo and Geelong.

To whom it may concern,

while doing **another prison sentence** which was the result of another cycle of **DRUGS, ALCOHOL and homelessness** which has plagued my life for various reason, I made contact with Emma of acso and as a result of her and acso, help for the first time in my life. I have been able to turn not only **my life around** but my families. with her and acso's **humanity and compassion**, their ability to listen and then help to find a home, pushing me in the right Direction concerning health Drug Alcohol etc this would never have happened. with their support I have been able to regain my self esteem, **my confidence** to take on Lifes problems etc and my **mental state** of mind. Instead of being a **thorn in society** I now feel I am part of the normal world again. I have many steps to go but would never have got to where I am now. **The world needs people like Emma and the service that acso provide.** I only wish I was asked to write as much as I want to let people know how much these people have saved and given me a new Life and hope because it would be 10 pages long. **God bless** the people who are Down and out. I thank them all ~~and~~ for **saving my life.**

From Martyn and the people close to me

