



GEORGES RIVER LIFE CHURCH

---

# ANNUAL REPORT

---

2025



---

## CHURCH LEADERSHIP REPORT

---

As we reflect on this past year, my guiding scripture has been 1 Corinthians 1:10 *“I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be not divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought,”* and Ephesians 4:3 which calls us to *“Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.”* It has been both a privilege and a humbling experience to serve during this significant season in our church’s life.

What a year of growth and blessing! We have witnessed God’s faithfulness through meaningful special services and a beautiful spirit of generosity across our congregation. The Ephesians series and “Hearing from God” studies have deepened our spiritual growth and helped us to lean into Jesus more. Our 24/7 Prayer events provided opportunities to lean in even further – much of this prayer was for the church during the selection process for the next Senior Pastor. We are grateful for Pastor Ben’s appointment and leadership as we begin this new chapter.

Chipping Norton moved to weekly services and, in conjunction with Life Care, continues to expand its impact in the community. Life Care also continues to grow in reputation and provide more opportunities for us to serve our community well. We have seen an increase in volunteers, welcomed talented new musicians, appointed Jess Huckstep as our new Youth Team Leader, and celebrated the vibrancy of Kids Connect. We have rejoiced in baptisms and seen many regular attenders choose to become GRLC Partners. Mission Month reminded us of our call to reach beyond ourselves. Your generosity as a congregation, in both time and finances, has been extraordinary and reflects hearts truly devoted to God’s work.

This has also been one of our most challenging years. The CLT has navigated multiple transitions with Pastor Scott stepping down after 24+years as Senior Pastor, the comprehensive search for our next Senior Pastor, changes in the Operations Manager

role, the appointment of a Finance Coordinator, multiple transitions in the treasurer role, and the restructure of the Youth Pastor role.

Despite these challenges, important progress has been made. Our audit was completed with nothing to note. We have appointed a new Finance Committee and implemented risk management reporting, with Braddon Wheeler overseeing WH&S, and Glenn Power managing property facilities and maintenance. The roof has been inspected, and quotes are being explored. A 10-year maintenance plan is currently being developed.

Our primary ongoing challenge this year has been finding the necessary time to properly address our legal structure, constitution, and guiding principles for a sustainable financial future. These priorities are deeply interconnected and will remain a focus for the year ahead. We are committed to completing this foundational work to position our church well for the future that God has in store for us.

This year, we have also seen change within the Church Leadership Team (CLT). We were delighted to welcome Bronwyn Thornton as the Chipping Norton Representative and have appreciated her deep insights. We would like to give a heartfelt thanks to Nik Karanikas and David Seeto, who are stepping down from the CLT: Nik, for his dedicated service over this extremely weighty time in our church - his wisdom, discernment and faithful prayer have been invaluable; and David, who has served faithfully over the last five years both in the CLT and the Finance Committee - we have valued his insight and gift for gathering everyone's thoughts around the table. Their humility and determination to see God first and forefront in all we do is a credit to them both, and they will be missed in the coming year.

To our entire congregation, thank you for the grace and faithfulness with which you have navigated this transition. All glory and praise be to God for a church that genuinely wants to see Christ glorified.

As we step into the year ahead, I am filled with hope and confidence. God has called us to unity, and through every challenge this year, you have demonstrated that unity beautifully. As we continue to press into our journey of growing, loving and making disciples, I am confident that God's purposes will be fulfilled in our church and Christ revealed to all around us.

So grateful for His leading of us.

MARGARET THOMPSON  
CLT CHAIR

---



The background of the top half of the page features a chalkboard with handwritten text in white chalk. The text includes "GROWING ALONG", "the Georges River", "AND BEYOND", and "LIFE". To the right of the chalkboard, a single lightbulb is illuminated, casting a warm glow. The overall aesthetic is rustic and inspirational.

---

## SENIOR PASTOR REPORT

---

It is an honour to have been called and accepted as your Senior Pastor, and a delight to share some of the ways God has been at work this year.

As we look back on 2025, it's easy to see God's hand leading us at GRLC. This has been a year of change, transition, prayer, and growth. My heart is full of gratitude, joy, and anticipation for what God is doing among us.

### **Senior Pastor Transition**

The Senior Pastor transition, so faithfully led by our Church Leadership Team (CLT), was a Spirit-filled and deeply unifying process. Through prayer and discernment, we have experienced God's guidance at every step and have emerged from this season united and expectant for where He is leading us.

This year has revealed the depth of maturity and grace within our church family – a people choosing to depend on the Spirit and follow the way of Jesus, even through seasons of change.

### **A Growing Multi-Site Church**

Even in a year of transition, our church has grown – both in depth and in number – across our Peakhurst and Chipping Norton sites.

At the beginning of the year, we prayed specifically for three to four new families to join our Chipping Norton site. We're thankful that God has answered – four new families have made it their home, with others now connecting more regularly. At Peakhurst, several 'New People Lunches' were run throughout the year, each one full of newcomers discovering community and purpose at GRLC. Many shared that they had found Jesus and His family, here with us.

Our church has also continued to demonstrate a strong culture of generosity. Weekly giving has remained healthy and consistent, and we again exceeded our Mission Month target of \$110,000, raising over \$121,000!

We've seen people across all generations seeking to go deeper in their faith, from young adults launching a new Bible study, to hundreds engaging in prayer weeks, courses, and spiritual practice groups. Volunteer teams across both sites have flourished, especially in Worship, Property, and Life Care. We celebrated the baptisms of three young people in March making a public declaration of their faith in Jesus. This year we also welcomed 35 new Partners into the GRLC family.

We end 2025 showing clear signs of spiritual and organisational health, with momentum for the season ahead.

### ***Becoming a People of Prayer***

Prayer has continued to be our first response and first resource in 2025. We have prayed regularly, fervently, and with a deep desire to hear God's voice.

Our *Hearing from God* series helped us tune in and recognise His quiet whisper. Testimonies poured in from every generation – people hearing God in new or clearer ways. Over 200 people participated in our 24-hour prayer catalysts, learning not just to pray for an hour but to live more prayerfully throughout the day.

And as we prayed, we saw God move. Together, we interceded for Nathanael Gray's health in prayer, and we've celebrated many other answered prayers, miracles, and healings throughout the year.

A church is always at its strongest when it is on its knees. I am deeply encouraged by how we are becoming a people of prayer.

### ***Peak Experiences for Our Young People***

2025 was filled with moments where our young people encountered God, powerfully. Youth Camp saw 63 teenagers experience God – with every Year 8 boy testifying to hearing God personally or feeling His presence. Rev Camp returned this year with 20 Year-12 students deepening their relationship with Jesus while putting in 30 hours of study.

And our Kids Connect ministry continues to thrive, bursting with over 160 children, many of whom made a first-time or reaffirmed decision to follow Jesus. These experiences remind us of the power of God at work in the next generation – the church of today and tomorrow.

### ***A Thriving Life Care***

Life Care has flourished this year under the outstanding leadership of Karen Power and her dedicated team.

We began the year praying that God would expand Life Care's impact in our community, and He has answered that prayer abundantly. Our fundraisers – Sleeping Rough (\$80k) and Care for a Walk (\$25k) – both recorded their largest donations to date.

New initiatives launched across both sites have created meaningful connections and a steady pathway for new people to engage with the wider life of the church. The partnership between Life Care and Life Church continues to strengthen, ensuring that compassion and discipleship go hand in hand.

### ***Prepared and Looking Forward***

2025 has been a year of great growth and preparation. As we look ahead to 2026, I sense God calling us to be courageous – for the harvest is plentiful and He is with us.

### ***Thank you***

To our GRLC Partners, thank you for your faithful commitment to the mission and vision of our church. It is a joy to follow Jesus with you.

To our Church Leadership Team, thank you for your humility, courage, and prayerful discernment throughout the year. Your faithfulness and tireless hours on behalf of our church have been a steady anchor through this year of change.

To our incredible staff team, thank you for the way you lead, serve, and continually point others to Jesus.

And most of all, I thank and praise God for all He has done in 2025. Even with all that we can see and celebrate, we only glimpse the fullness of His work, leading and stirring amongst us: *“For the Lord is good and His love endures forever; His faithfulness continues through all generations.”* (Psalm 100:5)

BEN RUSIN  
SENIOR PASTOR

---





---

## PEAKHURST REPORT

---

Our year at Peakhurst has been one of unity, joy and a deeper awareness of God's presence. In a year of big change and transition, it has been deeply encouraging to witness and experience stability within our site, fresh and renewed hunger for God in our people, and an overall increase in engagement.

Our Sunday gatherings have continued to be full of hope and celebration, learning and worship. People are genuinely loving being there with a renewed energy around the presence of God and an increase in attendance. We see a church-family enjoying being together. We are grateful for a culture of welcome and inclusivity that continues to grow at Peakhurst, and we love that on any given Sunday we see people connecting and looking out for one another. We have welcomed many new people into the GRLC family, with a large percentage of our visitors choosing to stay after a few visits, finding their spiritual home at Peakhurst.

As we journeyed through our teaching series, 'Hearing from God' and 'Ephesians' during the majority of the year, we sensed a real time of growth and challenge for our Peakhurst site as we grappled with new challenges of being the church and new ways of listening to and being obedient to God.

We also enjoyed our week-long prayer initiatives in March and September, along with our opportunities for intentional times of prayer as we discerned our new Senior Pastor and prepared for our major outreach events and for our mission partners. We long to be a people of prayer, growing to be more like Jesus in the way we live in the many and varied spaces, work places, schools, sporting fields, and anywhere else we might find ourselves.

We are incredibly thankful for the many leaders and volunteers that serve in our

Sunday teams, our mid-week Small Groups, and our generational spaces. Without the commitment and consistency of these teams, our gatherings, ministries and outreach opportunities would simply not exist. A very BIG thank you to all those who serve in these areas.

Our Small Groups have continued to be places where people are growing in their discipleship and feel a sense of belonging. We have loved hearing the great stories and testimonies that come from our Small Groups, and we look forward to these groups growing in 2026 - not just in depth but also in number and in the variety of what they can look and feel like.

Our large and committed River Kids Leadership Team are wonderful as they continue to work tirelessly alongside our families in their discipleship under the leadership of Sophie Brodie and Taryn Pascoe. We have also had a brilliant year at GRYouth with the appointment of Jess Huckstepp in her role as Youth Ministry Leader. Our Youth Leadership Team is healthy and thriving. Halfway through the year, they welcomed a large group of Year 6 kids (and their families), making great connections as they began their journey in Youth. It was also wonderful to see a richer intergenerational space found and created at Life Care's Sleeping Rough, where our younger families could learn about and be part of this wonderful initiative.

Kids Connect, our October school holiday program, was once again an effective peak experience and a real highlight of the year, not just for our kids and teens (with many recommitting their lives afresh to Jesus), but for our whole church. This year saw our biggest number of volunteers serving! Throughout the last part of the year, we have continued to see fruit come from this event, with people being touched by the gospel, giving us further opportunities to connect and love people.

Pastoral Care within our Peakhurst family under our local site pastor Glenn Power, has been fruitful. A small Pastoral Care Team has been established, and we have heard of great encouragement coming from phone calls and visits, the card ministry, and our meal train. We also love seeing our church organically growing in heart and capacity on an everyday basis as we look out for and care for one another.

There have been many men's and women's socials throughout the year engaging a wide range of ages, from dinners at Club Rivers and host homes, and a variety of different events to suit all people. It has been encouraging to see these well attended and new friendships and connections being made. It has also been great to see people inviting friends to these events.

We have continued to appreciate a healthy and ever-growing partnership with Life Care, with volunteers serving in these vital ministries for our local community, which continues to go from strength to strength! We look with great expectation as to what this partnership will look like in 2026.

A heartfelt thank you to ALL our staff, key leaders and volunteers for your tireless work throughout this year. Thank you for your ongoing support, encouragement and prayer. It is our privilege and joy to serve you as Site Pastors of Peakhurst.

As we look to 2026 and beyond, our heart's desire is that we continue to prioritise Discipleship, Mission and Prayer. We are excited and expectant as to what God will continue to do with people who are wholeheartedly surrendered to Him.

LARA WATSON &  
JASMINE ROUND  
SITE PASTORS

---





## CHIPPING NORTON REPORT

2025 has been a wonderful and rich year for us at Chipping Norton where we have continued to grow into the church that God is calling us to be in our community. The year started with the excitement of transitioning into weekly Sunday Gatherings – a move we made to position us missionally to be consistent, present and predictable to the community. This has been a positive shift, and enabled us to experiment with incorporating morning tea into the middle of our gatherings fortnightly to further prioritise fellowship and connection with one another.

This has been a year marked by building on the foundations that have been laid over the past few years. Our incredible team has been working hard behind the scenes to continue building the presence and pathways we need to meet the needs of our community. This has been one of the highlights of 2025 for me!

- Katelyn Baker and the RiverKids team have introduced a fortnightly RiverBabes program (led faithfully by Lily Falkenberg this year), nurturing our growing cohort of youngest disciples.
- Jess Huckstepp and Aedden Hurt have introduced a fortnightly Small Group for our teens – and we have seen this group grow in number and relationships this year.
- Ellen Tyrrell and the Life Care team have introduced a Friday Café Connect program, which has expanded the range of people we're meeting and the depth of connection possible; this is already bearing fruit in the growth of our Sunday Community Connect.
- Meanwhile, Alison and Peter Dye have continued to faithfully reveal Jesus through their Alpha Small Group; and Adriana Mocanu, Kathy Lawrence and the Hospitality Team have enabled deeper connection over fortnightly lunches.

All of these – and more – are not just programs we offer, but are deeply integral to our mission of being wholehearted disciples who love, live and reveal Jesus within our local community. And I believe we are seeing the fruit of this as several new families have found their home at GRLC Chipping Norton in the last third of the year.

I deeply celebrate the commitment of our volunteers who consistently chip in – like Dave Walker, who comes early to set up; and Joel Huckstepp and Franco Esposito who make our coffee; and Bron Thornton who leads us in prayer; and Peter Dye who is always at work behind-the-scenes. I shared at our site's Mid-Year Vision Update that a significant priority over the coming season is continuing to build and formalise new opportunities and roles that enable each of us at Chipping Norton to use our God-given gifts to serve Jesus and thrive in our sense of belonging, and this will be one of the driving priorities for 2026.

I pray with a deep gratitude for everything Jesus is doing at Chipping Norton, for the wonderful community of people He has brought together, and ask that He would continue to inspire us with His vision for our community in the year to come!

MATT GRAY  
SITE PASTOR

---





---

## LIFE CARE REPORT

---

This past year has been a season of growth, impact, and deeper connection across our Life Care community. Together, we have seen God's faithfulness at work through the generosity, dedication, and love of our church family, volunteers, staff, and community partners.

### ***2024 Christmas Appeal & Seasonal Programs***

- Christmas Appeal: \$70,359 raised — these funds enabled us to cover some important operational costs that other funding doesn't.
- Backpacks: Over 600 backpacks distributed to children and young people across our local Georges River communities, setting them up for a strong start to the school year.
- Christmas Hampers: 240 hampers distributed to families in need, each one a tangible expression of care and hope.

### ***Café Connect & Community Programs***

- Café Connect Peakhurst moved to Wednesdays, creating consistent rhythms and clear pathways for connection with our community.
- Café Connect Moorebank officially launched in May, establishing a new weekly community hub and a new pathway for locals to learn about life care and church services.
- Food For Life received funding to develop community cooking workshops that bring people together through food, culture, sustainability, and shared stories.
- Winter Wonderland community event hosted mid-year at Nuwarra Public School, drawing in local families for a joyful celebration and alignment with the local church site.

### **Partnerships & Collaboration**

- New partnerships established with The Nappy Collective, Inaburra School, and Revesby Workers Club, strengthening our reach and capacity.
- Care for a Walk raised over \$25,000, engaged 5 new corporate partners, and gathered 125 walkers and 200 attendees to support vulnerable families.
- Sleeping Rough raised over \$80,000, introduced the new Family Zone, and welcomed more than 100 participants, expanding both impact and engagement.

### **Organisational Growth & Sustainability**

- Staff team restructure implemented to align Life Care more closely with GRLC, strengthen processes, and create greater clarity across roles.
- New Intake Officer role introduced to support the case work team and streamline service pathways.
- Conflict Resolution Training Day held in April, equipping staff and volunteers with practical tools for healthy team culture.
- New database implemented for improved record-keeping and coordination across the growing team.
- A custom-built Community Relief database was developed internally to better manage our community relief operations.
- Secured DSS Funding for a further 5 years, providing strong financial stability for our Emergency Relief program.

### **Recognition & Alignment**

- Honoured to receive Community Recognition Awards from State Members Mark Coure and Tina Ayyad, along with a special invitation to Parliament House from Kylie Wilkinson.
- Church Leadership Team and Life Care Board are meeting more regularly to foster stronger alignment between the organisations.
- Welcomed two new board members – Karen Hewitt and Winnie Chow – bringing fresh perspective and wisdom to our governance team.
- Celebrated a significant leadership transition, farewelling Scott Morrison and welcoming Ben Rusin as Senior Pastor.

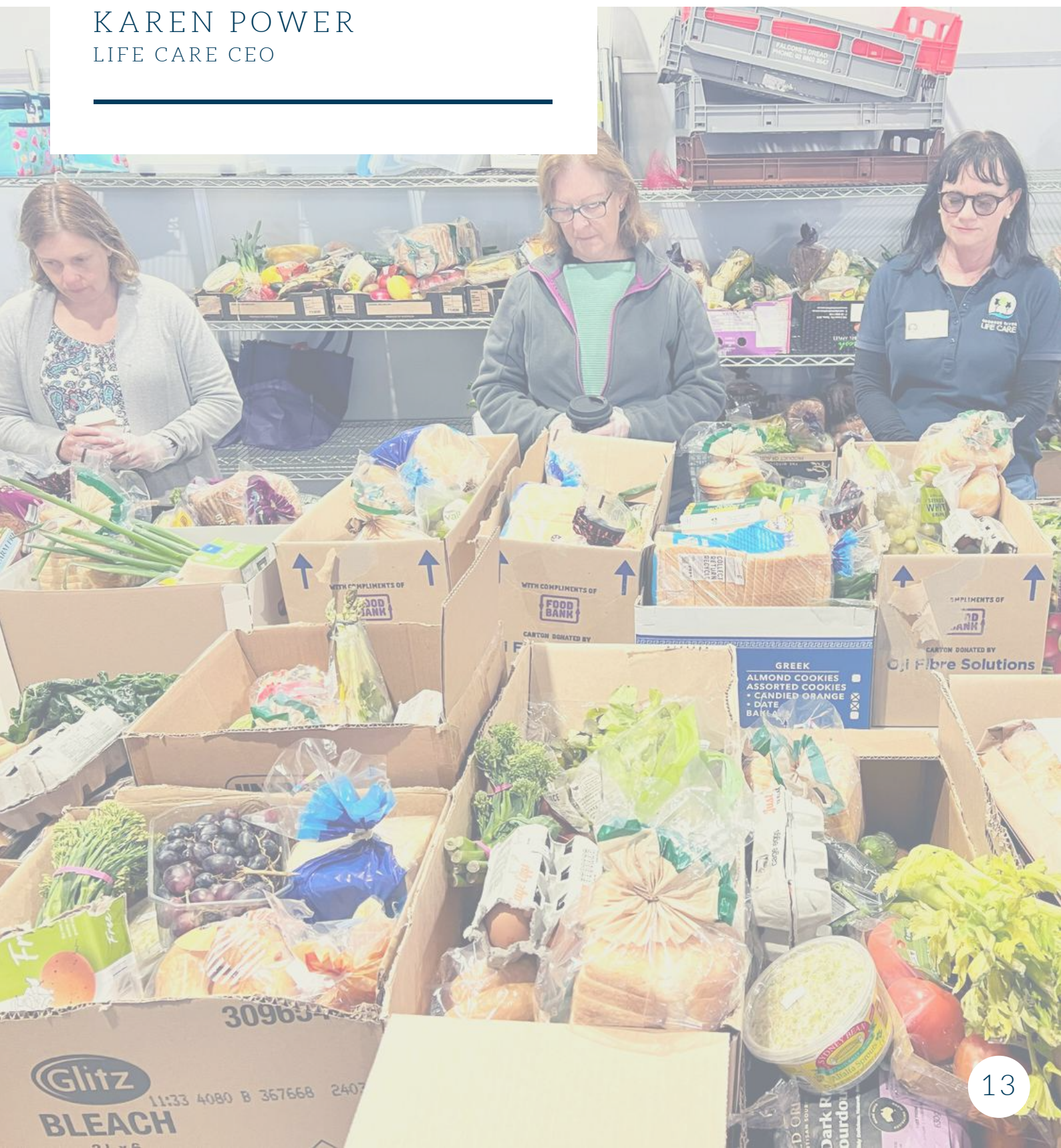
## Looking Ahead

As we look to the future, our team remains committed to being the hands and feet of Jesus in our community – creating spaces of dignity, connection, and transformation.

Thank you for your ongoing partnership, prayers, and generosity. Together, we are making a real and lasting difference.

KAREN POWER  
LIFE CARE CEO

---







GEORGES RIVER  
LIFE CHURCH

23 Stanley Street, Peakhurst NSW, 2210

02 9153 6300

[info@grlc.org.au](mailto:info@grlc.org.au)