

## St Mary's House of Welcome offers a helping hand to ACU's international students

A key community partner of the Australian Catholic University (ACU) Melbourne Campus has reached out to ACU's international students in their time of need.

St Mary's House of Welcome in Fitzroy has offered to provide meal packs, toiletries and laundry vouchers for ACU's international students who are facing hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Chief Executive Officer of St Mary's House of Welcome, Robina Bradley, said "International students are a vital part of our education system and our community. Many worked in businesses that were the first to close to help stop the spread of the virus, such as cafes, restaurants, bars and retail, leaving many without an income. We want to support them during their time of need."

ACU have been working with St Mary's House of Welcome over a number of years on several initiatives, including providing opportunities for staff and students to participate in community engagement activities, and an annual Community Giving Drive collecting toiletries during July to support the work of St Mary's House of Welcome.

Pro Vice-Chancellor (Engagement), Professor Sandra Jones said "This is a wonderful example of the reciprocal nature of community engagement. At ACU we don't see community engagement as a task for students and staff to complete, but rather as an opportunity to grow through collaboration with others. This generous offer of support from St Mary's House of Welcome in our time of need demonstrates both organisations' commitment to developing embedded and meaningful partnerships that benefit our shared community".

ACU international student, Ayushe Dheke said, "We didn't expect this at all. It's a really good step in helping us. We see many places where people don't care so it's great to see this by ACU."

Fellow ACU international student, Sundeep Manoth added, "Considering online classes, things have been very difficult. But there are so many great initiatives from the uni (like this) and we have received constant updates, so we feel we are being looked after. It has also been great so many of my friends who are struggling have also gotten access to the ACU relief fund. So, it's really wonderful the uni is helping, and I hope they continue to do so."

ACU Associate Director of Identity & Mission, Mark Lysaght said, "Dignity of the human person and the common good are hallmarks of the ACU Mission, this aligns with so many of our partners. The gratefulness we have for St Mary's House of Welcome cannot be more overstated in their care, concern and action to support those most vulnerable in our community especially our international students at this time."

[St Mary's House of Welcome](#) is a not-for-profit open access centre providing basic essential services to people who are homeless and experiencing poverty, have severe and persistent mental health issues, and those who are extremely isolated and socially marginalised.

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