

# Hope and compassion on our streets

**B**aptist Inner City Ministries has a new name. But, though the name may have changed, our commitment to practising justice, compassion and hope is as strong as ever and our dedication to those most often left out remains constant. Early in the year we embarked on a process to identify a name which would communicate the essence of the work that we do, and the way that we do it, to the widest possible audience in a way that is compact and appealing.

## The result...

**A new name:**  
HOPESTREET

**A new statement of our business:**  
Urban Compassion

**A Fresh connection to our foundations:**  
A NSW & ACT Baptist Initiative

**A Reaffirmation of our ethos:**  
Practising Justice, Compassion & Hope



But what is Urban Compassion and is there really **hope** on the streets of the inner city? Recently we were privileged to hear one of our colleagues give a report on the work she is currently doing for our ministries.

Sondra has formed a group called *Gatherings*, which meets to learn new skills in music, mime, dance and theatre. In addition she is also coordinating another similar program under the Work for the Dole scheme. The participants in both these programs have opportunities to gain confidence in expressing themselves in

small and large groups situations, as well as through public performances.

After working alongside those in the Women's Space, and in gambling counselling, Sondra recognised the need for people at risk, either homeless, addicted or otherwise left out, to form new groups. This is another way for them to find friendship and acceptance, as well as developing their creative talent and learning from each other.

As Sondra related the story of her progress she shared moments of triumph and times of despair. She spoke with passion, at times through tears, sharing her dreams and aspirations. It was an account of love and dedication, a very positive message of hope.

A week later, some of us watched an impromptu performance by *Gatherings of The Vision*, based on the story of Arthur Stace. This one act play, set in an inner city street, tells the story of the transformation of Mr Eternity, the man who spent over thirty three years writing *Eternity* on the streets of Sydney and beyond. In what can only be described as a profoundly moving performance, this small, talented, group held us spellbound.

With many parallels to the people we work alongside and support today, Arthur's story of forgiveness, grace and hope will be shared with many audiences over the next few weeks. The groups plan to perform at the various launches of our new name. For those who would like to arrange a performance by one of the groups, or would like the chance to see what they are doing in the new theatre space at Burton Street Tabernacle please telephone 9358 2388.



Members of Gatherings rehearsing for the Arthur Stace play

## Christmas cards:

Our cards are painted by Aboriginal artist Joseph Mlotkowski, who was a resident of The Terrace. They are a wonderful blend of Aboriginal art and Christian symbolism. The Holy Trinity is depicted at the birth of Jesus. May the message inside each card continue to excite and inspire you... "For all of us, a child is born. Joy to the world!"

The cards are post office preferred and the size is 125 by 185 with an envelope that fits neatly. There are six cards to a pack and the packs retail for \$5.95. You can purchase them by contacting Ron in the HOPESTREET office: 9358 2388.

**By Annie Lewis-Bramall, Minister Fund Raising and Publicity, HOPESTREET.**