



New(town) Beginnings #22

Dear Neighbour,

They say necessity is the mother of all invention; therefore creativity and collaboration must be its spawn. And we are seeing it in spades across our beloved community on Gadigal-Wangal land.

There's a reason why many of us choose to call the Inner West home. Sure we have fantastic shops, bars and some of the best breweries in the country (world even?) but let's face it, it's so much more than that. The last few weeks have highlighted the benevolent nature of our neighbours and we are so proud to be part of that.

If any community is going to thrive under such drastic and trying conditions, it's ours. I've witnessed it daily since the words pandemic, COVID-19 and Coronavirus entered our vernacular. There's an abundance of goodwill and intention, and everywhere you look you see people mobilising to support each other in multiple ways.

Our local businesses are evolving to stay afloat but are equally concerned with helping others. Young Henry's, long term supporters of NNC, have expanded their repertoire of delicious beer and gin and are now manufacturing hand sanitiser to help keep up with the demand. They're also supporting local artists and musicians by featuring their work on their social media channels, which guarantees exposure to a wider audience.

Local restaurants such as The Italian Bowl are feeding our exhausted healthcare workers, while Bloodwood and the Oxford Tavern are providing free meals to any hospitality workers who now find themselves temporarily unemployed. Colombo Social have reached out to us offering our clients regularly cooked meals as part of their #plateitforward project. And these are just a few, I know there's plenty more examples right across our neighbourhood.

Newtown now boasts two free food pantries - a 'Blessing Box' on the corner of Bedford and Station Street and our very own repurposed Street Library sitting outside NNC. I am hearing regularly from our staff that it is being emptied and restocked daily, and that is thanks to generous people like you.

We have even received calls and offers of support from the healthcare workers at RPA Hospital asking what they can do to help - like they're not already doing more than enough!

We are extremely fortunate to be supported by the mighty powerhouse that is Addison Road Community Centre. They have launched an Emergency Food Preparedness and Response Centre and are now supporting 27 community organisations just like ours.

Newtown Neighbourhood Centre

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Across the sector we are seeing true community development and engagement. Organisations are collaborating like never before. Liz Yeo, our CEO, participates in a weekly meeting with heads of local NGO's convened by the Mayor of Inner West Council. Continuity of care is of the utmost importance and these meetings ensure that the most vulnerable members of our community are looked after, resources are shared, and any potential issues are identified early. We've come together to collectively tackle to the societal challenges that the Coronavirus is throwing at us.

I just hope that some of these positive changes brought about by our new world remain after the virus eventually dissipates.

Please keep safe and look after yourself.

Mel

Community Strengthening Team

P.S. - As always, much love and gratitude to all the healthcare workers out there.

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