



See Christmas Insert for more information.



## Hope for my baby

The challenges I've faced in my life are hard to put into words. When the civil war started in Somalia, I was forced to flee from my home. I was never settled, and was always running. In 2018, after a very long and lonely journey, I was accepted as a refugee to New Zealand. Finally, I had found safety, and I was excited to start my new life.

My first year here was incredible. I was learning English, and the Kiwi way. I met a man who seemed perfect. He knew the future I wanted to build, and convinced me that we would have it together. We got married and began our story together.

But when I became pregnant, everything changed. He didn't want to be a part of our family. He abandoned me at three months pregnant, and never looked back. I found myself alone again. It was very hard for me to get by, and I had been deeply hurt by someone I had complete trust in. I ended up in labour in Wellington Hospital just before

the Level 4 Lockdown, with no home to return to. Emotionally I was devastated. I was about to give birth for the first time with no home for my new baby, no support, and nowhere to turn.

Thankfully, I was introduced to Holly from The Mission. She was there when I needed someone. She visited me in hospital, and helped arrange safe emergency accommodation for me and my baby. Lying in that hospital bed, it was a huge relief knowing that someone would be there for us with open arms when we would walk out the hospital doors.

*"You have given us the chance to flourish in New Zealand. Now our life is truly beginning."*

After giving birth to my beautiful baby girl, Holly continued to support us through Level 4. We spoke on the phone almost every

day. She advocated for us with government departments, and helped sort all of the forms I struggle with, such as a birth certificate. Holly also brought us some of the essentials that I couldn't afford – like baby clothes, a bassinet, and bedding – which made me feel so much better as a new mum.

Holly is still there for me if I need help, and we are applying for a permanent house. Every day I am getting closer to standing on my own feet, and becoming the strong and independent mum I want to be. It's been a hard road, but there is no comparison to the world I came from. My baby has a healthy start in life, and a safe place to grow up. I've never felt so fortunate in all my life and I am so happy to be here.

My words aren't enough to show how much I appreciate Holly, The Mission, and everyone who supports. You have given us the chance to flourish in New Zealand. Now our life is truly beginning.

Empowerment. Transformation. *Fullness of Life.*



## Murray's Message, Wellington City Missioner

Who could have known that 2020 would be the year that it has been? I think we will all look back on this year as the time that changed everything! It seems incredible that whilst we are only in October, so much has happened so far this year. The biggest single thing has of course been Covid-19. The parts of our lives that haven't been directly impacted by Covid have inevitably been somehow affected by the far-reaching consequences of a world-wide pandemic.

I have been talking to people about the 3 C's of the Covid lockdown – the Challenges, the Celebrations, and the Changes. The challenges for individuals and the community have been clearly visible, the celebrations relate to what we were able to do for people in response and the wonderful support we received from Wellingtonians, and the changes are the opportunities for the City Mission to grow and to do things differently as a consequence of our Covid learnings and experiences.

The other day, I was asked to write a summary of the highlights from the City Mission in 2020. I was surprised at what an impressive list it was, which is a credit to the team here at WCM and to the remarkable support we get from others. It struck me that often things happen incrementally and we don't realise the extent of change until we stand back and review how far we have come.

So it is for many of those that appear in this Newsletter; making small but often

significant changes in their lives that result in wonderful outcomes and create a new future for them and for their whānau. It feels like an incredible privilege to walk alongside and help others in this way.

I hope you all take satisfaction and blessing from assisting us in this most worthwhile of endeavours, particularly as we head into the festive Christmas season.

*"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ."*  
Galatians 6:2

Murray Edridge  
Email: [murray@wgtncitymission.org.nz](mailto:murray@wgtncitymission.org.nz)



## Finding my courage

In 2016 I moved to New Zealand to join my partner. We began renting together, and got engaged. I found a job at a cafe, and we travelled this beautiful country whenever we could. Life was happy.

COVID-19 changed everything. My fiancé, a chef in a hotel, lost his job. During lockdown, he became severely depressed and stopped sleeping. I think at that point he wanted to give up, but he was worried about me, so he pushed on. But he got worse and worse. Each day I could see the life leaving him.

One night while I was asleep, he committed suicide in our home. It was the worst moment of my life. I couldn't bear to live there anymore. A friend took me in, but I was battling with my own depression. I was

crying a lot, so I felt like a terrible burden. As I was grieving, I discovered my fiancé had a lot of unpaid debt, and I had just been laid off from work. I was so sad and afraid of what was ahead of me, and I had nowhere else to go.

*"From being alone in a very dark place, I can see the light at the end of the tunnel."*

That's when my friend brought me into The Mission. Straight away I found new hope because one of their social workers, Kirsten, spoke Chinese. We spoke for about three hours, and we planned a way forward. She found a room for me at The Wellington Homeless Women's Trust, and I moved in that same day.

Kirsten has been behind me since then. She's helped me deal with my fiancé's death, and budget to pay off his debts. She's also made all the difference when applying for the Jobseekers Support Benefit, permanent housing, and my permanent residency. Now I am going to counselling, and I have found a community of friends – many in The Mission's Community Lounge. I am also excited to be doing an English course every day, to open up new opportunities and find another job.

I feel so touched and grateful for all of Kirsten's guidance. From being alone in a very dark place, I can see the light at the end of the tunnel. I carry the spirit of The Mission and its supporters with me, and I am excited to give back to the community through volunteering in the Foodbank or Community Lounge. The Mission has helped me to heal, and I have found courage and hope for the future. Thank you so much!

Empowerment. Transformation. *Fullness of Life.*





## I'm in control of my life again

A few years ago, life got pretty overwhelming, and I spiralled out of control.

I was having epileptic seizures most days, and my full-time job was cut back to part-time. I was hit hard when my parents and a few close friends passed away in quick succession. I became homeless, and started couch-surfing. I quit my job altogether and turned to drinking as an escape. I had a pretty bleak outlook, and I needed help to find a way out.

When I heard about Britannia House The Paa, I wandered down there to chat with the staff. I could tell it was the right environment to turn my life around, and I moved in the following day. I was welcomed with open arms. They explained their approach to me, based on Maori principles, and asked what other ideas might speak to me as well. I remember from the first group meeting, I felt comfortable to start talking about my

problems for the first time. I took up all the opportunities on offer, from the group activities to Drug and Alcohol support, one-on-one counselling, and budgeting advice. I even volunteered for groundskeeping duties too. There was always someone there to talk to, and all the support made me feel invested in the place, and myself. It was the base that I needed to get back on track.

*"Just knowing that I had a group of people I could rely on kept my spirits up."*

While I was at The Paa, I was diagnosed with lung cancer. The staff cared for me, supported me with the technical stuff, and took me to and from my appointments when I was going through chemotherapy. Just knowing that I had a group of people I could rely on kept my spirits up. I'm now waiting for the results on my latest scans. All I can do is hope for the best, so I'm taking each day at a time, and looking forward to what's coming in my next chapter.

I've now moved into my own flat, and I love it here. I belong to a church community and feel really connected with the people around me. I've been reaching out to family and friends who I haven't talked to for years as well. This Christmas I'm really looking forward to having some of my family from down south coming to visit me in my home.

My options for work are pretty limited because of my epilepsy, so I've been volunteering at the local veggie co-op. I'm also passionate about sharing my own experiences with younger people who are struggling, and The Paa knows that I'm always available for someone who's in a similar situation to what I was. To me, being there and supporting each other is a cycle. By helping someone when they need it means they can go on to help someone else, and so on. Giving back makes me feel really good about myself, and I know I'm part of something good.

It feels marvellous to be in control of my life again!



## Volunteer Profile - Elyzah

Hi, I'm Elyzah. I've been volunteering in The Mission's Foodbank a couple of hours every week for three years. I wash and pack fruit and vegetables, sort the cheese portions, and do lots of other jobs - depending on what's needed that day.

I always look forward to coming in each week. My favourite part is talking with the other volunteers and staff, and meeting new people. It's really cool knowing I'm helping the people who need food too!

I think others should volunteer too because you're helping to do something good, and you'll really enjoy yourself!

*Thanks Elyzah, and all of our compassionate volunteers, for all of your great work!*

*If you, your family, or organisation want to volunteer at The Mission at Christmas or throughout the year, please contact our General Manager Volunteering Services, Susan Penetito. Email [susan@wgtncitymission.org.nz](mailto:susan@wgtncitymission.org.nz) or call (04) 245 0864.*

# LOOKING FORWARD

## Become a regular giver!

*Introducing our ChangeGivers Regular Giving Programme*

Join our community of dedicated supporters who understand the importance of making a sustained and ongoing commitment to helping people and families in need in the Wellington region.

This year we're introducing a new regular giving programme called 'ChangeGivers'. Our regular giving programme will play an essential role in helping to ensure that we can continue to be as responsive as possible, and ready to meet the needs of our community at all times of the year.

Regular donations will enable us to put in place long-term strategies so that for example our Foodbank remains stocked, our social workers can keep up their

outreach and engagement with families, and it could also help us to continue providing shelter for our City's homeless.

You can set up your monthly gift on our website donation page or by emailing [vivienne@wgtncitymission.org.nz](mailto:vivienne@wgtncitymission.org.nz) or phone Vivienne on (04) 245 0845.



**ChangeGivers**  
Regular Giving Programme



## Mission for Youth Update

Post COVID, The Wellington City Mission has been thinking differently about the needs in our local community where we should focus our resources and energy moving forward. As a consequence, we decided to pass the responsibility for the Mission for Youth School to a dedicated educational provider.

On 14 August 2020, Praxis, an NZQA Private Training Establishment took over our Mission for Youth school. Praxis offer NZQA courses in youth and community work and have run the alternative education programme at Porirua for many years so are very experienced in this work. We know Praxis will look after our young people and provide them with the best possible care and education.

We feel the time is now right and the best outcome for the rangatahi would be for Praxis to provide the rangatahi the opportunity to keep learning and thriving. We've valued the engagement and impact we've been able to make in the lives of our rangatahi, their families and caregivers.

At the heart of our Mission for Youth programme has been our commitment to supporting our rangatahi, by offering them a safe space to learn, build positive relationships and thrive. Our Mission for Youth staff have worked closely with rangatahi to not only achieve NCEA qualifications, but to help them set goals and personal plans tailored to their strengths and interests.

This of course wouldn't have been possible, without your support of our Mission for Youth programme over the years. Thank you.

## On A Mission, Round The Bays!

The Brendan Foot Supersite Round the Bays event winds its way along Wellington's picturesque waterfront. This event will take place on Sunday, 21 February 2021 and this year you can support people in need all across Wellington by running for your City Mission.

Whether you're keen to try the fun run, buggy walk or go for the half marathon, sign up today - we'll support you every step of the way. You can also get together with workmates or friends and enter as a team. There is no minimum sponsorship but aim high - you'll be amazed at what you can achieve.

### Why Join Team Wellington City Mission?

- You'll receive personal support before, during and after your run.
- The money you raise will help us continue to provide food, housing and social work support to transform the lives of people in need all across Wellington.
- Become a member of our Facebook page to engage with other participants and share stories and pictures.
- Raise \$200 and receive a 'I'm on a Mission' running t-shirt which you can wear on event day.

For more information about joining our team, contact [jana@wgtncitymission.org.nz](mailto:jana@wgtncitymission.org.nz) or 04 245 0862







## Innovative business partnering with The Mission

The Mission is incredibly grateful for the support we receive from businesses all across the region throughout the year. Every week we love hearing about the fun and innovative ways your staff and customers have come together to raise funds for us.

In early October we were excited to launch our partnership with iconic Wellington enterprise – luxury leather goods label Yu Mei, to deliver a unique fundraising campaign for The City Mission's stores.

The Bags for All campaign saw Yu Mei acquire sponsorship for 100 handbags, crafted by hand in their Wellington studio, which were then donated to our Taranaki Street store for retail. The proceeds from the sale of the bags will go towards helping us deliver the programmes and services we provide on a daily basis. Our partnership with Yu Mei recognises our shared values,

and aims to engage the quintessential 'op-shopper' while tapping into Yu Mei's niche buyer market.

## Q&A With Jessie Wong, Founder/Director – Yu Mei

### Why's it important for businesses to partner with charities?

All of us at Yu Mei love being a part of this community. So as a team, we were asking ourselves how we could partner with local social services in a really meaningful way that would have a long-term impact. Essentially we wanted to establish a blueprint for how brands and corporates can work with charities on an ongoing basis, as part of their core operation.

### How will your bags connect with The Mission's work?

Personally, I love bags because they are so diverse – they don't discriminate between size, age, or gender. But they are an expensive item. So we wanted to find a way

to balance that out, by selling some bags in the City Mission Store that are sponsored by our corporate partners. These bags will not only be more accessible to people who may otherwise be unable to buy them, but proceeds from sales will also go to The Mission and the wonderful work they do.

### So why did you choose to partner with The Mission?

It's always been Yu Mei's philosophy to create products that would weather your journey with you. So when we learnt about The Mission's core values, and how they believe in walking alongside people to reach their goals, we saw a lot of alignment. It's a lovely holistic approach, and both of us champion inclusivity and empowerment. We're delighted to be working with The Mission to bring this exciting partnership to life!

### Thank you Jessie and the team at Yu Mei.

If you would like to support The Mission this Christmas please contact Bridget Child on [bridget@wgtncitymission.org.nz](mailto:bridget@wgtncitymission.org.nz) or 022 150 7731.

## WHAT IT MEANS

**Susan**

**General Manager  
Volunteering Services**



*We simply couldn't make the same impact in our community year-round without our incredible Mission volunteers. All of their time and effort makes it possible for us to reach the people and families who need to feel cared for – especially at Christmas. This really diverse group of people also bring the feeling of whānau that we want for our whole organisation. I really love getting to greet them each day, and thank them for making a difference in our community. It's so uplifting to see their enthusiasm, and I feel humbled and blessed by their kindness and compassion. It's also a reminder about how lucky our organisation is to have them!*

**Serena**

**Kahui  
(Quality/Practice Lead)  
Te Paa Transitional Housing**



*Our manuhiri (guests) find more than simply shelter and a warm bed in our transitional housing. We offer care, and take an interest in their lives so they feel like they're a part of rather than apart from. They find a sense of belonging – especially at times like Christmas when we as a society show our love by coming together. I've personally experienced feelings of isolation and aloneness before, and that's a scary place to be – you feel so cut off. Sadly there are many people who are stuck there now. But through our mahi (work), we're showing our people that they do belong, they do have potential, and they do have a purpose!*



## A Word From Olivia – General Manager, Community Services

Christmas this year will look very different for all of us. At The Mission, we expect to see more people asking for help. Many of those people will have been affected by COVID-19 – particularly those who have lost the jobs they relied on.

We're also seeing people we would have otherwise not seen before. Some have even donated toys, food, or funds in the past, but now find that actually this year, they're

uncertain if they can afford gifts for their children or a special meal with their whānau. Individuals who were laid off have become disconnected from their group of colleagues, lost their sense of purpose and belonging.

At this time, The Mission will be here to support them. I think this really shows the circular nature of community. In that moment of asking for help, just knowing someone cares about you can mean the world. Wanting to feel loved and part of a group is so important for us as humans. That's something The Mission will offer in the lead up to Christmas, and in the New Year.

We'll be busy hosting manuhiri who have found a place of belonging in our Community Lounge, and getting out to people and families in the Wellington area with in-home support and hampers to bring much-needed relief. We'll also deliver our services in a mana-enhancing way. For example, by having our own Christmas gift shop, parents and families can come to actually pick out and give their own presents. We recognise as well that some of those we support, such as the Muslim community, don't celebrate Christmas. So we'll supply special food parcels, to make sure they still feel connected over the Christmas season.

Vitality, we're making sure that everyone we're working with is feeling like they are going to make it through this tough time, and are planning to take on the challenges that lie beyond Christmas. That means providing education such as financial mentoring, connections with other positive opportunities and community initiatives, and personal support to get back on their feet. Essentially we are building their resiliency so that they can face the challenges ahead with more confidence and hope.

I think it's really important for all of us to know that we don't have to spend a lot of money to have a great Christmas this year. If you can celebrate in a way that shows how much you love your whānau, friends, or community that's what will bring the most happiness. That might mean a simple gift, a special meal and quality time together, or taking an opportunity to volunteer. Even inviting over a neighbour or friend who's feeling isolated is really meaningful.

This is the spirit that The Mission and our staff are carrying with us as we work with our local community. From all of us, thank you to everyone who donates food, toys, time, and funds. You are showing kindness to those who really need to feel loved and cared for right now.

## THANKS TO YOUR HELP...

July - September 2020 Key Statistics



**1,202**

We've distributed  
1,202 food bags



**790**

790 adults have been  
supported through our  
food bank



**475**

We've helped feed  
475 children and  
young people



**252**

Community Service  
Advocates have carried  
out 252 face-to-face  
visits



**490**

Our Social Workers  
have had 490 contacts  
with families via e-mail  
and/or phone



**1,715**

Volunteers have  
worked 1,715 hours

## DONATE NOW TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

### WAYS TO DONATE

Website:  
[wellingtoncitymission.org.nz](http://wellingtoncitymission.org.nz)

Phone:  
(04) 245 0845 to make a donation.

Internet Banking:  
To our Bank account 03 0547 0296036 17  
Email [donations@wgtncitymission.org.nz](mailto:donations@wgtncitymission.org.nz) with details if  
you wish to receive a receipt.

## CONTACT US

Call in, or contact our Newtown office and Community Lounge:  
19 Gordon Place, Newtown, Wellington  
PO Box 7200, Newtown, Wellington 6242  
T: (04) 245 0900 E: [enquiries@wgtncitymission.org.nz](mailto:enquiries@wgtncitymission.org.nz)

## E-NEWSLETTER

To sign up to our quarterly e-newsletter, please email us  
your details [enquiries@wgtncitymission.org.nz](mailto:enquiries@wgtncitymission.org.nz) or  
call 245 0845.



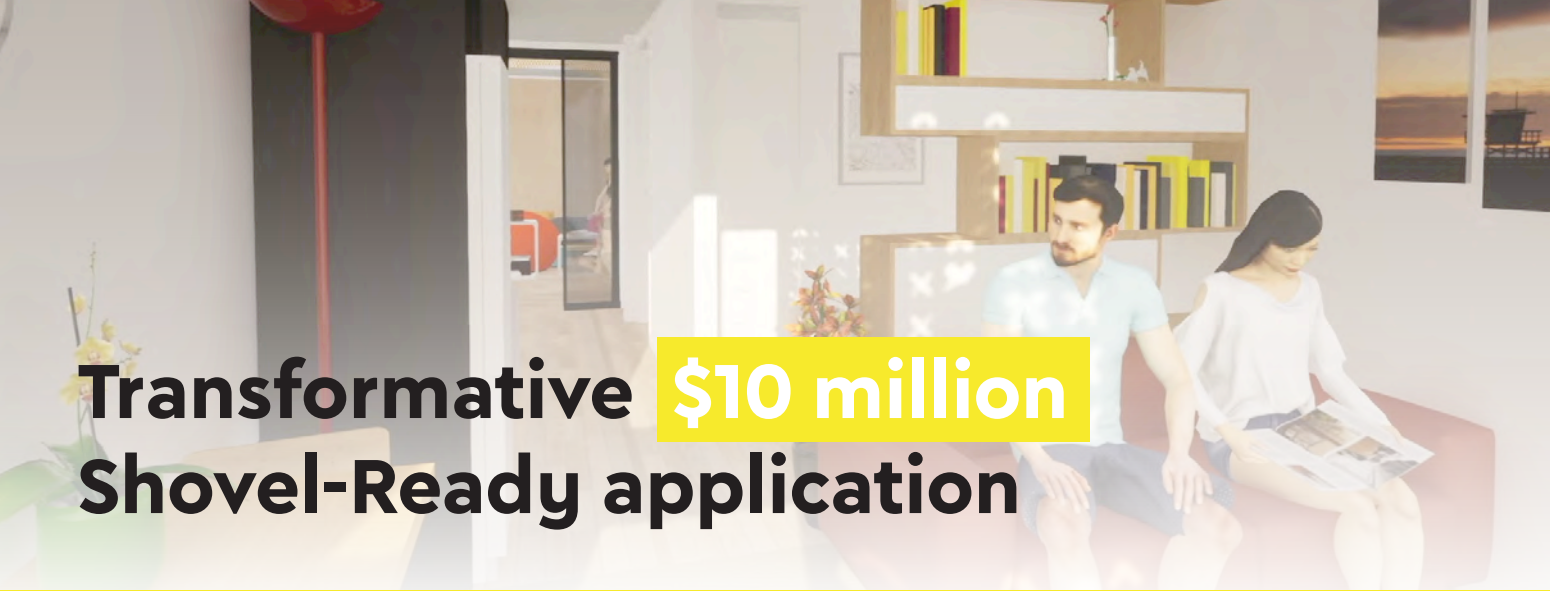


# Introducing Whakamaru!

 **whakamaru**  
More than a roof

 **wellington  
citymission**





# Transformative **\$10 million** Shovel-Ready application

**Wellington is a great place to live, work, do business and to raise a family. But for many, life is a significant challenge.**

Homelessness, food insecurity, and isolation are major social barriers to an ability to live successfully in our city. These are real challenges for New Zealand and for the people of Wellington. With that in mind, we have been asking ourselves; what is the best way we can respond and how can that response be one which

provides dignity? And the answer is clear; we need a game-changer.

For 116 years, The Wellington City Mission has been there for people and now, we are embarking on a significant building re-development project for Wellington; Whakamaru – more than a roof.




## **Whakamaru** – More than a Roof.

Whakamaru, a name gifted by Mana Whenua, meaning “to shelter, to safeguard, to protect”, is about much more than building walls and a roof, it is about creating a transformative supportive community hub in the heart of our city.

It is a response to the shared need to create a mana-enhancing community and it will be a game changer for the Wellington region.

Through Whakamaru we will provide homes within a community with 35 supported transitional housing units, encourage social interaction through a community café, enhance dignity through a free social supermarket, create community engagement through extensive volunteering, and provide a new and better equipped home for the Wellington City Mission.

We're delighted the Government announced a contribution of \$10 million in support for the construction of Whakamaru. The \$10 million injection is part of the Government's 'shovel-ready' programme and is part of a pipeline of infrastructure projects that have public or regional benefit, creates jobs and are ready to get underway.



The building of Whakamaru also presents social and economic benefit for the Wellington region by creating 120 jobs and generating a minimum of \$12 million to the Wellington economy during the construction phase.

Whakamaru will give us a greater platform to be there for people in Wellington, along with providing greater opportunities for community involvement. This will allow us to create a community that takes care of itself, which will be transformational for the Wellington region.

We are grateful to have received support from the Wellington City Council, and from generous philanthropists and business owners in Wellington.

With construction due to commence in April 2021 and the project completion in September 2022, we look forward to keeping you informed of progress and milestones, and inviting you to be part of Whakamaru.





# LIGHT UP WELLINGTON



## Pack the Bus (30 Nov - 4 Dec)

The bus is back! Over 1 week with The Breeze Wellington, we will be visiting businesses, organisations, groups & schools to collect food, goods & gifts.



## Christmas Star Boxes (Nov - Dec)

Host a collection of food, goods or gifts at your office, church or community group! Request a special Christmas Star Box today via our website.

## Walk of Fame (27 Nov - 27 Dec)

Pre-order your star today & be one of the first stars placed on Wellington's Waterfront to show your support for someone in need.

## NZSO Handel's Messiah (12 Dec)

Head along to the NZSO's annual performance of Handel's Messiah at the Michael Fowler Centre & donate to The Wellington City Mission.

[WellingtonCityMission.org.nz/LightUpWellington](http://WellingtonCityMission.org.nz/LightUpWellington)



# LIGHT UP WELLINGTON

[WellingtonCityMission.org.nz/LightUpWellington](http://WellingtonCityMission.org.nz/LightUpWellington)



## Help people in need in a Christmas like no other.

While 2020 has been a year like no other, it only seems timely for us all to stop and reflect on the joy and blessings that Christmas brings, while also being aware that not everyone is so fortunate. Following the severe impact that COVID-19 has and will continue to have on everyone's lives, it is fair to say that

2020 will be a Christmas like no other.

While we're in the midst of an unprecedented pandemic, this year there will be even more people and families across the Wellington region who will not be able to enjoy the delight of Christmas. It should be a season of celebration, but is often a time of anxiety, uncertainty and loneliness.

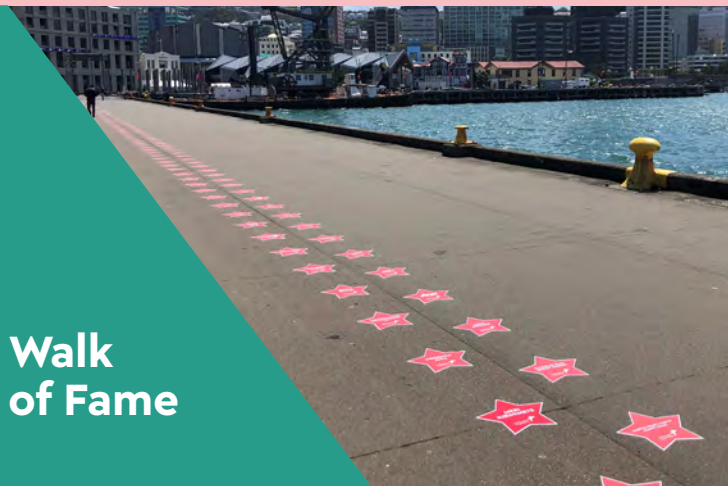
Here at The Wellington City Mission, we think everyone deserves the right to enjoy a special Christmas

this year. 2020 has been tough, but with your support, we have the ability to light up Wellington at Christmas.

Giving at Christmas isn't just about making a donation, it's about making a difference – and for those who have experienced hardship this year, your difference may just be the light they need to help them at Christmas, and to feel hopeful for the year ahead.

**Help us Light up Wellington this Christmas, by supporting our Christmas Appeal.**

## Walk of Fame



## Christmas Star Boxes



## Pack The Bus!



## Donate Online



Check out our map over the page to see how you can light up someone's Christmas by donating to our Christmas Appeal! Check out our website for more details.