



## Debbie's Story

**For as long as Debbie can remember, drugs dictated her life.**

"I was a drug addict for 48 years," Debbie says. "I was always rejected from society, being a heroin addict, bkie, gangster, whatever you wanted to label me."

During this time, Debbie and her family experienced periods of homelessness, and money was scarce.

"I've done jail," Debbie says. "I've done rehabs. I've done refuges, (experienced) domestic violence. Lived on the streets. And it made me rough."

Debbie tried many times to break her addiction. And finally, a few years ago, she was successful.

But being newly clean didn't fit with her previous social circles. She began looking for purpose, productive ways to spend her time, and the right support network.

Debbie was walking by the ADRA Community Centre in Gatton when the fresh fruit and vegetables caught her eye and reminded her of the soup kitchens she had visited in the past.

"I used to come here 10 years ago to the soup kitchen," Debbie says. "And I always remembered how nice they were and how I felt in having communal dinner. And that stuck with me."

She approached one of the volunteers and asked if they were looking for help.

# CEO Message

Lockdowns are challenging, but they have taught me a few things.



These include how beneficial a daily walk is, how talented and patient our teachers are (yes, my wife and I are currently home-schooling), how much joy a dog can bring into your life. And one of the things I have

observed is how well my team has adapted to working remotely.

I have always thought of our team as passionate and talented professionals who bring a lot of innovation to the workplace. But to see them monitoring international projects, continuing to source and share stories about the impact your donations are making, and welcoming new staff during periods of working from home has been inspiring.

We have all been gifted with talents, and we are stronger and more capable when we embrace these talents. I love working with people who want to use their abilities for the good of others. And as a Christian organisation, I know that this is just one way ADRA can be a witness for God.

I am reminded of the lyrics from *Act Justly, Love Mercy, Walk Humbly* by Pat Barrett.

*"It all comes down to this.  
To be Your hands and feet.  
Good news to all the world.  
The truth will set us free."*

With your support, ADRA is truly able to be the hands and feet of Jesus. And just like Jesus displayed love through His actions, in the same way ADRA is shining its light for those most in need.

I think of Debbie. She is one of the thousands of people who have been helped by ADRA's programs in Australia. She was drawn to one of our programs to help fill a physical need, but the community and spiritual blessing she received has changed her life. This October, Let Love Shine by supporting the ADRA Appeal and help make a lasting impact on those who are experiencing hardship.

"You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden... In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." - Matthew 5:14, 16



**Denison Grellmann**

CEO

ADRA Australia and New Zealand



## Contact Us

146 Fox Valley Road  
PO Box 129  
Wahroonga NSW 2076  
Australia  
ABN 85 109 435 618

T: 02 9489 5488  
1800 242 372  
E: [info@adra.org.au](mailto:info@adra.org.au)  
[www.adra.org.au](http://www.adra.org.au)  
[www.facebook.com/ADRAAustralia](https://www.facebook.com/ADRAAustralia)

Editor **Carlle Kerr**  
Contributors  
**Denison Grellmann,**  
**Syed Abu Saleh Mahfuz,**  
**Raymon Paletua,**  
**Stephen Pollack,**  
**Sarah Ryan, Ashley Stanton,**  
**Joyce Taylor**

“The guy who was on said, ‘Yes, you’re welcome! Come tomorrow eight o’clock’,” Debbie remembers. “Now that was my first responsibility, to get out of bed and go somewhere.”

And Debbie did. At eight the next morning, she arrived at ADRA to begin volunteering.

“I really resonated with the hungry people coming in,” Debbie says. “I knew a lot of them because of the scene I was in, a lot of people who are homeless and hungry, I know them personally.”

Volunteering with ADRA gave Debbie a sense of purpose and the community she craved.

“I go home, and I have a good conscience. I have a great day,” she says. “I’ve made a best friend called Patty. And just being accepted is really, really awesome. I’m growing every day and people around me can see the change. I’m enjoying my life. It’s the first time in my life that I’ve been in a community. And I get respect from people.”

Debbie’s involvement with ADRA also helped to reconcile her broken relationship with her son Lincoln.

“So, from the beginning, drugs did ruin my life,” Lincoln says. “There was never, you know, a meal. There was never dinner at the table. You know, it was all struggle, struggle, struggle.”

Since Debbie started with ADRA, Lincoln has noticed the change in his mum.

“She is a lot more independent,” Lincoln says. “Now, she actually takes the time, does things right. She seems pretty happy and she’s very healthy.”

Pastor Darryl Groves is the manager of the ADRA Community Care Centre. The demand for the food services has skyrocketed since COVID-19. But he says that thanks to volunteers like Debbie and Lincoln, ADRA has been able to serve their community through these tough times.

“Lincoln and Debbie are amazing,” says Darryl. “They enjoy being here and we love having them



here. They’re such an asset to our project and yeah, people like that, we wouldn’t be able to operate without them.”

For Debbie and Lincoln, their encounter with ADRA has also introduced them to church and God.

“I came into church one day just to see what it was about,” Lincoln says. “I was like, ‘wow!’, it was like a giant family.”

Debbie says, “In 18 months since I’ve been here, I can feel my growth. I have a spiritual growth.”

With everything Debbie has experienced, she now believes she is in a position to help those who are going through the same thing.

“Maybe I can actually achieve something to help other addicts and alcoholics.”

**The ADRA Appeal is the main source of funding for ADRA community projects in Australia. Let Love Shine this ADRA Appeal and help give someone the support they need to heal and rebuild their lives. Please donate at [adra.org.au/shine](https://adra.org.au/shine) or call us on 1800 242 372.**

# How Basketball is Changing Lives



*Basketball has been the key to connecting with the youth*

The ADRA community program in the Central Tablelands, NSW, is a shining example of collaboration between ADRA and the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Run by the Bathurst, Mandurama and Cowra churches, the program supports families and local schools.

“We have supplied food parcels to 23 public schools in the area every month since April 2020,” says Pastor Raymon Paletua, the ADRA Program Manager. “On average, we are distributing 150 food parcels each month between the schools and local community contacts referred to us by church members.”

The program currently provides three public schools with chaplains, who have been able to provide opportunities for the students to express themselves in safe and positive ways. One of these is through playing basketball.

“The basketball teams have become a way for us to connect and mentor the boys who come from challenging home and life situations,” says Pr Raymon. “Basketball has provided a safe

place for the boys to talk about their struggles such as drug and alcohol abuse, anxiety and depression, self-harming and attempted suicide.”

And through this connection, the ADRA program has seen these young men grow.

“One highlight has been the number of volunteers who have assisted with packing and distributing the food parcels to our communities,” says Pr Raymon. “We have approximately 50 volunteers in total including boys from our basketball teams. None of the boys are church members but they are more than willing to volunteer their time to give back to their community.

“One of the boys, James<sup>♠</sup>, is now studying Outdoor Leadership at TAFE and plans to set up an outdoors and abseiling business that aims to mentor youth that have a similar background to himself. James is a fine young man and has a big heart for the community, and we look forward to seeing what awaits him in the future.”

<sup>♠</sup>Name changed for privacy

# Youth Mentoring Program in New Zealand

From a young age, Eden loved attending school. Although shy, she thrived in a school environment. For her, it was an escape from home.

At home, Eden was exposed to alcoholism and addiction of family members. Her mother and father were unable to take care of her and she was raised by her grandparents.

“Life was a disaster, facing heaps of struggles with family crisis and drama, not having a mother or father around,” Eden shared while reflecting on her childhood.

In 2017, when Eden was only 14, her grandmother passed away. She was overwhelmed with grief as her grandmother had been such a strong and positive influence in her life.

Although she had loved attending school as a child, Eden struggled to focus in class after experiencing such a large loss. She stopped attending school for the year and when she tried to return the following year, she struggled to concentrate. Feeling helpless, she made the difficult decision to leave school.

At this time, Eden was also attending Tahi Whanau (meaning ‘One Family’), a youth mentoring program supported by ADRA. This program helps young people by providing a supportive environment where they can develop life skills.

Despite not being in school, Eden found her sense of purpose through Tahi Whanau.

Through this youth mentoring program, Eden gained confidence and leadership skills, and is now a mentor for other young people who enter the program.



*The Tahi Whanau Program has helped Eden*



*Tahi Whanau Program*

“Tahi Whanau has made a big impact in my life,” says Eden. “It has turned my life around and provided me with positive people... it’s even made a difference in my own family.”

Now Eden is a full-time carer for her grandfather and continues to mentor other young people.

**ADRA funds projects like Tahi Whanau throughout New Zealand to help kiwis overcome hardship. Learn more at [www.adra.org.nz/ctp](http://www.adra.org.nz/ctp)**



# Disaster Updates



*ADRA distributes food to those affected by COVID-19 in Fiji*



*Community members line up to receive vaccinations in India*



*ADRA responds to the 7.2 magnitude earthquake in Haiti*

## COVID-19 in Fiji



ADRA has been on the ground assisting families impacted by COVID-19 in Fiji since a second wave struck in May.

Our response has been in the form of food rations, the provision of personal protection equipment and financial assistance. “A lot of Fijians are in dire need of food and their livelihoods have been greatly affected due to the COVID-19 crisis,” says ADRA Fiji Country Director, Iliapi Tuwai. COVID-19 awareness campaigns are also underway, aiming to educate the population about precautionary measures to minimise the spread. So far, more than 1,000 families in Fiji have been assisted as part of our response.

## COVID-19 in India



In May, a deadly surge in COVID-19 infections swept across India.

With hundreds of thousands of new cases recorded daily, healthcare facilities were stretched beyond capacity. Shortages of hospital beds, oxygen supplies, medicine, and personal

protective equipment (PPE) all contributed to the ongoing crisis. ADRA’s COVID-19 taskforce responded rapidly by providing critical oxygen resources to hospitals, supporting local clinic staff, promoting preventive measures, and providing vital PPE to frontline medical staff. An Oxygen Generation Plant (OGP) was established by ADRA to help affected patients and to ease the demand for oxygen. ADRA further supported vaccine clinics in the hard-hit city of New Delhi.

## Earthquake in Haiti



On Saturday 14 August 2021, a 7.2 magnitude earthquake devastated the small island nation of Haiti.

The earthquake destroyed homes and infrastructure, and claimed over 2,200 lives. This widespread devastation was furthered by a 5.2 magnitude aftershock. ADRA was one of the first aid organisations to reach the affected area of Saint-Louis de Sud. ADRA provided immediate assistance through the distribution of food, water, hygiene items and tent tarpaulins to affected families and individuals made homeless through these events. ADRA also collaborated with the nearby hospital to provide medical assistance to those who were injured.

# ADRA joins the Emergency Action Alliance



On August 6, ADRA joined forces with sixteen Australian charities to launch the newly formed Emergency Action Alliance (EAA).

These humanitarian agencies will collaborate their efforts in fundraising and campaigning to improve how Australians can support and donate when large-scale humanitarian disasters occur.

The CEOs of each charity believe that through this new single fundraising entity, money may be raised from the Australian public more rapidly so that donations can be distributed and allocated where they are most needed in crisis events. This will save countless more lives and aims to establish a system whereby communities can be rebuilt quicker and more efficiently.

“We at ADRA are very pleased to join the Emergency Action Alliance as one of the founding



*The Emergency Action Alliance launched on August 6*

members,” said Denison Grellmann, CEO of ADRA Australia and New Zealand.

With the world rapidly changing, international development agencies like ADRA need to adapt and position themselves to address new humanitarian realities. Unfortunately, there has been a significant increase in both natural and man-made disasters, and it is crucial that organisations are well equipped to respond and save lives.

“ADRA recognises that the increasing impact of disasters on families, communities and nations today requires innovative and collective ways to resource responses to major

disasters as soon as they occur,” said Murray Millar, ADRA’s Emergency Management Director.


EAA is designed to maximise the impact of the generosity of the general public. When a crisis occurs, the Emergency Action Alliance works with its 16 members to quickly direct resources to the member agencies best positioned to respond to the disaster.

Being part of the Alliance allows ADRA to have a wider appeal reach, and as a result, fundraise and coordinate humanitarian efforts in a more significant way. This Alliance further strengthens ADRA’s purpose to serve humanity so all may live as God intended.

# Denise's Gift Equips Young Women



*Young women in Vanuatu take part in the 'Young Women Enrichment' Workshops*

 ADRA is honoured by individuals who choose to leave a long-lasting legacy through a gift in their Will.

After her passing, ADRA was honoured to receive a meaningful gift from the estate of supporter, Denise, whose only wish was that the money be used to help those in need.

Through Denise's generosity, beneficiaries of the Blossom Project in Vanuatu were gifted

livelihood training classes to assist young girls facing teen pregnancy and domestic and family-based violence.

The project originally focused on combatting teenage pregnancy issues but has expanded to include prevention of violence against women and children through education and raising awareness of harmful community practices. This vision has evolved in recent years to include training on a wide range of healthy lifestyle practices.

A recent participant, Cindy, reports, "I'm so blessed to be a

part of the Fabric Training organised by the Efate District Adventist Youth, and Local Food Preparation and Healthy Diet program sponsored by ADRA's Vanuatu Blossom Project. I will use the skills acquired to train young girls and women in the outer islands when I visit them. Not everyone has the opportunity of going through formal education and having a qualification for employment. We can, however, empower women, men, and children with such training so they too can be able to generate an income.

"For me personally, I really want to see my children practising this program and I want to involve them in selling their products, so they receive an income for themselves and practise self-reliance."

With more than 1,500 participants currently enrolled, the program is a thriving centre of influence in the community.


Thank you, Denise. Your thoughtful inclusion of a gift to ADRA is positively changing lives so that people can live as God intended.

**Just like Denise, you can leave a gift in your Will to ADRA as a life-changing legacy for people in need. Find out more at [adra.org.au/wills](http://adra.org.au/wills) or call us on 1800 242 372 to request a brochure. Thank you for your ongoing support.**

# Creating a Home for Refugees



*Lalo in her new home*

 Since early 2015, the Rohingya minority in Myanmar have been forced to flee to Bangladesh due to harsh military attacks and persecution.

Lalo Marjan, a Rohingya woman aged 48, witnessed this tragedy first-hand.

“I was living peacefully in Myanmar with my family. I had my husband, and two daughters. Suddenly the military entered our village and started shooting at us. Everyone was running in different directions. I was running alongside my husband and daughters through a canal. The army was shooting at us randomly,” Lalo explained. “Suddenly my husband and one of my daughters fell down, but I still held the hand of my second daughter and kept running.”

After three days, Lalo returned to the site where her loved ones had fallen and found they had passed away.

“After losing my husband I could see nothing but darkness around me. Later, I entered the border

of Bangladesh after walking for about five days. Even after this, the grief did not leave me. On the second day after coming to this country, my little girl also fell to her death due to hunger.”

Lalo took shelter in a refugee camp near the province of Chakmarkul, in Bangladesh.

At the beginning of 2018, ADRA undertook radical developmental initiatives in the Chakmarkul camp – building houses, roads, bridges,

schools, and playgrounds as well as distributing food to the Rohingya refugees. Furthermore, ADRA provided skills training workshops for widowed and underprivileged women in the Chakmarkul camp to help them become financially independent.

“ADRA gave me shelter by building a house for me,” Lalo said. “They gave me food and other much needed materials to help me make a living. I was greatly benefitted by ADRA. I don’t know how I could survive if ADRA was not beside me.”



*The village where Lalo lives*

# Farewelling Eddy Johnson



After 14 years as manager of the ADRA

Community Care Centre at Blacktown, **Pastor Eddy Johnson** retired in early 2021.

COVID restrictions delayed a formal farewell, but Conference ADRA Director Malcolm Rea hosted a luncheon on May 26 (before the most recent COVID-19 lockdown) in Eddy's honour.

Denison Grellmann, CEO of ADRA Australia and New Zealand, presented Eddy with a plaque for his years of faithful service and wished him well as he takes up the new honorary chaplain role at the centre.

"Pastor Johnson has taught me a great deal about compassion for the most vulnerable in our community," says Malcolm. "[His] signature brand has been helping people where they are with everything he has—totally free of cost or obligation."

Gratiela (Grace) Copoceanu was appointed to serve as manager and has been in that role since January 2021.

"Grace has been with the centre for almost a decade,



*Pr Eddy Johnson (left) with ADRA Australia and New Zealand CEO Denison Grellmann*

and it became apparent that she had the necessary temperament, education, and abilities to make a good manager," he shares. "As office supervisor and advisor of counsellors and staff, Grace showed initiative and resolve, but also a lot of human kindness, which makes her a favourite with the staff and clients alike."

Malcolm believes that Grace's shared vision brings

continuity. "She shares that same passion and love of people and has the appropriate experience and qualifications," he says, explaining that her clinical work at the centre has proven she has a clear vision. "This includes helping people have hope, take heart and learn new life skills so they not only gain independence but also understand their value and their purpose."

Eddy agrees. “Underpinning everything else is Grace’s firm grasp of the reason ADRA Community Centre in Blacktown exists,” he confirms. “We consider the centre primarily as a redemptive place where the people whose perceived immediate needs may be physical (hunger and addiction) or emotional (relationships), but whose ultimate need is to know God and learn how to connect with Him.”

Grace says she is honoured and excited to serve. “My mind often explodes with plans and dreams for this wonderful place,” she shares. “Yet my greatest desire is to continue the Centre’s legacy of supporting a vulnerable community with Godly inspired



*Grace in a counselling session with a client*

care and compassion.

“The ADRA Community Centre in Blacktown has the unique opportunity and privilege of having people hand their hearts and minds on a silver platter for us to pour our love,

support and care in helping shape their lives. This is beyond precious, which is why I hope to see the Centre grow in valuing the methods Jesus used to shape those He touched.”

**When you give to the ADRA Appeal, you are supporting programs like this ADRA Community Care Centre. Let Love Shine this ADRA Appeal and help support our local communities. Please donate at [adra.org.au/shine](http://adra.org.au/shine) or call us on 1800 242 372.**



### **Volunteer Today**

If you would like to volunteer for ADRA Australia, register your interest online at [adra.org.au/volunteer](http://adra.org.au/volunteer), or call us on **1800 242 372**.



### **Share Your Story**

If you are a volunteer, we would like to profile your story in ADRA News. Do you have one to share? Email [news@adra.org.au](mailto:news@adra.org.au).



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You can Let Love Shine for those experiencing hardship

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