

10th December 2020

Dear Manna Friends, Staff & Volunteers,

RE: THE YEAR OF 2020, WELD SQUARE & FUTURE OF MANNA

What a year it has been to say the least!

2020 was meant to be a year of accelerated growth and opportunities for Manna Inc, but the unfortunate circumstances around COVID-19 brought this all to a halt- and put us all and the wider community within our sector in an even more vulnerable and difficult position than ever before.

Despite the tumultuous situations we faced, we were very lucky to have the continued and generous support of our volunteers, staff, sponsors, partners and the WA community. To all our volunteers, I am deeply humbled (as always) for your tenacity, grit and resilience in your continued dedication and commitment in making our services even a possibility, despite the risks and difficult situation.

I would like to also take this opportunity to especially acknowledge and thank our team of staff – Darrell, Darren & Tash who continued their amazing work throughout COVID – and for a good part of it (and even today) as volunteers.

In addition, (whilst they have both now pursued better opportunities) both Cole & Jenny were also vital part in ensuring the continuation and stability of our programs

and services through COVID. We wish them both the best in their current and future endeavours, and they will be sadly missed by all.

We were unable to continue our Strive Program due to the restrictions brought about by the pandemic, and this placed a huge financial impact on our plans for the year. In addition to that, we were also unable to run key events such as planned GALA and annual “Homeless for a Night” fundraiser, which also had the same implications for us financially.

With great sadness and disappointment, I would also like to report that our service permit for Weld Square has not been renewed for 2021. Our last service day will be 24th December 2020.

The motion was moved by City of Vincent Council in October determining that *“the Manna Inc. meal service, and any other goods and service provision, will cease and not be permitted at Weld Square from 31 December 2020 for 12 months to allow for an assessment of the impact on amenity and safety at Weld Square. The current operating conditions will continue to apply to the Manna Inc. meal service until 31 December 2020”*.

As minuted in the City of Vincent Council meeting, the key comments from Mayor are as follows:

- 'Increasing antisocial behaviour, camping and safety issues are being reported' (at Weld Square)... 'whilst the purpose is not to attribute these issues to Manna Inc., a highly professional and valued service, it is important for the City of Vincent to seek to find a balance in the use of Weld Square, to take steps to ensure a safe environment for all and to be responsive to changing needs and emerging issues'.
- By removing all goods and service delivery from Weld Square for a defined period, the City will be able to assess the impact on the amenity, safety and use of Weld Square'.

Manna Inc. has been working closely with City of Vincent through the years (particularly in 2019 & 2020) to explore ways of improving our service approach at Weld Square in supporting the needs of the area and also balancing this with creating a safe environment for our clients, local area residents and members of the public.

Whilst the decision to cease the Weld Square food services was effected by the City of Vincent, I would like to acknowledge and commend them for their efforts in always keeping us informed, involved and included during the process. This was certainly a difficult process for us all and whilst this decision will have a significant impact on our regular clients, Manna will continue to explore and prospect other options/partnerships to ensure a coordinated approach to service delivery for our clients within the City of Perth/Vincent. This will definitely be a key focus for 2021 when we consider our new strategic and development plans for the sustainable future of Manna Inc.

The current programs delivered in 2020 that will continue in 2021 are as follows:

MANNA HOT & HEALTHY

MANNA KIDS PROGRAM

MANNA CARE WISH LIST

MANNA OUTREACH

As mentioned in our 2019 AGM report, working in this sector (especially during these strange and unique environment) will always be ever evolving and will require careful planning, considerations and consultations on every level.

In 2021, I will be seeking considerations from our Board, staff, members, volunteers, clients and sector partners to review the viability and effectiveness of our operations through our current programs in meeting the needs to the sector.

As such, our Hot & Healthy Meals Program (outside of Weld Square) may only recommence from February 2021.

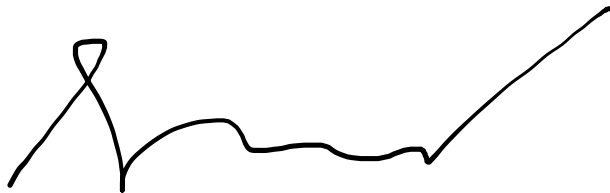
There will definitely be changes that our organisation will have to adapt to quickly, proactively and positively to ensure that we remain relevant and provide services with a practical and sustainable approach.

With this said, I humbly seek some patience, kindness and understanding whilst I embark on this new journey of exploration and prospecting our options for the new year.

Thank you for all your guidance and support in 2020, and I promise only my best endeavours to ensure that 2021 will be a brighter and better year for Manna.

Please feel free to individually contact me if I can provide any further information in relation to any of the above matters at sheena.cher@manna.org.au . Alternatively, I can also be contacted on 0408 888 968.

Sincerely Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'S' followed by a series of connected loops and a final upward stroke.

Sheena Cher (Manna Board Secretary & Programs Director)