

Olive Way Progress Review 9 Key Recommendations

Presentation - Sunday 17th March 2019



Report - Executive Summary

Brunswick UC, October 2018

Olive Way (OW) is a drop-in centre, operating in the premises of Brunswick Uniting Church (BUC). BUC established the service in 2007 which employs two part-time workers. An average of 45 people attend each day and approximately five volunteers are also involved each day.

BUC is committed to supporting the ministry of the OW and to ensure that it is a place in which community and a sense of belonging can flourish for those who live in or visit Brunswick. The role of OW is identified in the church's strategic plan.

BUC commissioned a full review of OW in 2015 and also commissioned this progress review in June 2018 through the church's Justice and Mission Group (JAM). This review had the following objective "to evaluate the overall operation of the Olive Way and make recommendations for say the next 3-5 years. Include in the recommendations any desirable new directions and an indication of resources which may be needed."

The review was undertaken by a team involving OW guests (or end-users), staff, the convenor of the Olive Way Steering Group and a facilitator (who is also a member of BUC). The process was participatory, with all team members contributing to the review design process, identification of groups to be interviewed, design of conversation questions, development of other data collection processes as well as data analysis and development of conclusions and recommendations. The report is a summary of the process, the information obtained during the review, and a presentation of the findings and recommendations for the OWSG, JAM and the BUC Church Council.



In your hands, by Ann Soo

9 Key Recommendations

The recommendations were presented to the Justice and Mission Committee in November for feedback and discussion. After further work by the Olive Way Steering Committee they were presented to the Church Council in December:

JAM recommends that Church Council endorse the Current (already commenced) and Future Strategies listed below which will enable the 9 Key Recommendations of the Review to be implemented. Note that the Olive Way Steering Group (which includes the Olive Way Coordinator) will take responsibility for implementing the current and future strategies and will be overseen by the JAM committee.

Council accepted the report and thanked all those involved in its development. They endorsed and affirmed both the current strategies and the future strategies of the report, also offering encouragement and suggestions for ongoing implementation.

1. Develop Olive Way as a hub
2. Review Wednesday as the designated day for lunch
3. Develop stronger links and better communication with other local services
4. Develop the pastoral support available to guests
5. More involvement/linkages with the church and other services
6. Better tracking of guests (with consent)
7. Provide structured support opportunities for volunteers
8. Tackle and monitor disruptive behaviour
9. Strengthen opportunities for guests' ownership/control

See a copy of the full report here: <https://brunswick.unitingchurch.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/OW-progress-review-2018.pdf>

This booklet contains the

- 9 key recommendations listed above
- rationales for each
- current and future strategies

Thank you

The JAM committee is deeply grateful to the Review Team for their work.

The team comprised guests, the OW Coordinator,
a representative from the OWSG and the external facilitator.

Three of the five guest members of the team participated for part of the review.

We offer our thanks to

Tim Budge, Review Team Leader/External Facilitator

Peter Blair, Olive Way Coordinator

Richard Arnold, Olive Way Steering Group Chair

Gus Argote, Olive Way Guest

Alex Phillips, Olive Way Guest



Flowers, by Richard Phelan

The Justice and Mission Committee:

Gwen Arnold, Richard Arnold, Abi Benham-Bannon,
Kirsty Bennett, Meredith Budge, Saide Cameron,
Leanne Salau, Ann Soo

commend this booklet to your for your reflection.

1. Develop Olive Way as a hub

OW should develop a broader view of how it operates, to encompass new services without losing its role as a basic place of welcome. This approach would allow guests to continue to use the basic OW services (drop-in, food, place of welcome) but also provide some other personal and social support services and activities involving staff and volunteers. OW could also operate more actively as a gateway for guests to learn about, be referred to, and access services from other key organizations (eg health, housing, legal). This recommendation necessarily involves a great deal more discussion, review and planning in order to be pursued and implemented effectively. The OWSG may wish to visit and review other drop-in services, churches and hubs to get a better sense of the options and opportunities around this recommendation.

Rationale:

OW is very well appreciated by guests but perhaps could be doing more. There was a general strong interest in more services and activities, including referrals, social work support, as well as more practical and recreational activities such as gardening, cooking, dancing. These need to be further investigated, tested and piloted and coordinated with other local service providers to avoid duplication and to learn from the successes and experiences of other agencies.



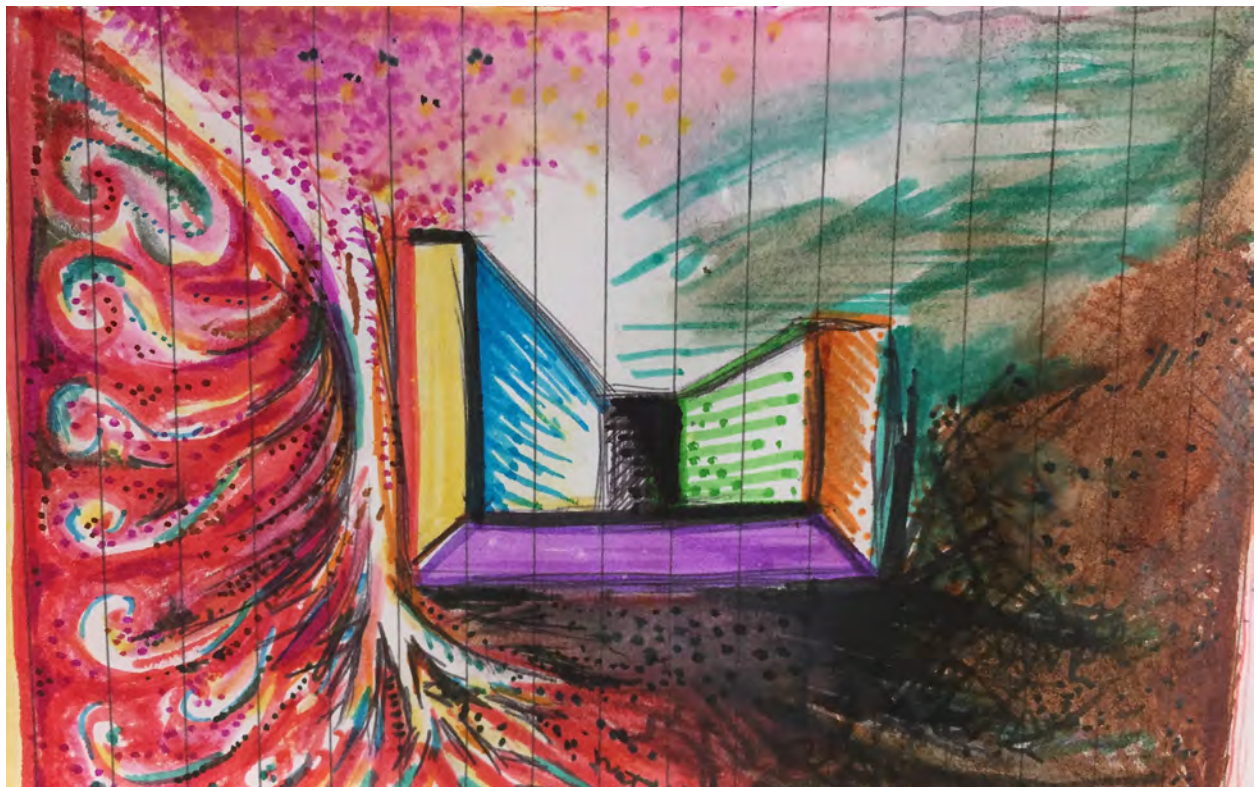
Respect, by Bev

Current Strategies:

- Continue the concept of the Olive Way being a hub in which guests can experience hospitality and safe place as well as find opportunities to participate in enriching activities such as Olive Arts, Sydney Road Opera Company, Writing Group, Music tuition. The Olive Way Steering Group sees hospitality and enrichment activities, rather than service provision, are at the heart of what the Olive Way stands for.
- Continue conversations about the extent of personal and social support service referral and/or provision (health, legal, accommodation, food, transport, etc) which the Olive Way can reasonably offer.
- Continue to update the Olive Way's Manual of Services



Untitled, by Giovanni



This is all of us, by Cindy

Future Strategies:

- Seek volunteer coordinators for new enrichment activities such as gardening, cooking, dancing, meditation
- Communicate with other community groups (Salvation Army, other church groups, Neighbourhood Houses) to ensure that there is no duplication of services
- Recruit and train additional “hosts” (this is a particular classification for volunteers who sit down and engage with guests on a one-to-one basis) in the use of the Olive Way’s Manual of Services and in how to refer guests to external sources of personal and social support
- Recruit a social work student or interested volunteer to help the Olive Way develop more detailed procedures around responding the guests seeking personal and social support services (health, legal, accommodation, etc), keeping in mind the limited resources of the Olive Way.
- Develop a policy regarding service referral and/or provision (health, legal, accommodation, food, transport, etc)
- Develop a training program for volunteers regarding the referral of guests to other personal and social support services



Untitled, by Chandra

2. Review Wednesday as the designated day for lunch, possibly collaborating with Salvos on designated days

Rationale:

People appreciate the food provided at OW. However, the Salvos offer lunch on Monday, Wednesday and Friday , so a change to Tuesday or Thursday may work well in avoiding a clash and providing a consistent service throughout the week. Worth noting is that the Food Relief page on the Moreland Council website lists OW providing lunch on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, perhaps indicating a need to contact the Council and make sure the information is updated.

Current Strategies:

- Continue to evaluate the value of a prepared sit-down meal at the Olive Way

Future Strategies:

- The Olive Way Coordinator will make contact with the Captain of Brunswick Salvation Army to discuss meal options in the Brunswick area, keeping in mind that the Olive Way provides a meal as an act of hospitality and community building.
- Contact the Moreland Council re the Food Relief page on their website to ensure it accurately reflects what we are offering



Joined Together, by Leanne Salau

3. Develop stronger links and better communications with other local services

Rationale:

This recommendation was touched on in some of the recommendations in the 2015 Review (Annex 6). The development of stronger links will assist the proposed implementation of a hub-model, providing more information on services which guests can access, and also help staff and volunteers at those services know more about the work of OW.

Current Strategies:

- See current and future strategies in 1 and 2 above

Future Strategies:

- Consider developing a regular gathering of local community groups in the Brunswick area (Salvation Army, other church groups, Neighbourhood Houses) with the purpose of coordination and integration of activities



Interwoven, by Lauren

4. Develop the pastoral support available to guests

The OWSG should work with Peter Blair to identify explore the pastoral support which guests are seeking and to think through how this support could be developed, without creating a huge workload for Peter or others. There is also the potential for volunteers, BUC members and some guests to play an active role in offering personal and pastoral support to other people who come to OW. Particularly given the nature of the other recommendations (for example OW as a hub), workloads for Peter and others will need to be carefully managed.

Rationale:

The role of OW Coordinator as a pastor has been recognised in the recent re-classification of Peter's position. Pastoral support and counselling was noted a number of times in the review and there seems to be a strongly recognised and requested need for these services. It may be possible for some BUC members to be involved in providing the support, noting that some of this is already happening informally, however, there may be opportunities to increase the communication about pastoral support and counselling being available at or through OW.



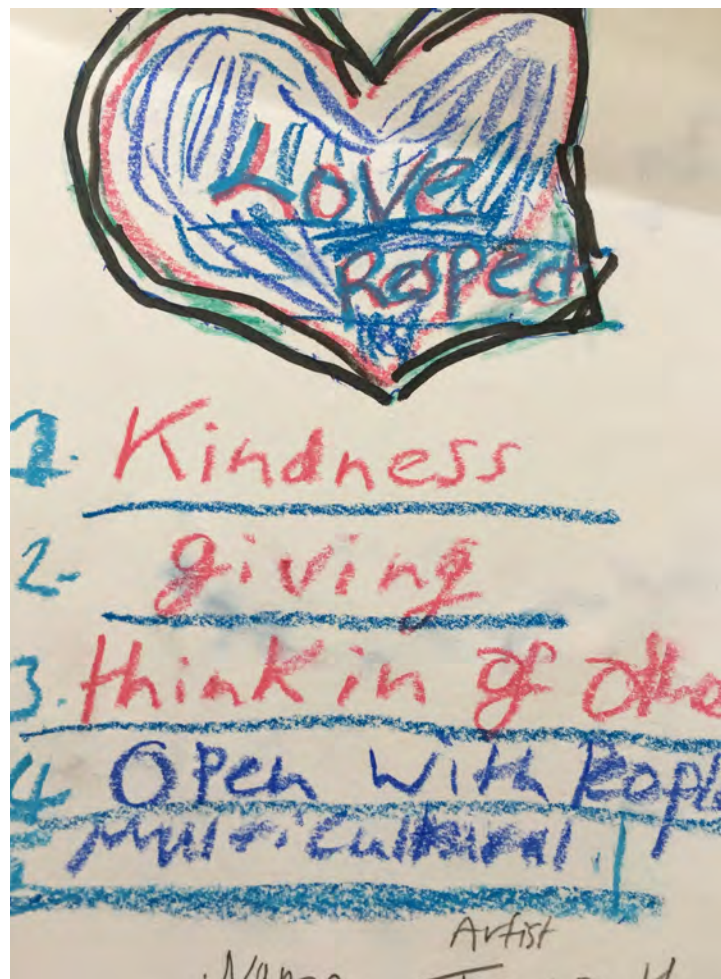
Respect Life, by Louise

Current Strategies:

- Continue conversations about the extent of pastoral care/case work that the Olive Way can reasonably offer keeping in mind its limited resources and the risk of burn-out for staff and volunteers.
- The reclassification of the Olive Way Coordinator role to that of pastor does not necessarily refer to the one-to-one pastoral care nature of the role. The important aspect of “pastoral care of the space”, “creating a nurturing environment” and “pastoral care through creative activities” cannot be under-estimated, and these areas are a major focus of the Olive Way Coordinator.

Future Strategies:

- Develop a policy on pastoral care at the Olive Way (this could incorporate aspects of a policy regarding service referral and/or provision (health, legal, accommodation, food, transport, etc).
- Develop clear procedures for responding to pastoral care needs as defined in the policy.
- Consider recruiting and training additional BUC members to assist in implementing a pastoral care policy.



Untitled, by Theo

5. More involvement/linkages with the church and other services

Developing on from Recommendation 4, it is possible to better promote and support OW guests to access other services at BUC, including Art Stop, SROC and the Asylum Seekers Welcome Centre (ASWC). Conversely, there need to be regular presentations to the congregation (and the other groups mentioned above) to remind people of the important ministry at OW and to encourage church folk to attend and meet people. It may also be possible to encourage church people to be more involved as volunteers at OW.

Rationale:

The church's role is genuinely appreciated and the hospitality of OW and the friendliness of people involved (including members and the BUC Minister of the Word) has probably helped some OW guest to be a little more involved in the church. However, there is scope to make sure guests feel welcome to Sunday services and other church activities. Although the 2015 review identified a high involvement of BUC congregational members in OW, this involvement was not explored in the current review. There may be scope for people who have started coming to BUC more recently, or whose work commitments have changed, to get more involved in OW in the future.



The Earth is Waiting,
by Richard Phelan and Ann Soo
for Advent & Christmas Worship, 2018

Current Strategies:

- Continue to reflect on how the Olive Way and the worshipping community can become more deeply integrated.

Future Strategies:

- Inform Olive Way guests (through the Olive Way Coordinator) of events happening in the congregation. Some examples of this could include Triple Letter Dinners, Sunday picnics, Olive Pesto, Education and Discipleship events
- Inform the congregation of specific events in the Olive Way in which members could participate and/or offer leadership. For example, the gardening group, music activity, art group. Methods of doing this could include announcements in worship, notes in the Olive Press.
- Investigate the use of visual images to show how the Olive Way and the congregation are inter-connected.



Welcome Banner,
created for and during Lent worship 2017
used during Holy Week worship 2017
carried at Palm Sunday rallies

6. Better tracking of guests (with consent)

As also noted in the 2015 Review, there is scope for better tracking of guests. This could include more consistent recording of numbers (or even undertaking a count every day in the week once every 3 months), but also offering guests the chance to write down their details for follow-up. Some type of visitor's book or attendance card could be trialled.

Rationale:

There should be no compulsion about a guest book or other register. However, it would assist greater pastoral care, administrative and logistical support and may be an effective way of following up people who stop attending.

Future Strategies:

- Develop a welcome card for guests to complete if they wish (like the one BUC has)
- Consider developing a Directory of guests at the Olive Way using the information from the welcome card. Participation would be voluntary.
- Consider a day book to record numbers and profiles of guests.



Respect the beauty within, by Samantha

7. Provide structured support opportunities for volunteers

The possibility of further training was noted by many people in the review. Given the issues facing OW and the workload facing the staff, there may be great opportunities to make better use of volunteers in supporting guests, dealing with disruptive behaviours and strengthening the impact of the service. Training opportunities would also contribute to people's skills and confidence and may help to equip them for employment opportunities elsewhere. Training could include: dealing with conflict and disruptive behaviours; simple relaxation practices; reflective listening skills and other topics identified by volunteers themselves. The OWSG should identify a specific budget allocation for this training.

Current Strategies:

- Continue regular meetings with volunteers
- Continue to discern training needs noting that in 2018 a 2-day Mental Health First Aid course was provided. Possible providers of training could include the Synod, Brunswick Neighbourhood House

Future Strategies:

- Additional training could include:
 - # Basic First Aid
 - # Handling disruptive and aggressive behaviours
 - # Food handling course
 - # Occupational Health and Safety (kitchen as a workplace)
 - # Awareness of sexual harassment training



Love - no strings attached,

by Ann Soo,

for the Sydney Road Street Party, 2016

8. Tackle and monitor disruptive behaviour

Noting that there have already been some actions in response, this issue needs careful management and monitoring. It may be useful to record the number of incidences as well as providing an anonymous, simple reporting mechanism so that people (guests and volunteers) can feel comfortable in reporting any behaviour which is not in keeping with the code of conduct or making others feel uncomfortable. Staff and volunteers also need support to make sure they have the skills to manage behaviours and can get immediate support when needed. This area needs to be a significant, on-going topic of discussion and monitoring for the OWSG. The OW coordinator should liaise closely with other service providers (for example Salvos) since these issues are probably being exhibited in other locations.

Rationale:

It is important to note that disruptive behaviours do not seem to be out-of-hand and incidences of disruptive behaviour seem to be a relatively contained or minor concern. Nevertheless, the issue was consistently noted across the review. It was also noted (including a recommendation in response) as an issue in the 2015 Review, suggesting that issues around behaviour are a chronic problem for some of the people who come to services such as OW. However, it is important that negative behaviours don't become acceptable and it is also important that everyone who comes to OW feels safe, valued and comfortable.



Respect, by Bev

Current Strategies:

- Continue to dis-invite guests who do not comply with the Olive Way “expected behaviours statement”.
- Raise consciousness about RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS by using postcards designed by participants of the Olive Arts Collective which speak to these behaviours and values. The postcards are being used to initiate conversation and discussion to deepen people’s understanding of how respect is exemplified in day to day interactions. They will also provide guests with an opportunity to give feedback.

Future Strategies:

- Develop a formal Olive Way policy on Respectful Relationships.
- Arising out of the policy, develop training programs for volunteers on how to deal with behaviours which are not in line with the policy.
- Develop a number of key women as contact people in the Olive Way to whom guests could take their concerns.
- Develop a system of recording incidents.
- Liaise with other service providers in order to develop a unified approach to respectful behaviours.



Respect Postcards Project Launch

Olive Way, November 2018

Postcards created by Olive Way Artists

The Respect Postcards Display was designed by Ann Soo with the consultation and support of Graeme Galloway and Helen Martin.

Peter Blair provided back up and we deconstructed Helen Burnham’s rainbow of hands, which was created during the Blessing of the Animals service, 14/10/18.

9. Strengthen opportunities for guests' ownership/control

There is scope to invite guests to become more involved in various aspects of the operations and management of OW. Opportunities could include: official volunteer status and volunteer training opportunities; further participation in the OWSG and executive; the chance to be responsible for activities; and liaising with other service providers. The OWSG might also want to think through the structure and roles of the WG as against the Executive. Is there a need for both? How can any/all governance structures fully include the participation and ownership of guests? How can issues of confidentiality be dealt with by staff or some form of pastoral care support structure so that these do not act as a deterrence to the involvement of end-users in governance structures?

Rationale:

Clearly, greater involvement may not be of interest to some guests, and some guests may need to be excluded from these opportunities (for example if they have been disruptive). However, providing greater opportunities for guests' involvement, participation and ownership of aspects of OW's operations and management would contribute to empowerment, confidence and skills development, and would provide an important model of involvement for all guests (including those who have been disruptive). There may be some issues around confidentiality that might restrict some people from being involved in some aspects of the steering group, however, these can be minimized by the way meetings are operated and ensuring that there is a focus on issues and processes rather than specific personalities.



Because love matters, by Ann Soo
for the 2017 Sydney Rd. Street Party

Current Strategies:

- Continue to involve guests in the Olive Way Steering Group meetings as has been the practice throughout 2018.

Future Strategies:

- Explore possibilities for greater participation by guests in the governance of the Olive Way. Further conversation is needed on this complex topic and input will be sought regarding successful models of participatory management from those with expertise and experience in this field (eg Laurence Alvis CEO ReGen, Meredith Budge).
- The OWSG also recognizes that some guests may be vulnerable and are not always able to focus on the responsibilities of managing a complex service.
- Explore the use of visuals as a possible way of showing how we (BUC, Olive Way, enrichment activities) are all connected and relate to each other. (One suggestion could be to place the Olive Way at the centre of any image which would provide a different way of understanding our relationships).



An imaginary ecosystem that continues to grow

The spiral in the centre is the Olive Way interconnected and linked to all the other organisms.

Each has its own nucleus but breathes the same oxygen and is fed from the same source.

(Look closely and seek out all the organisms linked to the Olive Way.)

by Ann Soo

Unless otherwise indicated the images included in this booklet were created by Olive Arts Collective artists for the Respect Project. The booklet was compiled by Saide Cameron.

