

MARGARET MARY McGOVERN

Sister Margaret McGovern has an extensive and distinguished career in delivery of care and services to Australians, in the motivation, development, and management of others who do the same, and in the fostering and development of an institutional framework to ensure that these and related services continue to be efficiently and effectively provided. She is an experienced administrator, with direct knowledge of both financial management, staffing and human resources activities, and external affairs including Government relations and corporate fund-raising.

In her work at Mercy Family Centre she has shown visionary leadership in her ability to grow and diversify the community services provided by this family support group.

Her community involvement has had a strong secular component including the successful participation in and conduct of potentially contentious and politically sensitive bodies such as ICAC, the National Council on AIDS. She has acquired a strong socio/legal focus through her membership of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal and an Australia-wide indepth knowledge of the social welfare industry through her role as Associate Commissioner of the Industry Commission, National Inquiry into Charitable Organisations.

Prior to that, Margaret McGovern performed a senior policy making role in the governance and development of the Mater Misericordiae Hospital, where she served on the Board of Directors, the Organisation Development team, and the hospital planning team. As Vice President of the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia, she was involved in the establishment and management of a **new** national entity. She had responsibility for care and development of special projects such as refugee camps in SE Asia, services to families and the aged, and to aboriginal people in the Kimberly region of Australia and travelled extensively **in** these areas.

She has pursued her own personal development throughout her career with particular emphasis on maintaining currency in counselling, conflict resolution, and personal growth and development. She is a qualified mediator and frequently acts as a facilitator for professional task forces and organisational development groups.

In recognition of her life-long commitment to learning and delivery of quality services, the University of Sydney, in 1996 conferred on her an Honorary Doctorate in Social Work.

A recipient of the Order of Australia, Margaret McGovern combines the professionalism and pragmatism of an extensive service career with the empathy and commitment of a concerned and caring individual.

MARGARET MARY McGOVERN RSM A.O., D.S.W.(Honoris causam), M.S. (Columbia).B.A., Dip Soc.Work, Grad.Dip. Theology.

Margaret McGovern has made an outstanding contribution in the area of:

- 1 . Community health and social welfare services.
 2. Leadership and development of church organisations and social welfare bodies.
 3. General community service.

1 Community Social Welfare Services

As project director, Sister Margaret was largely responsible for the innovative plan to close the outdated, eighty-year-old, foundling home at Waitara in 1977 and replace it with the modern, community-oriented, preventative welfare service Mercy Family Centre. This multi-faceted welfare agency now helps approximately 1,000 clients per day and has a well-deserved reputation for innovation and excellence. It is open to all members of the community and serves children, people with disabilities, homeless families, families in crisis, refugees, and the frail elderly. Sister Margaret continued to guide the development of the Centre from 1977 to 1994, variously as a member of its Board of Directors, Chairperson of the Board of Directors and Executive Director.

In 1994, Sister Margaret was responsible for the establishment of "The Mercy Arms", Waterloo - a division of Mercy Family Centre. This is an agency focusing on reception, education and support of parents struggling with issues of child safety within marginalised families. It has become a prototype for preventative and community services. It also provides care-in-the-home for over one hundred frail elderly people under the Commonwealth funded Community Aged Care Packages program, as well as special case identification and care services for frail elderly who are homeless or living in unsafe boarding houses in the inner city.

Sister Margaret's expertise in aged care has had a strong impact on the McQuoin Park complex at Mercy Family Centre. Approximately 400 elderly people per week are helped through MeQuoin Park in Hornsby, Ku-i-ing-gai and through community based services in the South Sydney, Marrickville and Leichardt regions. These are seen as models of excellence in the delivery of aged care services. Sister Margaret is a widely recognised consultant on aged care issues and she was also a member of the New South Wales State Executive of the Council of the Aging, 1972-73.

In the decade 1970-1980, Sister Margaret was involved in community health care, she made a considerable contribution to health planning in the Lower North Shore. Her roles included: Senior Social Worker and Deputy Sister Administrator of the Mater Misericordiae Hospital; member of the Mater Organisation Development Team; member of the Board of Directors of the Mater Hospital. She also served as a member of the Lower North Shore Area Coordinating Committee for Health Care (1976-78) and the Area Management Committee for the delivery of Community Health Care. As a member of the Professional Services Advisory Council to the

Minister of Health, her expertise made an impact on the wider community of New South Wales.

Since 1994, when she retired from the position of Executive Director of Mercy Family Centre, she has acted as **consultant** to various hospitals, voluntary organisations and Area Health Boards regarding the reorganisation of services particularly in the areas of Aged Care and other community services.

In 1995-96, she has completed for NSW Health, strategic plans for the reorganisation and development of aged care services in two health regions of Sydney and is acting as consultant to several organisations seeking to redevelop their aged care services. She has, in 1996 completed a tour of the U.S., U.K. and Holland to study contemporary policy and practice with regard to community based care of the aged.

As a group leader, counsellor, group facilitator and lecturer in social work practice, Sister Margaret has conducted innumerable courses and group experiences for University students, the Institute of Counselling and many Religious Orders through Australia and beyond.. She has also played a prominent role in the Australian Association of Social Workers as member of the Committee of Management (1971) and State Vice President (1972). and member of the National Ethics Committee (1995-6).

· Leadership and Development of Church Organisations and Social Welfare Bodies

Within the Catholic Church, Sister Margaret has made an important contribution on State and Australia-wide bodies such as the NSW Catholic Social Welfare Commission, the Australian Catholic Social Welfare Commission and the National Consultation for the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace. Between 1981 and 1987 she also served on advisory bodies to the Major Superiors of all Catholic Religious Congregations in Australia, and as Vice President of the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia. She continues to consult widely with leadership groups in both Dioceses of the Church, with Religious Congregations and lay organisations within the Church, such as the St. Vincent de Paul Society, in areas of both management practice and delivery of health and social welfare services.

3. General Community Service

Sister Margaret's background in welfare development and religious organisation has been recognised as valuable to the wider community in her appointment to a number of NSW Government committees and consultative bodies, for example: Council of Social Service (Child Welfare Committee 1962-68); Professional Services Advisory Council to the Minister of Health (1973-78); Consultative Committee on Social Welfare (1981-84); and member of the Operations Review Committee, Independent Commission Against Corruption (1989-91). She served for four year as a member of the Australian National Council in AIDS. In March 1994, at the invitation of the Commonwealth Government of Australia, Sister Margaret took up appointment as Associate Commissioner in the Industry

Commission enquiry into Charitable Organisations. She is also a member of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal and in June, 1996 has been appointed as a member of the Child Death Review Team, mandated under new state legislation in NSW.

The Sisters of Mercy, to whom Sister Margaret belongs, are renowned for their devotion to community service, compassion and tolerance, expressed as practical and effective concern for people with welfare needs; abandoned children, unmarried mothers and their babies, families in stress or crisis, aged and disabled family members. Sister Margaret's life reflects these values. All who know her are aware of the depth of caring, energy and skill with which she has lived out the high ideals of the Sisters of Mercy.

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