

Mackay Street Chaplaincy – Making a Difference in the City Heart:

Since December 2012, when Mackay Street Chaplaincy was launched by our Mayor, Councillor Deirdre Comerford, the volunteers, wearing distinctive purple vests, have become well-known in the City Centre on Friday evenings (as well as on special dates like New Year), dispensing water and lollipops at the City Safe tent at the Westpac Bank on the corner of Wood and Victoria Streets, as well as patrolling in pairs in the streets and lanes of the CBD. The team is made up of volunteers, some from across different churches of Mackay as well as others from other areas of the community. MSC has the support of many Mackay businesses, our Council's City Safe Committee and the Police.

When making decisions, Christians ask, "*What did Jesus actually teach us about caring for others.*" In his story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29–37), we get some good clues. Apart from the priest and the Levite who did nothing to help one of their own, wounded and lying on the roadside, we ponder the response of the man from Samaria, who took action. His response was amazing: he assessed the wounded man's injuries, rendered first aid, put the man on his donkey and walked beside him to an inn. Here he arranged and paid for on-going care before travelling onto his destination. We don't hear he checked out whether the wounded man was a good person, whether he had behaved foolishly travelling Jericho road alone or whether he was worthy of care and attention and risking his own safety.

This story has become important to MSC as we too offer a caring, non-judgemental presence, engaging with night club patrons and others, offering practical help: water, first aid, and a listening ear. We are well-supported by police, ambulance, security personnel and taxi marshalls in providing a safety net for those in need of assistance around the nightclubs . We want to help make nights out in the City Heart safer and more enjoyable, and in order to do that we need your help; if you wish to know how you could become a member of our team, phone me on 4957 3341.

**Ann Dittmar-McCollim, Rector, Holy Trinity Mackay
and President of Mackay Street Chaplaincy**

www.mackaychurchestogether.org.au