

## Fresh Start is a Life Saver

My name is Liam Cleak and I was once an alcoholic whose problem had become so severe that physically I was dying, mentally I was becoming unstable and socially I had all but lost everyone. I was living behind a sea container in the middle of Fremantle, drinking myself into sickness and oblivion every day.

I was thrown a life preserver, and this came in the form of a program called the Northam Recovery Program. I was visiting my parents one afternoon and while I sat there drinking and chatting to my father, my step mother went inside and called a friend of mine who worked in the community services sector. My parents were so very worried about me as I had never looked unhealthier than I did on that day. This friend happened to mention to my stepmother that the Northam Recovery Program would consider me as a client if I was to go to the clinic in Subiaco and present myself. I was lucky, the very next day I was admitted at the clinic and I received a Naltrexone implant which I daresay, very much saved my life.

The staff were wonderful and supportive and genuinely cared whether I lived or died. That was the beginning of my journey of recovery. I attended the York Street Lodge where physically, I regained my health and some mental stability. From there I was moved into the therapeutic community, where I now reside in Northam.

Now that I am here, I am on the verge of graduation. I have reconnected with my family and friends who always cared about me and believed in me and physically I am healthier than I have ever been. The



*Liam Cleak, graduate of The Northam Recovery Program*

*“The program has quite literally saved my life.”*

process of my recovery has been long and arduous and it most certainly is not over, but with Fresh Start’s help I have learnt the tools to help me battle my addiction for the rest of my life.

Since allowing Fresh Start to help me I have nearly completed a certificate in community services and have gained employment in the community of Northam and best of all, I am starting a relationship with my teenage son again. We are both very happy to be back in each other’s lives. I can thank the Fresh Start Recovery Programme in Northam for this.

[www.freshstart.org.au](http://www.freshstart.org.au)

## David's Story

My name is David and before Fresh Start came into my life, I had been using drugs for twenty long years. I always thought it wasn't a big problem until the last two years when my daughter was taken off me and placed with a foster family. It was then that I started using drugs harder and more frequently than I ever had before. I was using marijuana and methamphetamine several times every day.

My sister, who I have been close to all of my life was so close to cutting me off completely because of my drug use but instead, she reached out to Fresh Start and organized to fly me over to Perth for treatment. At that stage I had been awake on a drug bender for three weeks and was completely out of it whilst my sister and I travelled from Queensland to Melbourne and then from there to Perth. When I arrived, I had no idea I was even in Perth, I still believed I was in Melbourne because I was so burnt out from the drugs.

From there my sister and I attended the clinic in Subiaco. I was treated that very day and relocated shortly after to the therapeutic community in Northam. Fresh Start helped me with my recovery until I was well enough to begin working again for The Hill Catering Company that that is run by Fresh Start Northam Recovery Program. Getting back into a kitchen and working again was perfect for me as I think



*David Tarrant- Banks.*

a lot and having a busy work schedule helped to keep me focused and committed to my recovery.

As I am writing this, I am a graduate of the Fresh Start Recovery Program and I am exactly one year clean. I can thank the program for having faith in me that I would make it this far. My relationship with my sister has been saved and I frequently go on leave to see my children. I have beaten this addiction and I owe this to my family, my friends, my own inner strength and of course the Northam Recovery Program.

*“Getting back into a kitchen and working again was perfect for me”*

**In the year 2018/19.....**

- 1434 clients were seen at FS
- 590 of these were new patients
- 892 Chaplaincy sessions were attended
- 1261 Counselling sessions took place

# Chaplaincy at Fresh Start

The team of chaplains at Fresh Start Recovery Programme, is made up of both paid and volunteer staff. They spend their time in one on one meetings with clients, as well as their friends and families. They also run community support groups. The Fresh Start Community Group runs on Tuesdays from 10.00 am until noon at the Earth-Wise Building situated at 317 Bagot Road Subiaco. Anyone is welcome to attend.

The chaplains offer pastoral care through attentive listening and encouraging individuals onwards in their recovery. The chaplains facilitate a number of open groups in various locations where individuals are encouraged to share their stories on the full range of being human; that is an emotional, physical, rational, sometimes irrational, and spiritual being.

Chaplains have met face to face with over three hundred clients in the past year. We seek to be accepting of all whilst upholding the mission and purpose of Fresh Start.



Fresh Start Chaplains

We provide a space for those struggling with addiction to start afresh through medical intervention, an opportunity to regain integrity and good standing in Society, and to gain an awareness of their great irreplaceable value.

As chaplains we move around the many locations within Fresh Start, as in the clinic and rehabilitation centres in Northam, the houses around Perth, and groups meeting at different venues.

We see our vocation as a great privilege to share with others in rich times of both sorrow and joy.

*'Chaplains have met with over 300 clients in the past year'*

As at 30th June 2019 there were 84 volunteers, including 43 regulars, 3 on-call and 13 lunch roster. NRC had 11 Volunteers, Social enterprises 13 and 1 Driver only.

During the last year, FSRP appointed 10 people who were still in recovery as volunteers. This is consistent with FSRP policy of providing 'empowerment' opportunities within the organisation and, where appropriate, to employ people with lived experience of alcohol and other drug problems.

The total value of volunteer hours for the 2018-2019 financial year is: \$868,950.81.

The 2017-2018 value was \$707,182.01.

## You can help

### Volunteer your time

Consider joining the Fresh Start team. For more information please contact our Volunteer Coordinator on (08) 9381 1333.

### Become a financial supporter

To donate, please call (08) 9381 1333 or go to [www.freshstart.org.au](http://www.freshstart.org.au) All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

### Make a Bequest

For information about including Fresh Start in your Will, please contact CEO Jeff Cloughton on 9381 1333 or email [makingabequest@freshstart.org.au](mailto:makingabequest@freshstart.org.au)





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[www.freshstart.org.au](http://www.freshstart.org.au)

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*Beth Thompson started volunteering with Fresh Start in 2011. Coming from a back ground in Health teaching that included drug education across the state she wanted to give back to the community in a meaningful way in her retirement, she found her niche in the administration office at Fresh Start.*

For the past four years Fresh Start has worked extremely hard to achieve Class B Day Hospital licence accreditation. A great deal of the work to achieve this is carried out behind the scenes in the head office within the Subiaco clinic. This includes writing standard operating procedures for all the processes carried out within the organisation. Volunteer Beth Thompson has worked meticulously to achieve a well-structured system. For 8 years Beth has invested many hours of her time into volunteering at Fresh Start ensuring these milestones can be achieved. We are truly grateful for Beth's organisational skills and endless wisdom applied to her work as well as being a valued member of our Safety, Quality & Clinical Governance Committee since 2012.

## A message from the CEO:

I am writing this on Remembrance Day which is always a very good reminder to our community of the debt of gratitude we owe those men and women who have given their lives in the defence of our ideals and beliefs. A sense of gratitude is so important in our lives and as Albert Schweitzer said: "At times, our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us." I have certainly appreciated the times in my life when someone has taken the time and trouble to encourage me. These words are also a great incentive to the team at Fresh Start as we encourage people in recovery from addictions to change the whole of their life. Recent research has demonstrated that a person in recovery has a much better likelihood of success if there is just one new relationship with a non-using person. We work hard with people to establish and re-establish healthy relationships at home and in the community.

As the end of the year approaches (rapidly!) we have much to be thankful for. Twenty one men have graduated from our Northam Recovery Program. Many of these have returned to their families, found employment, enrolled

in education and stayed on as volunteers with Fresh Start. I am so grateful to Bevan and Troy who are residents in our transition housing in Warwick and who volunteer to keep our clinic calm and safe throughout the week.

Our State Government funding has been secured through to June 2022. This provides us with security for about 40% of our needs and we are grateful to the support we receive in this way through the Mental Health Commission.

Our Day Hospital licence has been renewed with no conditions for the first time. Since we were granted the licence in 2015 we have had matters to address each year until we reached full compliance. We have now completed this process and the last inspection by the Health Department confirmed our licence as unconditional. I am very grateful to the team at the Clinic in Subiaco for all the hard work they put in over three years to get us to this point.



Standard on Culturally  
Secure Practice  
QUALITY CERTIFIED  
ORGANISATION

*Everybody deserves a Fresh Start*