

## **Simon Perrott**

### **The Wayside Chapel**

Our guest speaker was Mr Simon Perrott Chairman of the Wayside Chapel. The organisation was founded by the Rev Ted Noffs 60 years ago to provide a level of hospitality and guidance for a variety of unfortunate people suffering from alcohol and or drug addiction, homelessness, domestic violence and other afflictions. The Chapel is currently managed by John Owen as a Pastor and CEO along with dedicated staff.

Simon made the important point that all visitors were treated with sympathetic respect and were extended love not hate and without any 'us and them' approach. Since the covid crisis the numbers of visitors has dramatically increased, evidencing the stresses in our society. An unhappy statistic is that First Nations people comprise about 50% of all visitors. People who visit are seeking various things. In some cases it is simply the company of others who are seen as their "family". In other cases it's a much needed meal, homeless seeking accommodation, people suffering domestic violence and so on. About 230 visitors are received each day.

The presentation powerfully demonstrated the sheer need that exists in our community for those hugely less fortunate than people such as our Probus members. A number of interesting questions and answers followed the presentation with everyone evidently learning a better appreciation of the problems being tackled by the Wayside Chapel and similar organisations.

***Sean Wareing***