



Plants as Partners.

Planted Places is a social enterprise centred on closing the distance between people and plants. So, what do we do when, for the sake of our neighbours, we are required to stay apart?

Last week we prepared a mix of houseplants from the Green Room at Collins St Baptist Church to be delivered to the residences of people seeking asylum. Some of the plants came from our own collection in the indoor garden of Central House and others were a part of an order from a wholesale nursery. Unable to do it ourselves during this

time of social distancing, we knew we could lean on plants to do the work of being sent out into the world.

The collection of 75 plants, picked up by one of Baptcare's employees, included easy-to-care-for common indoor plants such as *Spathiphyllum* - peace lilies, which faithfully live up to their name, *Chlorophytum comosum* – spider plants, which are highly tolerant and lots of plants from the *Epipremnum* family – devil's ivy and dragon's tail, which are actually much sweeter than they sound.



Confident of their capacity to change a space and bring life to a room, these plants carried out their roles as equal partners in the business of Planted Places. They did what we couldn't, that is to become physically close companions in a time of isolation. Distributed around Melbourne by caseworkers, the feedback to us was so encouraging.

Plants were received by families and children with joy. We heard reports of delight and "lit up faces". While also collecting weekly food supplies, men from Baptcare's Sanctuary program were able to choose a plant and they did so with "great care." At this time of collective restriction and enforced isolation indoors, interior green space and plants as companions become essential. As essential as the clean air they bring.