

CLOSER TO HOME  
HOMEGROUND  
ANNUAL REPORT  
09-10

Welcome to HomeGround's Annual Report for 2009/10. It's been a challenging and fruitful 12 months and we're proud to present this record of our activities, progress and priorities.

The last year has reinforced our experience of how damaging and increasingly widespread homelessness is with high costs for the community, our economy and the tens of thousands of individuals and families affected.

It has also reinforced our belief that homelessness in Melbourne can be ended and that we are making progress. We do end homelessness on a daily basis and there is no reason why the approaches that work can't be expanded and augmented with the best of what is being done interstate and overseas.

We also share the personal stories of some of our clients. In their own words Terana, Ray, Lorina and Tony relate some of the challenges faced by people experiencing homelessness and the positive impact housing and support has had on their lives.

We invite you to take a closer look.



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# OUR VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

Our **Vision** is to end homelessness in Melbourne.  
Our **Mission** is to get people housed and keep people housed.  
Our **Values** are:

- People** – Our clients, staff and partners are at the centre of everything we do.
- Respect** – We respect our own values and strengths as well as those of the people we work with.
- Dignity** – We value the dignity, talents and potential of our clients, staff and partners.
- Choice** – Each person has the right to make informed and empowered personal choices.
- Diversity** – The differences between people provide us with new perspectives and approaches.

“The Victorian Government is committed to reducing homelessness in our state. Our partnership with HomeGround focuses on providing people with the housing and support they need to get into and keep long-term housing. I applaud their vision to end homelessness in Melbourne and our Government will continue to work with them to make this a reality.”



**Richard Wynne**, Victorian Minister for Housing, Local Government and Aboriginal Affairs

“The John T Reid Charitable Trusts commend HomeGround on its vision of ending homelessness in Melbourne. Our funding enables HomeGround to provide a program of health, mental health, therapeutic and recreational services. This is vital for people recovering from homelessness to gain the physical, mental and emotional strength needed to rebuild their lives.”

**Anne Grindrod**, Chairman, John T Reid Charitable Trusts



“The City of Melbourne values partnerships with agencies like HomeGround that provide pathways out of homelessness. I commend their work with vulnerable members of our community and share their vision of ending homelessness in Melbourne.”

**Robert Doyle**, Lord Mayor of Melbourne

### Achieving the vision

HomeGround's vision is to end homelessness in Melbourne.

The primary place we do this is on the frontlines of our services working with individuals and families in crisis. Every day our 120-plus skilled staff prevent and end homelessness for vulnerable households.

The second is the greater movement to eradicate homelessness from our community. Momentum and support are growing behind this and we are deeply committed to this social change work.

In both of these areas, we have experienced success in the past year. In both, we know there is a lot more to be done.

### Victoria's housing crisis

Victoria's housing crisis is one of rising rents and house prices and of growing numbers of households experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness – many for the first time.

It is endlessly frustrating that the basic resource enabling people to avoid and escape homelessness – housing – has declined with regard to its availability and the standard of what is available to those in need.

Properties operated by private rooming house operators continue to provide the majority of accessible emergency accommodation, of which many are unsafe. Households experiencing homelessness are unable to access the majority of new homes being built under the stimulus package despite homelessness reduction targets providing a policy rationale for creating access to this housing.

A safe, secure and affordable home is further than ever from the reach of Victorian households experiencing homelessness.

### Reasons to be confident

In the midst of this worsening housing environment, there have also been encouraging developments.

The Federal Government White Paper on Homelessness and the Nation Building investment in social housing stand out as beacons guiding efforts to reduce homelessness.

These two initiatives address both the dire shortage of affordable housing and the need to reform the frameworks and approaches being used in order to effectively prevent and end homelessness for vulnerable individuals and families.

The former Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, is owed a large debt for making the shame of homelessness a national issue for the first time. His successor, Julia Gillard, has earned a lot of respect by continuing and building upon this direction with the appointment of the first Commonwealth Minister for Social Housing and Homelessness in Mark Arbib.

At a state level, we have seen leadership in areas including investment in affordable housing; the introduction of Supportive Housing and Housing First approaches; A Fairer Victoria, the Homelessness 2020 Strategy; and regulatory efforts to improve the rooming house sector. The Victorian Housing Minister, Richard Wynne, has driven local reforms.

### Reputation for reliability, reputation for innovation

HomeGround has been trusted to implement many of the new approaches we have been so vocal in advocating. It has been very rewarding to take on the risks and opportunities inherent in implementing innovative new programs.

The most visible of these is Elizabeth Street Common Ground. This landmark Supportive Housing program in a prime inner-city location has affirmed our belief about what is possible.

Other new models include Melbourne Street to Home and programs to get families out of rooming houses and into safer accommodation, preferably, long-term housing.

Another major highlight during the year was related to our strategic objective of creating more affordable and Supportive Housing.

HomeGround was funded to purchase 58 units of social housing within a 199-unit mixed tenure housing development. This housing is under construction and due for completion in April 2011 and contains an exciting retail and residential mix.

It will also have a strong focus on on-site place management which will emphasise community engagement and foster employment and training opportunities for our tenants in the businesses that are offered the retail spaces and in cleaning, gardening and maintenance at the development. The Board has agreed to source 25% of the project costs through a bank loan and are very excited about taking this step towards facilitating affordable housing development and demonstrating how ending homelessness can occur in a variety of environments and in mixed communities. There is no doubt that our continuing success, in both advocacy and tendering for new services, is directly related to our existing services and the inspiring staff who work day in and day out helping vulnerable people to access safe, secure and affordable housing.

HomeGround's reputation is only as good as our services and our services are only as good as our staff. The Board has incredible respect for the people who put our vision and mission into practice.

### Housing First provides the framework

Housing First challenges the current framework of 'housing readiness' that includes temporary accommodation, transitional housing and non-housing outreach support. Instead, it lays out the common-sense proposition that people need stable housing before they can deal with other challenges. At home, they get better quicker and have improved long-term outcomes. Good quality long-term housing must become our first response to homelessness.

The current framework does work for some, but it fails to offer a direct pathway out of homelessness for the majority. It has even contributed to the dangerous idea of 'people choosing to be homeless' by offering up the same inadequate options to people who know they will just end up on the street at the end of it all.

If we can adopt and successfully implement a Housing First framework for homelessness services in Victoria we will see that no-one truly chooses to be homeless.



### Supportive Housing provides pathways

Supportive Housing is a powerful concept that ties together good quality long-term housing and tailored support services. It encompasses a broad range of the best approaches we currently have, from Common Ground for the most vulnerable chronically homeless, to Foyers for youth, Wintringham for older people and Street to Home for vulnerable rough sleepers.

There are many households at risk of homelessness, and some already experiencing it, who do not need support services to sustain permanent housing. For these people, creating access to good quality permanent housing is enough. For everyone else, Supportive Housing offers an effective approach that can be adapted for specific groups with specific support needs.

We see the Federal White Paper on Homelessness as setting a direction for ongoing development and resourcing of Supportive Housing approaches. Creating a funding stream for these approaches would be a powerful step towards meeting Victoria's homelessness reduction targets.

### Thanks

The last year has been packed tight with highlights and challenges. All my fellow Board members have my sincere thanks for their untiring work in governing such a fast growing and dynamic organisation. The Board is a great team in itself, which makes my job as chair all the easier.

I would like to send special thanks to Catherine Morris, who resigned after five years of service, and welcome Wayne Read and Dominic Esposito who bring a great deal of accounting and property development-related legal expertise.

I wish to thank our sector partners whose collaboration and support is critical in delivering successful programs. Yarra Community Housing, The Salvation Army's Adult and Crisis Services, the Royal District Nursing Service and VincentCare Victoria are particularly committed long-term partners of ours.

Other partnerships have grown out of new projects like Elizabeth Street Common Ground. These include the construction and development company Grocon, the Rotary Club of Melbourne and philanthropic support from the John T Reid Charitable Trusts and Collie Foundation.

As I have already said, it is our people who make the whole thing work so well. The Board is incredibly impressed by the stories of success and resilience we hear from staff. HomeGround has a service delivery team that is a match for any other organisation in the country. I would also like to commend the CEO, Executive, leadership team and non-service delivery staff who provide essential leadership and support towards our shared vision to end homelessness in Melbourne.



Neil Chatfield, HomeGround Chairperson



TERANA'S  
DAUGHTER  
IS CLOSER  
TO A BRIGHT  
FUTURE.





## TERANA'S STORY

Terana came to Australia in 2005. Due to family breakdown she became homeless while pregnant. She was sleeping in her car and other unsafe accommodation.

"My homelessness started in 2007. I was in different places. I had no place of my own. I was never homeless before. I didn't know what to do with no father for my baby and no support. My friend told me about HomeGround.

First they put me in a hotel for two or three days because I was pregnant and had no place to sleep. From that first time I just felt something was opening up for me in my life. The people who really stood by me were Ivana and Caitlin (HomeGround workers).

I stayed for a few weeks in a shelter and they helped me apply for public housing. But I knew I would have to wait a long time so I went back to HomeGround, and the first thing Ivana said was that she was going to help me. They helped me look at rental houses because I had just one month left until the baby was born.

I was crying every day and thinking 'what is going to happen?'

Caitlin put in my application for me. Within two days the agent called and said congratulations. We were all shocked. My friends had tried on their own, but real estate agents just look at your Centrelink payment, not your character, and they reject you. I moved in to my place in March and my beautiful daughter was born in April. HomeGround paid my bond and first two months rent to make it possible.

It's an amazing feeling. I'm confident now with myself and everybody. I feel safe and strong. Now, I can go back to my life and have other options. When my daughter grows up I'll tell her this story and she can read it. She will be proud because she was strong too."

HomeGround helped Terana to find and secure private rental housing, provided initial financial support, and continues to support her to ensure her tenancy is successful in the long-term.



## An extraordinary year

The last year has been characterised by hardship for those experiencing homelessness and opportunity for our organisation as we progress towards our vision. It has reinforced the importance of leadership, both by individuals and through powerful partnerships between organisations coming together to get things done.

Our focus has always been on working with individuals and families who are experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness and articulating a broader vision for ending homelessness in Melbourne. This year saw us more explicitly focus on the most vulnerable members of the homeless population as a key strategy in being as effective as possible and paving the way for further success.

## Ending homelessness day by day

I am continually heartened by the stories I hear of our staff succeeding in finding long-term housing and supporting vulnerable households to access it – even in the midst of Victoria's deep affordable housing crisis. Every week we hear positive feedback and are reminded of the power of housing as the foundation for other life improvements such as stability, physical and mental health, safety, education, employment and hope for the future.

## Opportunity

Recent policy alignment has been driven by the Federal White Paper on Homelessness, Nation Building, A Fairer Victoria and a new state homelessness strategy. For the first time, we have all the key ingredients for substantial progress in reducing homelessness and meeting Victoria's targets.

Beyond government, we have also discovered the depth of business, philanthropic and public support for the goal of ending homelessness. Elizabeth Street Common Ground has been a catalyst for energising this support and I have been overwhelmed by the commitment and generosity coming in behind our work from all directions.



## Hardship

Homelessness remains a damaging and degrading experience for those forced to experience it. Attempting to source decent housing and work with individuals and families in crisis is stressful, frustrating and has never been harder than it is now. The future picture looks bleak, despite the positive developments above.

Twelve months on from the Premier's Rooming House Taskforce, there are still slum landlords operating in the middle and outer suburbs due to a desperate lack of housing for people who are homeless. One example is a private rooming house in Malvern housing 35 people in six bedrooms. The manager has assaulted people and deals drugs from the premises. Each person is paying over 70% of their income to live in these appalling conditions.

The most tragic thing for me is knowing that this suffering is preventable. Ending homelessness is possible with the right policy and investment priorities – which we now have mostly in place. Australia has the strategic framework, the knowledge and the evidence of what works to end this disgrace. For the first time in a generation we have a serious injection of new affordable housing, although bureaucratic processes may see only a fraction of people seriously at risk of homelessness, and even fewer people already homeless, able to access it.

## Leadership

It is a sign of just how big the cultural and political changes required are that we have so much positive to say, but that there is so much still needed in order to provide a basic housing safety net to vulnerable Victorians. Leadership is another area where we have seen much that is encouraging, but where efforts must be sustained and extended further.

Politically, the former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and our Victorian Housing Minister Richard Wynne have been key drivers behind the positive reforms and increased investment that has taken place.

The former Federal Housing Minister Tanya Plibersek and Victoria's Premier John Brumby have also been great supporters of reform.

Other leadership we have seen comes from our own sector as well as from business and philanthropic leaders. Individuals such as Daniel Grollo from Grocon and James Pullar from the Rotary Club of Melbourne have distinguished themselves through their personal actions and organisational leadership.

## Partnerships

No one organisation can end homelessness in Melbourne on its own. We work in a range of partnerships in order to share and gain access to specialist expertise. This has been true of Supportive Housing, the Common Ground model, Melbourne Street to Home, the Private Rental Access Program models we have been involved in and programs such as those aimed at getting families out of unsafe rooming houses.

Across all our services we work with more than 200 different organisations. Amidst this general atmosphere of collaboration, there are some partners which are particularly significant to our work.

These include Yarra Community Housing, The Salvation Army, Royal District Nursing Service, Sacred Heart Mission, VincentCare Victoria, Grocon, the Rotary Club of Melbourne, Council to Homeless Persons, the Tenants Union of Victoria, the Victorian Council of Social Service, the Community Housing Federation of Victoria and the members of the Australian Common Ground Alliance.

### Growth and change

Growth and change have been major themes of the last year. Since the start of last year we have received funding for more than half a dozen new programs and opened Elizabeth Street Common Ground. Our staff numbers have grown by more than 25% in the last 18 months as of September 2010.

This kind of rapid development can put a huge amount of stress on an organisation. I would like to thank all our staff for their patience, perseverance and openness to the changes that have taken place over the last four or five years.

Since then, we have built on our strong reputation for preventing and ending homelessness by moving towards becoming a housing developer, refining our focus on vulnerability and raising our voice as an advocate of new service models and necessary policy reform.

HomeGround has aspirations to provide more housing to people who are currently homeless. We will do this by developing our own housing and facilitating access to existing housing.

Major achievements on this important journey were made during the year: HomeGround was funded to acquire and own 58 units of social housing in a mixed tenure and mixed use development and a Housing Options Team was established to work with private and community housing providers to target and support people who are homeless into good quality housing.

### Our remarkable team

Thanks to all our wonderful staff who present a positive and hopeful attitude to people in crisis and as partners to our peers in the sector. It is your skills and passion that makes it all possible. Thanks to the Executive, who provide guidance and support to me in my role, and to the broader organisation. We are fortunate, in particular, to have Heather Holst who took over as General Manager Client Services during 2009 following the departure of Julia Canty-Waldron who led the client services team for many years. Thanks also to the rest of the leadership team for their role in guiding the development of our services and organisational culture. Thanks to my executive assistant Sharon Nicholson, who offers a huge amount of support and talent in a critical role.


Our Board is also a key factor in the success and growth we have experienced, providing professional oversight, governance and ensuring our policies, processes, systems and organisational services have kept apace during a period of rapid development.

### The road ahead

We will continue to work hard to support the movement towards ending homelessness to ensure that no-one has to endure the damage, trauma or fear of homelessness without hope.

The key leadership challenge for federal and state governments is to create reliable pathways for people who are currently homeless to access good quality permanent housing, such as the properties already under construction following Nation Building, or other existing housing.

Failure to do this will undermine everything else we do and lead to the failure of the White Paper and further increases in the number of individuals and families who fall into homelessness and who become entrenched and damaged by the experience. Ultimately, this hurts our community as much as those suffering needlessly.



Stephen Nash, CEO



As a result of the commitment and hard work of our highly skilled staff, and our collaboration with a range of partners, we have made excellent progress in achieving the five strategic objectives we set for ourselves in our 2009–2012 strategic plan.

#### Our objectives are:

- 1/ We will take action to prevent people from becoming homeless
- 2/ We will support people experiencing homelessness to access and maintain quality housing
- 3/ We will increase the supply of Supportive Housing and affordable housing
- 4/ We will ensure our approach to ending homelessness is underpinned by strong evidence
- 5/ We will continue to grow as a dynamic, effective and sustainable organisation.

#### Key achievements in 2009/10 included:

- / Working with 10,000 Victorian households to prevent or end their homelessness, providing housing, support and outreach services across Melbourne
- / Advocating for and/or implementing sector leading approaches based around Housing First and/or Supportive Housing principles including Elizabeth Street Common Ground, Melbourne Street to Home, Private Rental Access Program (PRAP) models, Social Housing Advocacy and Support Program (SHASP) and the Housing Outreach Worker role
- / Developing and implementing new programs including Accommodation Options for Families and Support for Families at Risk of Homelessness
- / Establishing and/or further developing partnerships with Yarra Community Housing, The Salvation Army's Crisis and Adult Services, Royal District Nursing Services, VincentCare Victoria, Salvation Army Social Housing and Support Network, Wombat and the Rotary Club of Melbourne
- / Undertaking or participating in evaluations of our transitional housing management practices and SHASP
- / Facilitating Common Ground founder Rosanne Haggerty, National Alliance to End Homelessness President Nan Roman and Suzanne Wagner, formerly of the Centre for Urban Community Studies, to visit Australia
- / Co-founding the Call this a home? Campaign for safe rooming houses; assisting the Victorian Rooming House Taskforce; and attracting funding to implement its recommendations to help families access safe accommodation
- / Supporting the implementation of a statewide rooming house closure protocol drafted by us based on experience working with Yarra City Council
- / Funding to purchase 58 units of social housing within a new, mixed tenure development under construction
- / Implementing year one of our strategic plan, including the development of key strategies covering housing development, human resources, advocacy and communications.

#### Key priorities for 2010/11 include:

- / Continuing to prevent and end homelessness for Victorian households through best practice housing, support and outreach services across Melbourne
- / Establishing Elizabeth Street Common Ground and other Nation Building Developments, including further development of HomeGround's Common Ground and Supportive Housing models and evidence base
- / Implementing Melbourne Street to Home
- / Establishing our Housing Options Team and improving access to private rental market and housing association stock for people experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness
- / Scaling up of the highly successful Private Rental Access Program model
- / Trialling selected evidence-based preventative approaches
- / Developing new partnerships with health and mainstream providers
- / Reviewing our crisis housing services (IAP)
- / Supporting the ongoing development of Opening Doors
- / Improving sharing of best practice from outreach programs to other services
- / Finalising and sharing our measuring outcomes project to encourage service system focus on long-term housing outcomes
- / Advocating for a comprehensive Victorian cost-benefits study into homelessness and effective responses
- / Negotiating our first Enterprise Agreement to safeguard staff conditions and retain our status as an employer of choice following the award modernisation process
- / Implementing existing organisational strategies and the development of additional strategies in the areas of fundraising, finance, environment, IT and stakeholder relationship management
- / Consolidating existing services amidst growth and change.

## OUR BOARD

HomeGround is governed by a professional board of directors with public, private and community sector expertise from a range of areas.

### Neil Chatfield (Chairperson)

Qualifications: Master of Business in Finance and Accounting; Post-Graduate Diplomas in Information Technology and Accounting; Fellow, CPA Australia; Fellow, Australian Institute of Company Directors

Employment: Chairman of Virgin Blue Holdings; Non-Executive Director of Seek Ltd, Transurban Ltd, Whitehaven Coal and Grange Resources Ltd

### Peter Clark

Qualifications: Bachelor of Social Work; Graduate Diploma in Information Technology; Master of Business Administration

Employment: Senior Program Manager – Housing, Mind Australia

### Dominic Esposito

Qualifications: Bachelor of Laws

Employment: Solicitor

### Simone Gandur

Qualifications: Bachelor of Arts

Employment: Director of Communications and Stakeholder Relations, Department of Sustainability and Environment

### Guy Gilbert

Qualifications: Bachelor of Legislative Law; Bachelor of Commerce; Associate Member, CPA Australia

Employment: Barrister

### Gina Hanson

Qualifications: Master of Environmental Studies; Bachelor of Natural Resources (Honours)

Employment: Project Manager, Indigenous Economic Development Strategy, Ministerial Taskforce on Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat

### Sally Parnell

Qualifications: Bachelor of Arts (Community Social Services); Master of Social Science (Policy & Management)

Employment: Program Director of Family and Community Connections, Jesuit Social Services

### Wayne Read

Qualifications: Bachelor of Economics (Honours); Associate, Institute of Chartered Accounts in Australia; Fellow and past Chairman of the Technical Committee of the Finance and Treasury Association Victoria

Employment: Partner, Accounting Advisory Services Group, KPMG Melbourne

### Nikos Thomacos

Qualifications: Bachelor of Business (Economics); Bachelor of Arts (Honours), PhD

Employment: Senior Lecturer, Health Social Science, Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Medical Sciences, Monash University

### Michael Wright

Qualifications: Bachelor of Economics (Honours); Master of Science (Economics); Diploma, Australian Institute of Company Directors

Employment: Managing Director, Miller Consulting Group; CEO, Victorian Cancer Agency; Chairman, ACSO

### Independent Chair, Audit & Risk Committee

### Robert Turnbull

Qualifications: Bachelor of Commerce, Masters of Business Administration, FCPA, ACIS

Employment: Chief Financial Officer & Company Secretary, OTEK Australia Pty Ltd



From left to right:  
Front row: Gina Hanson, Sally Parnell, Peter Clark  
Middle row: Neil Chatfield, Simone Gandur, Dominic Esposito  
Back row: Wayne Read, Guy Gilbert  
Absent: Nikos Thomacos, Michael Wright, Robert Turnbull

RAY  
IS CLOSER  
TO PUTTING  
HIS FEARS  
BEHIND HIM.





## RAY'S STORY

Ray has a history of insecure housing, health problems and has a significant visual impairment. He was living in unsafe conditions and had his jaw broken by a neighbour.

"I've lived in lots of places over the years. I was in Clifton Hill in a community rooming house, but I couldn't invite people over or have any privacy there. I lived above a pub in Collingwood. I had a dodgy friend who attacked me. Since then my vision has been wrong.

The other place I lived was disability accommodation in Melton. It was a fair way out and it was enormously frustrating. The problem was getting around because I can't drive. I had to walk or rely on cabs, which I couldn't afford.

Then I moved to public housing near here. The problem was my neighbour. He was violent and made a target out of me. On Boxing Day I was playing music and he knocked on the door. Didn't ask me to turn it down, just bashed me. I couldn't stay after that. I was willing to sleep on the street to get away. When I came to HomeGround I was desperate.

It worked out good in the end because I got this place. There's no graffiti here, the unit was clean when I moved in, no dodgy stuff in the foyer. I'm settling in. I get support now, from Patrick (HomeGround worker) and also from Vision Australia. My computer is well set-up with adaptive technology, screen magnifier, screen reader. I thought I'd be totally lost, but now I take it for granted what I can do on the computer and over the internet.

Patrick, I'm still in contact with him. The blinds here haven't been put in yet and the intercom doesn't work. The guy came around last week after four weeks of chasing him and leaving messages and not getting back. Patrick's call was the one that had an effect.

Now I have a home that is safe. There is security here. I want to improve my health so my eyesight gets better. Everyone wants a partner. I couldn't have had one at my last place. Here I could live with someone and have enough space.

I'd like to get a job. I was looking, but gave up because of the violence. I was paranoid leaving the house because of my neighbour. I'm in a good mood now, full of beans from eating well and going to the gym every day."

HomeGround supported Ray to get an urgent public housing transfer, linked him with support services and continues to work with him to establish his tenancy and work towards his future aspirations.

### VincentCare Victoria

Partnerships lie at the heart of the most successful housing and support programs. HomeGround works with hundreds of service partners every day and they all contribute their own particular expertise to the outcomes we achieve. One of the most significant partners we have is VincentCare Victoria, formerly St Vincent de Paul. They do amazing work in many areas, including with people experiencing, and at risk of, homelessness.

Some highlights of our partnership include:

- / A long history of collaboration between our crisis housing services. This work together has helped shape Opening Doors and we have established best practice principles and consistency in many areas
- / A newer partnership is the Accommodation Options for Families program, which provides housing and support to homeless families. It plans pathways out of homelessness and into long-term housing
- / Last year we moved our Broadmeadows-based Crisis Support Service over to VincentCare Victoria to better fit with other services they offer in the local area
- / Our Justice Housing Support Program and Housing Mental Health Pathways Program have access to transitional housing properties via VincentCare Victoria
- / Both our organisations were involved in the planning and implementation of the Call this a home? Campaign for safe rooming houses
- / Even when staff move between our organisations, connections are maintained and this adds to an atmosphere of shared purpose and collaboration.

“VincentCare Housing Services and HomeGround have a long history of working together to prevent and end homelessness for households in crisis. Our agencies have demonstrated a commitment to partnerships in areas including crisis housing services, family programs, transitional housing management, service system development approaches and advocacy around rooming houses. We both believe in ensuring dignity and respect for the people we work with.”

**Robyn Springall**, Acting Manager, VincentCare Housing Services

“VincentCare Victoria is a leading voice for social justice in Victoria and one of the most influential organisations in the homelessness sector. HomeGround has gained a lot through our partnership and I see a bright future together working to end homelessness for vulnerable families and individuals.”

**Stephen Nash**, CEO, HomeGround Services



# ENDING HOMELESSNESS UPDATE

In the last annual report we reflected on the vision, strategic framework and resources attached to the Federal White Paper on Homelessness and the injection of Nation Building funding for social housing. In the time since then, there has been considerable progress made towards ending homelessness in Melbourne. This update outlines what we have learned over the past year and what we now know about the challenges ahead.

## We know what works

We know through our work that nobody wants to be, or chooses to be, homeless. People want and need a safe home in order to rebuild their lives – however, this is something rarely offered. People who are homeless are usually offered temporary shelter or unsafe rooming houses. If they refuse options that have previously failed them, they are labelled as choosing to be homeless, service resistant or not housing-ready.

We know that when people are offered a safe home and support to help them settle into and sustain their housing that they do whatever they can to keep it. It is the basic foundation for people to be able to recover from the trauma of homelessness, improve their health and wellbeing and reconnect with their aspirations.

We know that any increase in housing and support will directly decrease the numbers of people who are homeless. We know that simply increasing support without housing will not work. An offer of housing can be difficult for some people to sustain without support. Both housing and support need to be provided together.

## We know there is housing available now

Housing is the most powerful and precious resource required to end homelessness. The lack of quick access to long-term housing means that thousands of people are offered temporary housing in expensive and intimidating rooming houses with a lucky few gaining access to government funded crisis accommodation services and transitional housing. Even these 'better' options are not a real home.

The exciting news is that there are over 4,500 social housing homes being built in Victoria. Half of these will be owned and managed by housing associations and half through public housing. This amount of new social housing is a rare opportunity to directly contribute to meeting our federal and state homelessness targets.

We know that unless we explicitly decide who should access this housing, the opportunity to target specific needs groups will be lost. We are advocating for at least one-third of Nation Building funded social housing to be provided to people who are currently homeless. This would reduce homelessness by over 1,500, which would be a historic step forward.

If this currently available Nation Building funded social housing is not prioritised in this way, then it is clear that Victoria will fail to meet our homeless reduction targets and will have wasted a golden opportunity to end the costly, damaging misery of a large number of highly vulnerable people.

## We know there are other policy tools available

In addition to capital funding for social housing, there is a need to think outside of this traditional approach by creating alternative ways of using the tax system and subsidies. The various key elements of the system of housing provision in Australia are not currently co-ordinated to achieve increases in supply, access or affordability.

For example, billions of tax dollars each year are forgone on negative gearing of investment properties without a requirement for creating new housing or ensuring affordability goals are met. Another subsidy is Commonwealth Rental Assistance which provides help with rental costs that is capped at a specific value regardless of local rental prices.

The Federal Government has recently shown great initiative by creating the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) to attract new investors into low cost rental housing to create new housing at below market rates, subsidised for ten years. For people with a

short or medium-term need, a small subsidy could be developed to facilitate access to these 7,500 properties. This represents a far cheaper option than allowing them to become, or continue being, homeless.

If we are to truly achieve homelessness targets across the board, then the options for providing affordable housing in which to do so are limited. We can spend \$250,000 to \$300,000 per dwelling for a household through capital grants for public or community housing. We can also provide incentives such as NRAS to the market at a cost of less than \$10,000 per year. More flexible housing subsidies are required.

## We know prevention and housing establishment are critical

In order to reduce the number of people who are homeless there needs to be a greater effort to prevent people becoming homeless in the first place. Through our extensive experience over 20 years in supporting people who have been homeless to access and sustain public housing we know that early intervention to avoid homelessness is possible.

The Social Housing Advocacy and Support Program (SHASP), is an incredibly successful approach that provides support to help people settle into public and community housing, and to intervene if their tenancy becomes at risk.

Support is critical to help people learn new skills, recover old skills, to assist them through the process of recovery and to deal with the damage of past homelessness. Often this support needs to occur over a long time period or at least be available for episodes of crisis over the long-term. Unfortunately, most homeless support funding is only for short periods which undermines the capacity to keep people in housing.

## We know we need sustained leadership and better accountability

Real reductions in homelessness can be achieved by aligning the housing and support resources that already exist and ensuring better targeting of those that need them most. The development of better data on the cost effectiveness of ending homelessness will assist in continuing the momentum and focusing these resources.

At the time of writing, the Victorian Homelessness 2020 Strategy was due for release. It is hoped that this will provide a strong vision for ending homelessness, the capacity for a Housing First approach and a clear vision for the future of the homelessness sector to shift towards assisting people at risk of homelessness to sustain their housing. It is hoped it will include provision for a Victorian Affordable Housing Plan.

There needs to be a more mature approach to dialogue within the sector and with the relevant government departments. Together we need to better monitor and evaluate what is working and invest strategically in those approaches that do work. We also need to be prepared to stop doing the things that do not get people out of homelessness. This is often the biggest challenge.

It remains unclear at the time of publication exactly who has authority and responsibility for reducing homelessness in Victoria. It appears that only the Premier and Treasurer would have big picture oversight of the impact of homelessness across systems such as health, mental health, justice, disability, family support, child protection, education and employment.

We urge that consideration be given to creating a homelessness commissioner reporting directly to the Premier in order to actively ensure that targets relating to homelessness are set and met in all of the departments that have a role in preventing or responding to homelessness. We urge that specific delegations of responsibility clearly identify who is responsible for what. We also urge that the Prime Minister's Council on Homelessness be replicated in states and engage directly with the Premier on progress and where further improvements can be made.

We call for a bi-partisan approach to ending homelessness to ensure that this important work is guided by evidence and commitment rather than being subject to changing political fortunes.



Through our experience ending homelessness on a daily basis, we know that the federal and state government targets for reducing homelessness are realistic and achievable.

The greatest threat to meeting the targets is failing to direct at least one-third of the social housing under construction with Nation Building funding to households who are currently homeless. This is in addition to preventative measures to divert at-risk households from becoming homeless in the first place. This realignment of housing resources must be delivered through an affordable housing plan that addresses all the social and economic policy levers to match stock numbers, quality, location and allocation appropriately with the needs of homeless households.

Our vision for affordable housing is based on more than 20 years experience working with households experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness as well as public and community housing tenants. A Victorian Affordable Housing Plan needs to address:

- / An annual target of new affordable housing stock to meet homelessness and affordability demand
- / High quality building and physical amenity
- / Healthy social mix in all public and community housing
- / Integration of employment, study and aspirational opportunities
- / Tailored support services available to those who need them in order to establish strong and sustainable tenancies, particularly for individuals and families recovering from the trauma of homelessness
- / Mechanisms to ensure those most in need can access this housing
- / Making housing associations more effective for people who are homeless
- / Reforming housing-related taxes and subsidies to enable the above goals.

The result of this would be a healthier social housing sector, a stronger housing safety net and success in reducing homelessness.

#### Creating more and better public housing, community housing and private affordable housing

Not only does Victoria have a challenging homelessness problem, but private rental housing is increasingly unaffordable. The National Housing Supply Council estimates the national affordable housing shortfall at around 250,000 properties. Victoria's also in the difficult position of having a low proportion of public and community housing compared with the national average. This public housing stock is mostly concentrated in estates with minimal social mix and limited opportunities.

In order to meet the housing needs of homeless Victorians, as well as those with low incomes suffering after-housing poverty, a Victorian Affordable Housing Plan must:

- / Create and make available at least 3,000 units of high quality social housing every year for 10 years which is targeted to homeless and other low income households
- / Facilitate further private investment in increasing affordable housing supply (such as NRAS) by 50,000 to meet the current shortfall.

#### High quality building and physical amenity

Affordable housing should not be second-rate housing. We already see preconceptions and prejudices in the community when it comes to public and community housing. We know that poor standards prevail in the lower cost end of the private rental market. For people to put homelessness behind them permanently, they need somewhere safe, healthy and liveable to call home.

- / Public and community housing must meet minimum standards of architectural and environmental performance
- / Minimum standards for private rental properties must be introduced.

#### Healthy social mix

Communities thrive when they have a social mix encompassing full and part-time workers, students, different age groups, diverse backgrounds, various household compositions, owners, renters, investors and anyone else you can imagine. It is when communities become demographically concentrated that they become stereotyped and constrained in the kinds of possibilities they allow to their members. Concentrated disadvantage is particularly destructive.

- / Greater social mix must be introduced into public and community housing estates without reducing overall supply across regional areas
- / Research and communication strategies are needed to challenge and dispel myths and prejudices about public and community housing
- / Public and community housing residents should be encouraged to stay in their existing communities once their situations improve
- / Public and community housing residents should be able to purchase equity in their properties.

#### Integration of employment, study and aspirational opportunities

People living in affordable housing are the same as everyone else. They want to live close to work, education, transport, shops, entertainment and services. They want to be safe and secure in order to plan for the future.

- / New public and community housing, particularly medium density housing, should be targeted in activity centres and along public transport corridors
- / Security of tenure is fundamental to the success of housing. Public and community housing tenures should be for life and the introduction of 5-10 year private rental leases would be a positive move.

#### Tailored support services available to those who need them

Adopting a Supportive Housing approach to the provision of public and community housing would dramatically improve the outcomes for people recovering from the trauma of homelessness. This means ensuring that offers of housing to people in need are combined with the provision of adequate services. Too often, support is not available and people are evicted, leave their tenancy or become isolated and unwell.

- / New public and community housing tenants should be linked in with appropriate support services in order to establish and sustain their tenancies
- / Establishment and intervention support services modelled on SHASP should be provided to at-risk households in private rental housing.



### Targeting a third of new social housing to people who are currently homeless

There has been a massive one-off injection of Nation Building funding to create 4,500 new social housing units in Victoria, half of which will be public housing and half owned by housing associations. There is a real danger that currently homeless households will miss out on this housing as significant numbers of people who are homeless are not registered on the public housing waiting list. The prioritisation lists held by Entry Points in the Victorian Opening Doors homelessness system should be used to allocate at least one-third of this new housing.

- / One-third of Nation Building housing must be allocated to currently homeless households
- / Programs like the Private Rental Access Program (PRAP) should be expanded to improve access to the private rental market
- / The right to housing needs to be included in the Victorian Charter of Rights and Responsibilities, including for asylum seekers
- / Work should continue to develop a common public and community housing waiting list.

### Improving the role of housing associations in ending homelessness

In Victoria, government investment in affordable housing has been focused on creating housing through housing associations. Housing associations are not for profit organisations which can attract 75% government funding for projects if they can provide a 25% contribution, which is mainly done through debt. Some fantastic housing has been created by these community developers, but the 25% debt burden, a lack of support services and no stipulation to house currently homeless households create a barrier to accessing this housing for those in greatest need.

HomeGround encourages the Victorian Government to:

- / Create a more flexible approach that varies the 25% leveraging requirement for projects which target people who are homeless
- / Provide clear mechanisms and quotas to ensure access to community housing for homeless households
- / Facilitate vulnerable households moving into community housing with linkages to appropriate support services to ensure successful tenancies.

### A National Affordable Housing Plan to underpin halving homelessness and improve affordability

There are many taxes and subsidies that act as levers in the housing market. These could be used to improve housing affordability and reduce homelessness. A positive example of this is the 7,500 new Victorian homes that will be created thanks to the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS).

HomeGround strongly urges all levels of government to work together to coordinate various levers to achieve better affordability outcomes, specifically:

- / Review negative gearing in order to re-focus billions of dollars in lost revenue to better target incentives towards creating new, affordable housing and homelessness policy objectives
- / Review Commonwealth Rental Assistance in light of high housing costs and the need to bridge the NRAS income gap for households with histories of homelessness.

# HEF – TIME FOR REFORM

Housing Establishment Funds (HEF) are a poorly understood but vital part of Victoria's homelessness system. They comprise the major source of funds we have at our disposal to help people in housing crisis avoid sleeping on the street or remaining in dangerous, damaging, abusive or exploitative situations. HEF is a flexible source of funding that can be used for various forms of accommodation or housing, meaning less reliance on large shelters than many other places around the world.

In any week, our crisis housing services in St Kilda and Collingwood will typically write cheques for \$20,000 to \$25,000 worth of HEF for between 100 and 150 households, adding up to nearly \$1.5 million last year. We can see 400–450 households across our sites each week.

The greatest amount of our HEF is spent on purchasing short-term emergency accommodation (nearly \$1 million annually) and the next largest amounts are for rent in advance (just over \$200,000) and rent in arrears (approximately \$160,000) so that people can move into or sustain rental properties. There are smaller sums expended on other housing-related expenses: bonds, removals, white goods and essential furniture, key deposits, food and travel cards.

Other agencies have their own practices which can mean that an individual gets a different outcome depending on who they go to for assistance.

This is partly a result of local demand factors, but is most often about how different organisations try to ration their HEF, which is universally too little to meet demand.

While it is an important resource that enables short-term crisis responses, the HEF option is also quite frustrating for services who see a lot of money going into temporary accommodation. These are not always good quality options and they rarely lead to permanent housing.

Frustrated with the quality of temporary accommodation for families in particular, we have been deliberately opting to house families and more vulnerable individuals in serviced apartments rather than rooming houses during the last year. While this is a better option, it is expensive and still only temporary.

The new programs that were developed in response to the Victorian Rooming House Taskforce have provided some extra HEF to meet some of this shortfall but the problem of temporary responses to long-term housing needs remains a critical one for a system that often fails Victorians in housing crisis.

At one time, HEF was able to assist people into permanent housing or to help them stay there if they fell behind with the rent. Today, this has become a very small part of our work due to rising housing costs.

We are actively advocating for an increase in the amount of HEF and for a full review of the possible uses and purpose of HEF in the current housing environment. Such a review is planned by the Victorian Government and we await this with interest to see how it refocuses a system that has not kept up with the changing housing environment and the sharp rise in housing costs.

The very successful results that the Private Rental Access Program in St Kilda has been able to achieve for homeless families points to a better way that much of HEF could be used. This program provides families with guidance and support to find affordable private rental and then around \$2,000 in brokerage to help with the early rent and set up costs. The result is permanent housing and an end to homelessness.

There is also scope in the new National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) which will bring 7,500 new rental properties to Victoria with a maximum rent of 80% of market value for 10 years. A brokerage fund for private rental could assist even very low income households to live affordably in these new properties by bridging the gap between the 80% of market rent and the amount households can realistically pay themselves.

There will always be people who need HEF assistance to get quickly into emergency accommodation. Nevertheless, if HEF was increased and directed towards brokerage for long-term housing – as was its intention when the program was devised – this would make a real impact on the numbers of people becoming and getting stuck in homelessness. The numbers, cost and timing of this transition could be calculated by a government willing to look squarely at the problem and to plan how to make HEF work to really establish people in housing rather than just save them from the streets for a night or two.

# PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS

We prevent people from becoming homeless in many different ways. This involves helping people to sustain their public, private or community housing and assisting people to find alternative housing where necessary.

It is quite common for people to become homeless when they are discharged from hospital, mental health wards, the child protection system or jail. We work with government systems like hospitals, the justice system and mental health services to prevent people becoming homeless.

For example, our Social Housing Advocacy and Support Program (SHASP) advocates on behalf of public and community housing tenants and works to help people save their tenancies when they are at risk of losing them.

The ConnectED and Housing Mental Health Pathways Program work within hospital settings.

The Justice Housing Support Program has outposts at the Melbourne Magistrates Court and the Neighbourhood Justice Centre to house people leaving the justice system, or who might be refused bail due to homelessness.

The Private Rental Access Program is another successful model with a focus on preventing women and children from becoming homeless as a result of family violence through supporting them to access private rental housing. The results have been strong and advocacy for an expansion of this program resulted in, funding for a generalist version targeted at other at-risk households, however ongoing funding for this has not been secured.

We are also implementing the new Support for Families at Risk of Homelessness program over four years in partnership with The Salvation Army and Wombat.

We also research approaches and advocate for reforms to ensure that groups at risk of homelessness can be identified early in mainstream systems like education, health and child protection.

If we wait until people become homeless, we are not only exposing them to the damage of life without housing, but we also make it much harder and more expensive to help them out of homelessness and back into permanent housing later.

“Homelessness is a damaging experience that impacts on physical and mental health and can have debilitating consequences. The Brumby Labor Government believes in a holistic approach that addresses both the causes and consequences of homelessness through integrated housing and support initiatives like Elizabeth Street Common Ground.”

**Lisa Neville**, Victorian Minister for Mental Health, Community Services and Senior Victorians.



LORINA  
IS CLOSER  
TO NEVER  
BEING  
HOMELESS  
AGAIN.





## LORINA'S STORY

Lorina is a respected member of inner-Melbourne's Indigenous community. She lives with her four school-age children.

"I lived on the streets between the age of 11–15. There was too much happening at home so I took off. I've lived in shelters, private rental and Office of Housing. I just couldn't afford private rental so I went into public housing. I have been independent since I was 15. I even went to court to get my own guardianship.

I got in touch with HomeGround about six months ago. I was in a public housing place in Richmond that was infested with cockroaches and I had to get out. I had registered for a transfer, but I was waiting and waiting. We were living out of the microwave because we couldn't cook without sharing the food.

HomeGround fought long, hard battles with me. They've gone over and above. If it wasn't for them, I wouldn't even be here. I would have left the flat with the kids and gone somewhere, I don't know where. I would have become homeless again. I would have gone and stayed in the car.

It was more than just housing support. I actually had to move out before we had a new place and was staying at a friend's house and worrying. It's Annabelle (HomeGround worker) who held me together.

Now I have a place in Fitzroy, not too far from my area and the kids' school. I didn't want the kids to change schools. A big weight has been lifted off my shoulders. It's a bit small, but it has other advantages to it. The kids are ecstatic. They will have a little backyard, but quite big for a townhouse. We're going to get a dog, save one from the dog home. I'm very happy.

I do Aboriginal advocacy work with the Parkies (Indigenous community) in Collingwood as a volunteer. I sometimes help with HomeGround's Recreation Program. My Mum did it before me and I did it with her when I was old enough. When she passed away last year I carried on. It's tough sometimes, but good work. Now, we have a home again I can get back to this work and help my community again."

HomeGround supported Lorina to get an urgent transfer out of her unhealthy property and avoid a return to long-term homelessness. We helped to establish her family in their new property and maintain a connection to help Lorina sustain this tenancy in the long term.

"It gets more exciting every day. I feel less stress now."

# ENDING HOMELESSNESS

The 2006 Census revealed that more than 100,000 Australians experience homelessness on any given night of the year. More than 20,000 of these households are in Victoria.

We believe that homelessness can be ended, and we know what works. The combination of quality housing and long-term support ends homelessness for individuals and families. All our services contribute to this goal.

The majority of our services work directly with individuals and families who are currently homeless or have experienced homelessness in the past. Our programs and services have a strong housing focus and we believe fast access to safe, secure and affordable long-term housing together with tailored support is the basis for ending homelessness for all households.

For example, our Initial Assessment and Planning service works towards finding quality permanent housing for a huge number of clients. Although this service often sees people at times of crisis, when finding short-term accommodation is a priority, it also assists clients to permanently leave homelessness by assisting with public housing applications, creating housing plans and links with support services.

We have worked to establish Melbourne's first Common Ground – a Supportive Housing development that provides new, quality, affordable apartments for formerly homeless tenants as well as on-site tailored support services.

Melbourne Street to Home, funded in late 2009, will permanently end homelessness for Melbourne's most vulnerable rough sleepers by identifying and linking them into permanent housing and tailored support.

We also research and advocate for reforms necessary to ensure good housing and support responses become the basis for a systematic approach to ending homelessness more broadly.

The tools for ending homelessness are known – quality, affordable housing and tailored support. Once these two essential ingredients are made available and coordinated, the result will be a quick end to the trauma of homelessness for individuals and families and a reduction in the personal, social and economic costs of homelessness for the entire community.

Melbourne Street to Home is a partnership between HomeGround and The Salvation Army Crisis and Adult Services in collaboration with the Royal District Nursing Service and a large number of other services working with vulnerable people rough sleeping in inner-Melbourne.



"We've been working with HomeGround for 20 years across programs and geographic areas. Over this time we have had many successes, but the one I am most excited about is the shift away from referral models towards a fully integrated homelessness and health service response. Melbourne Street to Home, for example, recognises the links between poor health and homelessness and provides a coordinated housing, support and health intervention at point of contact, targeting the most vulnerable people first."

**Theresa Swanborough**, Manager,  
Royal District Nursing Service  
Homeless Persons Program

The starting point for ending homelessness is access to housing. We have recognised the need to create new models of Supportive Housing targeted at the people who need housing most, new affordable housing to ease overall affordability and to find creative ways to generate Supportive Housing approaches in existing housing in the public, community and private housing sectors.

This led us to become a Registered Housing Provider in 2008 in order to access government funding for Supportive Housing and affordable housing. It is a key way for us to deliver on our aspirations for more Supportive Housing, Common Ground housing, Street to Home, Foyers and other Housing First models. It has driven our approach to programs like our Private Rental Access Program for women escaping family violence. This new direction has transformed us from a support and transitional housing provider to an organisation that can increasingly provide both the permanent housing and the support people need to leave homelessness behind them permanently.

In the last year, there have been major developments along this road. The most significant was the opening of Elizabeth Street Common Ground, a model which we proposed to the State Government and deliver in partnership with Yarra Community Housing. Tenants have already moved in and 65 highly vulnerable people with long-term histories of homelessness and trauma are on track to create fundamental change in their lives with the support they need to succeed.

We have been funded to acquire 58 social housing units in a 199-unit mixed tenure development in the northern suburbs.

The project will demonstrate how to create an effective Supportive Housing approach within a mixed housing development. This will be the first housing under HomeGround ownership and is an important step towards facilitating future Supportive Housing and affordable housing development.

These changes have led to the creation of a new Property Services Team that is tasked with developing new housing; managing more than 300 transitional housing units and private properties; and improving access to private, community and public housing for people exiting homelessness.

We are also working with housing associations, most notably Yarra Community Housing and Rural Housing Network, to create a Supportive Housing approach within community housing. This will help demonstrate that Victoria's community housing system can provide an effective pathway out of homelessness.

# CREATING SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

# ELIZABETH STREET COMMON GROUND



One of the highlights of the year has been Elizabeth Street Common Ground, which was launched by the Victorian Premier in August 2010. This landmark project targets the most vulnerable and entrenched, and is the first of its kind in Australia in terms of social mix, scale, security measures and on-site support services.

Elizabeth Street Common Ground comprises 131 studio apartments over eight floors. It will end homelessness permanently for 65 of our most vulnerable community members and provide high quality affordable housing for an additional 66 households.

This project has also shown how powerful a whole-of-community approach to ending homelessness can be. The Victorian and Federal Governments provided capital and support funding while Grocon's outstanding leadership led to businesses involved in the project working at-cost (no profit). The result was over \$8 million in savings. This is Australia's largest philanthropic commitment to homelessness. Grocon has made the same commitment to Common Ground projects in Brisbane, Sydney and Canberra.

Other commercial enterprises have also contributed to the project, including the supply of at-cost furnishings, white goods and consumer items to fit out the apartments. This includes Bunnings, Kmart, Coles and the Good Guys and Harvey Norman.

Philanthropy is another vital piece in the whole-of-community puzzle, with the Rotary Club of Melbourne, Rotary Club of Melbourne Park, John T Reid Charitable Trusts and the Collie Foundation all distinguishing themselves by backing a visionary idea that will go a long way to changing the way we view homelessness in Melbourne.

Finally, it is partnerships that will make the Common Ground model work. This includes our headline tenancy and property partnership with Yarra Community Housing and notable involvements from the Royal District Nursing Service Homeless Persons Program and the Melbourne General Practice Network. There are also a large number of other agencies working with tenants and helping them put the trauma of homelessness behind them once and for all.

Elizabeth Street Common Ground is a partnership between HomeGround Services, Yarra Community Housing, the Victorian Property Fund, the Victorian and Federal Governments and Grocon.



## SUZIE'S STORY



Suzie\* is one of the first 65 tenants who moved into Elizabeth Street Common Ground in late 2010. You can find out more about this historic development and hear from Suzie by following this link: <http://tinyurl.com/354r7d2>

\*Name changed for privacy

"Grocon and HomeGround both share a commitment to working to improve the lives of vulnerable Australians. Our organisations have gained much from the experience of building Elizabeth Street Common Ground and we look forward to continuing our relationship in the future as we support the goal of ending homelessness."



**Daniel Grollo**, CEO, Grocon

"I came to work here because of Elizabeth Street Common Ground and the chance to end homelessness for people who normally just bounce around services getting sicker and sicker."

Staff comment

Ending homelessness, whether it is for a single individual or the 100,000 plus who were homeless last Census night, requires an understanding of what puts people at risk of homelessness, what causes homelessness, what the experience of homelessness does to people, how it can be prevented and how people can be supported to put it behind them forever. Good intentions, political will and hard work are doomed to fail without strong evidence about what actually works and what does not.

Our Research and Service Development Team was established to build on existing service development work already taking place and their role has expanded quickly since that time. Their focus is on research that informs policy and the sector as well as improving our own services through data and outcomes analysis and various service development initiatives.

### Developing evidence through research – highlights

- / Delivering a housing census on behalf of Corrections Victoria across all Victorian prisons to create the first snapshot of housing needs for those leaving prison
- / FaHCSIA funded research towards developing nationally consistent client outcomes indicators to better measure the effectiveness of homelessness services
- / Evaluation of Elizabeth Street Common Ground by University of New South Wales researchers
- / Development and sharing of Supportive Housing resources including showing the flexibility of Supportive Housing models aimed at different at-risk groups
- / Myer Foundation research project on co-locating other high needs groups in Common Ground developments
- / Literature review of best practice in measuring housing and other homelessness service outcomes
- / Better Options for Families Project – a collaboration with VincentCare Victoria and North East Housing Services to identify better ways to provide accommodation and support responses to families experiencing homelessness in the northern suburbs of Melbourne
- / Facilitating access to our data and clients for outside researchers
- / Baseline data collection and collaboration with academic researchers in all new programs.

### Developing better services

This includes reflecting on and assessing the effectiveness of our own services to ensure they are providing the best outcomes possible for the people we work with and identifying limitations in service models. Here are some highlights from this side of our work:

- / St Kilda crisis housing service (IAP) reorganised itself to improve focus on first contacts and interim responses
- / Tenancy and Property reviewed its transitional housing management practice to reflect a new understanding of 120 Day Notices to Vacate as possible human rights violations

- / SHASP incorporated the recommendations of its review and evaluation
- / Elizabeth Street Common Ground implemented a sector-leading intake process with an independent selection panel and transparent selection criteria
- / Generalist Private Rental Access Program was evaluated and ongoing funding is being sought
- / Housing Establishment Funds practice was reviewed due to inadequacy of funding
- / We developed our first Client Participation Strategy
- / We audited our client records and reviewed records practice in many services
- / We are in the process of reviewing how we manage information electronically across the organisation
- / A new client management system is being developed to encompass seven of our case management support services
- / Work is continuing to develop a comprehensive set of outcomes measures that will enable us to better evaluate the long-term housing, health and wellbeing outcomes of all our services
- / The development of new service models for families and rough sleepers took place.



The Social Housing Advocacy and Support Program (SHASP) is one of the least heralded successes in the Victorian homelessness and housing sector. Through its establishment, intervention and transfer assistance services, SHASP is highly successful in creating long-term sustainable tenancies and preventing the breakdown of at-risk tenancies in public and community housing. We operate three SHASP services, covering an area from the northern suburbs through the CBD to the middle of the southern suburbs.

HomeGround prides itself on achieving the best possible outcomes for the people we work with while also improving the policies and systems that enable those outcomes. We do this through a mix of strategic, service and public advocacy.

Some key findings were:

- / 75% of tenancies referred to SHASP for intervention assistance were sustained
- / 8% more tenancies were sustained when referred at an early stage
- / 100% of tenancies referred for intervention assistance for anti-social behaviour were sustained
- / No tenants referred for establishment support were evicted.

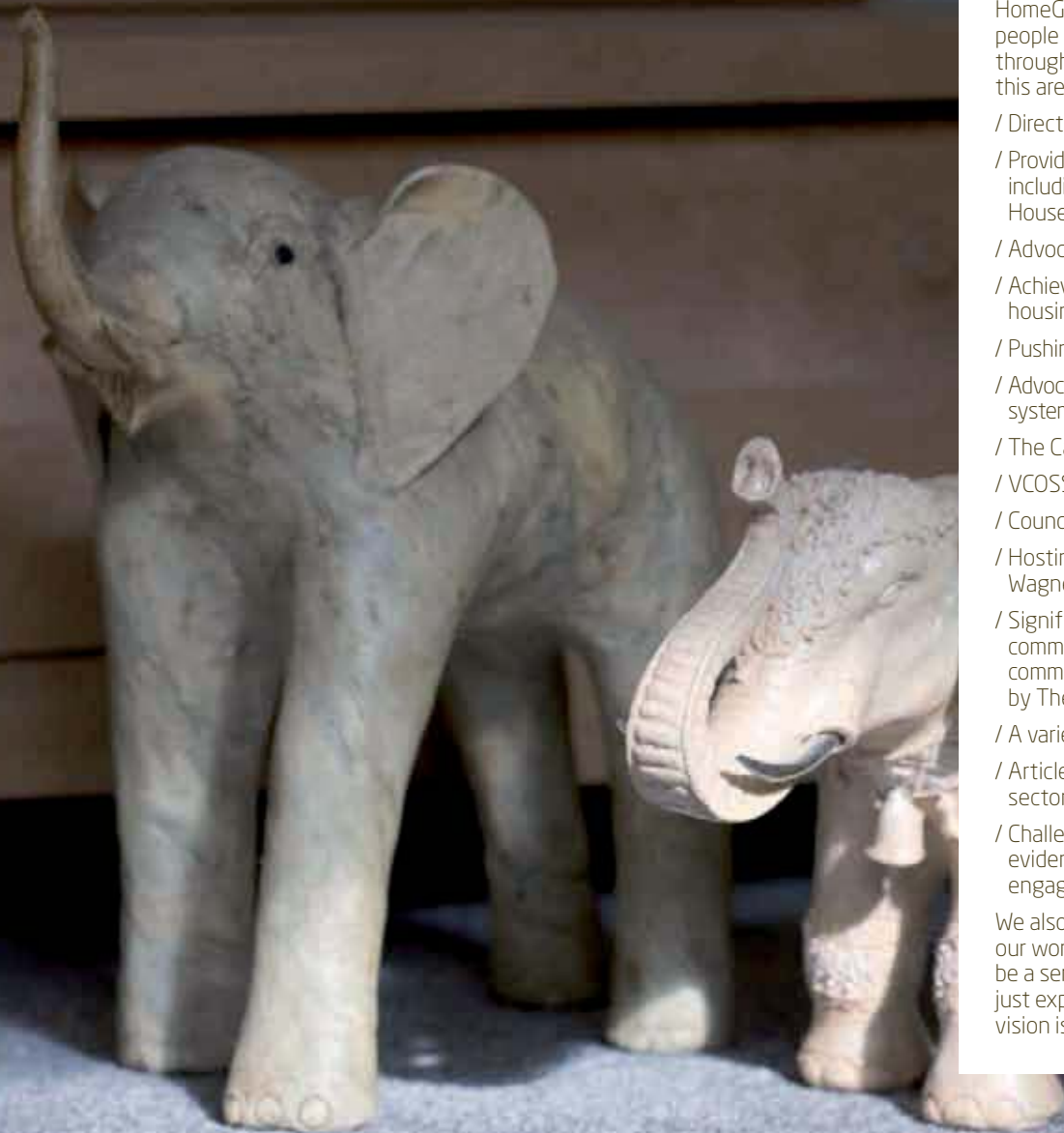
There were also recommendations, including:

- / Increase the time period for intervention support
- / Develop a duty of care referral guide
- / Review the establishment referral process
- / Develop an Office of Housing and SHASP service knowledge exchange
- / Include SHASP referrals in Housing Services Officers' key performance indicators
- / Develop mandatory SHASP training for all Housing Service Officers
- / Develop a state-wide process for recurring homelessness intervention referrals
- / Develop a practice guide for Housing Service Officers and SHASP workers on effective case notes and file notes.

The Victorian Government was quick to respond to this research by increasing resources in all SHASP services across the state and adopting some of the recommendations.

The reason that SHASP works so well is its ability to link in tailored support services into permanent housing. Its main failing is that the time limitations on support do not allow for more complex support needs to be fully met given the inability to form lasting support relationships and to work on longer-term issues a tenant may be facing. It is also an example of a good partnership between the Office of Housing and the community sector.





The opportunity to communicate with, and engage, the community has never been greater due to the urgency of our housing crisis and the momentum growing behind the movement to end homelessness. Realising this extraordinary opportunity will take even more intense and active political leadership than has been present to date. We hope to support, encourage and inform that leadership wherever, whenever and however we can.

HomeGround prides itself on achieving the best possible outcomes for the people we work with and also working to improve the system we work in through strategic advocacy and policy engagement. Some of our work in this area over the last year included:

- / Direct engagement with federal, state and local politicians and policy makers
- / Providing input into government policy and implementation processes including Homelessness 2020, Opening Doors and the Victorian Rooming House Taskforce
- / Advocating for a common public and community housing waiting list
- / Achieving swaps in management between transitional housing and public housing, enabling people to stay in their homes
- / Pushing for the expansion of SHASP resources and longer engagement periods
- / Advocating for increased Housing Establishment Funds (HEF) and HEF system reform
- / The Call This A Home? Campaign for safe rooming houses
- / VCOSS' Decent Not Dodgy campaign for minimum rental standards
- / Council to Homeless Persons' It Takes A Home... campaign
- / Hosting international guests Rosanne Haggerty, Nan Roman and Suzanne Wagner and facilitating their input into local policy development
- / Significant events with leading members of corporate, philanthropic and community sectors around key ideas like Supportive Housing and whole of community approaches to ending homelessness. This included a lunch hosted by Thérèse Rein at The Lodge in Canberra
- / A variety of submissions to state and federal government inquiries and reviews
- / Articles and conference presentations aimed at homelessness and housing sector stakeholders
- / Challenging the misconception that people choose to be homeless through evidence and exploration of what constitutes real choice and proper client engagement in terms of housing and support responses.

We also developed our first three-year Advocacy Strategy, which will guide our work in this area in the coming years. There is no doubt that advocacy can be a sensitive area to work in, particularly in a double election year as we have just experienced, but our resolve to pursue the changes needed to further our vision is as strong as ever.

# OUR SERVICES

## Accommodation Options for Families

Accommodation and support services for homeless families living in rooming houses. It creates pathways out of homelessness.

This is a partnership between HomeGround, VincentCare Victoria and the Department of Human Services.

## Bushfire Case Management Service

This program ran until December 2009. It provided support for people impacted by the Black Saturday bushfires to access assistance including accommodation, finance, employment, education, counselling, health and legal services.

## ConnectED

Housing-focused outreach support aiming to increase housing stability and reduce preventable use of the Alfred Hospital's emergency services by people experiencing chronic homelessness.

This is a multi-disciplinary partnership between HomeGround and the Alfred Hospital, Royal District Nursing Service's Homeless Persons Program, Port Phillip Community Group and Bentleigh Bayside Community Health Service.

## Housing Mental Health Pathways Program

Access to long-term housing and support for people with a history of homelessness being discharged from the Alfred and St Vincent's Hospitals' Acute Psychiatric Inpatient Units in partnership with those two hospitals.

## Housing Options Team

Access to accommodation for people entrenched in homelessness. It works to expand the housing options available to clients by optimising access to social housing, building relationships with serviced apartments and working with the private rental market. It will also facilitate socially aware property owners to make their properties available to people leaving homelessness.

## Initial Assessment and Planning

High volume drop-in service with major access points in Collingwood and St Kilda that provides crisis and long-term housing advice, support and referral services for people who are experiencing or are at risk of homelessness in the City of Melbourne, Port Phillip, Stonnington and Yarra municipalities.

## Integrated Family Violence Services for Men

Assistance for men who are using violence towards family members to find emergency accommodation. It also refers men to other appropriate services and men's behaviour change programs.

## Justice Housing Support Program

Homelessness prevention by providing people discharged from jail with housing and support. This program has access to dedicated transitional housing properties and engages with its clients for as long as they require support to stabilise their housing.

Housing workers based at the Melbourne Magistrates' Court, the Sunshine Magistrates' Court and the Collingwood Neighbourhood Justice Centre provide housing-focused information and referral services.

## Melbourne Street to Home

Melbourne Street to Home was established in mid-2010. It will work to end homelessness for inner-Melbourne's most vulnerable rough sleepers. The Street to Home model identifies the most vulnerable rough sleepers and then moves them into permanent housing and provides appropriate support. Melbourne Street to Home is a partnership with The Salvation Army's Crisis and Adult Services in conjunction with the Royal District Nursing Service.

## Outreach programs

Outreach programs support people with complex needs and long histories of homelessness to stabilise their lives and make the transition from homelessness or insecure housing into stable, secure and affordable long-term housing.

We work with people in homes, rooming houses, hospitals, parks or on the street. The program is aimed at adults who are over 25, living in Yarra and face particularly challenging circumstances and exclusion from other services.

## Private Rental Access Program

Homelessness prevention by facilitating access to private rental housing for women and children leaving family violence situations.

This program operates in partnership with the Salvation Army's Family Violence Service and utilises their specific expertise in family violence support. This model is being trialled with different target groups and the outcomes so far have been excellent.

## Private Rental Management Program

An opportunity for socially aware owners and investors to contribute to ending homelessness by making properties available to people exiting homelessness.

Properties are managed by the HomeGround Property and Tenancy team. The program aims to increase the amount of housing for low-income households. Tenants are provided with support to establish a successful tenancy and deal with their longer-term needs.

This program is made possible by the generous support of The Singer Family Trust and other social landlords.

## Recreation programs

Recreation programs aim to prevent and end homelessness through housing-focused outreach with people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. They primarily work with the Indigenous community local to the Collingwood area. This is done through recreational and community activities including sporting events. The weekly Billabong BBQ is a partnership between the Royal District Nursing Service, North Yarra Community Health Centre, Centrelink and Fitzroy Legal Service. Another Indigenous women's program works closely with the Maya Healing Centre. Recreation programs are a key feature of Elizabeth Street Common Ground.

## Social Housing Advocacy and Support Program

Outreach support to assist public and community housing tenants to establish and maintain long-term tenancies. This includes advocacy and intensive support work with households who are at risk of losing their housing. It has a critical role to play in ending and preventing homelessness due to its

capacity to help people establish and sustain social housing. This reduces cycling through accommodation services, demand on homelessness services and damage to individuals.

## Support for Families at Risk of Homelessness Service

Assistance for families experiencing homelessness in establishing and maintaining social housing tenancies and private rental accommodation. The service will provide intensive long-term support for families to help them build the capacity to maintain their housing. The Support for Families at Risk of Homelessness Service is a partnership with The Salvation Army Social Housing Service and Wombat Housing.

## Supportive Housing

Elizabeth Street Common Ground (ESCG) provides permanent housing and support for 65 previously homeless tenants and 66 low income earners. ESCG features a central location, proximity to transport and employment, a positive social mix of tenants, secure access and a 24-hour support desk. ESCG Supportive Housing is a partnership with Yarra Community Housing, the Victorian and Federal Governments, the Victorian Property Fund and Grocon.

HomeGround is actively implementing other Supportive Housing approaches in our own and other social housing.

## Tenancy and Property

Tenancy and Property manage approximately 300 transitional housing properties in Port Phillip, Stonnington and Yarra in partnership with over 60 support agencies.

HomeGround has developed specialist expertise in this area and has one of the best non-profit tenancy and property management teams in the community sector. Their in-depth understanding of, and close relationship with, support services means that tenants are also supported to deal with the underlying personal issues that form the basis for most tenancy and property issues. HomeGround will continue to contribute to the future development of transitional housing services in Victoria.

TONY  
IS CLOSER  
TO BEING  
PART OF  
A CARING  
COMMUNITY.





## TONY'S STORY

Tony has spent 40 years living in temporary accommodation and constantly moving. Undiagnosed health problems and a lack of support had made finding a permanent home impossible for him.

"I worked with the Salvos picking and delivering to their shops. My Mum worked at Royal Doulton so I knew a lot about crockery, I knew good from bad. I also helped put washing machines and dryers into the Collingwood high-rise flats. You've gotta do something. No point just sitting around.

I lived a pretty normal life until they found out I was epileptic. When I found out, I didn't want anybody to know. You just hide it, but eventually it'll come out. You can't hide it forever. When you're put on a disability pension, you go down to hardly anything per week, which takes the wind out of your sails. You go from driving a car to not doing that, and you realise you'll never have a house again.

I lived at the Carringbush Hotel for years. I used to stack their wood every week. Then I was at The Anchorage, that was alright. Soon after, the Salvos put me on the public housing waiting list. I waited years and got a place, but one of the neighbours was violent ... you've got no idea what I've seen. I was just trying to keep out of the way of people there, that's just how it went.

HomeGround helped me get a transfer away from that place and move here. They've organised a nurse to come every day for my pills and help when I need to go to hospital. Andrew (HomeGround worker) still comes to visit when he's in this area. I'd like to do some volunteer work again if I can. I'm going to call up about it.

I love it here. I can't complain about this. People around here are friendly. They talk to you like you've been here for 20 years. That's what opened my eyes about it. When I walked down the street for the first time and they all say 'hello, how you going?'"

HomeGround helped get Tony into safe housing and provided outreach support for an extended period. HomeGround still liaises with Tony's new support workers and keeps in touch from time to time. Ongoing support will help Tony pursue his future plans, building on the stable foundation that safe, secure and affordable housing has provided.

HomeGround's success continues to be driven by the passionate commitment and skill of our talented staff. In recognition of this, during the past year we developed a human resources strategy that supports our strategic plan.

We have maintained our efforts to be an 'employer of choice'. We are proud of our efforts to maintain a diverse workforce rich in a range of skills and experience that enhances our capacity to provide high quality services to people experiencing homelessness. We provide staff with extensive opportunities to develop their skills and experience to work effectively, engage with social change work and achieve their aspirations.

We have experienced considerable internal development and growth in the past year. Staff numbers rose considerably at the conclusion of recruitment for Elizabeth Street Common Ground, Melbourne Street to Home and other new programs. We have been careful to take steps to ensure this growth is managed effectively and sustainably by increasing our capacity in the areas of human resources, service development and research, communications and corporate and government relations.

Information technology and telecommunications systems have been upgraded over the past 12 months. Investment in other internal resources has improved our ability to support growth. To this end, we have also continued to develop and embed a high quality risk management system. Other internal developments have included the redesign and implementation of an intranet system that provides staff with access to resources and support materials.

Our planning and reporting framework has allowed every member of staff to engage in individual and team planning that links their personal contributions to the achievement of our broader strategic objectives.

We redesigned our business planning and reporting processes, thereby improving the quality of reports produced for a range of stakeholders, including funders and the Board.

Recruiting talented staff has remained a key challenge for us and our peer organisations in the homelessness sector. To manage this effectively, we have continued to build a reputation for offering not only competitive financial and non-financial benefits, but an employment experience which focuses on satisfying and engaging staff, and developing a culture that supports staff to achieve the best possible outcomes for people experiencing homelessness.

Several support systems have been reviewed and redesigned as we have implemented all recommendations from the 2008 QICSA accreditation review. Since then, we have focused on service and practice improvement along with organisational health and sustainability. This remains a priority as we prepare for the next full accreditation review to take place at the beginning of 2011.

We were very pleased that 90% of our staff participated in this year's staff satisfaction survey, which highlighted some areas for improvement while also giving us all a lot to celebrate. Importantly, this survey revealed that a key motivation for staff to work at HomeGround is a commitment to providing quality services to clients. Creating a supportive and engaging work environment for staff to pursue this commitment has been and will continue to be a vital focus of our work.

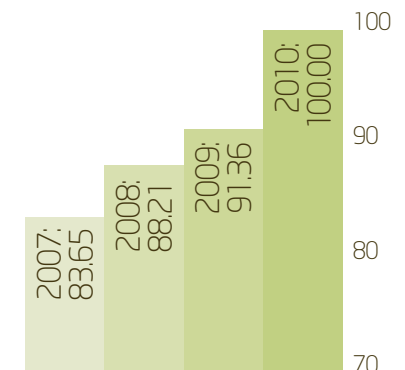
Progress was also made towards the goal of being an employer of choice through the implementation of projects linked to the Human Resources Strategy; such as the review of our human resources policies, development of our first Disability Action Plan and a new performance appraisal process. Linking staff development and work planning has meant that everyone has the opportunity to plan their personal and professional goals.

HomeGround has also just embarked on its first Enterprise Agreement negotiations, and is working closely with the Australian Services Union to deliver a fair and decent set of workplace conditions for all our staff.

"There is a supportive culture that recognises we do really tough jobs and that without support from each other, and from management, it just wouldn't work."

Staff comment

#1 TOTAL STAFF EFT (EQUIVALENT FULL-TIME) AS OF 30 JUNE





Skye is Coordinator of our Inner-North Social Housing Advocacy and Support Program (SHASP) team.

“My first student placement was working with refugees at the Atherton Gardens public housing estate. When it came to my second placement I approached HomeGround. Then I applied for a job with the Preston (Outer-North) SHASP team. That was about three years ago now.

After a year or so in Preston I moved to the Collingwood (Inner-North) SHASP team. Earlier this year I had the opportunity to be acting coordinator, which was a great experience. This led to me filling this role for a year while our coordinator is on maternity leave.

I have also had the chance to take on other responsibilities like being involved in sector-wide projects and representing HomeGround on the Office of Housing’s Hoarding Working Group, which is doing important work to improve outcomes for this group.

I’ve always really enjoyed working here. It’s a really strong organisation with a commitment to ending homelessness. All the programs are very focused on that. It goes across all the different levels from the frontline where we deal with the pointy end of homelessness to the Supportive Housing models that are starting to come in like Elizabeth Street Common Ground. And we’re supporting the most disadvantaged and getting them into permanent housing. I think it’s fantastic HomeGround’s taken that path.

The program I work for is also a really positive program that’s had great outcomes for clients. It’s a program I feel very strongly about. Seeing the benefits in terms of HomeGround’s vision of ending homelessness is exciting.

We are now seeing the SHASP model flow into private rental housing through the new Support for Families at Risk program. This is a step in the right direction with early intervention to prevent homelessness.

I feel very supported here. There is strong peer support and a good culture. People are flexible and understand what we are trying to do. It’s allowed me to move into new roles and my confidence has grown.

One of our biggest challenges is working with clients who hoard. Some people store huge amounts of stuff in their homes and it becomes a fire risk and they can be threatened with eviction by the Office of Housing. It takes a long time to work with hoarders, maybe a year or two. There are reasons why people hoard and they can’t just stop overnight.

The problem is that our funding guidelines don’t fit that approach, we are only funded to work with people for six to eight weeks. I’d love to see some more funding for this group so that we could do the long-term work properly.

Before HomeGround, I did all sorts of things. I travelled, worked in hospitality and studied Auslan. I was an after-school care integration aide and worked with the deaf community. At some stage I realised I wanted to do social work. This is the first time I actually want to come to work. I really feel it’s a career I’m happy with.”



SKYE'S STORY

# CLIENT STATISTICS



## Client numbers

Existing	5,510
New	4,276
Total	9,786

## By service

Initial Assessment and Planning	7,280
ConnectED	12
Justice Housing Support Program	61
Outreach	123
Private Rental Access Program	120
Bushfire Case Management Service	51
Housing Mental Health Pathways Program	96
Tenancy and Property Management	508
Social Housing Advocacy and Support Program	1,338
Housing Outreach Worker Program	183

## Gender

M	59%
F	38%
Unknown	3%

## Age

<17	0.8%
18-24	12.7%
25-34	28.5%
35-44	27.9%
45-54	17.1%
>55	10.8%
Unknown	2.2%

1.8% increase in >55  
Small decreases in younger age groups

## Income types

Newstart Allowance (unemployed)	31%
Disability Support Pension	23%
Parenting Payment	11%
Other (including employed people)	10%
No form of income support	5%
Unknown or not collected	17%

## Household type

Singles	68.8%
Couple no children	6.2%
Single parent	15.7%
Couple with children	4.5%
Other/Unknown	4.9%

## Languages

English	85.6%
Other/Unknown	14.4%

## Top 5 other languages

Vietnamese	19.9%
Arabic	14.7%
African languages	10.6%
Russian	6.6%
Turkish	6.4%

## Country of birth

Australia	73.8%
Other/Unknown	26.2%

## Top 5 other countries of birth

Sudan	10.4%
Vietnam	10.1%
Somalia	7.4%
Ethiopia	7.1%
New Zealand	6.2%

## Indigenous clients

Non-Indigenous	86.5%
Indigenous/ Torres Strait Islander	4%
Unknown	9%

# FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

## Income and Expenditure Statement for Year ended 30 June 2010

	2009/2010	2008/2009
<b>Income</b>		
Grants and subsidies	10,610,748	9,656,965
Grants in advance	1,513,853	-
Interest	133,450	170,860
Miscellaneous	557,323	288,165
THM rental income	1,046,519	1,048,416
<b>Total income</b>	<b>13,861,893</b>	<b>11,164,406</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Staff costs	6,338,694	6,054,166
Motor vehicles	448,617	392,370
Office costs	555,461	442,439
Miscellaneous	1,691,833	978,664
Client costs	1,747,233	1,787,070
THM property costs	454,539	502,977
THM rental expenses	1,023,406	1,034,182
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>12,259,783</b>	<b>11,191,868</b>
<b>Net surplus</b>	<b>1,602,110</b>	<b>-27,462</b>
Accumulated surplus brought forward	2,109,458	2,136,920
<b>Accumulated surplus</b>	<b>3,711,568</b>	<b>2,109,458</b>

## Balance sheet for year ending 30 June 2010

	2009/2010	2008/2009
<b>Current assets</b>		
Cash and investments	4,662,075	3,283,705
Receivables and payments	170,821	68,551
<b>Total current assets</b>	<b>4,832,896</b>	<b>3,352,256</b>
<b>Total non current assets</b>	<b>1,279,477</b>	<b>935,756</b>
<b>Current liabilities</b>		
Creditors and borrowings	922,439	1,275,789
Provisions	595,995	422,903
Other	-	1,110
<b>Total current liabilities</b>	<b>1,518,434</b>	<b>1,699,802</b>
<b>Total non current liabilities</b>	<b>882,372</b>	<b>478,752</b>
<b>Equity</b>		
Accumulated earnings	1,499,096	1,199,489
Furniture and housing reserves	698,620	909,969
Program funding received in advance	1,513,853	-
<b>Total equity</b>	<b>3,711,569</b>	<b>2,109,458</b>

The above summary of financial information has been extracted from the audited financial report for the company of the year ended 30 June 2010.

*Danby Bland Provan & Co*

**Danby Bland Provan & Co, Chartered Accountants**  
123 Camberwell Road Hawthorn East Victoria

*G D Winnett*

**G D Winnett, Partner**  
23 September 2010

Major service and research partners

Alfred Hospital  
 Australian Community Support Organisation  
 Australian Housing and Urban  
 Research Institute  
 Centrelink – Indigenous Engagement Service  
 Community Corrections  
 / Better Pathways Program  
 Council to Homeless Persons  
 / Homeless Advocacy Service  
 / Peer Educator Support Program  
 Doutta Galla Community Health  
 Eastern Emergency Relief Network  
 Family Violence Outreach Program  
 Hanover Welfare Services  
 Hotham Mission  
 Housing Choices Australia  
 Inner South Community Health Service  
 Maya Living Free Healing Association  
 Melbourne Citymission  
 Melbourne Division of General Practice  
 Neighbourhood Justice Centre  
 Ngwala Willumbong  
 North East Housing Service  
 North Yarra Community Health  
 Port Phillip Community Group  
 Quantum Support Services  
 Royal District Nursing Service  
 / Homeless Persons Program  
 Rural Housing Network  
 St Vincent’s Hospital  
 The Salvation Army Adult Services  
 The Salvation Army Crisis Services  
 Victorian Aboriginal Health Service  
 VincentCare Victoria  
 Wintringham  
 Yarra Community Housing

Supportive Housing partners and supporters

Australian Common Ground Alliance  
 / Common Ground Adelaide  
 / Common Ground Tasmania  
 / Mercy Foundation (NSW)  
 / Micah Projects (QLD)  
 Central City Concern (USA)  
 Common Ground (USA)  
 Commonwealth Government of Australia  
 Community Access (USA)  
 Corporation for Supportive Housing (USA)  
 Grocon  
 Mercy Foundation (NSW)  
 Micah Projects (QLD)  
 Nan Roman and the National Alliance  
 to End Homelessness (USA)  
 Philip Mangano (USA)  
 Rokus Loopik (Netherlands)  
 Rosanne Haggerty (USA)  
 Royal District Nursing Service  
 / Homeless Persons Program  
 Rotary Club of Melbourne  
 Rotary Club of Melbourne Park  
 Rural Housing Network  
 Steve Coe (Community Access USA)  
 Suzanne Wagner (USA)  
 Yarra Community Housing

Funding partners

Bayside City Council  
 Commonwealth Department of Families,  
 Housing, Community Services  
 and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA)  
 Commonwealth Department of  
 Health and Ageing  
 Melbourne City Council  
 Port Phillip City Council  
 Victorian Department of Human Services  
 Victorian Department of Justice  
 Yarra City Council

Philanthropic partners

Bagot Gjergja Foundation  
 Collie Foundation  
 George Hicks Foundation  
 John T Reid Charitable Trusts  
 Lord Mayor’s Charitable Foundation  
 Melbourne Community Foundation  
 Mercy Foundation  
 Myer Fund  
 OTEK Australia  
 Oxwood Holdings Pty Ltd  
 Perpetual Trustees  
 Rotary Club of Melbourne  
 Rotary Club of Melbourne Park  
 Singer Family Trust

Pro bono/Corporate partners

Aesop  
 Affordable Housing Solutions  
 Anaconda  
 Ashton Raggatt McDougall  
 Brand Strategy Television  
 Bunnings  
 Change Agent Network  
 CPR Communications  
 and Public Relations  
 Dan Murphy’s  
 Elmwood Design  
 Enhance  
 Ernst and Young  
 Fishbowl PR  
 Good Guys  
 Grocon  
 Haigh’s Chocolates  
 Harvey Norman  
 Hide and Seek Productions  
 iHR Australia  
 Jack Diamond  
 Kmart  
 m.a.d.woman  
 Maddocks  
 Melbourne City Baths  
 Middletons  
 National Gallery of Victoria  
 Paterson’s Cake Shop Pty Ltd  
 Ponch Hawkes Photography  
 Silent Partners  
 Simon O’Halloran Design  
 Stokes Street Studio  
 Victorian Association  
 for the Teaching of English

## OUR STAFF



"We don't just work in the system, but also try to make the system better at the same time."

Staff comment

"Today I am in wonderful, stable housing thanks to HomeGround."

Client comment

Corporate Enquiries

General  
Phone 9288 9600  
Fax 9288 9601  
info@homeground.org.au

Media  
Phone 0402 596 297  
media@homeground.org.au

Recruitment  
www.currentjobs.homeground.org.au  
humanresources@homeground.org.au

HomeGround City

Supportive Housing  
Phone 8359 0200  
Fax 8359 0201

HomeGround Collingwood

All services  
68 Oxford Street Collingwood 3066

Housing  
Freecall 1800 048 325  
Phone 9288 9611  
Fax 9288 9602

Support  
Phone 9288 9611  
Fax 9288 9601

Outreach  
Phone 9288 9650  
Fax 9288 9601

HomeGround Prahran

Tenancy and Property  
Phone 9537 7999  
Fax 9537 7797

HomeGround St Kilda

All services  
122 Chapel Street St Kilda 3182

Housing  
Phone 9537 7711  
Fax 9537 7722

Support  
Phone 9537 7888  
Fax 9537 7991

Outreach  
Phone 9537 7711  
Fax 9537 7722

HomeGround Preston

Support  
Phone 9471 4522  
Freecall 1300 844 125  
Fax 9471 4533

