

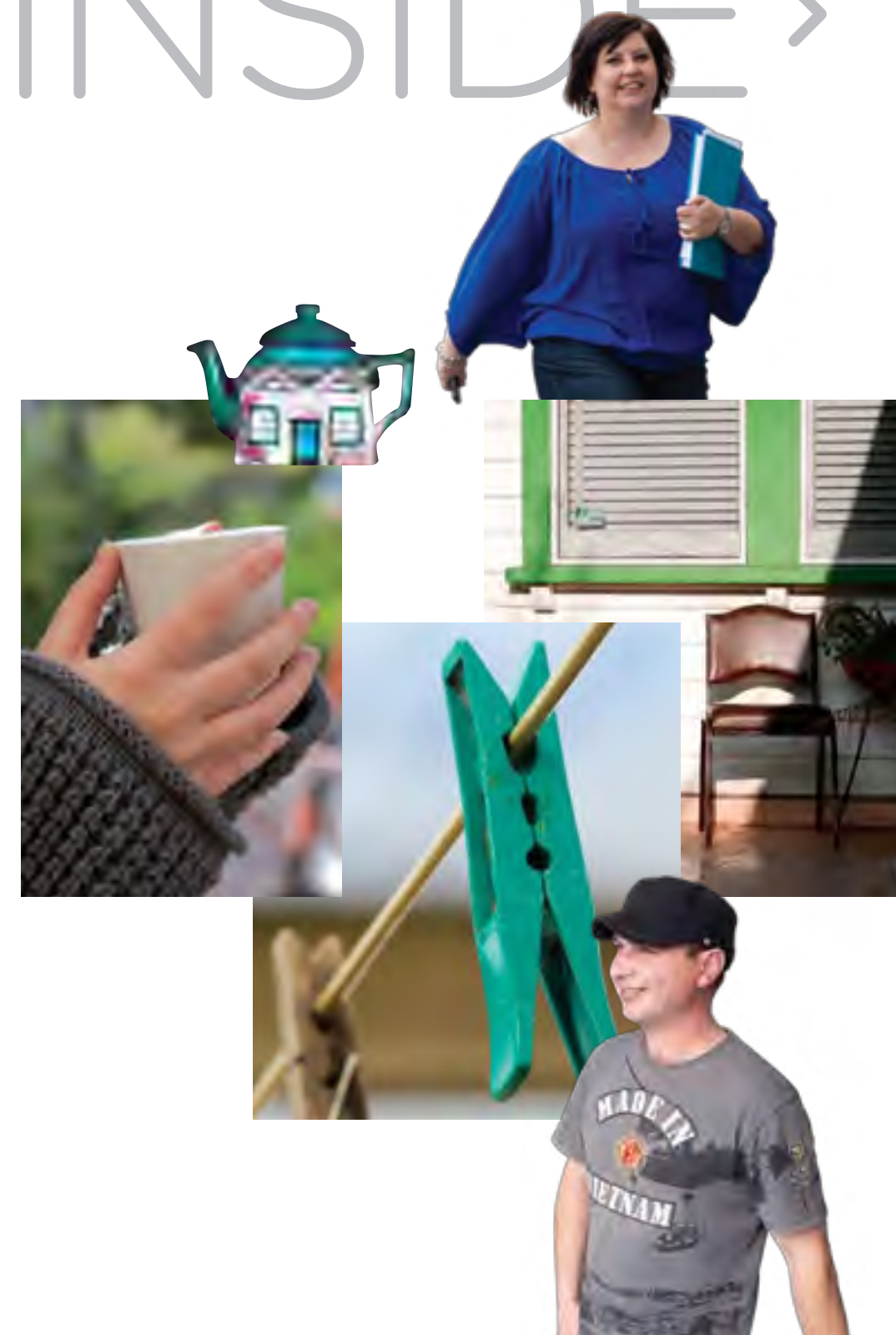
# HomeGround Services

THE YEAR IN REVIEW [HOW VICTORIA CAN END HOMELESSNESS](#) MAKING OUTCOMES  
MEASUREMENT WORK [ASSESSING OPENING DOORS](#) MELBOURNE STREET TO HOME  
[TRULY SOCIAL HOUSING](#) ADVOCACY [RESEARCH](#) WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS  
THE 2010/11 **HOMEGROUND** ANNUAL REPORT

“  
**HOMELESSNESS**  
 IS AN EXPENSIVE AND WASTEFUL  
**POLICY FAILURE**  
 THAT DAMAGES LIVES, FAMILIES  
 AND COMMUNITIES.  
 ”

^  
 Stephen Nash, CEO,  
 HomeGround Services

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See [www.homeground.org.au](http://www.homeground.org.au)  
 or [www.youtube.com/homegroundservices](http://www.youtube.com/homegroundservices)  
 for more information and stories from our work.



*"Just like to say thank you for the opportunity that my son and I have been given. It's a new start for our lives."*

Client feedback

“  
**HOMEGROUND HAS BEEN AN ACTIVE PARTICIPANT WORKING WITH THE STATE GOVERNMENT AND OTHERS IN THE HOMELESSNESS SECTOR TO DEVELOP NEW AND INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS.**  
”

In particular by supporting people who have experienced long-term chronic homelessness; assisting them to achieve stability and positive changes in their lives and enabling them to reconnect with their community.

I look forward to working with HomeGround in the future as we implement the new Victorian Homelessness Action Plan.

”



^  
The Hon Wendy Lovell MP,  
Victorian Minister for Housing

“  
**THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT THANKS HOMEGROUND FOR YOUR EXTRAORDINARY EFFORTS IN HELPING SOME OF THE MOST VULNERABLE AUSTRALIANS.**  
”

You are leading the way in breaking the cycle of homelessness, particularly through Elizabeth Street Common Ground, which has given 65 people a brighter future.

The Australian Government is deeply committed to reducing homelessness and \$5 billion has been invested since 2008 in better support services and more housing. But it is the hard work and dedication of organisations like HomeGround that makes the difference on the ground.

I congratulate HomeGround on your achievements and for working together with services and governments to make an amazing difference to the lives of many Australians.

”



^  
Senator the Hon Mark Arbib,  
Federal Minister for Social Housing  
and Homelessness

# OUR VISION

> TO END HOMELESSNESS  
IN MELBOURNE

# OUR MISSION

> TO GET PEOPLE HOUSED  
AND KEEP PEOPLE HOUSED

# OUR VALUES

> **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 TASK  
OF REDUCING  
HOMELESSNESS  
REQUIRES BOLD  
REFORM IN POLICY  
AND IN PRACTICE.

But above all it requires people and organisations who bring fresh thinking to familiar problems and who combine innovation with clarity of purpose. HomeGround is an exemplar of such an organisation.

”

Tony Nicholson,  
Chair, Prime Minister's Council on Homelessness;  
CEO, Brotherhood of St Laurence



# OUR 2009 – 2012 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- 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

## THE YEAR THAT WAS



### KEY HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LAST YEAR INCLUDE:

- > Working with over 9,000 Victorian households to prevent or end their homelessness by providing housing, support and outreach services
- > Guiding Elizabeth Street Common Ground through its first year and witnessing people begin to achieve housing stability and put long histories of homelessness behind them
- > Taking ownership of affordable housing properties to ensure access for people who have been homeless and to leverage future affordable and supportive housing developments
- > Further developing and refining our approach to supportive housing to incorporate active outreach support provision in different density housing such as The Nicholson in East Coburg and projects in the City of Yarra and CBD
- > Holding Victoria's first Street to Home Registry Week together with our partners in Melbourne Street to Home and successfully housing 32 of the most vulnerable people sleeping rough
- > Creating new pathways into private rental housing and developing evidence to support this approach across our Private Rental Access (PRAP), Private Rental Brokerage (PRBP) and Housing Options (HOP) programs and through the Better Options research project
- > Supporting the growing movement to end homelessness and advocating in support of Housing First and supportive housing approaches

- > Nurturing philanthropic leadership towards ending homelessness from organisations such as the Rotary Club of Melbourne, John T Reid Charitable Trusts, Collie Foundation and Grocon
- > Forming a new and unique partnership with the Centre for Adult Education (CAE) at Elizabeth Street Common Ground to provide training and employment for some of the most socially excluded members of the community
- > Undertaking a comprehensive internal review of our largest service, Initial Assessment and Planning (IAP), which provides housing advice to around 7,000 households each year
- > Achieving our Quality Improvement Council (QICSA) accreditation and maintaining our status as a registered Housing Provider and our accreditation under the Homeless Assistance Service and Psychiatric Disability Rehabilitation and Support Standards
- > Successfully negotiating our first Enterprise Agreement with staff and the Australian Services Union

## THE YEAR AHEAD

### MAJOR PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT YEAR INCLUDE:

- > Continuing to be one of the most effective service delivery organisations in Australia across our broad range of housing, homelessness, support and outreach services
- > Advancing our goal of five supportive housing developments by 2020, following on from the success of Elizabeth Street Common Ground and The Nicholson, including various small-scale and scatter site supportive housing developments
- > Housing the 100 most vulnerable people sleeping rough through Melbourne Street to Home
- > Unlocking additional access to public, community and private housing options as both a preventative approach and an exit pathway out of homelessness
- > Further sharpening our focus on measurable housing and wellbeing outcomes for households across all of our services
- > Establishing ourselves as a reliable and constructive partner for the new Victorian Government in both the delivery of effective housing and support programs, but also in the process of reforming policy and systems as outlined in the Victorian Homelessness Action Plan

- > Strengthening our research, service development, advocacy and communication activities to ensure we remain at the forefront of articulating the way forward for homelessness and housing services in Victoria
- > Beginning the development of our second three-year strategic plan in collaboration with staff, clients and external stakeholders
- > Implementing a competency based framework for staff across the organisation

*"Thank you for your help. I don't know where I would be without your help."*

Client feedback



# IT IS TIME

# FOR A BOLD VISION

## WELCOME TO OUR 2010/2011 ANNUAL REPORT.

HomeGround's board and staff team look back on the previous year with a sense of success and optimism about the future.

We have continued our focus on developing and refining strong models that combine housing and support in new ways, based on the best evidence and a clear focus on long-term housing outcomes for the people we work with, whether it is through prevention, early intervention or more intensive services targeting the most vulnerable and entrenched.



Neil Chatfield, Chairperson



Stephen Nash, CEO

*"We are particularly proud of our second major housing development, The Nicholson."*

Our outcomes focused approach has been boosted by the White Paper's establishment of achievable and measurable targets for reducing homelessness.

Other newer approaches that deserve greater recognition include those that have broken down the social and economic barriers to accessing private rental housing for low income households and those that have focused on saving families and children from the horrors of homelessness and the poorly regulated private rooming house sector. We are at the forefront of work in both these areas and will continue this focus in the years to come.

We are particularly proud of our second major housing development in East Coburg, known as The Nicholson, which has taken the idea of positive social mix and extended it to mixed tenure (tenants and homeowners) and commercial and retail spaces – all in the same building.

We hope this concept can be adapted and implemented throughout Australia as a future model for social housing within mixed tenure, mixed use developments.

*"Access to safe, secure and affordable housing with individually tailored support is essential."*

## A CONTINUED FOCUS ON DEVELOPING AND REFINING STRONG MODELS THAT COMBINE HOUSING AND SUPPORT IN NEW WAYS, BASED ON THE BEST EVIDENCE.

As an organisation, we have seen support grow for a number of new approaches that are helping many to avoid or escape from the trauma of homelessness and get back onto the firm foundation of housing we all need.

The best known of these are Elizabeth Street Common Ground and Melbourne Street to Home, which have received a lot of attention due to their implementation of Housing First and Supportive Housing approaches. They received mainstream endorsement through the Federal Government's White Paper on Homelessness and have subsequently been implemented across the country.

### HOUSING AFFORDABILITY WORSENS FURTHER

Despite these positive developments, the predicament for individuals and families experiencing homelessness or housing crisis in general remains truly bleak as the demand for affordable housing in Victoria increases further.

We have seen private rents and house prices rise beyond many peoples reach. Victoria's public housing waiting list is approaching 40,000 with others on community housing lists and more and more wait times classed as 'indefinite'. At the same time, some of the most in need are not even on waiting lists.

The crisis and breakdown of secure households into first-time homelessness continues despite the best efforts of services. The difficulties of getting people back into secure housing are more challenging than ever as the supply of housing options shrinks and the complex needs of people accessing services increase.

Homelessness undermines individual and community strength and has extensive spillover effects for the broader economy as it disrupts and restricts opportunities for education, employment, social connection, health and wellbeing.

Without significant focus and sustained investment in creating new affordable housing and dedicated access pathways for people who are already homeless, this situation will only deteriorate further.

The longer an individual or family remains homeless, the more complex needs they will develop and the greater the trauma they will later have to overcome in order to reconnect with family, friends, community, education and employment.

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**ACCESS TO NEW HOUSING IS VITAL**

There still remains a significant opportunity to unlock access to the final release of the 4,000 public and community housing properties being constructed under Nation Building.

So far, it appears that very small numbers of those in contact with homelessness services have been able to get into these properties in Victoria, and we will be tireless in our efforts to connect these properties with homelessness policy to create pathways for the explicit purpose of reducing homelessness.

*"We are witnessing the mass realisation that homelessness does not exist in a vacuum."*



**HOMELESSNESS TOUCHES US ALL**

One of the few positives that has come out of the spread of homelessness and housing affordability concerns is that, across government and the community sector, we are witnessing the beginnings of a realisation that homelessness does not exist in a vacuum.

Many have needs across mainstream and other service systems. The trauma of homelessness directly exacerbates their needs in these non-housing areas, resulting in a huge and growing burden on systems including hospitals, community health, mental health, drug and alcohol, crisis accommodation, justice/police and disability.

**A NEW GOVERNMENT SETS COURSE**

Here in Victoria, we have seen a new government navigating the complex process of reviewing and formulating social policy, and in particular with regard to housing and homelessness.

We are encouraged by their initial efforts and in particular the release of a Victorian Homelessness Action Plan. We are committed to supporting and contributing to the successful execution of that plan, and in particular we will continue to respond positively to the need for innovation and the introduction of new models which challenge the misconception that homelessness is inevitable.

We retain hope for the areas they are focusing on and we are actively engaging with new ministers and existing departmental, sector and research partners in supporting the best of what is being done at the moment in addition to new reforms that will improve long-term housing outcomes for individuals and families in crisis.

There is a real opportunity here to be grasped by the new government.

HOUSING IS THE FOUNDATION FOR PHYSICAL & MENTAL HEALTH, SAFETY, EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND HOPE FOR THE FUTURE.

Our initial meetings with Minister Lovell have been very positive and we are heartened that prevention, early intervention and targeted housing and support responses that lead to clear outcomes are all part of the plan.

There are good reasons to think that progress interstate can be picked up in Victoria. We have confidence in the Baillieu Government to confront the required policy challenges given the massive personal, social and economic consequences of failure.

Even a hard headed analysis of waste and productivity in mainstream systems should be enough to motivate action, let alone the deep and degrading trauma that individuals and families experience when they fall out of secure housing.

Beyond Victorian and Federal Government leadership, we will continue to expand the scope and diversity of our cross-community partnerships and raise awareness and interest in, and support for, our vision to end homelessness in Melbourne. Successfully leveraging non-government support through partnerships remains a major focus of our work.

*"There is a real opportunity here for the new Victorian Government to grasp."*

**THANKS**

We have an amazing group of people here at HomeGround. They are professional, committed and good at what they do - especially when things are tough. They are the stars of the show.

We are encouraged by the stories we hear of our staff succeeding in finding long-term housing and supporting vulnerable households to access and keep it - even in the midst of our deep affordable housing crisis.

Every week we hear positive feedback as well as the inevitable stories of suffering and setbacks. These are a continual reminder 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.

We must also acknowledge the members of our board who manage their governance responsibilities closely while challenging us to look at new ways of doing things in pursuit of our vision. Farewell to Sally Parnell and welcome to Dimity Reed OAM, who has joined us this year.

Finally, thanks to all our partners and funding bodies who make the work we do possible. We look forward to another exciting and successful year ahead.

Neil Chatfield, Chairperson

Stephen Nash, CEO

# OUR BOARD

WE ARE GOVERNED BY A PROFESSIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

OUR DIRECTORS HAVE BROAD PUBLIC, PRIVATE AND COMMUNITY SECTOR EXPERTISE FROM A RANGE OF AREAS.

**ABSENT FROM PHOTOGRAPH:**

**WAYNE READ**

**Qualifications**  
Bachelor of Economics (Honours); Associate, Institute of Chartered Accountants 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

**ROBERT TURNBULL  
INDEPENDENT CHAIR,  
AUDIT AND  
RISK COMMITTEE**

**Qualifications**  
Bachelor of Commerce; Masters of Business Administration, FCPA, ACIS

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



**PETER CLARK**

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

**Employment**  
Senior Program Manager - Housing, Mind Australia

**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

**DOMINIC ESPOSITO**

**Qualifications**  
Bachelor of Laws

**Employment**  
Solicitor

**SIMONE GANDUR**

**Qualifications**  
Bachelor of Arts

**Employment**  
Director, Communications, Department of Human Services

**GINA HANSON**

**Qualifications**  
Master of Environmental Studies; Bachelor of Natural Resource (Honours)

**Employment**  
Senior Policy Adviser, Aboriginal Affairs Taskforce, Victorian Department of Planning and Community Development

**DIMITY REED  
OAM**

**Qualifications**  
Bachelor of Architecture; Master of Architecture; Life Fellow, Royal Australian Institute of Architects.

**Employment**  
Principal, Dimity Reed and Associates, Architecture, Planning, Urban Design

**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

**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

**GUY GILBERT**

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

**Employment**  
Barrister



# ANGELA'S PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE



## ANGELA FOUND HERSELF WITHOUT A HOME FOR THE FIRST TIME AT 55.



**ANGELA ENJOYED AN ORDINARY LIFE.** However, when she had to take on full-time caring responsibility for her granddaughter and experienced the breakdown of her marriage, she quickly found herself in the shocking position of being without a home for the first time at the age of 55.

"I was working in administration at the time and have worked all my life. We were pretty well off, living in Caroline Springs in a nice house. I never thought it would be so easy to lose it all.

"When I took custody of my granddaughter, who is autistic, I had to give up my job. At first I stayed with friends and family, but having two whole families in one house is stressful for everyone.

"Then we had to live in shitty rooming houses; and motels when we could. We were spending more than \$500 a week for two rooms in the rooming houses, sharing with strangers, or \$100 a night for five people to share a single motel room. We could hear each other thinking.

"I had my other granddaughter as well, who was seven and couldn't go to school because of our situation, plus a son of my own with a disability. She was missing out on her education and we were all missing out on a normal life. Every day was tough.

"We tried to get housing in a rental place but none of the agents would look at us. Being a family and being homeless is just too much trouble for most of them. We were stuck for nearly three years and I couldn't see a way out. At one time we had all our stuff in a car outside the latest motel and were just ringing people to find out where we could go.

"When HomeGround got involved, everything changed. They gave us personal support through Accommodation Options for Families, helped us work out what we needed and found us a private rental property through their Housing Options Program. We are a strong family and never gave up, but sometimes you just need some help to find a way out.

*"We are a strong family and never gave up, but sometimes you just need some help to find a way out."*

"It's been nearly a year. My older one is enrolled at the local primary school and my adult children have a place to stay when they need it. I'm negotiating to take over the lease here in my own name eventually.

"I'm planning on studying psychology at uni next year. We've got our lives back."

Angela's story was featured in *The Age* earlier this year: [www.tinyurl.com/AngelaHG](http://www.tinyurl.com/AngelaHG)



▲ Nick, a year after moving into his new apartment

# MELBOURNE STREET TO HOME ONE YEAR ON

*"Rough sleepers and people who are chronically homeless are more likely to have complex needs such as mental health issues, substance abuse and disabilities. They are also more likely to experience chronic health issues and have a mortality rate three to four times higher than that of the general population."*

Federal White Paper on Homelessness



▲ Shane, from many years sleeping rough to a permanent home

Melbourne Street to Home celebrated its first anniversary with its second health survey of people sleeping rough in inner-Melbourne. Known as Registry Week, this forms the basis for identifying and engaging with the most vulnerable people sleeping rough in order to prioritise access to permanent housing, support and health services.

People assessed as 'vulnerable' have a significant risk of death in the next five years if their homelessness continues.

Following the first Registry Week in 2010, Melbourne Street to Home identified the 50 most vulnerable people surveyed and began to engage with them in order to end their experience of homelessness.

Many had been homeless for more than 20 years and the majority had a combination of serious physical and mental health issues combined with a high rate of substance use and victimisation.

The results exceeded expectations. Of the first 50, 32 are now in permanent housing with the support and health services they need while about 10 are in some form of transitional or temporary accommodation. The remaining individuals are still homeless and most are still receiving regular assertive outreach from our team. This shows us what is possible through this model.

Registry Week 2011 involved around 80 volunteers and 30 organisations going out from 3am and interviewing people sleeping outside as well as taking advantage of popular day centres to interview those who were not easily found during the morning.

The results revealed that the level of complex needs and overall vulnerability amongst people sleeping rough is high and getting higher. They highlighted key homelessness entry pathways located in other institutional systems such as child protection, hospitals, mental health services and the justice system.

Melbourne Street to Home is a partnership between HomeGround Services, The Salvation Army Adult Services, The Salvation Army Crisis Services and the RDNS – Homeless Persons Program.

[www.facebook.com/MS2HFB](http://www.facebook.com/MS2HFB)  
[www.twitter.com/\\_MS2H](http://www.twitter.com/_MS2H)  
[www.homeground.org.au](http://www.homeground.org.au)

*"Of the first 50, 32 are now in permanent housing with the support and health services they need while about 10 are in some form of transitional or temporary accommodation."*



▲ Carl is off the streets, stable and recently enrolled at Melbourne University

# GUIDING

*"Letting an individual or family fall into homelessness begins a process of harm and entrenchment that damages those involved and increases the complexity and cost of supporting them back into housing again in the future."*

# THE WAY



The best estimate we have of homelessness in Australia is around 100,000 people with over 20,000 in Victoria. That figure is now five years old and we won't get a new one until the arrival of the 2011 Census data some time in 2012.

Data collected by homelessness services shows that the numbers of contacts have increased in the last five years, by almost 7% overall and by significantly more than that for those aged under 15 and between 35-64. Reductions were recorded for those aged 25-34 and over 65.

This suggests that the difficulty in solving homelessness for people seeking help continues to grow as our affordable housing crisis pulls the rug out from under more households each year.

Ending homelessness requires more than policy tweaks. It requires large-scale reform that will only be possible if we establish a renewed framework for homelessness and housing policy with a clear focus on reduction outcomes.

A framework for ending homelessness will guide individual reforms to ensure they are integrated and consistent with the overall objective to significantly reduce the number of individuals and families without a safe, secure and affordable home to call their own.

## WHY SHOULD VICTORIANS CARE ABOUT REDUCING HOMELESSNESS?

The most urgent argument for ending homelessness is a moral one. The experience of losing stability, security and safety, of slipping into a bleak world of violence, shame and hopelessness is something no-one deserves.

It scars people for life, breaks apart families and creates inter-generational suffering and disadvantage. The physical and psychological damage caused by homelessness is traumatic, yet possible to deal with once someone has access to a home.

*"Ending homelessness in Victoria requires large-scale reform that will only be possible if we establish a renewed framework for homelessness and housing policy."*

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## ACROSS PORTFOLIOS

**THERE ARE COMPELLING ARGUMENTS FOR ACTION BASED IN ECONOMICS AND GOOD GOVERNANCE.**

- **WHAT TREASURER** could justify spending \$575 a night to treat someone who is homeless in a mental health bed when they could be spending \$75 a night solving the problem in permanent supportive housing?
- **WHAT HEALTH MINISTER** wouldn't jump at the chance to divert the most common emergency room and ambulance users into options that save money and free up the public system?
- **WHAT CORRECTIONS MINISTER** would pass up the chance to cut recidivism through housing with support that addresses the root causes of why some people offend and re-offend?
- **WHAT HOUSING MINISTER** wouldn't want to be the one who turned around the spread of homelessness and set Victoria on the path towards ending one of our most costly, preventable and solvable social problems?
- **WHAT PREMIER** would want to miss the chance to eliminate our most insidious poverty trap and drive greater social and economic participation to reduce welfare dependency?

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**BUT CAN VICTORIA DO IT?**

There is no doubt we can get the vast majority of people experiencing homelessness into safe, secure and affordable housing, if they are able to access appropriate housing and flexible support services.

Even the most entrenched, including those with extreme behaviours and complex needs can successfully follow such a pathway into stable housing. This has been shown by approaches already in operation, including Elizabeth Street Common Ground and Melbourne Street to Home, among others.

Preventing homelessness is an even more straightforward task and relies primarily on early identification of those at risk, rapid intervention to resolve risks of losing housing or to find new housing, therefore avoiding homelessness. Ongoing support may be needed for some, but many will sustain their housing independently.

However, letting an individual or family fall into homelessness begins a process of harm and entrenchment that damages those involved and increases the complexity and cost of helping them back into housing again in the future. Homelessness disrupts educational and employment pathways and opportunities, social connections and health and wellbeing.

When children and young people are allowed to become homeless, the costs to society can be measured in a lifetime of trauma and welfare dependency that stretches out across the generations.

**SO WHAT'S STOPPING US?**

The basic elements in solving homelessness (quality housing and support) are currently not co-ordinated to achieve the best possible outcomes.

The new Victorian Homelessness Action Plan lays the groundwork for a new policy direction that better addresses the needs of households who are homeless or at risk through integrated housing and support provision.

Significant progress will not be achieved without a clear plan that links an adequate supply of appropriate housing to a variety of support and health services.



\* \* \* \* \*  
**NO-ONE DESERVES TO LOSE STABILITY, SECURITY & SAFETY, SLIPPING INTO A BLEAK WORLD OF VIOLENCE, SHAME & HOPELESSNESS.**  
 \* \* \* \* \*

**WHAT WOULD A FRAMEWORK FOR ENDING HOMELESSNESS LOOK LIKE?**

The key elements of a framework for ending homelessness would include:

- > A vision that brings people together around a clear focus on ending homelessness in Victoria
- > Short, medium and long-term targets for funded services, regions and the overall system
- > A focus on long-term housing and wellbeing outcomes as the basis for services and efficient government investment
- > A commitment to placing the person seeking assistance at the centre of the system with services wrapping around them rather than an expectation they can navigate a complex service system
- > Smart data collection, research and evidence development to ensure accurate outcomes measurement and funding accountability
- > A focus on broad community partnerships that provide opportunities for philanthropy, corporates and members of the community to leverage skills and investment
- > Much greater investment in prevention, including the integration of 'triggers' in education, health, child protection, justice, mental health, disability, family violence, public/community housing, private rental, Centrelink and other systems
- > A focus on funding medium to long-term responses that provide immediate access to appropriate housing with flexible support packages that establish and sustain strong tenancies
- > Linking of housing and support across the sector so they are delivered together, either by the same organisation or by partnerships between specialist services
- > An increase in the amount of affordable housing by two to three thousand properties per year. This would be a combination of public, community and subsidised private rental housing
- > Piloting a private headleasing program which targets the most vulnerable people sleeping rough similar to Platform 70 in New South Wales
- > Adoption of Housing First in place of housing readiness as the basis of policy and services
- > Integration of homelessness with private, community and public housing within a single ministerial portfolio and integrated government policy that recognises the deep linkages between housing development, urban planning, affordable housing and homelessness
- > Smart use of private rental subsidies to create access to private rental housing for certain groups as the cheapest and quickest pathway into stable housing
- > A reduction in region-limited services and simplified administrative processes to encourage services to work together and to provide an equal service across Victoria

**SO HOW DO WE GET THERE?**

The broader community is interested in homelessness and housing affordability like never before. There is a well of support for any government willing to take decisive action to end homelessness. People and organisations with significant skills and resources want to be involved.

Back in 1997 the Kennett Government implemented fundamental reforms to the homelessness system. It established an improved system at that time. They added targeted resources and were not afraid of bold reform.

Strong and sensible state government leadership combined with a supportive federal government and existing leadership across community, corporate and philanthropic sectors can end homelessness in Victoria within a decade. Reductions can be delivered within the next two years.

Victoria is able to rise to this challenge and set itself back where it rightfully belongs, as the national leader in smart and efficient homelessness and housing policy.

*"Visionary state government leadership combined with a supportive federal government and existing leadership across community, corporate and philanthropic sectors can end homelessness in Victoria within a decade. Reductions can be delivered within the next two years."*



# KNOWING A GOOD OUTCOME

## ARE SERVICES ACTUALLY ENABLING PEOPLE TO AVOID AND ESCAPE HOMELESSNESS?

An important question for us is whether the housing we assist people to access is an enabler or barrier to them achieving opportunities in education, employment, social connectedness, health and wellbeing?

For several years now, we have been thinking about how to better define and measure the work that we do in terms of tangible outcomes for the people who use our services. Our Service Development and Research Team has now turned this thinking into a set of measurable factors relating to positive and negative housing situations.

While a simple idea, it proved much harder to put into practice than first imagined. Just one of the challenges is that HomeGround is made up of 18 services that work with people at risk or experiencing homelessness in a wide range of housing and homelessness situations.

For example, a positive housing outcome for someone at risk of homelessness is no loss of housing, whereas someone in an unsafe rooming house or sleeping rough requires an improved housing situation.

Different services also collect different data in different ways and use partially incompatible databases. Even where these issues can be overcome, using outcomes data to compare services needs to be done with great care.

*"A good housing outcome is a housing situation that supports a person's physical, psychological, economic and social wellbeing and their ongoing growth and development."*

There are several other agencies working on outcomes measurement, all in slightly different ways, so we began by talking to these agencies about their experiences and plans for further work and surveying the state of existing research.

Governments have also started talking in terms of outcomes. We hope our work will contribute to a consistent, sector-wide approach.

We joined with the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI), Melbourne City Mission and Hanover Welfare Services in early 2010 to submit a funding proposal to the Federal Government for a joint research project.

Based on the findings of that project, we developed the next stage of work which was defining and implementing a set of housing related outcome measures across all of our services.

The challenge was to identify robust indicators that were able to be collected by busy service workers and that would make sense at all levels of the organisation from workers and clients to board members, funding agencies and the general public and media. We undertook a comprehensive consultation process addressing these issues.

We then incorporated the results into a draft housing outcomes questionnaire. Council to Homeless Persons' Peer Education Support Program (PESP) ran a focus group to test the questionnaire from the perspective of former service users. PESP comprises people who are homeless or have been homeless in the past and invites participation from current and past HomeGround clients.

We further refined the questionnaire and the introduction of a section on housing outcomes for children. Dr Hellene Gronda also provided advice based on her homelessness outcomes framework. This was followed by a user guide and internal training.

At the time of writing, we are collecting this new data in all of our services except for our Tenancy and Property service, which manages around 350 transitional housing properties. This will require a different approach and will be rolled out at a later date due to the large number of support agencies involved in this service who play a vital role in secure housing outcomes.

We are all keenly anticipating the results of this data collection and hope to learn more about what we are achieving through the exercise. There will be a need to refine the process over time, but even the first round of data should give us new insights into our effectiveness.

We hope this approach to outcomes measurement will be adopted by other agencies to enable an 'apples with apples' dialogue across the sector and with funding bodies and partners.

A dialogue like this would quickly lead to identification of the most effective approaches and all agencies would be able to learn a great deal from each other about what works and what doesn't.

The result would be more people moving out of homelessness and into safe, secure and affordable housing as the basis for economic and social participation.

For Government, it would mean more efficient use of taxpayer funds and real reductions in homelessness.

## HOW WE MEASURE A GOOD HOUSING OUTCOME.

The key areas in the first iteration of our housing outcomes framework are:

### **CHOICE AND CONTROL**

People have choice and control when accessing our services.

### **APPROPRIATENESS FOR NEEDS**

People have housing appropriate to their needs.

### **SAFETY**

People are living in a safe situation.

### **AFFORDABILITY**

People have financially sustainable housing.

### **LOCATION**

People are close to the services they need, their social networks and future opportunities.

### **SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIPS**

People have the personal and professional support they need to access, establish and sustain long-term housing and wellbeing.

# A STRONG FOUNDATION TO BUILD ON

OPENING DOORS IS A MAJOR REFORM OF VICTORIA'S HOMELESSNESS SYSTEM INTRODUCED IN 2006.

Opening Doors aims to re-orient services around the needs of people accessing them rather than expecting people to navigate a complex maze of services in the midst of crisis or accept limited assistance because they have approached the 'wrong' service or geographic location.

It created 17 geographic catchments across Victoria so that all funded services within each catchment could share information and resources and work together to make assistance available as quickly as possible.

A statewide freecall number was introduced for the first time to ensure help was available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

During business hours, calls are automatically sent to the local housing service and after hours they are answered by The Salvation Army's Crisis Services team.

A further innovation was the creation of an electronic resource register for agencies to advertise available support, housing and brokerage funds to allow these to be better utilised based on need rather than which service a particular person happens to contact. Previously, the only way to know what resources other agencies had available was to make numerous phone calls.

A common system was also implemented for the assessment of need. This enables prioritisation of assistance based on the time a person has spent waiting and the match with available support, housing and/or brokerage resources. This meant an end to sending people from one agency to another.

#### WHAT'S THE POINT?

The service received at first contact is vital in preventing a housing or homelessness crisis from getting worse, working out what sort of assistance someone requires and working to quickly facilitate housing stability once more.

Due to the growth of the homelessness and housing system into a series of specialist providers, it is often only the most persistent or lucky who receive the best responses. For the most entrenched with the most debilitating health problems, persistence and running around is not a viable expectation.

In this regard, the system inadvertently screened out those who needed help most. Opening Doors, on the other hand, requires agencies to do the running around, rather than the person who is homeless or in crisis.

[CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE >](#)



CLIENT FEEDBACK  
ON OUR STAFF

RESPECTFUL, FRIENDLY, PROFESSIONAL,  
PATIENT, UNDERSTANDING, INVESTIGATIVE,  
RESPONSIBLE, HONEST, EMPATHETIC, COURTEOUS,  
COMPASSIONATE, POLITE, HELPFUL, KIND,  
EXCELLENT, EXPLAINED MY RIGHTS, RESPECTED  
MY PRIVACY, ALWAYS KNEW WHAT TO DO.

> CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

**HAS IT WORKED?**

Opinions remain divided on some of the reforms introduced and their success in delivering on their stated goals.

However, the following successes are generally agreed among most of us in the homelessness sector:

- > People who need assistance can now more easily speak to someone for help day or night
- > People only have to approach one service to access all available assistance
- > People can choose where they would like to receive assistance
- > Cooperation between agencies has improved significantly, making referrals and collaboration more efficient and productive
- > Most homelessness workers are better informed about the assistance available beyond their own agency
- > Housing vacancies are easily checked, eliminating the need for time-consuming ringarounds
- > Catchment areas have developed 'good practice' approaches that are shared and implemented across agencies
- > Resources are better targeted to those in most need
- > Data collection practice and systems have improved through more frequent collaboration

Anecdotal reports of some people with long histories of homelessness being quickly supported with good housing as a result of the prioritisation process are also heartening.

**WHAT ISN'T GOING SO WELL?**

- > Not all agencies are advertising all accommodation vacancies or contributing equally to the shared responsibilities of the new system
- > A very small number of entry point agencies are not maintaining a prioritisation list nor carrying out related follow-up, meaning people do need to come back time after time or go to another agency for help
- > Funding and resources provided to facilitate Opening Doors was too limited in relation to the scale of reform being implemented
- > No additional housing or support resources were funded, nor was this ever part of Opening Doors. Despite some efficiency gains, a lack of affordable housing and support resources is still limiting the response most people need to establish and/or sustain safe, secure and affordable housing
- > The IT resources developed to support coordinated service responses are inadequate. An e-referral system is needed to make this part of Opening Doors work efficiently. Similarly, the resource register, prioritisation lists and referral forms require further IT support and resources

*"The conceptual framework it comes from, where the person seeking support is at the centre of the response, is a valuable principle to guide future reforms."*

**WHERE TO NOW?**

Opening Doors is a significant and laudable project that has already delivered improved efficiencies and outcomes for people in housing crisis.

It should be seen as the strong foundation for future work to create a homelessness and housing system that is capable of consistently providing access to housing and support without long waits, wasted resources and accumulated trauma.

The conceptual framework it comes from, where the person seeking support is at the centre of the response, is a valuable principle to guide future reform efforts.

That said, Opening Doors relies on the will of agencies and the government to work cooperatively. All homelessness and housing partners - from government to agencies - need to redouble our commitment and resourcing in order to see it through.



# PREVENTION IS THE BEST CURE

## ELIMINATING HOMELESSNESS FROM OUR COMMUNITY WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE UNTIL WE CAN CONSISTENTLY STOP PEOPLE WHO WERE SECURELY HOUSED FROM BECOMING HOMELESS IN THE FIRST PLACE.

No matter how good you are at bailing water out of the boat, unless you stop the water coming in you will still sink. HomeGround has a strong prevention focus in many of our services.

This includes our Social Housing Advocacy and Support Program (SHASP) which prevents the breakdown of at-risk tenancies in public and community housing.

We operate Victoria's largest SHASP service and have found this approach to be highly effective, constrained only by limited capacity to work with people for longer periods of time and the need for timely referrals from the Office of Housing and housing associations.

The other aspect of prevention is quickly assisting individuals and families into new housing when they are forced to leave their previous housing or accommodation. This could be a mum and kids escaping from family violence or it could be someone being discharged from mental health wards, hospital, jail or the child protection system.

ConnectED and the Housing Mental Health Pathways Program both focus on finding good quality housing for those leaving hospitals.

Family focused programs include Accommodation Options for Families, Support for Families At Risk of Homelessness and the Private Rental Access Program.

The Youth Private Rental Access Program supports under 25s while the Indigenous Tenancies At Risk program supports Indigenous households.

Our Justice Housing Support Program is a leader in reducing recidivism through providing stable housing and high quality support to those exiting the justice system who are at risk of homelessness.

Our drop-in housing assistance service (Initial Assessment and Planning) caters to others who are not eligible for the above services.

Doing prevention better is a focus of our strategic plan and our research and advocacy agenda. If we wait until people are already homeless, we subject them to trauma and violence and an often long journey back into housing.

By identifying those at risk in education, health, policing/justice and child protection systems and then creating pathways that bypass housing crisis and homelessness, we spare individuals and families extreme trauma and save the taxpayer tens of thousands of dollars per person at the same time.

It's the right thing to do, the sensible thing to do and the fiscally responsible thing to do.

*"By bypassing housing crisis and homelessness, we spare individuals and families extreme trauma and save the taxpayer tens of thousands of dollars per person at the same time."*

# RODNEY'S WORKING AGAIN



## RODNEY'S STORY / JUSTICE HOUSING SUPPORT PROGRAM

HAVING A HOME DOES MUCH MORE THAN PROVIDE SHELTER. IT PROVIDES THE FOUNDATION FOR TURNING YOUR LIFE AROUND.

**RODNEY HAS REGULARLY BEEN HOMELESS SINCE HIS TEENAGE YEARS WHEN HE LEFT HOME.**

He has a 15 year old son, and has struggled to hold down full-time work and permanent housing.

"I was on the streets as a young bloke on and off. I slept in trains, laundromats, anywhere I could find. You look for anywhere warm.

"I was on bail when HomeGround found me. I needed a place to live or they wouldn't let me out. Miranda (HomeGround worker) helped. It was great. I didn't know anything like this was available.

"First they got me into a place in Wantirna. Then the owner sold up. I moved and have been stable here for three years.

"I like having a place for my son. I was worried about him couch-hopping all over at friends' places. I didn't know where he was most of the time.

"Miranda has been there 100%. She helped with getting a roof, with furniture, helped with my court stuff, which is over now. I went through a little bit of depression so just having someone to talk to was good, too. I saw a counsellor for a while, but don't need to now.

"She helped me get on the public housing waiting list for priority applications and on the Yarra Junction Housing Group list as well. That gives me more options. Hopefully something will come up quick, but we're pretty comfortable here.

"I got my scaffolding ticket and I'd like to go back to working construction. I'd like to seek out a new relationship some time, but there's no use when you've still got your own stuff to sort out. I'm looking for part-time work now.

"I'd probably be dead if it wasn't for getting a home. I was pretty much at that stage where I'd had enough. Being scattered, moving with the wind. But being stable, having a place to live, it gives you focus, feels like you belong somewhere. I had to work hard to get here."



HomeGround helped Rodney to establish himself and his family in transitional housing and provided support to then move into a permanent public housing property with his son. This stability has helped him reconnect with the community and return to the workforce.

*"Being stable, having a place to live, it gives you focus, feels like you belong somewhere. I had to work hard to get here."*



# FINDING WAYS BACK HOME

## WE KNOW HOMELESSNESS CAN BE ENDED BECAUSE WE DO IT EVERY DAY.

Every one of our services succeeds in ending homelessness for the people we work with. How effectively this happens, varies across service models and is heavily dependant on access to housing and the flexibility of available support resources.

New family focused programs within our housing assistance services (Initial Assessment and Planning) have improved housing outcomes for families. Other groups such as single women, youth and older people are also benefitting from private rental access and brokerage programs.

We are also proud to be among the few homelessness agencies who refuse to refer single women, families and other vulnerable people to potentially unsafe rooming houses, which have expanded to become a poorly regulated black market crisis accommodation sector in Victoria.

Melbourne Street to Home is another new approach which has already delivered remarkable results working with those with the longest histories of homelessness and sleeping rough.

In its first year, it provided housing, support and health services to 32 of the 50 most vulnerable people identified through a pre-dawn survey. So far, there have been few tenancy breakdowns amongst this group.

Our outreach programs also engage in assertive outreach with people experiencing homelessness, often in marginal accommodation, to support them into an appropriate and affordable long-term home.

Our tenancy and property service manages up to 350 transitional housing properties at any time. These create an invaluable pathway from homelessness to permanent housing through medium-term stable housing that is linked in with appropriate supports.



Our work in this area has been immeasurably strengthened by evolving partnerships with leading housing associations like Yarra Community Housing who have unlocked quick access to housing for many who would otherwise languish on waiting lists getting sicker each year. The Office of Housing is also a valued partner in working with us to prioritise access for those most in need.

The thing stopping us from systematically ending homelessness is not a lack of knowledge but the inability to consistently make the right housing and support responses available when and where people need them.

This is a frustration, but it gives us great hope that reform of how housing and support services are delivered could yield an extraordinary improvement in outcomes for households in crisis.

The Victorian Government's Homelessness Action Plan and forthcoming affordable housing strategy gives us hope that such an opportunity is going to be grasped and acted on.

*"Thanks... I have my long-term housing now. It's so awesome to be able to have my beautiful kids stay with me on weekends.*

*Thanks to my worker too for all her help and... for helping me get furniture. I really appreciate the work you have all done so a big big big huge humungous titanic massive thank you to all of you... yeah."*

Client feedback



# A STABLE HOME PROVIDES SAFETY AND SECURITY

AS WELL AS

# CONNECTIONS TO FRIENDS, FAMILY AND THE COMMUNITY.



# HOMELESSNESS MAKES IT VERY DIFFICULT TO HOLD DOWN A JOB OR LEAD A HEALTHY AND FULFILLING LIFE.

# ALBERT'S SINGING A NEW SONG



## ALBERT'S STORY / ELIZABETH STREET COMMON GROUND

“**STABLE HOUSING MUST BE THE STARTING POINT FOR RECOVERY FOR PEOPLE EXPERIENCING MENTAL ILLNESS & HOMELESSNESS.**

ONLY WITH SECURE HOUSING IS THERE TIME AND SPACE FOR THE PROCESS OF ENGAGEMENT, DIALOGUE AND DISCOVERY THAT FORMS THE BASIS OF MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT AND CARE.”

^  
Dr Sally Wilkins,  
Elizabeth Street Common Ground  
Psychiatrist and former Acting Deputy  
Chief Psychiatrist of Victoria

**ALBERT IS A CHARISMATIC AND CHARMING MAN** who has spent time working around Australia as a chef and in a variety of other jobs throughout his life. He had never considered himself at risk of being homeless, but a combination of affordability and health issues showed him how quickly a secure situation can evaporate.

“As a result of my health issues, I had stopped moving around and taken a job in a call centre. I was living in Coburg in a nice rental place. I was happy there and the rent was affordable.

“Then, out of the blue, the landlord increased it from \$1,000 a month to over \$1,500. There was no way I could afford that so I lost the place. When my 60 day notice to vacate ran out I still had nowhere. Nothing was affordable and I became homeless. It was a shock to me more than anyone. I had no idea what to do.

“Losing my security made it much harder to keep my health issues under control. I’ve got several mental health conditions combined with a kidney condition which means I can’t take medication. This means I have to work twice as hard to keep myself stable and healthy. That was just impossible to do living on the streets.

“I stayed for a while in some real scary rooming houses. Open sewers. Drug use. Guys who would just come into your room and take things or threaten you if you looked the wrong way at them. Places I wouldn’t bury my dog. There were times I didn’t want to keep going.

“I couldn’t afford to see a psychologist either so my mental health got worse. My physical health got worse. I was in and out of hospital all the time. I spent months in there.

“Finally, I got offered an apartment at Common Ground. It was just what I needed. I have a GP and psychologist on-site and health care.

“I’m doing courses through the Centre of Adult Education (CAE), including being a member of our choir. I’m working now at Green Collect next door and hope to get back into a job once I’m really settled here.

“I have discovered I’m a natural born mediator and have been helping some of the other tenants advocate on issues in the building. I’d like to do some more work in entertainment if I got the chance. I love being in the spotlight.”



*“I have discovered I’m a natural born mediator and have been helping some of the other tenants advocate on issues in the building.”*

# IT TAKES A HOME

BY CREATING NEW HOUSING AND ACCESS PATHWAYS, WE ARE SUPPORTING MORE HOUSEHOLDS TO GET THE HOME THEY NEED.



HomeGround is a major manager of transitional housing in Victoria with responsibility for up to 350 properties at any one time. Access to safe, secure and affordable housing remains the principal barrier preventing escape from homelessness for the majority of individuals and families looking for help.

It also causes many preventative approaches to fail, causing housing crisis to turn into homelessness.

Without a serious effort to tackle Victoria's housing affordability crisis, we will continue to fight a losing battle to reduce the numbers of people experiencing homelessness.

Even against this bleak backdrop, HomeGround has made major gains in creating new options and pathways for the people we work with into safe, secure and affordable housing.

This includes our own supportive and affordable housing developments delivered as we move towards becoming a housing association, and our partnerships with not-for-profit leaders such as Yarra Community Housing and the private construction sector's homelessness champion, Grocon.

DAREBIN, MORELAND, KINGSTON, MOONEE VALLEY, MANNINGHAM



Elizabeth Street Common Ground remains the best known example of our work in bringing innovative new housing models to Australia.

It is now more than a year old and is showing that ending homelessness for those with long and complex homelessness histories is possible, but that it requires intensive support delivered in the context of permanent housing.

A more recent project is The Nicholson, which is a sustainable, fully integrated mixed-use development with housing, commercial and retail spaces and catering to a social mix of home owners, affordable renters, community housing tenants and co-ordinated outreach for tenants who require support.

We own 58 units in the 199 unit development. This provides a model for future community and public housing that better reflects the community around it.

Yarra Community Housing have become invaluable partners with collaboration now extending beyond Elizabeth Street Common Ground to encompass supportive housing units within a variety of their developments in the inner-city.

We have also purchased a number of units in the CBD, which will provide permanent housing in conjunction with outreach support.

Transitional housing is a vital resource in moving people from homelessness into permanent housing and our tenancy and property services team is an acknowledged leader within the sector.

Staff work closely with a large number of different support providers to establish and sustain strong tenancies while they wait for permanent housing to become available.

The other half of the housing options puzzle is unlocking access to existing housing.

This includes advocacy work being done to ensure those with the greatest need are gaining priority access to public and community housing, but it also includes the task of tackling the private rental market.

CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE >

*"One of the fundamental things every person needs is a roof over their head; a stable home where they can be safe and which enables them and their children to participate in the community."*

Wendy Lovell,  
Victorian Housing Minister

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Our Housing Options Program is at the forefront of this latter work and is striking strong partnerships with real estate agents and other commercial accommodation providers to increase the flow of short-term, medium-term and permanent housing into all of our programs.

This is an immense benefit and is facilitating some of the spectacular outcomes we have seen across programs.

In many cases, we are headleasing properties to facilitate access for vulnerable households while also showing landlords and real estate agents that prejudices about the people we work with as bad tenants are misplaced.

This has included participation by social and philanthropic landlords via our Private Rental Management Program, which accepts use of properties via headleasing arrangements to transform the lives of homeless households. There are also financial benefits available to landlords who make properties available via this program.

Finally, there has been a shift towards the use of smart private rental subsidies to expand models, including the Private Rental Access Programs series of models targeted at women escaping family violence, young people and other vulnerable groups, and the Private Rental Brokerage Programs, which are similar in intention and delivery, but with a more general focus.



WEEKLY RENTAL COST OF A 1 BEDROOM FLAT ACROSS MELBOURNE

IN 2003

IT WAS

\$120  
TO  
\$140

IN 2011

IT WAS

\$245  
TO  
\$305

AN INCREASE OF

2-2½  
TIMES



WHOLE OF COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS IN PRACTICE

Elizabeth Street Common Ground is revolutionary in a few respects. One of the least talked about is how it has brought together an unprecedented number of different partners to contribute their specialist expertise to enhance the services on offer. For example:

The Victorian and Federal Governments provided funding for construction and services. Grocon and its sub-contractors built the building at cost, passing on the savings.

Yarra Community Housing own the building and manage tenancies. Melbourne City Council provided a gift of land.

The Rotary Club of Melbourne has provided hands-on assistance and financial support and facilitated the involvement of other philanthropic partners.

The John T Reid Charitable Trusts and the Collie Foundation have financially backed the Common Ground model in its first years.

Health and allied health providers are located on site, including a GP, psychiatrist and psychologist, plus others are linked in via case management.

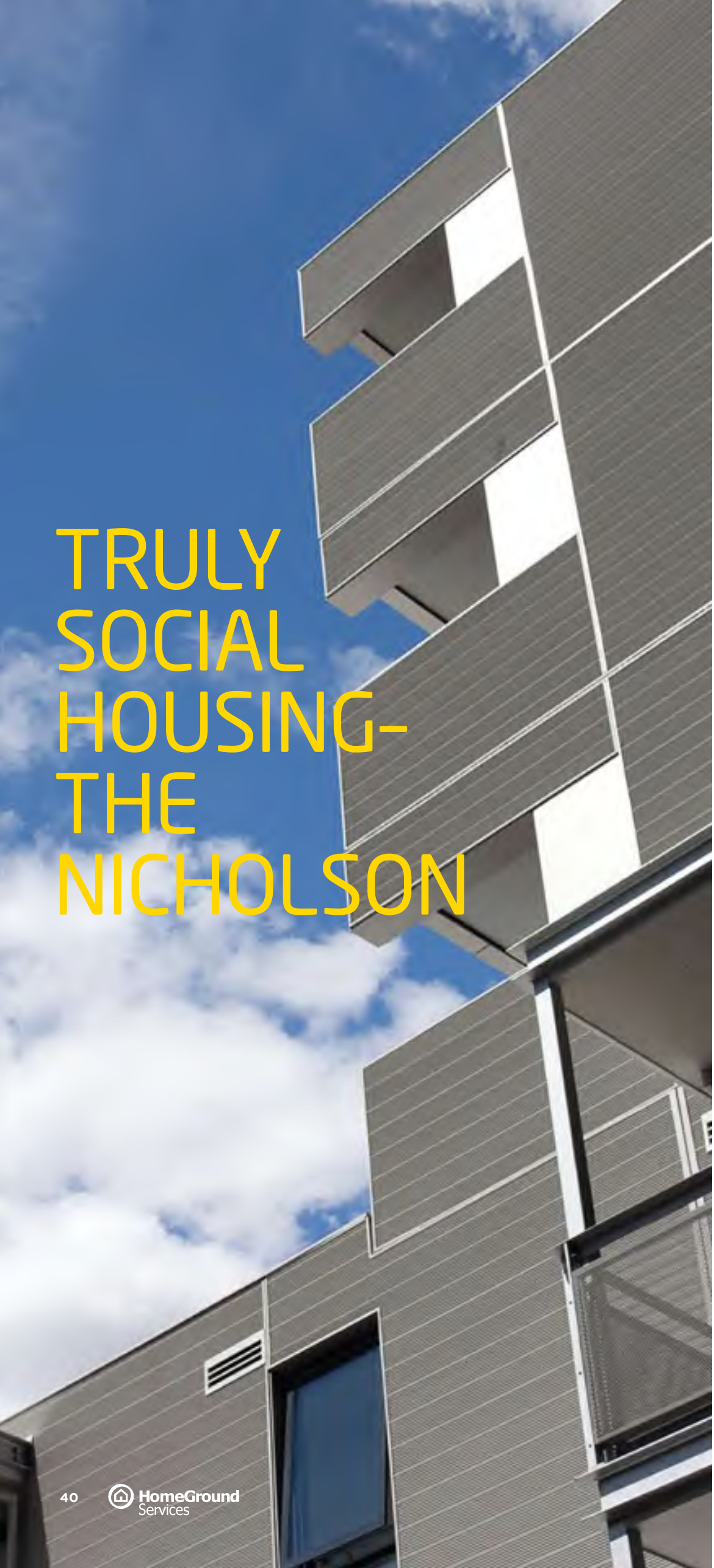
The RDNS Homeless Persons Program is located on-site and ensures a strong health focus is provided to all formerly homeless tenants.

The Centre for Adult Education has established a learning precinct on-site and created a range of ways for tenants to further develop literacy, learning and skills.

Green Collect and Wesley Mission's Last Cuppa social enterprise are co-located and also provide training and employment opportunities.

We manage the on-site support services provided through the Common Ground model, including case management.

Please see [www.homeground.org.au](http://www.homeground.org.au) and [www.youtube.com/homegroundservices](http://www.youtube.com/homegroundservices) for more information.



# TRULY SOCIAL HOUSING- THE NICHOLSON



THE NICHOLSON, LOCATED IN EAST COBURG, IS AN EXAMPLE OF INNOVATION IN COMMUNITY HOUSING INCLUDING SOCIAL MIX, TENURE MIX, MIX OF RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL SPACES, DESIGN EXCELLENCE, MODULAR CONSTRUCTION TECHNIQUES AND SUSTAINABILITY FEATURES.



It is fully integrated into the broader community, and has been delivered through a partnership model which also includes a support framework to ensure that those tenants with histories of homelessness receive the support they need to establish and sustain their tenancies.

Of 199 apartments, 58 are owned by HomeGround and being made available to general community housing tenants and, with support, to a smaller number who have experienced homelessness.

Around 65 have been sold to owner-occupiers, around 45 to investors for renting and around 30 subsidised rentals through the National Rental Affordability Scheme.

There are also commercial and retail spaces on the ground floor of the building, providing employment opportunities and completing the microcosm of society that will make this innovative new building its home.

Urban Communities Ltd are the owners' corporation manager and tenancy manager for The Nicholson. They use a place management framework that focuses all activities in tenancy and property management (including cleaning and maintenance contracts) to encourage community strengthening, tenant participation and employment.

The Nicholson is an example of the future for social housing where it blends in to the neighbourhood with community housing tenants being neighbours like any other.

# CHRIS HAS SOMETHING TO COME HOME TO



## CHRIS' STORY / FROM THE HUB TO THE NICHOLSON

“WHEN I SAW THIS PLACE FOR THE FIRST TIME, I COULDN'T BELIEVE IT. IT WAS BRILLIANT. IT'S BEAUTIFUL.”



**CHRIS IS IN HIS 30s. HE WAS A STUDENT AT THE SELECTIVE SCHOOL MELBOURNE HIGH AND LA TROBE UNIVERSITY, BEFORE BECOMING HOMELESS.**

“In my twenties I got sick. I developed mental health issues. It was pretty severe. I didn't get violent or anything, just really introverted with hallucinations and stuff. I will probably have to take a tablet a day for the rest of my life. It's a funny illness because I don't think even the doctors really understand it either.

“When I first became sick I was homeless for bit, then I went into hospital. I've normally had somewhere to stay, not on the streets. I lived with my brother for seven years, my uncle for a couple of years, mates' places when I could. Six months at a rooming house in North Melbourne, six months at The Hub.

“Two things I've always done. Never got into drugs and always paid my rent. It's how I've kept my head above water. I like a few beers. I like my cigarettes. That's enough for me.

“At North Melbourne, there was this lovely kid next door, Ashley, he was only 21 or 22, had a hard life. He was on heroin, then methadone. One of the loveliest young kids you'd ever meet. The drugs, they just destroyed him.

“In a place like that, you feel like you can't make any progress. Even when you're working, you come home and just don't feel any good. It was hard.

At the rooming houses, having strangers around, they weren't friends, unstable people, they are dealing with issues. Occasionally I felt a bit threatened, sometimes you fear for your safety, just because you don't know these people.

“When The Hub closed, I sat in an interview with Takashi and Raul (HomeGround workers). I just told them straight out, I need somewhere to live and this place is closing down. I told them I always pay my rent. Takashi helped me into the place in North Melbourne and then put me onto Steph (HomeGround worker) who got me this place. I'm forever indebted to them.

“When I saw this place for the first time, I couldn't believe it. It was brilliant. Every time I come home I know I've got something to come home to. It's beautiful. I like the area, tram outside, 12 minutes to work, my brother lives around the corner, my mum's about 20 minutes, got friends around the area.

“The relationship with my mum and brother has gotten better. All my debts went away when I got here, not that I had that much, I paid them off straight away. The funny thing is, I was paying more for a room at The Hub than I do for a home here.

“I work for a concreter, a couple of days a week. Bricklaying, paving, rendering, that type of stuff. All around the area, it keeps me fit.

“The balcony's large for a place this size. I'm thinking of getting some plants, but just need to work out what type. I might get a cat, but need to check if I can. It's very liberating to think about these things.

“In the future, I'd like to travel, not overseas, but around Australia. Maybe catch a train across Australia. Keep working. Do some physical training.

“I'll stay here as long as I can. I've got work, got my own place, now I just need a girl. Yeah, I'm happy.

“Make sure you put in a good word for Takashi, Steph and Raul because they really did help me.”

*“I'll stay here as long as I can. I've got work, got my own place, now I just need a girl. Yeah, I'm happy.”*

OUR SERVICE DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH TEAM WAS ESTABLISHED TO BUILD ON SERVICE DEVELOPMENT WORK ALREADY TAKING PLACE AND THEIR ROLE HAS EXPANDED QUICKLY.

Their focus is on research that informs policy and the sector, as well as improving our own services through the provision of data including the analysis of client outcomes.

The team also undertakes a number of service development initiatives including quality improvement activities and accreditation.

The development of our first client participation strategy is also driving greater involvement of the people who use our services in both service development/evaluation work, but also in organisational work such as the Disability Action Plan and Advocacy Group.



NEARLY

84,000 CHILDREN

ACCOMPANIED A PARENT OR GUARDIAN TO RECEIVE HOMELESSNESS ASSISTANCE (2009/2010)

AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF HEALTH AND WELFARE

## KEY SERVICE DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

- > Research towards developing nationally consistent client outcomes indicators to better measure the effectiveness of homelessness services. This was in partnership with the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Hanover Welfare Services and Melbourne City Mission
- > Undertaking a housing census on behalf of Corrections Victoria across all Victorian prisons to create the first snapshot of housing needs for those leaving prison
- > Supporting the independent evaluation of Elizabeth Street Common Ground by University of New South Wales researchers
- > Development of our first Client Participation Strategy
- > Supporting the independent evaluation of Melbourne Street to Home by researchers from RMIT University
- > Introducing a new client management system to encompass seven of our case management support services
- > A comprehensive review of our housing assistance service (Initial Assessment and Planning) and implementation of key recommendations
- > Auditing of our client records and reviewed records practice in many services
- > The 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
- > Reviewing how we manage information electronically across the organisation
- > Developing and implementing a comprehensive set of outcomes measures that will enable us to better evaluate long-term housing, health and wellbeing outcomes in all our services
- > Facilitating access to our data and clients for outside researchers including three National Research Projects
- > Baseline data collection and collaboration with academic researchers in all new programs
- > Further strengthening our complaints and feedback processes and actively promoting them to clients and stakeholders
- > Developing a comprehensive series of policies and procedures which support better research, including our first Research and Evidence Strategy

# VIVIAN IS BACK IN THE THICK OF THINGS



## VIVIAN'S STORY / MELBOURNE STREET TO HOME

VIVIAN HAD IT ALL.  
THEN HE LOST IT ALL.  
THAT WAS 15 YEARS AGO.

**VIVIAN IS A UNIVERSITY EDUCATED MAN IN HIS 50s.** He is a published writer, novelist and poet. He had never imagined he would become homeless.

"I had a partner and child. We were getting married. I had my novel published. I was working six days a week. We had a big flat in Sydney.

"Then everything fell apart. I lost my family and the trauma brought up all the demons from my own childhood which were waiting for me. Work, family, life, it just came undone.

"Most people on the streets don't have family. Without family to fall back on, you just keep falling. My family has always been dysfunctional. I never had that as a safety net.

"I turned to alcohol to keep my head from exploding. I slept on floors, at disgusting rooming houses, behind bushes on Brunswick Street. I was killing myself with alcohol and grief. That went on for 15 years.

"Two women from Street to Home came along and I did a survey at a lunch drop-in centre. Then a computer spat out my name (based on prioritisation of health needs) and I got this place within months.

Kate (Melbourne Street to Home worker) keeps supporting me even now. I wrote her a poem which is on the wall by the front door.

"I've stopped drinking completely. I'm writing again and doing poetry readings. I've made this house my home. When I moved in I thought it was completely soulless, but now I've made it mine.

"Everything is collected from the streets. All the materials, all the furniture – except for this chair which Kate bought me. It didn't cost much, but it made the world of difference. As a writer, I sit here for 10–20 hours a day. Sitting in a comfortable chair is just wonderful.

"I love the Fitzroy area. It is still bohemian and it's a great place for an artist. I'm back in the thick of things again.

"I can see a future that I thought had been taken away from me."





# CREATING NEW POSSIBILITIES

HOMEGROUND WORKS HARD TO DELIVER THE BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOMES FOR THE PEOPLE WE WORK WITH, WITHIN THE CONSTRAINTS OF EXISTING POLICY, PROGRAMS, SYSTEMS, FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS AND THE BROADER CONTEXT OF COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND SUPPORT FOR OUR VISION.

At the same time we work to create policy, systems and social change in order to open up new possibilities and facilitate better outcomes for the people we work with.

Last year we designed and commenced our 2010–2013 Advocacy Strategy, which includes support for our staff-driven Advocacy Group. This strategy outlines three broad areas of advocacy and some key issues that will remain at the forefront of our work in this area.

#### > SERVICE ADVOCACY

Private advocacy carried out by workers, coordinators and managers on behalf of clients to achieve individual outcomes or in support of our advocacy objectives and policy or procedural improvements.

#### > STRATEGIC ADVOCACY

Private high level advocacy carried out by senior staff in support of our advocacy objectives to create policy and systems change.

#### > PUBLIC ADVOCACY

Public advocacy using the media, events, publications, forums, social media and other external communications tools to raise awareness and support policy, systems and social change.

#### KEY ADVOCACY HIGHLIGHTS:

- > Advocating for homeless access to a share of Nation Building funded social housing, especially for the most vulnerable
- > Advocating for Housing Establishment Fund (HEF) system reform
- > Advocating successfully for greater resources for private rental access programs including the youth and general services as well as the related Private Rental Brokerage Program
- > Supporting the Australian Services Union's campaign to improve conditions for workers
- > Supporting the national campaign for a National Disability Insurance Scheme
- > Supporting the Victorian Council of Social Service's campaign to introduce minimum standards for rental housing
- > Supporting the Council to Homeless Persons' It Takes A Home... Campaign
- > Direct engagement with federal, state and local politicians, policy makers and departmental and sector stakeholders
- > Providing input into government policy and implementation processes, including submissions and parliamentary inquiries, including the Victorian Homelessness Action Plan, Housing Establishment Fund Review, Common Waiting List implementation

*"Advocacy at all levels will continue to be a priority as we work with partners and the community to create strong momentum towards our vision to end homelessness in Melbourne."*

- > Achieving swaps in management between transitional housing and public housing, enabling people to stay in their homes
- > Maintaining a proactive presence in print, television and radio media and responding quickly to media interest in our work
- > Making the link between homelessness, housing and poverty through National Anti-Poverty Week and the work of our staff managed Advocacy Group
- > Hosting international guest Rosanne Haggerty and facilitating her input into local policy discussion and development
- > Articles and conference presentations aimed at homelessness and housing sector stakeholders

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

# GYPSY HAS FOUND HOME AFTER FIFTY YEARS



*"I went back to the Murray and saw the swans near the water, and just wanted to stay. I couldn't have done this without help from HomeGround. They made it possible."*

**GYPSY WAS BORN IN COBRAM HOSPITAL IN THE 1950s AND LIVED ON THE MURRAY RIVER UNTIL THE AGE OF 18 MONTHS**, when she and her brother were taken away from her parents as part of the Stolen Generations.

"I was never fostered or adopted. My brother stayed with me. By the time I was two I had malnutrition and ran away to try to find my mum. They gave me electro convulsive therapy and Depo-Provera as a contraceptive. Forced them on me.

"I gave myself the name Gypsy because they took my identity back in that orphanage.

"My mum was so hurt she became an alcoholic to survive. She tried to visit me at the orphanage, but they sent her away. No-one told me she came.

"I've lived in lots of places like Queenscliff, Healesville, Carlton and Hawthorn. Later, I met my sister by accident at a shelter in Glebe. I've got nine brothers and sisters that I know of. We were all taken away when we were kids.

"I lost custody of my own kids and tried to keep in touch, but couldn't. Later I got back custody of my boys, but my little girls were fostered out.

"Being homeless as a woman is dangerous. I was attacked and kept moving. I slept rough and moved around from town to town.

"Four years ago I came back to Melbourne to find out more about my past. I tried living with one my sons, but that didn't work out. I was on the street for a few weeks, then in an Aboriginal hostel.

"After that I went back on the streets for about four months with my new partner Wayne and his boy. It's not good. One of us had to always look out and we slept in shifts. We slept in parks, behind bushes, in underground car parks, wherever we could find. The cold was bad for my arthritis.

"Then I went to a housing agency for help and they sent me to a rooming house. It was in a bad way with mice, holes in the walls and no locks on the bathroom. Men and women sharing. I complained about the conditions and they kicked me out, even though I'd paid the rent ahead.

"I feel safe with Wayne. We slept in a factory for a while. We got a rental place in Pascoe Vale. It was a pigsty, but we cleaned it up and stayed for awhile. The real estate agent wouldn't fix the problems even leaking gas in the kitchen. He just told us to leave the back door open so the gas could get out that way! I took them to VCAT and they ordered that the repairs be done straightaway.

"I wanted to go back to the Murray though and be back with family. I went back there and saw the birds near the water, the swans, and just wanted to stay. I couldn't have done this without help from Ella and Brendan (HomeGround workers). They made it possible.

"Now I've got a veggie garden and am back home near where I was born. Wayne and I are happy here. We're getting married next year in our beautiful back yard. I've reconnected with my mum. I'm home."



▲ Gypsy and Wayne

# OUR SERVICES

## WE PREVENT AND END HOMELESSNESS FOR VICTORIANS IN CRISIS ACROSS NEARLY TWENTY DIFFERENT 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 and VincentCare Victoria.

### 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, RDNS – Homeless Persons Program, Port Phillip Community Group and Bentleigh Bayside Community Health Service.

### HOUSING MENTAL HEALTH PATHWAYS

Homelessness prevention through 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

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 also facilitates socially responsible property owners to make their properties available to people escaping from homelessness.

### INDIGENOUS TENANTS AT RISK

Support for Indigenous tenants to establish strong long-term tenancies and to successfully resolve housing crisis in order to sustain housing and prevent homelessness.

### INTEGRATED FAMILY VIOLENCE SERVICES FOR MEN

Emergency accommodation assistance for men who are using violence towards members of their family.

It also refers men to other appropriate services and men's behaviour change programs.

### INITIAL ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING HOUSING ASSISTANCE

High volume drop-in service with major access points in Collingwood and St Kilda that provide crisis and long-term housing assistance, 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.

This service maintains outposts at key locations including the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service, Neighbourhood Justice Centre, Melbourne Magistrates' Court and the St Kilda Crisis Centre.

### JUSTICE HOUSING SUPPORT

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

### MELBOURNE STREET TO HOME

Melbourne Street to Home was established in mid-2010. It is ending homelessness for inner-Melbourne's most vulnerable people sleeping rough.

The Street to Home model identifies the most vulnerable people sleeping rough and then engages with them in order to move them into permanent housing with 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 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.

[CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE >](#)

*"It was nice to deal with people who understood and cared and with capability to provide a good solution."*

Client feedback

> CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

**PRIVATE RENTAL ACCESS (PRAP)**

- > Women and children escaping family violence
- > Young people
- > General model (pilot)

Homelessness prevention by facilitating access to private rental housing for various groups.

The initial model operates in partnership with The Salvation Army's Family Violence Service and utilises their specific expertise in family violence support.

A general PRAP pilot was successfully completed.

**PRIVATE RENTAL BROKERAGE**

Connected to our housing assistance services (Initial Assessment and Planning), the Private Rental Brokerage Program assists households where long-term private rental is an appropriate option to overcome the social and financial barriers to securing a private tenancy.

**PRIVATE RENTAL MANAGEMENT**

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 our Tenancy and Property team.

It 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 opportunities for positive social participation.

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 RDNS, North Yarra Community Health Centre, Centrelink and Fitzroy Legal Service.

Recreation programs are a key feature of Elizabeth Street Common Ground.

**SOCIAL HOUSING ADVOCACY AND SUPPORT (SHASP)**

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**

Assistance for families experiencing homelessness in establishing and maintaining social housing tenancies and private rental accommodation.

It will provide intensive long-term support for families to help them build the capacity to maintain their housing.

It is a partnership with The Salvation Army Social Housing Service and Wombat Housing.

**SUPPORTIVE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT**

> Elizabeth Street Common Ground provides permanent housing and support for 65 previously homeless tenants and 66 low income earners. It features a central location, proximity to transport and employment, a positive social mix of tenants, secure access and a 24-hour support desk.

> The Nicholson in East Coburg includes 58 units of social housing that provides a mix of affordable homes for low income households and support for people who have been homeless in the past.

> HomeGround is actively implementing other supportive housing approaches in our own properties and in partnership with other housing associations, including small-scale models and scatter site housing in Fitzroy, Collingwood and the CBD.

Yarra Community Housing is a key partner in this work. Scatter site supportive housing combines access to permanent housing in the community with assertive outreach support. It is important that a range of housing and support options are available as no one size fits all model exists.

**TENANCY AND PROPERTY**

Tenancy and Property manage up to 350 transitional housing properties in Port Phillip, Stonnington and Yarra in partnership with over 60 support agencies.

Our 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.

The team also manages a growing number of permanent tenancies in our own and headleased properties.





# AN ORGANISATION IS ONLY AS GOOD AS ITS PEOPLE



“ONLY AS GOOD AS OUR PEOPLE.”

THIS GUIDES OUR DECISION MAKING, INFLUENCES OUR ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AND IS THE BASIS FOR OUR APPROACH TO FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORTIVE MANAGEMENT.

WE WANT TO RECRUIT GOOD PEOPLE AND BUILD STRONG TEAMS.

*“From three sites just two years ago, we now have six permanent offices in the city, Collingwood, Fitzroy, Prahran, Preston and St Kilda.”*

**KEY ORGANISATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS**

A major highlight of the last year was the successful negotiation of our first Enterprise Agreement with staff and the Australian Services Union. The final document sets out attractive conditions that go above and beyond those of our sector in many areas.

We were happy to see that 93% of staff who voted, voted in favour of adopting this EA. This EA and other improvements in our human resources practices have been made possible by expansion of our internal human resources team.

Our organisational values are another important element of our staff culture. We put these into practice in the way we deliver services and, internally, in the way we interact with and support each other.

This includes our official participation in Pride March, an important event for Victoria’s lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer community, recognising the diversity of our staff team, those who access our services and the broader community. We also conduct training and awareness raising around our internal diversity officer roles.

We are about to adopt our first Disability Action Plan, with input from staff and clients. This plan aims to remove the barriers that often prevent people with disabilities from accessing our buildings, services and employment opportunities.

Environmental sustainability has been another focus with the adoption of our first organisational strategy in this area setting out the ambitious goals of reducing energy consumption, paper use, water use and waste.

These plans commit us to convening and resourcing internal staff-driven groups and championing these issues across the sector.

Greater corporate and service delivery efficiencies have been achieved by co-locating three of our offices, including Elizabeth Street Common ground which shares office space with Yarra Community Housing’s head office.

The other two co-locations are with The Office of Housing and Centrelink in Prahran and with Hanover Welfare Services in Fitzroy.

From three sites just two years ago, we now have six permanent offices in the city, Collingwood, Fitzroy, Prahran, Preston and St Kilda. This decentralisation of staff teams has also prompted a greater investment in internal communications, which includes a high quality intranet and staff newsletter.

Our small communications team has also done a great job at raising the public profile of the organisation, supporting people to share their own experiences of homelessness with the wider community in an empowering and dignified way.

Pro-bono partners have also been integral to our organisational development, including the redevelopment of our website, video projects, media strategy, publications and government relations. These things would not have been possible without the generous pro-bono support of Elmwood, CPR, Brand Strategy Television and Stokes Street Studio in particular.

Maddocks have provided invaluable support for our new housing development initiatives, complementing the pro-bono legal work Middletons have done with us for many years. Silent Partners have generously provided valuable organisational planning services on a pro-bono basis.

We began to accept donations from the general public during the year and would like to thank the many people who have made a financial commitment to our work and vision to end homelessness.

Finally, it’s been great to have had our client services, corporate and governance systems recognised and commended by the Quality Improvement and Community Services Accreditation (QICSA) Council. Corporate improvements include new finance, occupational health and safety and risk management systems, which will make us more effective in these areas.

# NANNETTE IS ENDING HOMELESSNESS

## WORKING AT HOMETOWN

### EVERY DAY IS A CHALLENGE AND AN OPPORTUNITY.

“Before coming to HomeGround, I was working in youth housing, in a refuge. I had a good understanding of youth housing and wanted to take on another challenge. In my first role here, I provided drop-in housing assistance in our Initial Assessment and Planning (IAP) service at Collingwood. That was about five years ago.

“It was very different work from what I was used to. I wasn’t just working with youth anymore and I wasn’t working with people who had accommodation, they were still in crisis. We see thousands every year.

“I specifically worked with people who had more barriers to housing, who had complex behaviours and who had sometimes been banned from other services. I also spent two days a week based at our Magistrates’ Court outpost in the city. If you can work in IAP, you can work anywhere!

“Then I moved to our Justice Housing Support Program. Working in Justice gave me a much better understanding of how the justice system works and impacts on people who are often vulnerable themselves.

“It gave me more insight into how families are affected, how everything that’s going on for an individual impacts everyone in the family – children, partners. Having housing and support often stops people re-offending, just having someone to talk it through when they were on the edge. Often the people offending are victims of violence and abuse themselves.

“I then went on to apply for the job of Coordinator of our Outreach team in Collingwood. Again, my knowledge increased dramatically. I learned a lot about people with combined mental health and substance abuse conditions ending up in long-term homelessness when they fall through the cracks. Sometimes, our fantastic outreach workers were the only positive source of support a person had in their lives.

“There was one man I remember who was dying and didn’t have any family or friends, but we were there for him. At least he had someone to check on him, talk to him, someone who knew him. He passed away, but we were with him right until the end. That’s pretty powerful.

“Later, I moved to St Kilda, back to IAP, but this time as a coordinator. I share the role with my colleague Lauren and it plays to both of our strengths. She runs the drop-in service, the front of house stuff, and I manage the private rental program, families program and public housing applications. We’ve both got what we wanted out of it, which is really good.

*“It gave me more insight into how families are affected, how everything that’s going on for an individual impacts everyone in the family.”*

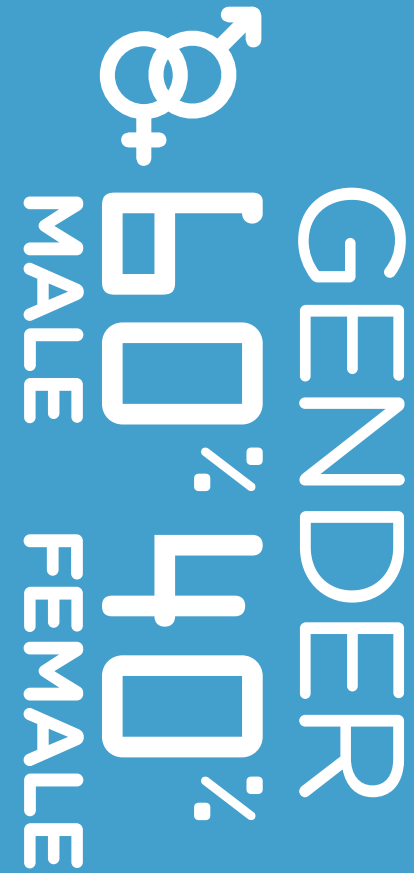
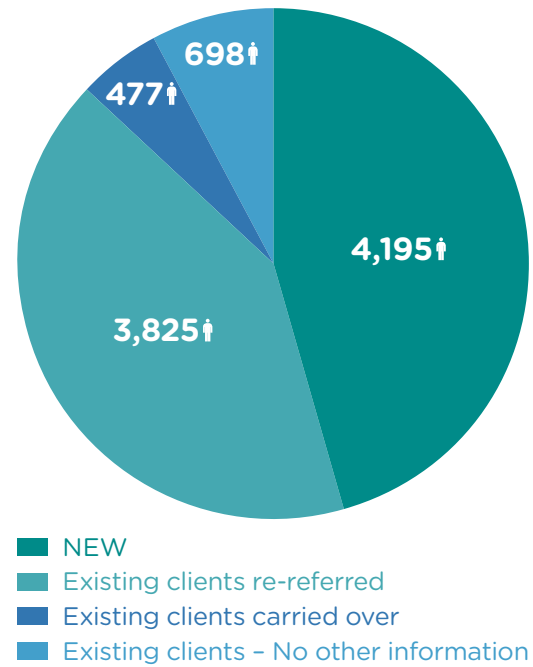
“Our St Kilda office is smaller and you tend to be quite close with everyone. I drive from Craigieburn each day and it’s an awful commute. I could work closer to home, earn the same money and it wouldn’t be such a long day, but for me it’s all about the people I work with. I feel so honoured to work with these people. They’re like family. That’s what keeps me here.

“I see every day as an opportunity to learn, to grow and to be challenged. I’ve been supported to try new things and every role I’ve had here just adds another layer of experience and knowledge.”

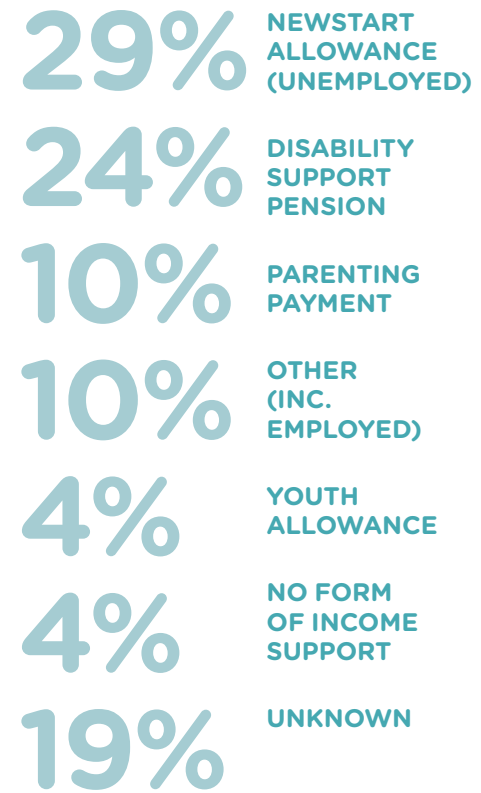
Nannette Wilkinson,  
Coordinator for our St Kilda based  
housing assistance service (IAP).

SERVICE STATISTICS

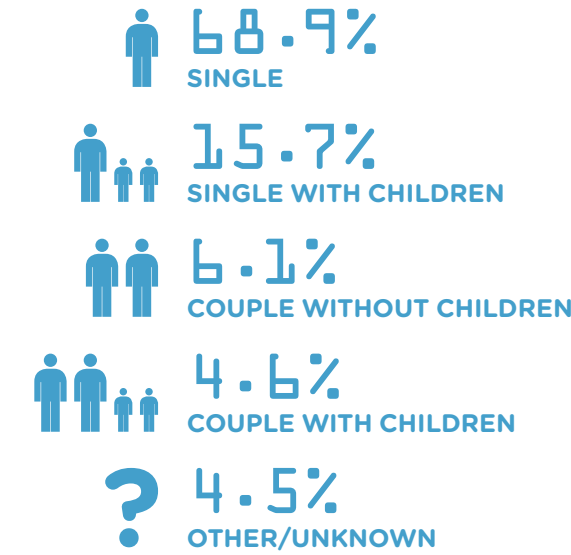
CLIENT NUMBERS



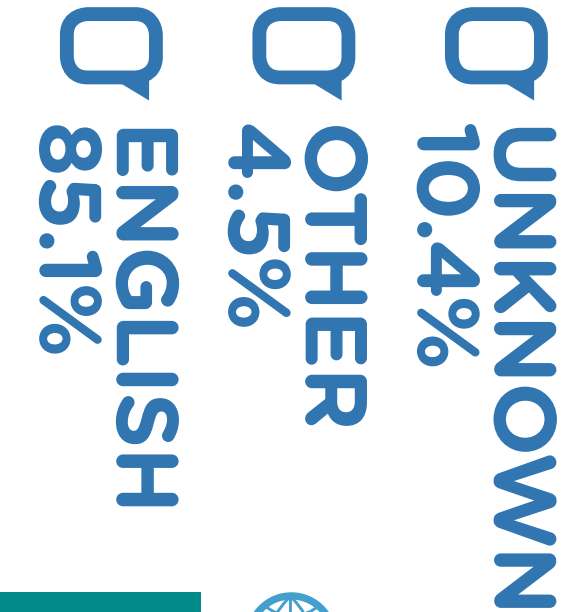
INCOME TYPES



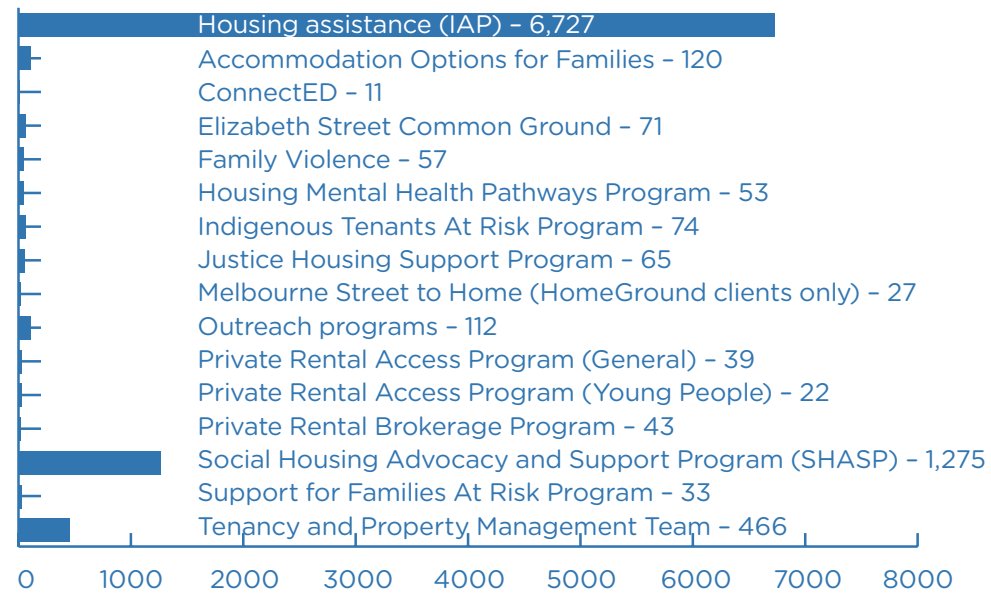
HOUSEHOLD TYPE



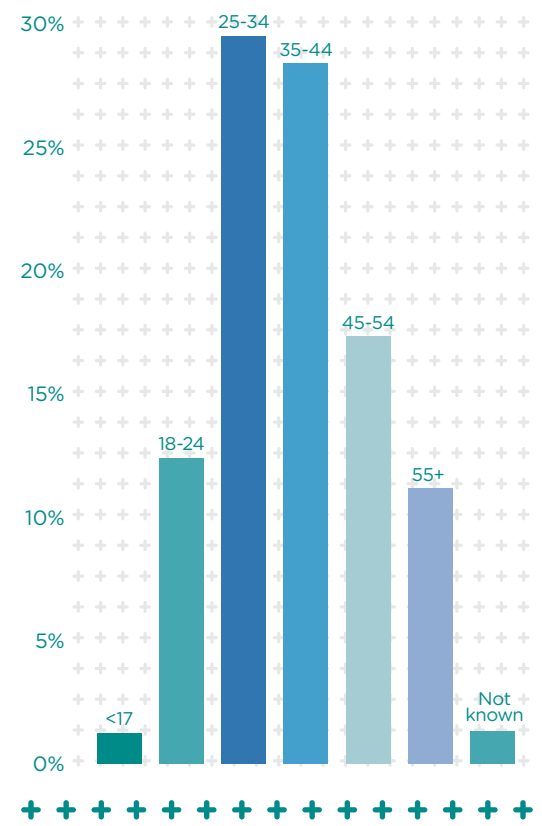
1<sup>ST</sup> LANGUAGES



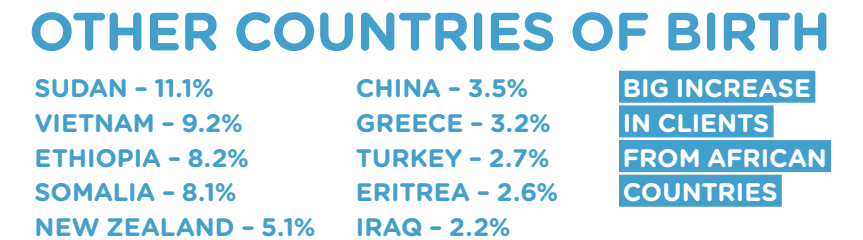
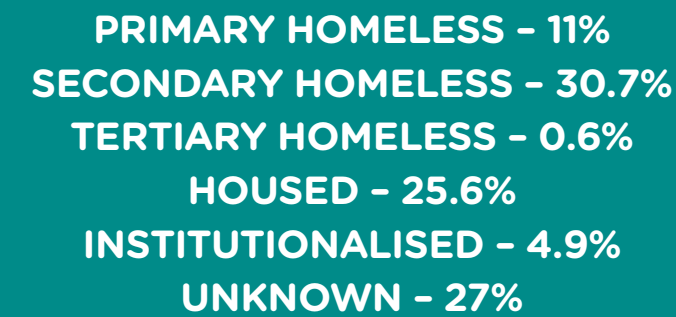
BY SERVICES



AGE



HOUSING STATUS



**\* LARGE INCREASE IN INDIGENOUS CLIENTS (4% LAST YEAR)**

Note: Where clients use multiple services, they will be counted multiple times. We are looking to quantify overlap as we improve our data collection and analysis. Totals above may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

## SUMMARISED STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2011

	2010/2011 \$	2009/2010 \$
<b>REVENUE FROM OPERATIONS</b>		
Government and other Grants	12,573,317	10,610,748
Grants in Advance	1,353,379	1,513,853
THM Rental Income	1,055,269	1,046,519
Interest	224,496	133,450
Sundry Income	1,031,177	557,323
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>16,237,638</b>	<b>13,861,893</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Staff Costs	8,093,914	6,338,694
Payments to Partner Agencies	1,797,654	724,573
Client Costs	2,275,730	1,747,233
THM Property Costs	530,620	454,539
THM Rental Expense	1,015,136	1,023,406
Consultants and Professional Fees	450,865	225,973
Amortisation/Depreciation and Impairments	294,857	213,459
Office Expenses	670,954	555,461
Motor Vehicle Expenses	412,651	448,617
Other Expenses	898,158	527,828
<b>TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>16,440,539</b>	<b>12,259,783</b>
<b>OPERATING SURPLUS / (DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR</b>	<b>(202,901)</b>	<b>1,602,110</b>
<b>OTHER INCOME</b>		
Capital Purchase Grant Vic Government / Transferred to Capital Reserve	13,382,750	
<b>TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR</b>	<b>13,179,849</b>	<b>1,602,110</b>

## SUMMARISED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 JUNE 2011

	2010/2011 \$	2009/2010 \$
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	3,653,018	4,662,075
Receivables	333,993	37,128
Prepayments and other Receivables	245,754	133,693
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>4,232,765</b>	<b>4,832,896</b>
Property Plant and Equipment	18,646,865	1,230,922
Other non current assets	48,556	48,556
<b>TOTAL NON CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>18,695,421</b>	<b>1,279,478</b>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Trade and Other Payables	1,038,659	1,114,954
Provisions	450,392	403,479
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>1,489,051</b>	<b>1,518,433</b>
Borrowings	4,311,153	750,011
Provisions	236,564	132,361
<b>TOTAL NON CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>4,547,717</b>	<b>882,372</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>16,891,418</b>	<b>3,711,569</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>		
Accumulated Surplus	1,460,915	1,499,096
Capital Reserve (Property)	13,382,750	-
Furniture and Housing Reserves	694,374	698,620
Program Funding Received in Advance	1,353,379	1,513,853
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>	<b>16,891,418</b>	<b>3,711,569</b>

The summarised Statement of Comprehensive Income and Financial Position has been extracted from the audited financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2011.

*Danby Bland Provan and Co*

Danby Bland Provan and Co  
Chartered Accountants

123 Camberwell Road  
Hawthorn East Victoria

10 October 2011

*G D Winnett*  
G D Winnett  
Partner



# SHARING THE VISION

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.

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.

## 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  
Hocking Stuart  
Hotham Mission  
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  
RDNS  
/ Homeless Persons Program  
St Kilda Community Housing  
St Vincent's Hospital  
The Salvation Army  
/ Adult Services  
/ Crisis Services  
/ Social Housing Service - Western  
Victorian Aboriginal Health Service  
VincentCare Victoria  
Wintringham  
Yarra Community Housing  
YWCA Housing

## SUPPORTIVE HOUSING PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

Australian Common Ground Alliance  
/ Common Ground Adelaide  
/ Common Ground Tasmania  
/ Mercy Foundation (NSW)  
/ Micah Projects (QLD)  
Australian Communities Foundation  
Central City Concern (USA)  
Common Ground (USA)  
Commonwealth Government of Australia  
Community Access (USA)  
Corporation for Supportive Housing (USA)  
Grocon  
Dame Elisabeth Murdoch  
Dina Grollo Trust  
Mercy Foundation (NSW)  
Micah Projects (QLD)  
Nan Roman and the National Alliance to End Homelessness (USA)  
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

Victorian Department of Human services  
Victorian Department of Justice  
Victorian Department of Health  
Commonwealth Nation Building Social Housing Initiative  
Commonwealth Department of Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA)  
Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing  
Yarra City Council  
MECU

## PHILANTHROPIC PARTNERS

Collie Foundation  
Dame Elisabeth Murdoch  
Dina Grollo Trust  
John T Reid Charitable Trusts  
Rotary Club of Melbourne  
Rotary Club of Melbourne Park  
Singer Family Trust

## PRO BONO/CORPORATE PARTNERS

Affordable Housing Solutions  
Anaconda  
Ashton Raggatt McDougall  
Brand Strategy Television  
Bunnings  
Change Agent Network  
CPR Communications  
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Dan Murphy's  
Dean's Art  
Elmwood  
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Fishbowl PR  
Good Guys  
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Hide and Seek Productions  
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Kmart  
Madame Flavour  
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Oxwood Holdings Pty Ltd  
Palace Cinemas  
Ponch Hawkes Photography  
Silent Partners  
Simon O'Halloran Design  
Soul Sisters Removals  
Stokes Street Studio  
The Social Studio  
Victorian Association  
for the Teaching of English

“ THROUGH OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH HOMEGROUND, OUR MEMBERS HAVE PROUDLY CONTRIBUTED FINANCIAL, EDUCATIONAL AND VOLUNTEER RESOURCES TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF ELIZABETH STREET COMMON GROUND AND ITS WORK TRANSFORMING THE LIVES OF ITS TENANTS.

We look forward to continuing our partnership and establishing supportive housing as a major approach to ending homelessness in our city.

”

> Austen Burleigh, President, Rotary Club of Melbourne



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ABN  
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### HOMEGROUND CITY

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### HOMEGROUND COLLINGWOOD

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Fax 9288 9602

Support  
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Fax 9288 9601

Outreach  
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### HOMEGROUND PRAHRAN

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### HOMEGROUND PRESTON

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Support  
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Fax 9537 7991

Outreach  
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Fax 9537 7991

You can get more information  
and view or subscribe to our publications at  
[www.homeground.org.au](http://www.homeground.org.au) and  
[www.youtube.com/homegroundservices](http://www.youtube.com/homegroundservices)

Feature photography by Ponch Hawkes  
Design by Stokes Street Studio

We are a Registered Housing Provider  
and accredited under the Quality  
Improvement Council (QICSA),  
Homeless Assistance Service and  
Psychiatric Disability Rehabilitation  
and Support Standards

EVERY DAY, HOMEGROUND  
IS PROVING THAT WE CAN  
END HOMELESSNESS.

WORKING CLOSELY  
WITH OUR PARTNERS,  
WE LOOK FORWARD TO  
CONTINUE OVERCOMING  
THE CHALLENGES  
OF HOMELESSNESS  
IN 2011/12.



*we're housing people*