

**“We didn't know
what we'd do.
We lived without
gas for three
months. We
experienced the
instability, of crisis
accommodation
for six, and felt
we had no other
choices.**

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**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.

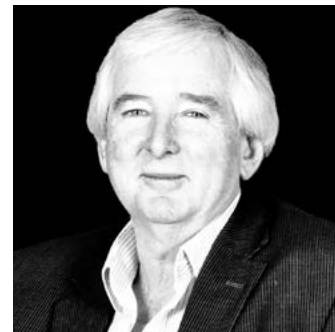
Choice

each person
has the right to
make informed
and empowered
personal choices.

Diversity

the differences
between people
provide us with new
perspectives and
approaches.

Report from the Chair and CEO.



It has been another busy year at HomeGround Services. In 2013/14 we continued to grow and develop our capacity to respond to the many thousands of Victorians who seek out our services each year.

This will be the final annual report for HomeGround Services as we will be merging with Hanover Welfare Services in early 2015. Bringing together the resources and expertise of both organisations, we will boost our services to the growing number of Victorians who are struggling to find affordable housing. We will be even stronger in developing new solutions, giving a voice to the issues faced by people who are homeless and we will make best use of all the programs as an integrated whole that are now managed separately by the two organisations.

HomeGround's history of working with the most disadvantaged and isolated members of our community goes back almost 25 years to the time of George Street Outreach. HomeGround was formed in December 2002 from an amalgamation between Argyle Housing Service and Outreach Victoria (which began as George Street Outreach and then was renamed Bedford Street Outreach). The merger of these two organisations, similar to the impending amalgamation of HomeGround and Hanover, joined two organisations with common values and strong commitment to social change.

As a result of the merger between Outreach Victoria and Argyle Housing, HomeGround grew into a high quality housing focused service that offered high crisis and transitional housing assistance and outreach support across the entire inner urban region of Melbourne.

The amalgamation with Hanover will enable us to increase our capacity and our advocacy efforts in leading the charge to end homelessness. We look forward to presenting our new joint organisation to you in next year's annual report.

One of our greatest achievements in early 2014 was the launch of HomeGround Real Estate, a not for profit real estate agency whose purpose is twofold – to provide an expert property management service to investors while opening up more affordable housing options in Melbourne. The new organisation will provide us with increased capacity and capability to take the real estate agency to even greater levels. The same applies to all our other highly effective services.

Since launching in March 2014, we have over 120 properties listed and many more in negotiation. One of the most satisfying achievements of the agency has come through the affordable housing initiative. As part of this initiative we have housed a number of low income families who were at risk of homelessness. You can read Rachel's story in this report and find out more about the real estate agency.

The last year has seen some big changes in the social and political landscape in Australia. We have a new Commonwealth Government and now a new Victorian government so policies and programs in the housing and homelessness sector are up for review.

Changes to funding arrangements in mental health in Victoria presented a huge challenge in the past year. A review of mental health funding resulted in the loss of significant funding which forced us to withdraw from providing support and housing services to some of the most vulnerable people in our communities.

We hope a review of these changes will be undertaken and funding restored to HomeGround and other community mental health service providers in the homelessness sector who lost funding. We simply must be able to stop people falling through the cracks.

Thank you for your support and collaboration over the years in helping HomeGround grow into one of the leading providers of housing and support services in Melbourne.

We also look forward to working with Commonwealth, State and local Governments, our partners and supporters and the wider community to build and expand affordable housing options and deliver programs and services that help end homelessness in Melbourne and nationally.

Heather Holst
CEO
HomeGround Services

Neil Chatfield
Chairperson
HomeGround Services

“

One of our greatest achievements was the launch of HomeGround Real Estate, a not for profit real estate agency whose purpose is to provide an expert property management service to investors while opening up more affordable housing options in Melbourne”.

Messages from Partners



The Victorian Coalition Government is committed to ensuring that social housing forms part of a sustainable and flexible service system that supports people to achieve greater levels of independence.

In March this year, the Victorian Coalition Government released *New Directions for Social Housing: A Framework for a Strong and Sustainable Future* which outlines the new directions to build better communities, deliver better opportunities and maintain and develop better assets.

As part of the Framework we are spending \$1.3 billion over the next five years to upgrade and maintain 9500 public housing properties that were at risk of being lost to the system. We are also looking at ways to break the cycle of homelessness by providing existing and prospective social housing tenants with connections to work and study opportunities; access to relevant support services and providing support for people to enter the private housing market.

Partnering with community organisations like Homeground, who are often more closely aligned to their local communities and can help tenants access or engage with community services and activities, will ensure that we provide people with a foundation for greater independence and community participation. I congratulate Homeground on the work they have done to reach out to those most vulnerable in our communities.

The Hon Wendy Lovell MP
Victorian Minister for Housing



We're right to regard homelessness as a moral blight on our society. We're right to think it morally unacceptable that fellow Australians in the year 2014 are not able to obtain safe and secure accommodation for themselves and their families.

Just as the descent into homelessness can be triggered by multifaceted factors, so the ascent out of homelessness can be difficult to navigate and this is not an easy challenge.

The Australian Government this year allocated \$115 million to keep the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness – NPAH – operational for another year.

Here in Victoria, this translates into \$22.79 million in Commonwealth funding that will be complemented by another \$29.1 million from the state government.

It's my personal desire to see lasting reductions in the number of homeless Melbournians.

I'd like to express my gratitude to HomeGround for what you've done in that area, what you do and what you'll keep on doing.

The Hon. Kevin Andrews MP
Minister for Social Services



Kildonan UnitingCare is proud to partner with Homeground Services to deliver the supportive housing project for families. One of Melbourne's oldest and most respected community service agencies, Kildonan works with more than 15,000 vulnerable Victorians each year.

Kildonan works to get ahead of the problem, providing holistic solutions for families with a Customer Care Team approach that identifies and addresses all of the issues facing an individual and their family. We are excited about the supportive housing project as it represents an opportunity for us to give families a fresh start in a protective and nurturing environment, once more taking a holistic approach to their needs.

Prompted by increasing requests for housing and support services from Melbourne mothers, the project will deliver a place for these families to live and be nurtured.

This project will target some of the most vulnerable women and children in our communities who have been affected by family violence, mental illness, substance issues and interaction with the criminal justice system. To ensure these families recover and restore themselves as effectively as possible, the housing component will be complemented by a range of specialist services onsite. The supportive housing model is a proven, practical and cost-effective way of responding to the housing and support needs of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Supportive housing programs have been successful in Australia as evidenced by a number of Common Ground sites around the country. In North America tens of thousands of units of housing have been developed and run by non-profit organisations, delivering positive social and economic outcomes in local communities.

The proven success of Homeground's Common Ground project in the heart of Melbourne is further proof to us that the concept works. And we are delighted to be part of the solution. reach out to those most vulnerable in our communities.

Stella Avramopoulos, CEO

The 2014/15 Board and Executive



The HomeGround Board and Executive

Back row, left to right

Ernst Ferreira (CFO)
Heather Holst (CEO)
Peter Clark
Wayne Read

Middle row, left to right

Robert Turnbull
Carolyn Gale
Simone Gandur
Dominic Esposito
Graeme Bruce

Front row, left to right

Zoe Vale (GM Client Services)
Neil Chatfield (Chair)
Dimitry Reed

Neil Chatfield

Qualifications

Master of Business in Finance and Accounting; Post-Graduate Diplomas in Information Technology and Accounting; Fellow of the CPA Australia (FCPA); Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors

Experience

Experienced Public Company executive and non-executive director, currently Chairman of Virgin Australia Holdings Ltd; Non-Executive of Seek Ltd, Transurban Group and Recall Holdings Ltd

Peter Clark

Qualifications

Bachelor of Social Work; Graduate Diploma (Software Development); Master of Business Administration

Experience

Community Sector Consultant, program evaluation and strategic planning; Project Manager, Bayside Region Central Mental Health Intake project, Inner South Community Health Centre; currently UnitingCare Victoria and Tasmania, Strategy and Network Support

Nikolaos Thomacos

Qualifications

Bachelor of Business (Economics); Bachelor of Arts (Honours); PhD; GCHE

Experience

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

Dimitry Reed

Qualifications

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

Experience

Principal, Dimitry Reed and Associates, Architecture, Planning, Urban Design; Former Professor of Urban Design, Head, Department of Design, RMIT University

Simone Gandur

Qualifications

Bachelor of Arts

Experience

Founder and Director of Values Communication

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

Experience

Partner, CFO Advisory KPMG Melbourne

Dominic Esposito

Qualifications

Bachelor of Law

Experience

Legal practice as Solicitor

Graeme Bruce

Qualifications

Diploma Business Studies (Acc), Diploma Business Studies (EDP), Diploma Financial Services (FP)

Experience

Management Consultant, Director of the SpringHill Group, Formerly Deloitte Consulting Regional Director of Operations

Robert Turnbull

Qualifications

Bachelor of Commerce; Master of Business Administration, FCPA, ACIS

Experience

Principal, Statewide CFO Solutions

Carolyn Gale

Qualifications

Master of Business Administration; Certificate of Public Sector Management; Graduate Diploma in Urban Research and Policy; Bachelor of Arts (Honours Political Science)

Experience

Deputy Secretary, Service Strategy Reform, Department of Justice; Executive Director Department of Justice, Director Department of Human Services

John Rawling (Company Secretary)

Qualifications

Chartered Accountant (CA) ACIS/ACSA

Experience

Manager of Corporate Clients, Leydin Freyer Corporate

HomeGround Executive members

Ernst Ferreira (CFO)

Zoe Vale (GM Client Services)

Australia's first not-for profit real estate agency

One of our greatest achievements in 2014 was the launch of HomeGround Real Estate, an innovative program that unlocks existing rental property stock in Melbourne.

**NOW
OPEN
FOR
INSPECTION.**



HomeGround
Real Estate



HomeGround Real Estate is a not for profit agency with a social conscience that has the potential to transform the provision of affordable housing around Australia. The aim is to provide a real estate agency that delivers an expert and competitive rental property service to landlords and opens up more affordable housing stock.

Since launching in March, HomeGround Real Estate has acquired over 100 properties and is set to extend its reach into other states and territories with philanthropic support from REA Group.

A severe shortage of affordable housing combined with increasing demand on our services inspired our executive and Board of Directors to forge ahead with plans to set up a not for profit real estate agency almost two years prior to the launch.

Seed funding for the project was provided by philanthropic grants from the Mercy Foundation, Lord Mayor's Charitable Trust and City of Yarra. We currently employ four staff members who manage the needs of landlords and tenants.

The early indications are that investors are happy to contribute to a social cause by listing their rental properties with HomeGround Real Estate.

We will continue to build on the success of the agency and welcome your support in helping us spread the word.

“

Unlike traditional agencies, there is a unique relationship between tenants and landlords at HomeGround Real Estate. Upon hearing about our agency and its mission, many tenants have been delighted. As Natalie says, “I think even them knowing they are helping in some way is nice also”.

Natalie Titcume heard about HomeGround Real Estate at a time when she was about to rent out her property for the first time. Natalie and her partner chose the agency from the outset. This choice provides more than a financial return. Natalie says they both “loved the idea that we were helping someone else. Especially those who cannot afford to have a roof over their heads.”

Now, Natalie is not just a property owner but “a part of something larger”, she explains. Her choice in what real estate agency she uses now counts towards a social justice cause and simultaneously, she is actively involved as a kind of advocate for the agency who spreads the word to family and friends.

Unlike traditional agencies, there is a unique relationship between tenants and landlords at HomeGround Real Estate. Upon hearing about our agency and its mission, many tenants have been delighted. As Natalie says, “I think even them knowing they are helping in some way is nice also”.

Stephen Peterson is a landlord with HomeGround Real Estate. After reading about the agency in *The Age* and then having some initial contact with staff, Stephen made the decision to transfer from his agent of some years. Although pleased with his former agent’s service, HomeGround Real Estate struck him as innovative and worthwhile.

“Firstly, as a general principle, I thought what you were doing was a very good idea. I believe housing is the key for many people who are disadvantaged. If people are homeless or having trouble with their housing situation, to be able to provide a roof over their head, suitable to their needs, is a very constructive way forward,” Stephen said.

From a practical point of view, our agency made sense too. Stephen gives money to charities of his choice from time to time, and is always going to have to pay a management fee on his property.

“I thought this was a great meeting point, between the need to pay the fee and finding somewhere useful for it to go. I have a very positive feeling about the fact that in this small way I’m doing something constructive to help ameliorate the problem of homelessness in Melbourne.”

Stephen says his decision to switch agencies was a decision he made based on principle.

“There was no reason to leave the previous real estate company, as I was satisfied with their service. Choosing HomeGround was purely an ideological choice on my part,” he said.

Stephen says HomeGround Real Estate provides a high quality, expert service.

“You’re no different from a well-run, good service provider in the commercial sector, with competent, professional staff - if there are differences they’re all positive.” ■



“

You’re no different from a well-run, good service provider in the commercial sector, with competent, professional staff - if there are differences they’re all positive.”

Above: Stephen Peterson
Below: Natalie Titcume



A family home at last

A year and a half ago, Rachael built up the courage to leave her abusive partner. In doing so, she also left behind a thriving business and the home they had shared and she suddenly found herself in desperate need of housing. For over a year, Rachael moved between emergency accommodation, motels and shared housing but constantly worried about living in this kind of accommodation.

After finding part time work, Rachael says, "I found myself questioning if I was doing the right thing by my family because working only seemed to be hindering us." She was not eligible for the majority of benefits so found saving money impossible, being barely able to cover rent, let alone food and other necessities. She describes this time as a "vicious cycle" of instability, seeing little hope of finding stable housing.

After making such a momentous decision to leave her partner, Rachael still faced enormous hardship. She says, "While in emergency accommodation I couldn't look forward to anything, you can't plan your future." Every day was an unknown spent juggling work, the care of her daughter and limitless paperwork.

Soon after securing a full time job, Rachael got a call from John, a HomeGround worker.

"Suddenly he was ringing me every day, he gave me constant help and attention. I remember thinking 'is someone really calling to help me?'"

After supporting Rachael for some time, John worked with the HomeGround Real Estate team to find Rachael a property in Kew in which the landlord agreed to reduce the market rent. He also donated a couch and some other furniture for the flat. The ability for HomeGround to offer this full spectrum of support was hugely beneficial for Rachael as was the real estate agency's unique model. Previously, Rachael says that private rental agencies wouldn't consider her application. Unable to afford the bond and with no rental history "I didn't even feel comfortable approaching most of them. But HomeGround paid my bond and they looked at factors besides my rental history," she says.

Having now been in the property for a month and a half, Rachael is starting to feel a lot more settled. "What people don't realise is that this house means I can start organising my life. It's not just a house; it means having a routine and having that sense of stability and security so that I can finally sort out all the little things."

"I can't really believe it. I can go to the letterbox and I can get my own mail whereas before I had no fixed address. I now have a stove and cook dinner for my kids, we sit down together at the table- I haven't been able to do that in a long time." ■



“

It's not just a house; it means having a routine and having that sense of stability and security so that I can finally sort out all the little things.”

Working together to make a difference

What began as a small group of women in St Kilda wanting to pass on good quality children's clothes to people in need has grown into an organisation that works with 250 organisations around Victoria.

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HomeGround staff work closely with St Kilda Mum's to provide much needed clothes, toys, prams, cots and other essential items to our clients.

St Kilda Mum's founder and CEO Jessica McPherson said she initially couldn't find an outlet for the pre-loved items she wanted to share with families who were struggling.

"I tried to track down a women's refuge that I could donate the goods to but of course these places are secure and well hidden for good reason," Jessica says. "So I approached my local maternal and child health care nurse with a whole lot of items I had after my son Mario was born."

Jessica wasn't the only person who approached the maternal and child health nurse and she soon found herself organizing the donated items into care packs for distribution to families in need.

"The nurses were blown away. One nurse was looking after vulnerable families in the south and she found the packs really useful. She started telling other agencies and case workers about us and we started to get a lot of calls for assistance."

Jessica started with a single vision that resonated with her local community and beyond. St Kilda Mum's also now plays an advocacy role in education community members about the realities facing families in hardship.

"When a woman becomes homeless due to family violence she leaves everything behind. These women are in a disheartening position where they have to leave behind all of their possessions and start again." Jessica says. "But this time they have fewer resources to begin with so they buy cheap products that aren't made to last and that perpetuates the feeling that you can't get ahead."

Providing families with basic necessities can sometimes determine whether they continue to care for their children, according to Jessica. "We hear about families who may have a child removed if they don't have a cot for them to sleep in. So you realize this is the reality for these women and children."

Understanding the vulnerability of these families and making sure they are not penalised for removing themselves and their children from unsafe environments is what St Kilda Mum's is all about.

"If women leave a situation of family violence but can't provide a decent cot or bed for their child they risk losing them. We can help make sure that doesn't happen and that is a pretty good reason to keep going." ■

Mums helping Mums

HomeGround's relationship with St Kilda Mum's is vital in providing much needed assistance to families across all of our programs.

When HomeGround worker Sophie needs a pram for a single mother in transitional housing she calls St Kilda Mum's. "They are just fantastic. The goods they supply are of the highest quality. I would definitely use them for my own children."

HomeGround support worker Sophie is assisting Mary (not her real name) and her daughter who have escaped family violence.

Mary and her daughter are living in transitional housing waiting for a placement in long term social housing. She left home with a small bag filled with clothes for herself and her daughter. Sophie is working closely with St Kilda Mum's to provide additional clothing as well as a pram and toys for Mary's daughter.

When she delivers these items to Mary there are tears of joy. "Mary started to cry and said she had been anxious about not having some of the basics. She was pretty overwhelmed that everything was in such good condition and didn't feel like she was being treated like a second class citizen." ■



“

We hear about families who may have a child removed if they don't have a cot for them to sleep in. So you realize this is the reality for these women and children.”

Breaking the cycle

New families supportive housing project underway.



HomeGround has always sought to find or build the home that most suits our client's needs. We've also always known that just providing someone with a roof over their head is not the answer.

But let's face it, having safe and secure place to call home is critical and without it everything else falls apart.

A solution that works

We've built supportive housing and we've seen that it works. We've seen adults who have moved from rough sleeping to finding secure housing and a supportive community at our Elizabeth Street Common Ground property.

We now want to transform the lives of children by building Australia's most innovative housing that will support and nurture them from infancy to adults. We want these children to grow up knowing that they can achieve their full potential.

We've studied the best models in the world. We've been inspired by seeing first-hand that with the right support even the most disadvantaged children can go on to thrive and have the happiest and healthiest upbringings and graduate from university with honors.

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From the day we meet them every child will be inspired to know no limits and told repeatedly they can do anything they dream of.

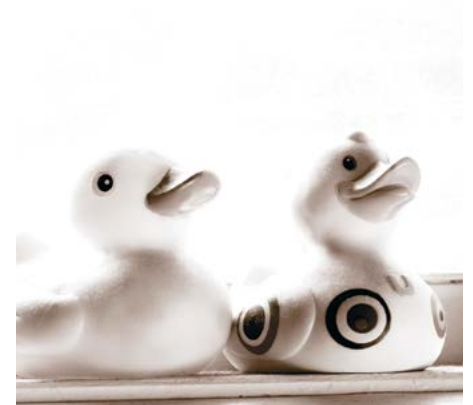
New opportunities

HomeGround, in partnership with Kildonan Uniting Care, is in the planning stages of making Victoria's first families supportive housing a reality. We have a parcel of land in Melbourne's inner north and we have a committed developer who will build our 60 unit development at cost.

Home Ground's supportive housing for families will give every mother and child the opportunity to reach their full potential. Every child will be nurtured through optimum health, education and cultural enrichment. From the day we meet them every child will be inspired to know no limits and told repeatedly they can do anything they dream of.

Our idea of support is not just in the service but in inspiring children to have expectations and then supporting them to exceed those expectations.

We believe that Victoria can aspire to be the best in the world in transforming the lives of disadvantaged children. There is a long term economic case to be made too. However, the best reason to do it is because everyone agrees that nothing is more important than our children and we have the opportunity to transform the lives of the most vulnerable members of our society – one child at a time. ■



What will it look like?

- **Purpose built complex providing stable, secure, well designed housing for families**
- **Includes a range of co-located support services including education, allied health and living skills specialists**
- **24 hour concierge on site to assist with safety**
- **Early development and educational services for both children and mothers**

Blake and HomeGround prove a winning marathon combination

Blake Miles did his research before running the Melbourne half marathon in 2014. He wanted to donate to a cause he felt committed to and an organisation he respected.

Blake set out to raise \$1,000 in sponsorship and would match this amount with the intention of making a \$2,000 donation to HomeGround. He exceeded his own target within the first week of fundraising and by the time he completed the event had raised \$4,400.

Blake explains why he decided to take part in the half marathon and why he donated to HomeGround.

Have you ever taken part in a half marathon before?

Having spent much of the last 12 years approximately 30kg overweight I never imagined I would be running 5km, let alone a half marathon. I struggled with my health and weight for a long time, reaching the pinnacle of poor health at the end of 2011 after a 9 month stint of living out of a suitcase and mainly eating hotel food. When I moved to Melbourne in 2012 I decided it was time to change and I have been on a long journey to a healthier lifestyle ever since.

This year has been a roller coaster ride of major downs and ups, so following a recent 'up' (a chance to travel overseas with my mother to spend time with my older brother) I decided it was time to re-focus on my health and wellbeing. The Melbourne Marathon Festival gave me the motivation to take one of my 'next steps' with physical fitness.

Do you think these kind of activities are a good way for people to be active for a cause and why?

Events like this can be really positive because you can set targets, work to deadlines and challenge yourself. As mentioned, for me it was a good motivator and provided me with an avenue through which to focus my efforts. However, I didn't actually sign up for the marathon until I had found a charity that I wanted to fundraise for. It was important for me that my 'run' was more than a personal goal and that through it I could contribute to the health and wellbeing of the broader community.

How did you hear about HomeGround and why choose HomeGround for your fundraising efforts?

The simple answer is - I went looking for an organisation like HomeGround.

Since moving to Melbourne I have been very privileged and lucky to live in the CBD. This has meant that I have been witness to the growing number of people who are homeless and living on the streets. I was also lucky enough to be able to live in department housing when I was going through university. As a result I understand the importance of providing affordable housing to help people get out of poverty cycles or provide a stable environment so that they can manage other challenges like mental health or past abuse.

So I searched for an organisation that recognised the spectrum of issues in terms of causes, preventions, immediate and long term solutions to homelessness. From what I have read in the HomeGround Strategic Plan and Annual Report, HomeGround is an organisation that recognises those elements and more. HomeGround has set ambitious but realistic targets and has implemented a range of programs, worked closely with partners and used research to improve its ways of working - all in the face of growing demand and fewer resources. For these reasons I believe HomeGround deserves and earns my fundraising efforts and respect.

Do you think that community awareness and engagement is important in trying to address the issue of homelessness and why?

Community awareness and engagement are instrumental to the success of all programs seeking to address social issues. It is far too easy to just put your blinkers on and go through life only worried about yourself. I believe that as a society we have a responsibility to each other, to look out for each other, to lend a helping hand when its needed. I have been extremely lucky throughout life in receiving support from my family, friends, government through housing and allowances. Now that I am in a place where I have the ability to help, as a result of the support I have received, it is time for me to give back to the community and hopefully encourage others to do so as well. ■



Our services

HomeGround's broad range of services are testament to the power that working in partnership has when tackling homelessness.

Initial Assessment and Planning

Initial Assessment and Planning (IAP) is the main access point for clients experiencing homelessness, or at risk of homelessness, throughout Victoria. The service helps to prevent and end homelessness by providing accommodation assistance, advice and referrals for additional support.

HomeGround Outreach Support Service (HOSS)

Providing people with complex needs and long histories of homelessness with the support required to transition from homelessness or insecure housing into stable, secure and affordable long-term housing is the aim of our Outreach Support Service. We work in partnership with other agencies in a holistic way to ensure each individual client's needs are met.

Accommodation Options for Families (AOF)

Working in partnership with families to plan a pathway out of homelessness, the Accommodation Option for Families Program provides a combination of accommodation and support services for families who are currently homeless.

Private Rental Brokerage Program

This program supports clients to secure or maintain a private rental tenancy as an alternative to rooming house accommodation. In partnership with North East Housing, HomeGround offers a range of assistance to clients including advice, advocacy, outreach support and brokerage

Support for Families at Risk of Homelessness

A partnership between HomeGround, The Salvation Army Social Housing Service and Wombat Housing, the Support for Families at Risk of Homelessness (SFaR) Program delivers assistance to families to sustain and maintain public, social, and private tenancies. Long-term, intensive support is provided to families with an aim to build capacity to maintain housing independently.

HomeGround Intensive Support Program

The HomeGround Intensive Support Program (HISP) works collaboratively with Connecting Home and North East Housing Service (NEHS) to drive an integrated service system response to service delivery within the North-East corridor. HISP provides high-quality; recovery focused case management and support, including assertive outreach to prevent homelessness for people with severe and enduring mental.

Justice Housing Support Program

Justice Housing Support prevents homelessness for people leaving the justice system by supporting them to access safe, secure and affordable long-term housing.

Transitional Housing Management

HomeGround manages the tenancies of over 300 transitional and medium-term properties for tenants who are receiving ongoing support to move from homelessness into long-term housing. These properties provide a vital alternative to people who may otherwise be sleeping rough or in crisis accommodation.

Social Housing Advocacy and Support Program

The Social Housing Advocacy and Support Program (SHASP) aims to end and prevent homelessness by supporting public housing tenants and residents to establish and sustain their housing. Though individualised support plans, the program works to ensure clients maintain safe, appropriate and sustainable housing.

Melbourne Street to Home

A partnership between HomeGround Services, The Royal District Nursing Service and The Salvation Army Adult Services and Crisis Services, Melbourne Street to Home (MS2H) provides coordinated housing, support services and health intervention targeted at Melbourne's most vulnerable rough sleepers. The program identifies the most vulnerable rough sleepers and helps them to access safe, secure and affordable long-term housing and provides ongoing support to sustain successful tenancies.

Housing Mental Health Pathways

The Housing Mental Health Pathways Program (HMHPP) assists people who present as homeless whilst an inpatient at the The Alfred or St Vincents Hospital acute psychiatric ward.

Aboriginal Tenancies at Risk

The Aboriginal Tenancies at Risk (ATAR) Program aims to establish or sustain Aboriginal tenancies in social housing by supporting tenants to address issues placing their housing at risk.

Elizabeth Street Common Ground

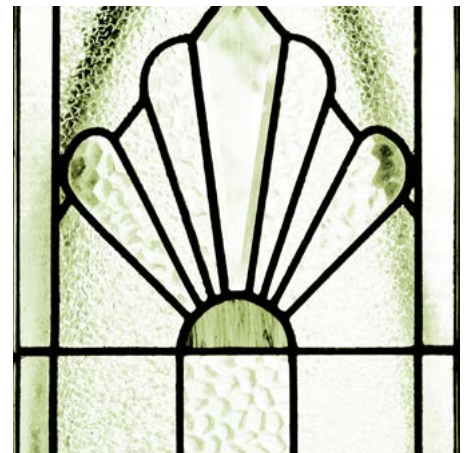
Elizabeth Street Common Ground provides permanent, affordable, high-quality housing to 65 chronically homeless people, many of whom have been homeless for more than 10 years. An additional 66 apartments exist for low income workers and students. Elizabeth Street Common Ground is a partnership between HomeGround Services, Yarra Community Housing, the Victorian Property Fund, the Victorian and Federal Governments and Grocon.

OUTPOSTS

- Melbourne Magistrates Court
- Neighbourhood Justice Centre
- Victorian Aboriginal Health Service

PARTNERSHIPS

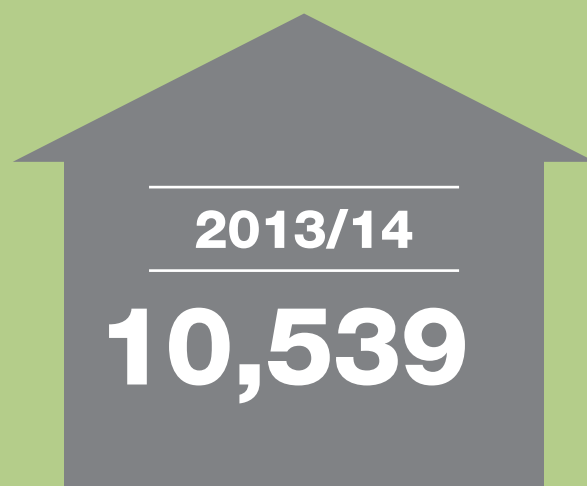
- Homeless Outreach Mental Health and Housing Service
- Families at Home
- MOIRA (HomeGround St Kilda)
- Kildonan Uniting Care ■



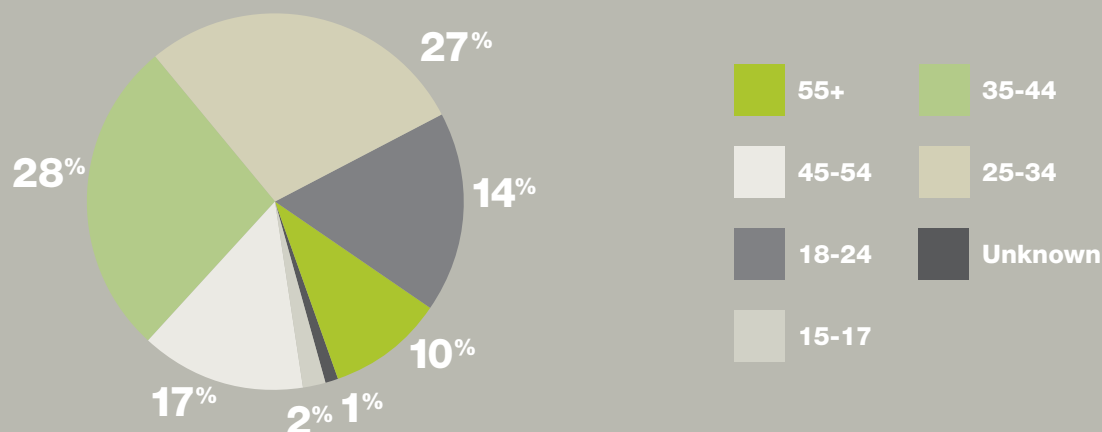
Our stats at a glance

Total client numbers: 2013/14*

2008/09	9,614
2009/10	9,777
2010/11	9,176
2011/12	9,562
2012/13	10,131*



Age distribution: 2013/14



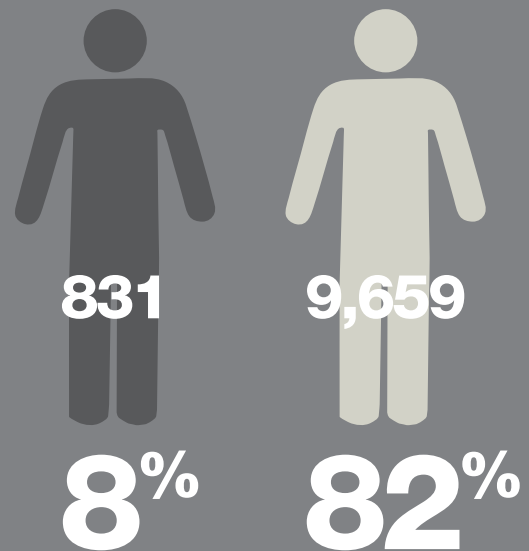
HomeGround provides housing and support to nearly 10,000 households per year. This assistance takes many forms including help to access safe and sustainable housing, support to access crisis accommodation, financial help, and short and long-term case-management.

It is evident that demand for housing and support continues to outstrip supply, and HomeGround is working on finding innovative ways to access sustainable housing options to keep up with demand. Public housing and community housing waiting lists continue to grow, with single households in particular experiencing lengthy waiting times.

Gender by number and percentage: 2013/14



ATSI status: 2013/14**



Country of Birth: 2013/14

	Number	Percentage
Australia	6646	63%
Other	2983	28%
Unknown	910	9%

*The total client data for 2012/13 differs here to the figures published in last year's Annual Report. The reason for this is because dependent children under the age of 15 are included now in data collection where they weren't in previous years.

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

2014 Partners

Ending homelessness is not something that can be achieved by any one individual organisation or government department. Achieving this requires a new approach to partnerships and sharing of expertise and resources. HomeGround is committed to putting this approach into practice in all areas of our work.

If you are interested in working with us to end homelessness in Melbourne, contact: communications@homeground.org.au

We collaborate with a huge number of private, community and government partners in the course of delivering our services and working towards our vision including:

Major Service and Research Partners

Alfred Hospital
Australian Community Support Organisation (ACSO)
Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute
Centrelink /Indigenous Engagement Service / Windsor Service Centre
City of Melbourne
City of Moreland
City of Port Phillip
City of Stonnington
City of Yarra
Community Corrections / Better Pathways Program
CoHealth
Connecting Home Ltd
Council for Adult Education (CAE)
Box Hill TAFE
Council to Homeless Persons / Homeless Advocacy Service – Peer Educator Support Program
Department of Human Services – Prahran Housing Office
Eastern Emergency Relief Network
Hanover Welfare Services
Hope Street Youth and Family Services
Hotham Mission Asylum Seeker Project
Inner North West Melbourne
Medicare Local
Inner South Community Health
Kildonan Unitingcare
Melbourne Citymission
Melbourne General Practice Network
Neighbourhood Justice Centre
Ngwala Willumbong
North East Housing Service
North Richmond Community Health
North Yarra Community Health
Port Phillip Community Group
Prahran Malvern Community Housing
Quantum Support Services
RDNS Homeless Persons Program
RMIT Centre for Applied Social Research
Rotary Club of Melbourne
St Kilda Community Housing
St Joseph's Parish, South Yarra
St Vincent's Hospital
The Salvation Army
– Adult Services
– Crisis Network
– Social Housing Service
– Western / Crossroads
Urban Communities Ltd
Victorian Aboriginal Health Service
VincentCare Victoria
Waratah Area Mental Health Service
Wombat Housing and Support Service
Yarra Community Housing

Housing development partners and supporters

Australian Common Ground Alliance
Australian Communities Foundation
Australian Community Services Organisation (ACSO)
City of Melbourne
Common Ground (USA)
Grocon
Mercy Foundation (NSW)
Micah Projects (QLD)
Rosanne Haggerty (Community Solutions) (USA)
Rotary Club of Melbourne
Rural Housing Network
Slattery Australia
Workshop Architecture

Funding partners

ACSO
Bank Mecu
City of Yarra
Commonwealth Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) now the Commonwealth Department of Social Services
John T Reid Charitable Trusts
Kildonan Uniting Care
Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation
Rotary Club of Melbourne
Salvation Army Crisis Network
Singer Family Trust
UNICO Community Fund
Victorian Department of Health
Victorian Department of Human Services
Victorian Department of Justice

Pro bono / Corporate partners and supporters

Charcoal Lane
Cheeki
Coles
The Contenders
Dean's Art
Ethos Café Fitzroy
Good Guys
Greg Larsen
Grocon
Harvey Norman
Hocking Stuart
K&L Gates (formerly Middletons)
Kmart
Maddocks
Nelson Alexander Real Estate
Peter Burke
Philippe Batters
Ponch Hawkes Photography
Rigby Cooke Lawyers
Spec Savers Melbourne
Spitting Image Catering
Stokes Street Studio
Victorian Association for the Teaching of English
Wayne Scott-Sutton
REA Group
KPMG
Phillip Endersbee
Harcourts
Virgin Australia
MAYSAR

A special thanks to Kate Hunter for her portrait and support imagery throughout the 2014 annual report.



Working in true partnership with such a committed, knowledgeable and inclusive group as the HomeGround Services team has been incredibly rewarding for our studio, providing a unique opportunity to create solutions that really drive positive community change.



Celebrating our staff

Our amazing staff did another fantastic job of providing assistance to more than 11,000 households in 2013/14.

With an organisational culture that puts people first HomeGround's staff survey in 2013 found high levels of satisfaction, with staff feeling they made an important contribution in the community.

Our staff work across five sites in Melbourne providing essential services to some of the most vulnerable members of our community on a daily basis. They are the reason we have such a great reputation as one of Melbourne's leading housing and homelessness services.

HomeGround staff work in collaboration with people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to find lasting accommodation solutions. Our advocacy group organised another successful art exhibition this year that provided an opportunity for people with lived experience of homelessness to be part of a community of artists. The exhibition allows our clients to show their talents and express their experiences with the broader community.

Our staff worked in partnership with many other community organisations in the past year to improve services and address the issues affecting people who access our services. These networking and inter agency activities are key to addressing the broader issues facing people who are marginalized and disadvantaged in society.

HomeGround staff took advantage of a well designed internal training calendar in the past financial year with sessions including:

- Auslan
- Equal opportunity, discrimination and bullying
- Motivational interviewing
- Aboriginal cultural awareness
- Disability awareness training
- Time management
- Residential Tenancies Act

We look forward to taking our organisation forward through the merger with Hanover in 2014/15 and providing even more opportunities for our staff to grow and to make a contribution to ending homelessness in Melbourne and throughout Victoria.

Our staff survey results found:

- 92% of staff have a strong sense of belonging in the organisation
- 98% found working at HomeGround allowed them to do something 'worthwhile'
- 92% reported "overall I am satisfied with my job"
- 96% said they would recommend HomeGround to others as a good place to work
- 98% of staff were proud of the quality of work we produce at HomeGround
- 94% found their job interesting and challenging
- 94% said HomeGround offered a good work/life balance. ■



Finances

Summarised Statement of Comprehensive Income for the Year Ended 30 June 2014

Revenue from Operations	2013/ 2014	2012/ 2013
Government and other Grants	15,229,679	14,273,415
Rental Income - THM	1,160,703	1,087,504
Rental Income - Service Delivery Own Buildings	721,788	726,896
Interest	174,550	131,259
Sundry Income	202,973	59,142
Real Estate Management Fee	17,442	2,098
Donations	96,698	39,974
HEF recovery	116,913	195,935
Total Revenue	17,720,745	16,516,224

Expenditure	2013/ 2014	2012/ 2013
Staff Costs	8,414,346	7,669,735
Payments to Partner Agencies	2,030,890	1,874,189
Client Costs	1,962,748	2,338,929
Property Costs - THM	623,859	632,416
Rental Expense -THM	1,121,891	1,040,229
Property Costs - Service Delivery Own Buildings	719,843	649,653
Consultants & Professional Fees	99,467	63,916
Amortisation/Depreciation and Impairments	717,481	696,001
Office Expenses	561,333	512,479
Motor Vehicle Expenses	275,233	321,624
Other Expenses	635,387	554,635
Total Operating Expenditure	17,162,479	16,353,805

Operating Surplus / (Deficit) for the year	558,266	162,419
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Other Income	2013/ 2014	2012/ 2013
Capital Purchase Grant Vic Government / Transferred to Capital Reserve	849,598	-
Total Comprehensive Income for the year	1,407,864	162,419

The summarised Statement of Comprehensive Income and Financial Position has been extracted from the audited financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2014

Summarised Statement of Financial Position for the Year Ended 30 June 2014

Current Assets	2013/ 2014	2012/ 2013
Cash and Cash Equivalents	7,967,347	8,376,425
Trade and Other Receivables	203,647	157,476
Prepayments and other Receivables	190,396	151,863
Total Current Assets	8,361,389	8,685,764
Non Current Assets	2013/ 2014	2012/ 2013
Property Plant & Equipment	18,929,448	18,573,428
Other non current assets	34,439	34,439
Total Non Current Assets	18,963,886	18,607,866
Current Liabilities	2013/ 2014	2012/ 2013
Trade and Other Payables	1,288,934	1,466,504
Borrowings	87,859	421,885
Employee Benefits	783,010	706,801
Grants in Advance	2,079,581	3,155,275
Total Current Liabilities	4,239,385	5,750,465
Non Current Liabilities	2013/ 2014	2012/ 2013
Borrowings	4,365,696	4,246,424
Employee Benefits	117,958	102,369
Total Non Current Liabilities	4,483,654	4,348,793
Net Assets	18,602,237	17,194,372
Equity	2013/ 2014	2012/ 2013
Contributed Equity	781,055	781,055
Accumulated Surplus	2,270,760	1,485,200
Capital Reserve (Property)	13,971,293	13,571,332
Furniture and Housing Reserves	758,543	713,343
Program Funding Received in Advance	668,607	519,200
Property Maintenance Reserve	151,979	124,243
Total Equity	18,602,237	17,194,372

Danby Bland Provan & Co

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

Cery W. A.

G D WINNETT Partner

30 October 2014

You can help us to end homelessness in Melbourne.

Our vision to end homelessness in Melbourne is not a slogan – it is something we believe in and work to achieve.

HomeGround is consistently at the forefront of innovative service delivery models. Programs like Elizabeth Street Common Ground, the Nicholson social Housing Project and Melbourne Street to Home are providing support and helping create homes for some of Melbourne's most vulnerable people.

But we can't do this alone.
With your help we will be able to continue moving forward in delivering accessible, innovative and effective services to those who need them most.

We ensure that the services we deliver are supported by evidence. Your donation will help us continue to deliver services and conduct research and more towards ending homelessness effectively and efficiently.

You can make a secure online donation at www.homeground.org.au/donate or by calling us on (03) 9288 9600.

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communications@homeground.org.au

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Fax 8359 0201

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Housing
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Phone 9288 9611

HomeGround St Kilda
122 Chapel Street St Kilda 3182

Housing
Phone 8598 1111
Fax 8598 1101

MS2H
Phone 8598 1140
Support
Phone 8598 1188

HomeGround Prahran
PO Box 354, Prahran 3181

Tenancy and Property
Phone 9537 7999

HomeGround Northcote
279 High Street Northcote 3070

Support
Phone 9466 0100
Freecall 1800 834 125
Fax 9466 0101



**“We didn't know
what we'd do.
We lived without
gas for three
months. We
experienced the
instability, of crisis
accommodation
for six, and felt
we had no other
choices.**

“Homelessness has a real and devastating effect on people’s lives. It places them within a cycle of danger, despair and isolation, and leaves them feeling that their stories are unimportant.”

Danny's Story

Opening doors – new life choices at ESCG

Having a private space to shower is something most of us take for granted but for Elizabeth Street Common Ground (ESCG) resident Danny it seemed out of reach for over a decade.

“I lived in a rooming house for 10 years before coming here. My greatest wish was to have my own toilet and shower and that wish came true when I moved into my Common Ground apartment,” Danny says. A combination of hard times and social isolation resulted in Danny being at risk of homelessness before finding a place at ESCG.

“I was in dire straights. I had some hard times and found myself backing away from people who cared about me. I got to a really low point but I was lucky that a door opened for me here (ESCG) and now I am in a good state of mind.”

Danny had a gambling problem and experienced some mental health issues that impacted on his ability to maintain stable housing.

“When I was a gambler I would spend all of my money and often go without basic things like decent food. But something clicked in me and I decided I had to change. When I was given this head start – this unit – I was determined to change things.”

Elizabeth Street Common Ground gave Danny a ‘50% head start’ and combined with his own motivation has allowed him to make some big life changes.

“I gave up gambling and started saving when I came here. I gave myself a goal and I have never looked back,” Danny says.

“Coming here was a big motivation for me to change. You want to make a 100% change in your life and all of a sudden you have a 50% head start because you have somewhere safe and secure to live.”

ESCG manager Camille says Danny contributes to the sense of community in the building by taking part in activities and using ancillary services available on site.

“Danny helps out with the Sunday night barbeques. He prepares, cooks and is on hand to help Russ (ESCG worker) make the night a success. I think we had 28 to 30 residents at the last barbeque; Danny and Russ run it like a well oiled machine,” Camille says.

Moving to ESCG has opened up a host of possibilities for Danny and expanded his ability to make good life choices.

“I am thinking about doing things now that I haven’t considered possible over the past 10 years. I got my driver license after five years of not having it. I have photo ID and I am thinking of applying for a passport.”

Camille has seen Danny develop his confidence and independence over the three years he has been at Common Ground.

“There is a real level of independence and goal setting with Danny. He is very determined and contributes to the sense of community we are building here. It is great to see the sense of pride he has in his home. Danny has choices now that he never had before.”

Danny says he would find it hard to leave ESCG because he feels so at home and a sense of belonging. He would like to see more long term supported accommodation available to people in need. ■

“I am thinking about doing things now that I haven’t considered possible over the past ten years.”



Terry's Story

From homelessness to helping others

While the rest of Melbourne sleeps, Terry leaves his home in Prahran to begin an hour and a half journey on foot to a church in the CBD.

For nearly two years now Terry has been volunteering to cook breakfast at St Peters for people who are experiencing homelessness. When his breakfast shift is over, Terry continues on to Fitzroy to help prepare lunch at St Mark's.

"I volunteer because the help is needed. People often need someone to talk to and what better way than over a meal and a cuppa," Terry says.

Terry's own experience with homelessness led him to volunteer at breakfast and lunch programs run by Anglicare Victoria.

When Terry's long term relationship broke down in 2012 he found himself on the street. After leaving the family home Terry slept rough for six weeks and began to drink heavily.

"I was in a bad place and I just couldn't think straight," he says. Fortunately the Melbourne Street to Home (MS2H) team met Terry and began to help him with housing and health issues.

"I really just needed someone to talk things through with. Maria (MS2H worker) and I would just chat for a little while and it kept me from losing it."

Maria worked with other services to help secure Terry a safe home in Prahran which provided him with a base to rebuild.

Now that he has a home Terry can work on reconnecting with his children and managing his health.

"Having a place of your own relaxes you so that you don't have to worry so much," Terry says.

Terry was recently recognised for his volunteering work at St Peters and St Marks churches. He was awarded the Chairman's award for outstanding volunteer by Anglicare Victoria.

"I couldn't believe it," Terry says of winning the award. "I was just so happy to be recognised. I started volunteering so that I could have a place to go every day and keep my mind occupied."

Terry now feels like he is part of a community and cared for by others involved in the volunteering programs.

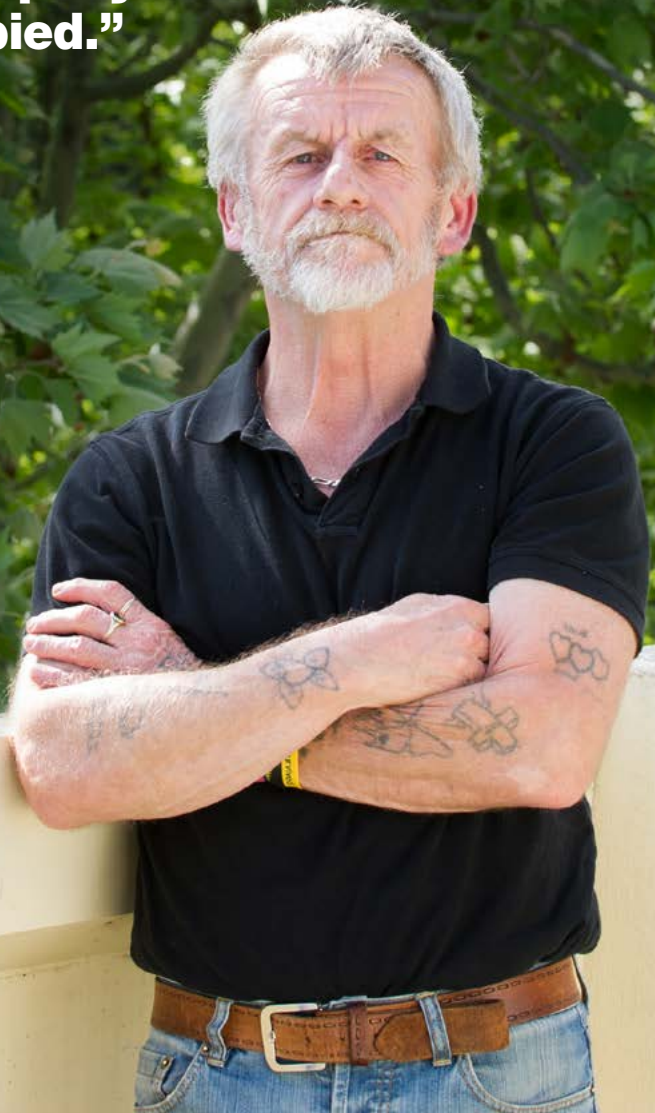
Melbourne Street to Home worker Ruth is working with Terry on future goals and provides support when any issues arise that might be overwhelming.

"I really enjoy working with Terry. I have seen him come through some really tough times. I admire how hard he has worked to be in the position where he is winning awards for his efforts to support other people who are homeless."

One of the things Terry looks forward to most these days is spending time with his children.

"I get to see my children tomorrow. You should see my house; the whole wall is covered with my children's art work." ■

“I was just so happy to be recognised. I started volunteering so that I could have a place to go every day and keep my mind occupied.”



Hani's Story

Healthy homes, healthy lives

A series of traumatic life events left Hani on the verge of homelessness months before the birth of her first child. “My partner and I separated when I was four months pregnant and I needed support because my life was breaking down,” Hani says.

Hani was living in private rental and couldn't afford the rent without the financial support of her ex-husband. Only a few months into her pregnancy Hani was advised that her unborn child had a congenital heart condition.

“The doctor told me the baby had a heart condition and that I would need to have complete bed rest. I had to leave my job and the relationship breakdown meant I no longer had financial support. It took about a month to get any income support from Centrelink and the bills kept piling up.”

Hani says she survived with the help of friends and workers who provided food vouchers and paid some of her bills. With the assistance of the Muslim Women's Association, Hani was referred to HomeGround and efforts were made to get her housed before the baby was born.

“The HomeGround workers listened to me and they didn't give up even when it was really hard to find any suitable housing. Finally this place came up (a public housing unit) and the rent was affordable so I knew I would be able to manage.”

With her housing in place Hani was able to concentrate on caring for her child.

“My baby was only one hour old when he had his first operation and 14 days old when he had the second operation to mend his heart,” Hani says. “Now that my baby is healthy and we have a safe home I feel like my life is paradise.”

HomeGround Families Team worker Erin is providing ongoing support to Hani and assisting her with keeping track of appointments and setting goals.

“Erin is many things to me. She is like a mum and a best friend. She looks for things that I need in order to plan ahead and gives me the information so I can make decisions. Erin provides me with resources so that I can make a future for me and my son.”

Erin says she enjoys working with Hani and is impressed with her high levels of motivation and initiative.

“Hani was keen to get her license so we worked together on practicing the test. She now has her L Plates and the next big goal is to become an interpreter. I know she will achieve everything she has in mind. I really enjoy working with Hani and I'm so happy we could assist her with the housing she desperately needed before her son was born.”

Hani says her experience has confirmed how essential housing is and why it should be a basic human right.

“I think shelter is the most important thing in life for every human being. Once you have a home you manage everything else. It is such a basic need and without it we are lost.” ■



“Erin is many things to me. She is like a mum and a best friend. Erin provides me with resources so that I can make a future for me and my son.”

Sharon's Story

The long and winding road to recovery

It has been a long and hard road to recovery for Sharon Giordmaina but having a safe, affordable place to call home and weekly support from HomeGround is making the world of difference.

Sharon's journey with HomeGround outreach worker Wayne began when she found herself homeless and battling many demons. Serious mental health and addiction issues combined with homelessness intensified Sharon's feelings of sadness and isolation.

With her mental health deteriorating at the beginning of 2014 Sharon found herself admitted to a mental health ward as an involuntary patient. She spent five months undergoing treatment and was discharged from hospital in May.

Before her admission to hospital Sharon had been living in a property in East Coburg and with assistance from HomeGround was able to return to the property after her hospitalisation.

"It was great that Wayne and Mirella kept in touch with me when I was in hospital," Sharon says. "Having a place to come home to made all the difference."

In the midst of her housing and health crisis Sharon was unable to care for her daughter who is currently living with a foster family. Sharon and her daughter now enjoy regular visits.

HomeGround outreach worker Wayne is offering intensive support to Sharon and they meet weekly to address any issues that come up and keep track of appointments and goals.

"Wayne helps me keep on top of things. We keep track of appointments and he checks in with me about how I am going with my health and anything else I am worried about."

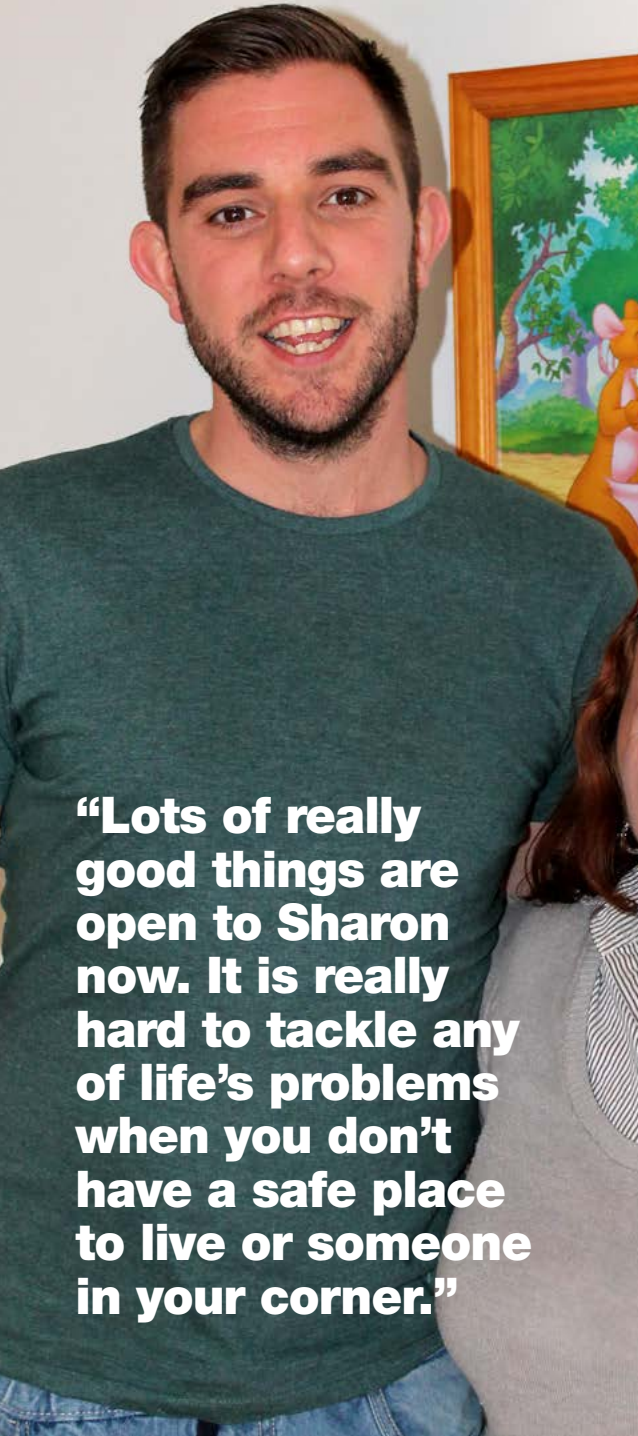
Wayne says Sharon has come a long way and having a stable home is a vital part of her journey to recovery and rebuilding her life.

"Lots of really good things are open to Sharon now. It is really hard to tackle any of life's problems when you don't have a safe place to live or someone in your corner. Sharon has been reunited with her daughter and is looking at work opportunities.

She is making a huge effort to get her life back on track and I will be here to support her with that."

Sharon smiles as she joins Wayne for a photo and proudly shows off the jewellery she has saved up for. "Things are getting better. I am seeing my daughter regularly and I hope to do my Certificate IV in Community Services next year." ■

*It is with great sadness that we announce that Sharon passed away suddenly and unexpectedly before the annual report was published. We dedicate this story to her memory.



“Lots of really good things are open to Sharon now. It is really hard to tackle any of life’s problems when you don’t have a safe place to live or someone in your corner.”

Kevin's Story

The long journey home

Kevin is enjoying the serenity of his own place in a quiet apartment in Melbourne's inner north almost a year after finding himself homeless.

"I ended up living under a bridge after an incident at the rooming house where I got the hell beaten out of me," Kevin says. "Linda from the Royal District Nursing Service (RDNS Homeless Persons' Program) introduced me to Dylan from HomeGround who started working on finding me housing."

Kevin's journey to stable housing took almost 12 months of moving between various rooming houses and supported accommodation before settling into his new place.

"I had a lot of moves in a short amount of time before settling here. I had three to four addresses in one month. When I got this place I realised that having an advocate in your corner is priceless. I moved in here on 20 May which was perfect because it was a couple of days before my birthday," Kevin says.

While HomeGround support worker Dylan initially focused on sustainable housing options, he and Kevin are now working on health issues and longer term goals.

"When I met Dylan I knew he was going to help me with housing. What I didn't expect was the extra help or planning.

At the start we decided to meet once a week. I can procrastinate so Dylan helps me get things done. His approach is very hands on."

Kevin says having a stable home and support allows him to plan ahead and he would like to see other people who are homeless receive the support and opportunities he has accessed through HomeGround and the RDNS.

"I found myself looking to the future after I moved in here," Without Dylan and Linda's support I wouldn't have sought the help I am now getting for my mental health. I have met a lot of guys at other services and found the people still doing it tough and sleeping rough haven't been able to access the help they need," Kevin says.

Dylan says he is heartened by the strength that Kevin has shown in the face of great adversity. "Kevin is an example of how resilient people are. It has been a really hard road for Kevin but he has come through and still has a positive outlook."

Homelessness can happen to anyone and once it takes hold it can be hard to find a way out according to Kevin.

"It can wear you down. There are lots of people I know who want to get off the streets but things don't quite work out for them," Kevin says.

"It is so sad because you see all sorts of people out there – some people who have owned their own business and you wonder 'how did this happen to you'? ■

“At the start we decided to meet once a week. I can procrastinate so Dylan helps me get things done. His approach is very hands on.”



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