



**ANNUAL
REPORT**
2016-17

Launch
HOUSING

IT'S TIME TO END
HOMELESSNESS

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WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR



Neil Chatfield
Chair

Welcome to the second annual report of Launch Housing. In keeping with our mission to end homelessness, we are providing housing and support services to individuals, couples and families experiencing homelessness or at the risk of being homeless.

We have restructured our organisation to focus on our three core pillars: Getting Housing, Keeping Housing, and Housing Supply.

We're committed to implementing our strategies to support our clients through a range of programs and services.

During the last year:

- We have supported more families and children through the variety of programs you'll read about in this report.
- HomeGround Real Estate, the first real estate agency of its kind in Australia, continues to increase its market presence to help house more people.
- Government and other grants have increased to support increased program activities and new initiatives.
- We've continued our important research to support broad-based change regarding homelessness and housing affordability.

As we move through the next financial year, we will continue to focus on innovative solutions to address the lack of affordable housing in Victoria and prevent people from experiencing homelessness.

I encourage you to read our annual report and recognise the outstanding efforts of our staff.

WELCOME FROM THE CEO



Tony Keenan
CEO

Launch Housing has a combined 75 years of service in our community. When our predecessors first started in the 1960s, most people experiencing homelessness were men in their mid-40s. Today, over half of our clients are families, in particular, women and children escaping family violence.

Our research tells us that the perceptions many Australians have about homelessness do not match the reality of what is happening on the ground. People still tend to think that homelessness is the same as it was in the 1960s. We are facing unprecedented changes to those affected by homelessness, driven by a crisis in affordable housing and family violence. The reality for us is that families make up a large proportion of the people we serve.

With that in mind, this year's annual report focuses on our work with families. We believe that all families should be able to fulfil their desires and aspirations, including having a safe place to live, affordable childcare, and a quality education. Homelessness disrupts these aspirations, and is worsened by our fragmented system.

As advocates for affordable housing solutions, Launch Housing continuously strives to deliver programs to assist families and young children affected by the experience of homelessness. Throughout this 2016-17 Annual Report, we share our stand out achievements for the year. They include the delivery of a specialised Outreach Program for single pregnant women who are homeless or living in insecure or unsafe housing. It also showcases work through our Homeless Children's Specialist Support Service, successful tenancy placements through HomeGround Real Estate, our latest research, Accommodation Options for Families, and more.

Many experiences of homelessness are not visible, especially with those supporting young children and families. Now more than ever, we are working to ensure we continue to effectively provide assistance and support to those in need, with our priority for affordable and safe housing reigning strong through both our mission and services.

OUR MISSION

IS TO END
HOMELESSNESS



OUR VISION:

WE BELIEVE HOUSING
IS A BASIC
HUMAN RIGHT
THAT AFFORDS PEOPLE
DIGNITY.

EVERYONE HAS A
RIGHT TO A HOME
AND IT IS OUR



JOB

TO MAKE THIS
HAPPEN.

OUR BOARD



Launch Housing is governed by a professional board of directors. Our board members have public, private and community sector expertise from a range of areas.

Our board comprises:

Top row, left to right: Dominic Esposito, Katharine Williams, Wayne Read, Carolyn Gale, Megan Fletcher, Dimity Reed AM, Geoff Nicholson (Deputy Chair), Professor Tony Dalton.

Bottom row: Professor Ron Wakefield, Pam White, Neil Chatfield (Chair), Jill Riseley.

LAUNCH HOUSING SERVICE PHILOSOPHY

The Launch Housing Service Philosophy is a set of statements that express our core beliefs, values, culture and aspirations. It informs our understanding and approach to homelessness and the people who access our services. It is the foundation for all aspects of our operations, service delivery, communications, research and advocacy.

Our Service Philosophy has been key to driving a new shared identity and culture for Launch Housing, and it holds us to account by stating what we believe in and how we deliver our services.

Our Service Philosophy was developed by staff members alongside people with a lived experience of homelessness, many of whom have used our services and have experienced a profound sense that they no longer belong to society or are entitled to the rights enjoyed by other community members. Their involvement was fundamental in building an effective Service Philosophy, which is the foundation for creating the best possible housing outcomes and an inclusive and empowering service experience for all.

Launch Housing Service Philosophy

Launch Housing's mission is to end homelessness. Homelessness is a consequence of our unequal society. People don't choose homelessness.

Belief Statements

- We recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were the first to live here. We celebrate the First Peoples, their cultures, languages, connections to country and heritage. We also recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples experience higher rates of homelessness than other groups in the community which is connected to the history of dispossession from country and culture.
- Access to safe, secure and affordable housing is a human right.
- Like everyone else, people who experience homelessness have rights, aspirations and potential.
- The people we work with are experts in their own lives, we walk alongside them to achieve the best outcomes for each individual. Everyone's experience of homelessness is unique.
- We recognise there is a power imbalance between staff and the people they work with. It's our job to work hard to minimise that imbalance.
- We are an independent, non-religious organisation focussed entirely on ending homelessness.
- The support Launch Housing provides is always free of discrimination.
- Community is important, connectedness and participation is essential for the long-term prevention of homelessness.

How do we do it?

Ending homelessness requires:

- the expertise, knowledge and specialist skills of our staff
- advocacy always being a strong focus of our work so that everyone has a place to call home
- everyone to take responsibility – we build partnerships with other sectors, governments and with the community to achieve better outcomes for our clients
- belief in people's strengths, skills and capabilities to make the changes in their lives that they want
- being active and authentic in harnessing the creativity and knowledge of people with a lived experience of homelessness
- providing services and support that are culturally safe
- access to safe and affordable housing
- working in partnership with specialist Aboriginal agencies and using Launch Housing resources to deliver high quality services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- recognising the under resourcing of the system, identifying gaps and blockages and working hard to achieve what's needed
- timely responses that are crucial to minimising harm
- persistence, as it often takes time and creativity to achieve lasting outcomes
- being adaptable, flexible and using innovative approaches and strategies that are informed by evidence.

CONSUMER PARTICIPATION PROJECT

Updates from our Lived Experience Advisory Group

Last year, Launch Housing established its Consumer Participation and Leadership Strategy in conjunction with a group of people who have experienced homelessness. It was based on the recognition that our clients are at the centre of everything we do, and their views and feedback should shape our services, research and advocacy.

A key part of that strategy was the establishment of the Lived Experience Advisory Group (LEAG) in June 2016 with the help of two consumer consultants, Emily Baisman and Nic Dolby, both of whom have experienced homelessness.

The LEAG is now composed of 10 consumers broadly representative of the people with whom Launch Housing works. This includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, LGB people, people from trans and gender diverse communities, people who have experienced family violence and young people from our Youth Foyers. The group also represents a diversity of experiences of homelessness, from transitional housing and crisis accommodation to rough sleeping, extended periods of homelessness and more.

The group has been involved in more than 15 initiatives since its inception, including:

- integral input into the design of small, transportable houses for a major Launch Housing project
- education and training of multiple external organisations, including Public Transport Victoria PSO officers, leading to a change in their approach to enforcement with people who experience homelessness
- co-design of Launch Housing's Feedback System (implemented in October 2017)
- submission to the City of Melbourne rough sleepers bylaw changes
- review of the Launch Housing client complaint system
- attendance at all team planning days and visits to some Launch Housing sites
- involvement in new staff induction days through providing an overview of LEAG, its purpose and roles within the organisation
- education and training with Wilson Security staff who operate carparks in the CBD (where many rough sleepers congregate)
- trial of a 'Meet and Greet' initiative where a peer worker is available at Launch Housing sites to greet clients.

LEAG plans for 2017-18 include to:

- co-design a new consumer participation strategy to further embed participation in the organisation
- lead a Lived Experience Forum to share experiences, strengths and challenges of consumer participation with other peer workers and people with a lived experience
- become involved in accreditation processes and interview panels for support workers
- become actively involved in higher level meetings and advocacy with Government
- build cultural diversity of the group, including an understanding of cultural diversity and to start each meeting with an Acknowledgement to Country
- develop a speaking bank of the LEAG's experiences of homelessness and their public speaking strengths.

"People with a lived experience of homelessness are now involved in developing and improving services.

We are particularly proud of the cohesiveness of the group, the bond we have formed, the passion we have and the acceptance of Launch Housing of the LEAG into the organisation."

Annie, LEAG Chair

LAUNCH HOUSING OVERVIEW

Launch Housing is an independent Melbourne-based community organisation, which brings 75 years' experience working with people at risk of, or experiencing, homelessness. We are Victoria's strongest advocate for affordable housing, and leaders of research into homelessness that influences better outcomes for the people we support, and brings lasting positive change for our community.

We believe housing is a basic human right that affords people dignity. Everyone has a right to a home and it is our job to make this happen. Our mission is to end homelessness. Launch Housing provides housing and support services

to individuals, couples and families experiencing homelessness. This includes crisis accommodation, transitional, medium-term and long-term supportive housing, and access to private rental.

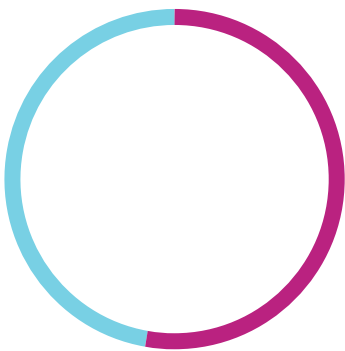
We also provide flexible, specialist services that directly assist and improve the lives of thousands of men, women, young people, children and families experiencing homelessness every year. This includes outreach support, family violence assistance, education programs, financial skill building and access to health services.

We operate across 14 sites and 18 local government areas from Whittlesea in the north to Greater Dandenong in the south-east of Melbourne. Last year we supported over 18,000 people across Melbourne.

IN 2016-17, LAUNCH HOUSING SUPPORTED

18,168

people



53% | 47%

53% of people we supported identified as female, 47% identified as male

LAUNCH HOUSING IS COMMITTED TO GETTING PEOPLE HOUSED. WE DO THIS THROUGH:



2

Education First Youth Foyers, accommodating up to 80 young students



65

studio apartments at Elizabeth Street Common Ground, for people experiencing chronic homelessness



539

539 transitional (short- to medium-term) properties



326

properties through HomeGround Real Estate



115

beds in supported crisis accommodation

KELLY

“I’m what you call a Jill-of-all-trades. You normally hear Jack-of-all-trades, but I’m Jill.”

The experience of homelessness was completely unexpected for Kelly, a mother of five. Initially from Queensland, Kelly, her husband, and children moved to Melbourne in 2015 into a small granny-flat, until they were unable to continue paying the rent on a single low income. They were unable to secure a lease due to their unstable employment and were spending about \$770 to \$1100 a week on motels just to survive. The situation was not sustainable.

In between motel stays, Kelly often found herself living out of her car, which was becoming increasingly difficult with several young children.

“[People] don’t care if you need petrol for your car, because as far as homelessness is concerned, [they think] ‘wow you got a car, that’s called luxury’. I could not believe that someone said that to me... some of them were laughing at me because my husband was still working.”

As their experience of homelessness intensified, her relationship with her partner came to an end. Kelly was forced to find other means to protect and care for her young children, as living in motels was becoming increasingly dangerous. Kelly says she was often frightened and concerned for the wellbeing of her children.

“I heard a noise one night and I [saw] an argument, and two days later they removed a lady’s body. It was very overwhelming.”



Kelly wanted to secure a stable home to bring up her young children, so she came to Launch Housing in 2016. She worked closely with a support worker and secured temporary transitional housing. Eventually a vacancy for long-term permanent housing came up for Kelly and her kids. By taking this opportunity, she was able to introduce her children into a kindergarten program and create a sense of normalcy for her kids. Most importantly, Kelly finds that having a roof over her head, which she describes as “gold”, has relieved a lot of her stress and welfare concerns, such as income, a place to sleep, and safety.

“When you’re on the other side of the fence... you try and think better things. Until you’re on the other side of the fence, you don’t know. Of course I never in a million years would’ve thought that would’ve happened to me,” she said.

As her children are nearly old enough to start school, Kelly explains that she is eager to get a job and contribute to the community.

“I’m what you call a Jill-of-all-trades. You normally hear Jack-of-all-trades, but I’m Jill.”

Eventually, Kelly has aspirations of buying her own plot of land.

RESEARCH UPDATE

Rough Sleeping

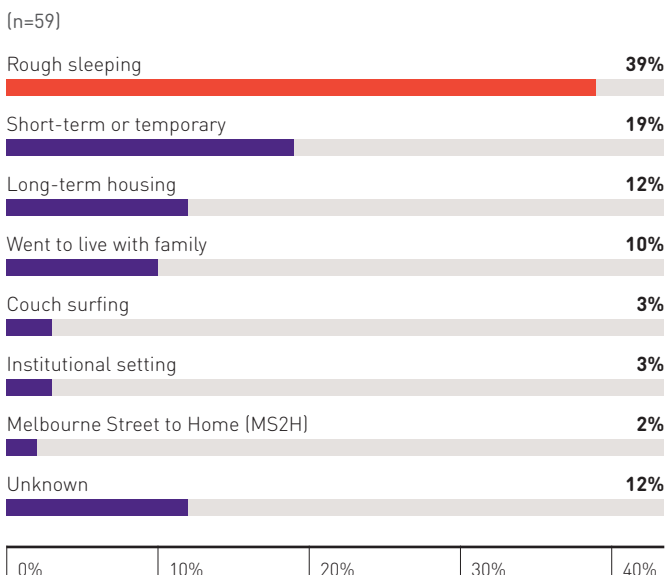
The City of Melbourne 2016 StreetCount documented 247 people sleeping rough in and around Melbourne’s Central Business District (CBD), an alarming 74% increase since the 2014 StreetCount.

The experience of homelessness tends to be generally invisible, with many individuals staying in short-term or emergency accommodation or crowded dwellings with relatives or friends. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, 6% of those experiencing homelessness end up sleeping rough on the streets, in parks or improvised dwellings, making them highly visible and extremely vulnerable. This vulnerability opens them up to a higher risk of being victims of crime, including targeted violent assaults and even murder. Many individuals who are suffering mental and physical health issues also find their health deterioration is amplified through the experience of sleeping rough, and its associated vulnerabilities.

Just like the broader homelessness population, those who find themselves on the streets are a diverse group. Some people may experience homelessness as a one-off, short-term occurrence while others may experience homelessness on an ongoing or recurring basis.

In order to understand what was happening in relation to rough sleeping, Launch Housing undertook an in-depth analysis of data from Launch Housing’s Rough Sleepers Initiative (RSI). This small program provides a dedicated response to people sleeping rough, linking them to housing and essential support services.

Figure 1: Housing Outcomes for Rough Sleepers



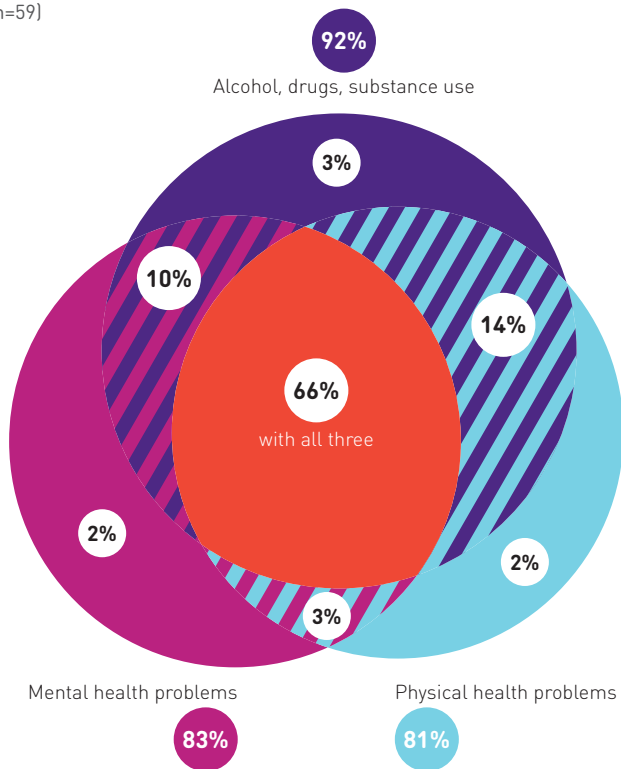
Three key findings of the analysis of the RSI client sample are:

- 1 The majority of the clients did not get long-term permanent housing. Instead, most of the accommodation available to them consisted of a cycle of multiple stays in crisis accommodation and/or short-term emergency accommodation (mainly in cheap hotels). At the end of a 12 month period, 39% of the surveyed group were primarily sleeping rough due to lack of housing (Figure 1). This emphasises the significance of a permanent housing response as part of any strategy to address rough sleeping.
- 2 The majority of clients are experiencing significant mental health difficulties (consistent with childhood trauma), substance abuse problems and/or serious physical health problems. Many are dealing with all of these simultaneously (Figure 2). In many cases, the level of disadvantage and vulnerability experienced by these clients was amplified by the experience of sleeping rough. This demonstrates that there is a critical need to secure permanent secure housing for these clients so as to prevent further trauma and deterioration of their health.
- 3 The findings indicate that there is a broader system failure when dealing with people with high and complex needs. It is better to take the time, however long, to assist people to achieve a sustainable housing outcome, rather than relying on short-term, temporary solutions. The analysis reminds us of the importance of designing and implementing interventions and programs that are mindful and respectful of each person’s particular circumstances and that lead to permanent, sustainable housing solutions.

Launch Housing established the Rough Sleepers Initiative (RSI) in March 2015 with Victorian government funding, in response to a significant increase in people sleeping rough in Melbourne’s CBD. Between July 2016 and June 2017, our RSI team supported 242 people sleeping on the streets of Melbourne. Long-term rough sleepers often have multiple and complex health issues, and we work with the Bolton Clarke Homeless Persons’ Program to ensure that their medical needs are addressed at the same time as their housing needs.

Figure 2: Prevalence of Overlapping and Concurrent Health Issues in Rough Sleepers

(n=59)



Australian Homelessness Monitor

In early August 2016, Launch Housing was delighted to host a visit by leading international academic, Professor Suzanne Fitzpatrick from Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh, who specialises in research on homelessness and housing exclusion. We were especially excited to welcome Suzanne because she has been instrumental in the development of the UK Homelessness Monitor, a unique research and policy-influencing tool designed to achieve significant reform in homelessness and housing policy.

Launch Housing has been inspired by this work and is well on the way to developing the first Australian Homelessness Monitor (AHM). The aim of the AHM is to raise the profile of homelessness as a critical social problem. Analysis will focus on drawing links between labour market and housing market trends, and to social security and affordable housing policy developments.

There are three main components of the AHM:

- 1 The primary research involving interviews with key stakeholders and an online survey of specialist homelessness services across the country.

- 2 The secondary analysis of existing datasets will include the 2016 Census, and other surveys from the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.
- 3 A review of recent social security policy changes with possible implications for homelessness will also form part of the analysis.

Progress to date includes:

- An online survey of stakeholders was completed – an overall response rate of 40% was achieved (from a total of 174 agencies contacted, 70 agencies responded).
- Survey responses were received from every state/territory.
- Interviews were conducted with representatives from nearly all state and territory governments. Also interviewed were stakeholders from community organisations or peak bodies in every state and territory in Australia.
- Analysis of the data is well under way and we hope to report on the findings in the coming months.

Pregnancy and Homelessness

Launch Housing and RMIT University are working together to complete a research project on pregnancy and homelessness. The research is led by Associate Professor Suellen Murray from the Centre for Applied Social Research at RMIT University, and guided by a reference group including senior staff from Launch Housing and the Royal Women's Hospital.

Homelessness is a difficult and traumatic experience and becomes even more challenging for women who are pregnant, as they begin to think about how they will manage once their child is born. Pregnant women experiencing homelessness are less likely to access antenatal care and may be reluctant to disclose their pregnancy to homelessness services for fear that their child may be removed from their care, thus increasing the risk to their own health and wellbeing, and that of their unborn baby.

While individual services work with pregnant women experiencing homelessness, there is no systemic response to this group in Victoria. In order to address this gap, this research aims to identify successful ways of working with pregnant women who are experiencing homelessness in order to improve the service response to ensure better outcomes for pregnant women and their babies. It also seeks to estimate the number of pregnant women who experience homelessness in Victoria. In addition to a literature review, the researchers will undertake in-depth interviews with practitioners and policymakers, with the findings due to be published in early 2018.



MARIA*

"I used to be a very 'no' person.
I used to be very resistant.
But now...I'm like 'yep ok, yep'.
I'll give it a go."

The Outreach Support Program for pregnant women sits within the Housing Support Team at Launch Housing South Melbourne. In 2016–17, it has helped dozens of single mums including Maria*, aged 27. After a tumultuous journey, which included prior substance abuse and sleeping rough, Maria is a testament to the success of the Outreach Program. She has been recently successful in applying for supported long-term accommodation for herself and her one year-old son Spencer*.

Maria experienced a childhood in foster care, where she suffered myriad abuses over six years. To escape from this and find a way to deal with her pain, she left her foster home.

"From sixteen I was couch surfing, then I ended up in a refuge in Brunswick. It ended up [being] refuge to refuge. Then I found drugs. I was a user for about seven and a half years... I found that I had hit rock bottom."

Maria was determined to not let her past define her and attended a detox program supported by Launch Housing. Despite it taking several tries, she successfully completed the program. Not long after, Maria presented again at Launch Housing seeking accommodation, and soon she became pregnant. The Outreach Program was able to offer her safe transitional housing until a permanent solution was found, and also provided counselling and guidance.

"I used to be a very 'no' person... I used to be very resistant. I wouldn't do anything. I used to say 'no thank you.' But now... I'm like 'yep ok, yep'. I'll give it a go."

Maria remained in transitional housing throughout her pregnancy, supported by the program. During this period she worked with her case worker to discuss permanent and long-term housing options as well as other pregnancy-related support. With growing concerns that she wouldn't be able



to bond with her unborn child, she attended a pregnancy support program where she was able to further manage her pregnancy and wellbeing. Her progress was so positive that she was asked to become a mentor for the program for other young mothers-to-be.

“My biggest fear whilst pregnant was not bonding with [my son]... I never had unconditional love, the things that parents are meant to give [their children]... It’s okay to ask for help. Take it day by day... When I gave birth to him and looked at him, I thought ‘I don’t know why I thought all those things’ because it changes you... I look back now, and I haven’t had a sleep-in for a year. But it’s all worthwhile.”

Maria explains that her plan for the future is to maintain stable housing, and continue to engage in support services as both a client and a mentor. She describes her relationships

with Launch Housing as like “family” and says her strong connection with her case workers has inspired her to complete her Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) and begin a Community Services Diploma. Her ultimate goal is to become an alcohol and drug counsellor and help others in need.

*Names changed by request

OUTREACH SUPPORT PROGRAM

OUTREACH SUPPORT PROGRAM OUTCOMES FOR 2016–17

35/40

women and babies (87.5%) supported were placed in safe and stable housing

95%

of babies born to mothers supported by the Outreach Support Program remained in the mother's care

Launch Housing's Outreach Support Program provides case management support to single pregnant women who are experiencing homelessness, or living in insecure or unsafe housing. This program provides specialised support to women who are 18 and over, 12 or more weeks pregnant, with no other children in their care. Primarily the Outreach Support Program is comprised of direct case management, supplied by a dedicated Outreach Support Program Case Manager located at South Melbourne Launch Housing. Other Launch Housing sites have access to an Outreach Outpost which is crucial to providing the best service possible to women supported by Launch Housing.

The Outreach Support Program's primary focus is to assist pregnant women to work towards securing safe, stable and affordable housing. Clients are assigned to the Outreach Case Manager who provides onsite support to pregnant women to find housing options for them and their families, and provide information and referrals with pregnancy-related matters.

The Outreach Support Program enables and empowers the women to take control of their lives. It gives women the strength, resilience and esteem to believe they are worthy and valued members of a community. This in turn encourages them to view their current situation as a stepping stone towards a brighter future for themselves and their children. The program also empowers pregnant women through education (including pregnancy support classes), and through information around antenatal care.

Outcomes of this program for 2016–17 included:

- 35 out of the 40 women and babies (87.5%) supported were placed in safe and stable housing
- ongoing, consistent engagement with women supported by the program
- 95% of babies born to mothers supported by the Outreach Program remained in the mother's care
- the Outreach Program delivered education and information on its work through training and presentations to various internal and external programs and services.

The Outreach Support Program works with women who are strong and courageous. The women accessing the program are encouraged to remain engaged in the support and are kept well-informed of their choices. The program is delivered in a way that women are reminded that they gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience that they have had to face and are supported through these challenges every step of the way.

Moving into 2018, the program plans to deliver:

- continued networking with other agencies to educate workers within the community service/health sector on working with pregnant women experiencing homelessness
- discussions to develop better relationships with local hospitals to ensure continuity of care and assistance to women experiencing homelessness
- potential opportunities to access grants or philanthropic funding to further assist the women supported to gain extra support during their pregnancy, or to create a pilot program that would recruit another worker to assist with the demand on the program.

ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS FOR FAMILIES

FROM JULY 2016 TO JUNE 2017, AOF HAS WORKED WITH:

109

families

54

families secured private rental

23

families moved into transitional housing and crisis accommodation

9

families moved into public and community housing

Accommodation Options for Families (AOF) is a program that sits within the 'Getting Housing' portfolio at Launch Housing and operates through our three entry points at St Kilda, Cheltenham and Collingwood. AOF delivers short-term case management for up to 6-8 weeks for families to help find medium- to long-term housing, access short-term crisis accommodation options, while also addressing relevant concerns that may be impacting a family's ability to access and maintain safe and secure housing.

Our aim is to work with our clients to help them understand the housing system and find long-term housing. Some of the supports AOF provides include:

- holistic assessments of families and children
- information and referrals to specialist services
- referrals for children to specialised services with regards to their schooling, health and wellbeing
- assistance for families to get linked with required support services and transport clients to any external appointments where necessary
- assistance for clients to find crisis accommodation and long-term housing
- financial assistance to help clients secure and move into a property.

If a family experiencing homelessness presents at one of Launch Housing's entry points, the Launch Housing team will provide emergency accommodation. Families are requested to pay 40% of their income towards the rent at the accommodation and Launch Housing covers the difference. The family is allocated a case worker who works with them to find housing and support options, and identifies the family's capacity to afford and maintain a rental. The case worker assists the family with a myriad of tasks, including determining affordable areas, working out the affordable monthly rental amount, and helping the family to attend inspections.

Our St Kilda AOF team also works closely with Launch Housing's South Melbourne Homeless Children's Specialist Support Service team which offers specialist programs for children affected by family violence and/or homelessness. These programs focus on the emotional and physical wellbeing of the children, and developmental outcomes such as engagement with education and programs suitable for school age groups. The collaboration between these two Launch Housing programs has been a great catalyst to achieving great outcomes for families.

From July 2016 to June 2017, AOF has worked with 109 families, all of whom have been successfully assisted. The program has successfully:

- secured 54 families private rental
- moved 23 families into transitional housing and crisis accommodation
- moved 9 families into public and community housing.

The program plans to continue to focus on widening the network and relationships with real estate agents, in efforts to house families in private rentals. AOF will also continue to collaborate with further family support services in the sector to assist families with keeping housing.



After moving from overseas, Atiye, aged 45, and her 18 year-old daughter Jasmine struggled to find affordable housing. The mother and daughter found themselves unable to afford the excessively high rents, and were often moving from place to place with no prospect of stability.

Atiye and Jasmine began to feel the pressure, both emotionally and physically. Atiye's health began to deteriorate from the unavoidable stress of not being able to find housing, and Jasmine found herself falling in with the wrong crowds. Atiye explains that as a mother, she devotes herself to her daughter, and her concerns grew when she noticed changes in their behaviour after living in unsafe accommodation.

"My daughter wasn't my daughter anymore. I wasn't me anymore... [Jasmine] was walking different, dressing different. I thought to myself 'what's going on?' After she explained to me, 'if you look weak in there, they'll stab you,' that was a smack in [the] face. I don't think we could be ok if we had to be in that situation. We were really devastated. Really scared."

Atiye said she was looking for a miracle.

Atiye and Jasmine were introduced to Launch Housing in 2013, where they received assistance with obtaining transitional housing, before beginning to apply for private long-term accommodation. Describing their case manager as a "guardian angel," they were also supported by Launch Housing's Accommodation Options for Families (AOF) program. Through this program, they worked with a case manager to source and maintain safe and permanent housing, and financial and emotional support.



ATIYE + JASMINE

"Now that I'm not dealing with homelessness... I can try to sort things for my future."

Jasmine

HomeGround Real Estate offered them a viable housing option, which they now call home. The importance of having a place to feel safe to come home to every night was incredibly important. Jasmine explains she now has the opportunity to finish her education and to set goals for herself: "Now that I'm not dealing with homelessness, I can actually deal with my own problems. I can try to sort out things for my future."

Most importantly, Jasmine can now be herself and pursue her potential, saying: "I don't have to be something I'm not. I don't have to live that lifestyle and think this is a dead end road [Launch Housing] gave me a new start to life, and has given me a chance to start another and better future... After being homeless for this long, it can be hard to see the future. I've just gotten used to waking up in this place and thinking 'wow I live here and it's going to be permanent'."

Atiye and Jasmine both take great pride in their home and are looking forward to the future. Previously a teacher's aide, Atiye plans to get back into working with the community.

"I love helping people so I might do some volunteering with some special needs children."

An avid gardener, Atiye proudly tends to her plants and finds the positive in starting a new opportunity. "I can tell you I am looking to better my life... at the moment I just want to take it easy and enjoy."

WOMEN'S RAPID RE-HOUSING PROGRAM

The Women's Rapid Re-Housing Program aims to move women, and women with children, out of homelessness as rapidly as possible, and ideally prevent them from entering the homelessness system altogether. The program provides access to flexible, short-term financial assistance for women and their children to either find suitable alternative housing, or maintain their current tenancy. Both approaches focus on establishing stability in sustainable housing.

Last financial year, we supported 108 households with flexible financial assistance to get and keep housing through a partnership between Launch Housing, Justice Connect and WISHIN (Women's Information, Support and Housing in the North). The uptake of this program for women, and women with children, experiencing homelessness and family violence has continued to exceed expectations.

During the last financial year, 80 households, including 81 women and 34 children, have been supported through the Women's Rapid Re-Housing Program at Launch Housing. The program has enabled 57 households to establish new suitable tenancies and 23 households to successfully maintain their current tenancies.

The Women's Rapid Re-Housing Program is a unique and flexible program that ensures safety and security for women and their children. Launch Housing gets women and their children rapidly rehoused, or supports them to maintain their housing, as they work towards achieving their goals and building sustainable lives.

Currently, the increased investment of philanthropic donations will enable delivery of the Women's Rapid Re-Housing Program from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018.

We would like to acknowledge that it is only with the incredible generosity of a fantastic donor that we are able to deliver this program.

FUNDRAISING UPDATE

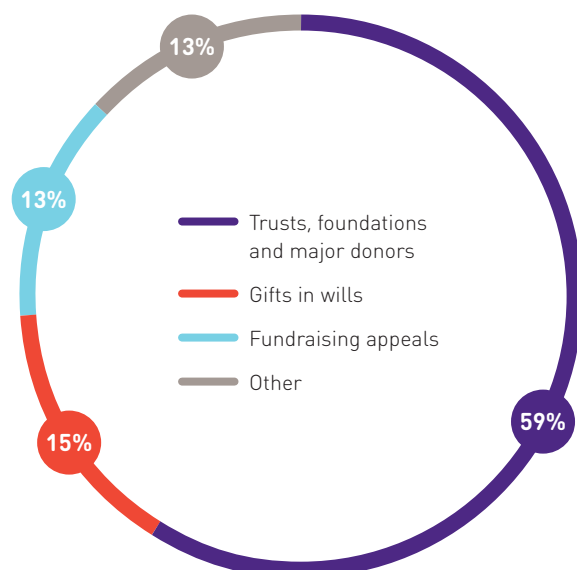
Launch Housing relies on the generosity of our supporters to help fund our innovative programs and help everyone we work with.

A total of **\$2,176,899** in private donations was raised by our fundraising team.

Of that:

- **\$1,293,657** was given by trusts, foundations and major donors
- **\$329,931** was donated from gifts in wills
- **\$278,827** was donated to our two fundraising appeals

On behalf of all of us at Launch Housing we would like to sincerely thank each and every supporter who has donated to the work we do. Every contribution makes a huge difference to the lives of the people we work with – thank you!



HOMEGROUND REAL ESTATE

HomeGround Real Estate began as a not-for-profit real estate agency three years ago and is a significant part of achieving the Launch Housing mission to end homelessness.

The real estate agency provides property management services to investors. Investors may choose to use the real estate agency to manage their properties at the standard, market rate or at reduced rent and social rent for low-income tenants. The property management team actively engages with private landlords to list their properties and consistently receive feedback that the real estate agency is making a difference. We re-invest the revenue gained from their property management fees into Launch Housing services to support people experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, homelessness.

HomeGround Real Estate is a social enterprise of Launch Housing. Our property and tenancy management portfolio has grown to over 300 properties, 132 of which are below market rent.

A new and important growth area of the real estate agency is the Head Lease Programs that house 70 clients in 62 private rentals. In these programs, Launch Housing is the head tenant and the client is the sub tenant.

In all areas, the increasingly diverse portfolio and our professional property management team are progressively growing to sustain the high level of service we offer. Ultimately, this provides more affordable housing options for those on a low income.



“There are various community agencies who have started to operate real estate agencies, especially since we opened HomeGround Real Estate in March 2014, but no others do the same thing of gathering private owners willing to let their properties at below market rent mixed with full price properties that pay commissions to cross-subsidise the rest. Launch Housing is delighted that Bridge Housing opened a HomeGround Real Estate this year to offer the same service in Sydney.”

Heather Holst,
Deputy CEO – Chief Operating Officer, Launch Housing

PROPERTIES UNDER MANAGEMENT

As of June 2017

Property type	Number
Market rent	81
Reduced rent	60
Social rent (30% of income)	49
Spot purchase	23
Rooming house	46
Head leased	62
Commercial	5
Total	326

Laura

Laura* came to HomeGround Real Estate after being referred to us by a local family violence support service. Laura had left a hostile relationship, and was trying to find safe accommodation for herself and her two young sons. Without the stability of a home, Laura was unable to work, return to study, or arrange childcare for her sons. With the assistance of Launch Housing support staff, we found temporary housing

for Laura and her sons, and worked with the HGRE team to secure them an affordable home. With the stability of a secure home, Laura is now able to organise childcare for her boys, return to full-time study and she has secured a job placement due to start late 2017. Laura will soon be in a position to take the lease on in her own name and can now confidently start to plan for the future.

RAPID HOUSING ASSISTANCE FUND – FAMILY VIOLENCE

The Rapid Housing Assistance Fund-Family Violence was part of the first tranche of the Victorian Government's "Housing Blitz" funding that was announced in June 2016 in response to the Royal Commission into Family Violence. Launch Housing received \$5.7 million of a \$50 million pool for both the purchase and head lease of dwellings for women and their children escaping family violence across Victoria. The Victorian Government invested in funding head leasing arrangements for people at risk or experiencing homelessness and impacted by family violence.

"I had no idea the hardest was going to be readjusting back into society. I didn't realise that living in my car for almost five months had affected me... [it] was the major factor in my feeling disconnected from day to day living. I haven't felt like this since long before I became homeless."

Jennie*

"Being part of the [Rapid Housing Assistance Fund] program has enabled me to establish and maintain a new home and safe environment for myself and my children. My property manager was not only approachable and very friendly, but also empathetic and always able to answer any questions or concerns. Without the assistance of HomeGround Real Estate, I don't know where I would be. Their help in securing our new home cannot be measured with words. On behalf of the kids and myself, I send a really big thank you and bucket loads of appreciation to the whole team. Thank you so much!"

Ruth*

*Names changed by request

PRIVATE RENTAL SUPPORT PROGRAM

It is well-known that there is an affordable housing crisis in Melbourne.

The low supply of social housing has meant that the private rental market is becoming an increasingly important housing source for people on a low income.

The high demand for, and low supply of, social housing has also meant that this type of accommodation is only provided for those most critically in need. Many families on low incomes are falling through the gaps.

Throughout 2016–17, the Homelessness Prevention Private Rental Support Program continued to be a highly effective early intervention program. It delivers support to individuals experiencing personal crisis and at risk of homelessness by assisting them to maintain their private rentals. The average investment is just \$1,372 per household over the three-month life of the program, and it has prevented 26 individuals and families from experiencing homelessness in 2016–17.

Financial support is provided to program participants on a sliding scale with the program covering 50% of the tenant's rental payment in the first month, 37% in the second month and 17% in the third month.

In October 2016, Launch Housing released an important piece of research drawing on data obtained from Victoria's Department of Human Services.* This research explored declining rental affordability in Melbourne and presented findings that Melbourne's rental market is increasingly expensive for low income households (particularly individuals receiving Centrelink payments). Average rental prices have risen by 46% over the past decade, which is twice the rate of inflation over the same period.

In May 2017, Launch Housing welcomed the Federal Government's Budget announcements on homelessness and affordable housing. In particular, we welcomed the Government's decision to ensure that funding for homelessness services is now ongoing and that it will be indexed to ensure growth. In response to escalating concerns regarding housing affordability, the Federal Government announced that as part of the 2017–18 Budget, funding for the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness will be renewed. Further, the Victorian Government has announced significant investments in the following, which all happen to align with Launch Housing priorities:

- housing for women, and women with children, who are escaping family violence
- social housing (public and community housing)
- private rental subsidy schemes.

While these measures don't tackle some of the structural drivers of high housing prices, such as negative gearing and the capital gains tax discount, they are nevertheless welcome.

Our early intervention program through our Homelessness Prevention Private Rental Support Program continues to deliver practical support to help households experiencing a time of personal crisis to maintain their private rental properties, and prevent them from entering the homelessness system.

PROGRAM KEY FACTS

\$1,372

average investment per household over the three-month life of the program

Financial support is provided to program participants on a sliding scale:

50% → 37% → 17%

Month 1 Month 2 Month 3

*Source: Department of Human Services Current Rental Report <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/research,-data-and-statistics/current-rental-report>

VOLUNTEERS UPDATE

There are four main elements to Launch Housing's Volunteer Program: Community Volunteers, Lived Experience Volunteers, Corporate Volunteers and Student Placements.

While all areas continue to be a priority, the Community Volunteer Program has seen significant growth over 2016–17, with a 51% increase in the number of volunteers who are providing invaluable support to our organisation. One example is our Education First Youth Foyer Mentoring Program. This mentorship program aim to connect students who are residing at one of our Youth Foyers with an interested and committed adult mentor who can help them explore their personal and professional aspirations for the future, and provide them with guidance, support and encouragement. These volunteer positions add enormous value to the Foyer program and outcomes for the students.

Launch Housing Youth Foyers are funded by the State Government of Victoria, and provide and combine affordable accommodation, education, training and employment to young people between ages 16 and 24.

Over the next year we hope to grow our community volunteer base to help people who have experienced homelessness to keep their housing through enabling connections to their local community. We also hope to improve the opportunities for people with a lived experience of homelessness to volunteer and gain work experience to improve employment opportunities. Launch Housing recognises the capabilities and expertise that a lived experience brings to our organisation and believe we can only benefit from increasing the opportunities for people with lived experience of homelessness to participate in, and contribute to, Launch Housing.

EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

Launch Housing provides a specialist response for children and young people experiencing homelessness and/or family violence called the Homeless Children's Specialist Support Service (HCSSS). Through this response we aim to help children reconnect with education, overcome trauma, build resilience and improve their long-term outcomes.

Launch Housing's HCSSS Educational Assessment Program has provided children and young people affected by homelessness and/or family violence in Melbourne's Southern Metropolitan region with the educational assessments that allow them to access critical classroom support from specialist teachers. The program has provided educational assessment packages, including cognitive and achievement testing, for a total of 80 students to date, of which 40 assessments have been completed by our current in-house psychologist, Gemma, with some assistance from two provisional psychology students during 2017.

The program also continues to ensure that children and young people are referred to support services, such as speech therapy, counselling and occupational therapy, to meet their individual needs and in order to help mitigate the impact that homelessness can have on children's education and development. Of the 80 students assessed, 29 have also been referred to in-house counselling.

Gemma has successfully built strong relationships with a number of the students' teachers, with some schools requiring more support than others. Gemma's "wrap-around approach" to supporting children's education means that she does not intend to "close" her support periods with children, and is keen to provide additional support as required to enable students to reach their full educational potential.

The highly valued HCSSS Educational Assessments Program continues to be of enormous benefit to highlighting students' educational, social and emotional gaps in order to inform support plans at school and help children and young people to better engage with their education.

CHILDREN'S SUMMER CAMP

The Homeless Children's Specialist Support Service (HCSSS) 2017 Summer Camp took place from 19 to 21 January 2017 in Bellbrae, a small coastal town between Torquay and Anglesea along the Great Ocean Road. A total of 12 children (seven girls and five boys) who have experienced homelessness and/or family violence attended the camp, which was run by four Launch Housing staff and two Launch Housing volunteers.

Many of the children that Launch Housing support in the HCSSS have experienced trauma as a result of their experiences of homelessness and family violence, and the trauma has significantly impacted their physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development.

The camp provides children and young people with the opportunity to try new activities and push their personal boundaries in a supportive environment. Some of the activities included surfing, horse riding, kayaking and a ropes course. The activities were also long enough for children with a natural ability to get a knack for the activities, which gave them the opportunity to pursue a sense of mastery. This is incredibly important for identity formation. For other children, simply exploring new tasks was highly beneficial in helping them develop their problem solving skills, coping mechanisms, and confidence in trialling new tasks during the camp and in the future.

Another important aspect of the camp was the structure of a daily routine, which many of the children do not have in their home life. The same schedule was maintained for the three days of the camp which enabled the children to know what to expect each day. This structure and consistency creates stability and reduces stress for children whose families are currently experiencing a period of crisis. All of the children responded well to the routine, which enabled the camp to run smoothly.

Many of the children did not have items such as bathers, board shorts, thongs, towels, socks, or sleeping bags. Thanks to a generous donor, Launch Housing provided many of these items, as well as vouchers which allowed staff to purchase any extra items for the children so that they could actively engage in all of the camp activities. The children were extremely appreciative of these gifts and were excited to be able to take home their new belongings following the camp. This also enables the children to participate in a range of activities, including swimming, for the summer to come.

Launch Housing is looking to pursue similar programs in the future, including more camps for children who have been exposed to the experience of homelessness and/or family violence, and advocating for the educational aspirations of young people. Launch Housing plans to host the next Summer Camp in January 2018, with funding provided by our philanthropic donors.

"My experience of the HCSSS Summer Camp took me by surprise. I had no idea how great the camp would be, and I honestly didn't expect to see so many positive changes in the children in such a short period of time. Witnessing the significant benefits that the children got out of the camp was truly amazing. This was the best thing I have ever done as a social worker."

Chris, Launch Housing support worker
volunteered at the January 2017 HCSSS Summer Camp



MOHAMED + RAHMA

“We want the best for our kids.
That’s all we want.”

After moving from Sudan to Melbourne, Mohamed and Rahma were faced with the overwhelming unlikelihood of being able to attain affordable housing. Rahma was experiencing severe health issues, which were amplified during her first pregnancy and resulted in hospital stays of several weeks at a time. This placed significant stress and financial strain on the family, making it hard for Mohamed to maintain employment and drive Rahma to her medical appointments.

After her first pregnancy with Ahmed, now aged two, Rahma’s health deteriorated. Soon after, Rahma gave birth to her second child Amjet, now aged nine months. Mohamed was forced to give up his job so he could take his wife and children to their hospital appointments and help care for his children. Eventually, Rahma was diagnosed with a tumour in her pituitary gland. She had to have both her hip and knee replaced and experienced a collapsed foot. All of this made the strain of caring for her children too difficult to do with no help.

Mohamed said: “There were too many appointments, and too [many] hospital [visits]... It was very hard to [keep a job] when I had to take her to the doctor.” As a result of no family income, Mohamed and Rahma were unable to pay rent or utility bills for three months. They moved in with extended family and cousins who were also in social housing. However, due to tenancy regulations, they had to move out and continue looking for housing.

With advice from a friend who was staying at Launch Housing’s Elizabeth Street Common Ground, Mohamed attended Launch Housing’s Initial Assessment and Planning services at Collingwood. From the moment he made contact he was relieved. “There was lots of support,” he said. “That’s the main thing. Otherwise we would be on the street.”



Initially, the family stayed in transitional accommodation at St Kilda Family Housing. However, soon Launch Housing was able to offer Mohamed and Rahma a more family-friendly home located in Cremorne.

“When you find people to help you and look after you, it’s a very good life,” Mohammed said.

When you have small children, it’s important that they grow up feeling safe he said. “It’s a good experience.”

Before her pregnancy and health complications, Rahma was studying English every Friday from 10am to 2pm. Now that Rahma’s health has significantly improved, she plans to continue her education and language studies, stating that “language is very important to learn”.

Now that the family is almost entirely self-sufficient, they are planning to eventually move somewhere close to amenities and schooling for their two sons. “Hopefully near to a shopping centre, a school, a hospital. It would be good,” Rahma said.

The importance of stable and permanent housing is primarily for her children: “I want my children to be educated. To start school, and then graduate.”

“We want the best for our kids. That’s all we want.”

FINANCIALS

AT A GLANCE

Operating surplus

\$804,184

(2016: \$310,726)

Government capital grants

\$10.6m

(2016: \$1.9 million)

Net asset value

\$46.3m

(2016: \$34.8 million)

Financial performance

For the year ending 30 June 2017, Launch Housing delivered an operating surplus of \$804,184 (2016: \$310,726) and total net surplus of \$11.4 million (2016: \$2.3 million) for the year, including capital grants of \$10.6 million (2016: \$1.9 million).

Government and other grants, excluding capital grants, increased from \$33.1 million in 2016 to \$37.1 million due to increased program activities.

Government capital grants increased from \$1.9 million in 2016 to \$10.6 million due to successful tendering for Rapid Housing Assistance Fund (Homelessness) and Rapid Housing Assistance Fund (Family Violence) grants. Launch Housing acquired 42 dwellings in nominated locations to the value of \$13.9 million utilising the capital grants, borrowings and own equity.

Client costs increased from \$4.3 million in 2016 to \$5.2 million in 2017. In 2017, 80% of the expenditure was to provide short-term and crisis accommodation, and to assist with the establishment of tenancies. This was possible due to growing income raised through fundraising and philanthropy.

Employee benefit expenditure increased by \$1.9 million during the financial year due to the impact of additional staff numbers to meet increased program activities, plus the continued increase in the salary base as per the sector-wide Fair Work Australia ruling and National Wage Case.

Financial position

Launch Housing's cash position remains strong, with cash and cash equivalents increasing by \$5.3 million over the year to \$16.6 million as of 30 June 2017. This was due to operating grants and other income received in advance increasing by \$8.4 million. The net result is a decrease in cash and cash equivalents of \$3.1 million due to the direct investment of Launch Housing's equity in additional housing stock as part of the Rapid Housing Assistance Fund (RHAF).

Non-current assets increased by \$14.4 million in 2016 to \$47.8 million due to the investment in additional housing stock through the RHAF and the increase in the investment portfolio.

Launch Housing's net asset position increased by \$11.5 million in 2016 to \$46.3 million.

Current liabilities increased by \$9.7 million due to the increase in operating grants and other income received in advance. The income is deferred until the delivery of the services as per the conditions in the funding agreements. The services are earmarked for delivery through significant projects in the 2017-18 financial year.

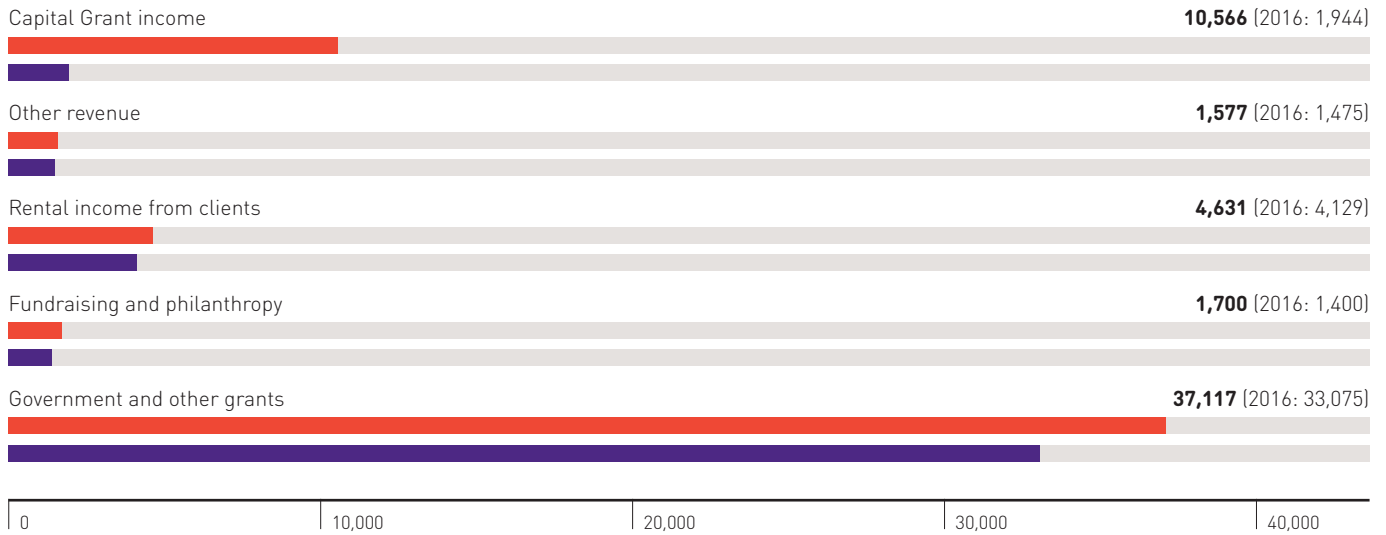
The Annual Financial Report has been audited by Pitcher Partners. They have expressed an unqualified audit opinion. For a complete set of financial statements, contact the Finance Department at finance@launchhousing.org.au.

Consolidated Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income for the Year Ended 30 June 2017

	2017 (\$'000)	2016(\$'000)
Revenue from continuing operations		
Government and other grants	37,117	33,075
Fundraising and philanthropy	1,700	1,400
Rental income from clients	4,631	4,129
Other revenue	1,577	1,475
Total revenue	45,025	40,079
Expenditure		
Salaries and employee benefits	24,851	22,864
Amortisation and depreciation	890	878
Client cost	5,181	4,284
Property costs	3,094	2,837
Payment to other agencies	4,920	4,611
Other expenditures	5,285	4,294
Total operating expenditure	44,221	39,768
Operating surplus for year	804	311
Capital Grant income	10,566	1,944
Net surplus	11,370	2,255
Other comprehensive income/(loss)		
Net changes in fair value of Available-for-Sale (AFS) financial assets	136	(250)
Total comprehensive income for the year	\$11,506	\$2,005

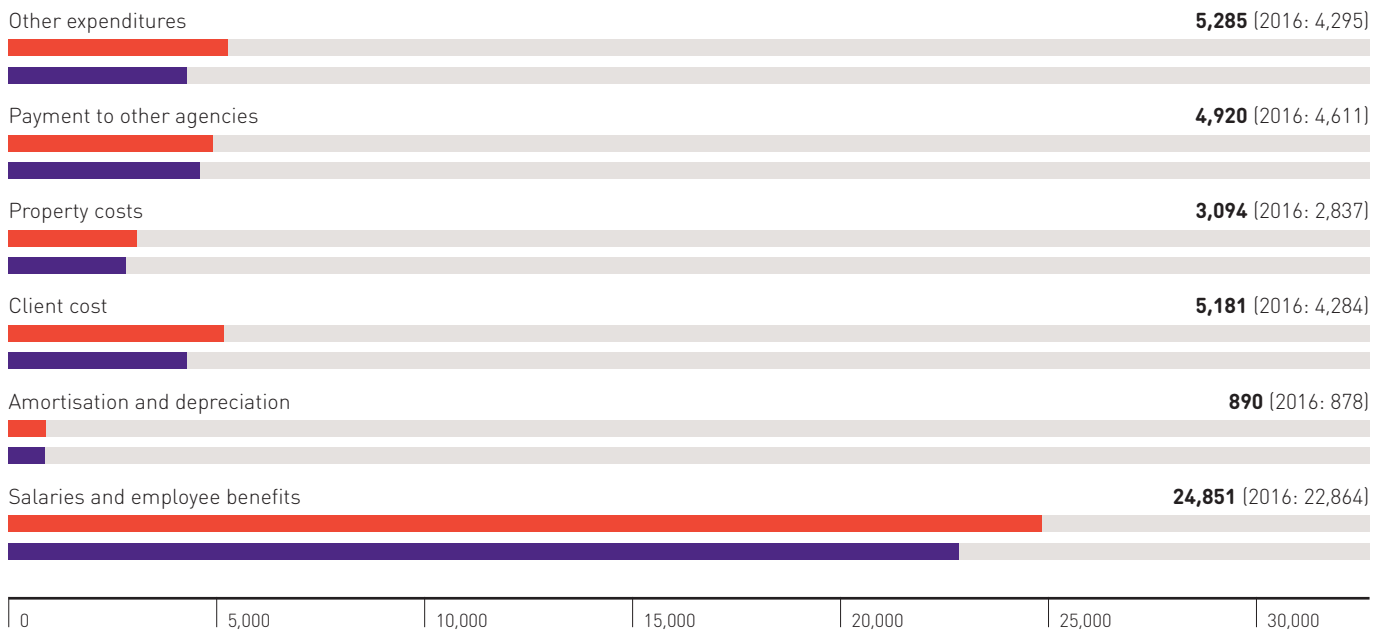
Revenue (\$'000)

● 2017 ● 2016

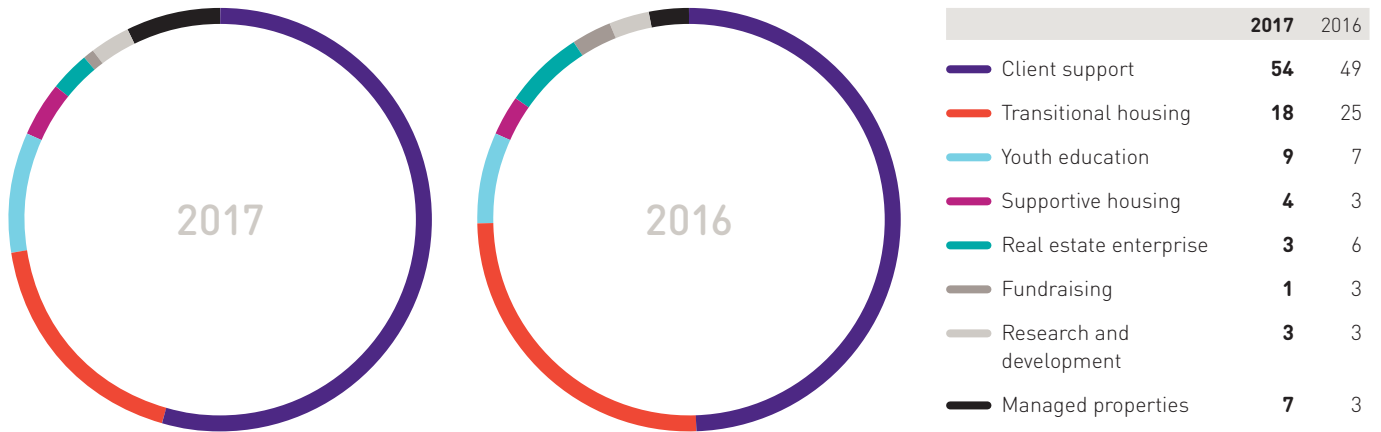


Expenditure (\$'000)

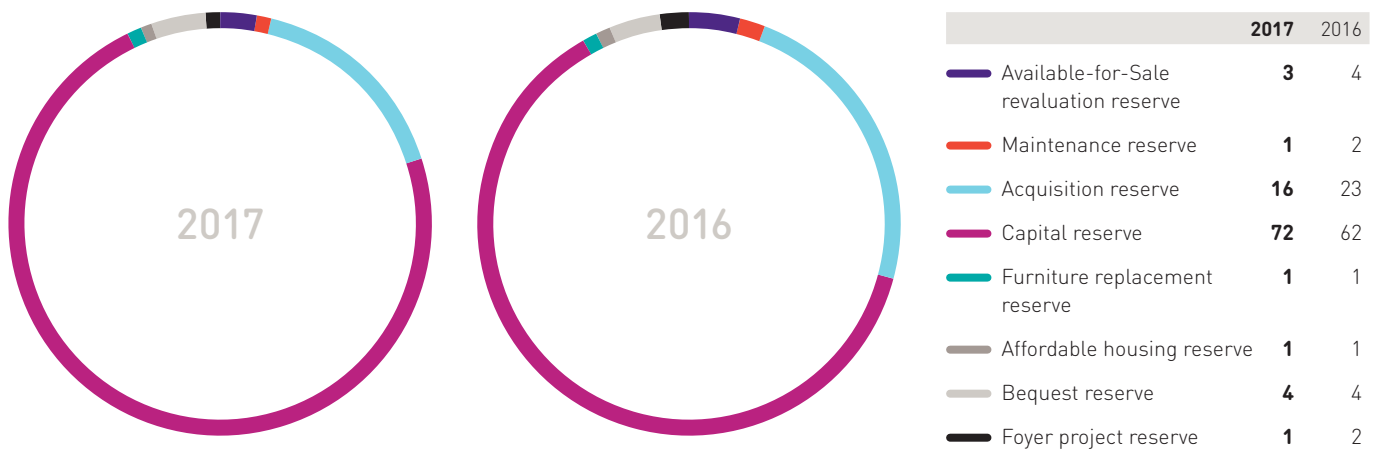
● 2017 ● 2016



Expenditures by business segment (%)



Reserves as at FY16/17



Property, plant and equipment



Consolidated Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2017

	2017 (\$'000)	2016(\$'000)
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents		
Trade and other receivables	16,581	11,287
Other assets	256	454
Total current assets	2,346	544
Total current assets	19,183	12,285
Non-current assets		
Available-for-Sale assets	7,020	6,303
Property, plant and equipment	40,650	26,947
Intangible assets	167	158
Total non-current assets	47,837	33,408
Total assets	67,020	45,693
Liabilities		
Current		
Trade and other payables	3,859	2,544
Provisions	2,266	2,137
Borrowings	3,853	3,945
Operating grants received in advance	9,740	1,344
Total current liabilities	19,718	9,970
Non-current		
Provisions	307	279
Borrowings	694	633
Other liabilities	16	32
Total non-current liabilities	1,017	944
Total liabilities	20,735	10,914
Net assets	46,285	34,779
Equity		
Retained surplus	11,461	10,427
Available-for-Sale revaluation	1,135	999
Reserves	33,688	23,353
Total equity	46,285	34,779

PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

We gratefully acknowledge the generous support of our volunteers and donors, and the many businesses, government agencies, non-governmental and community organisations that continue to support our work. We also sincerely thank the people we support who have shared their stories in the media, in our publications, and online.

Corporate partners

ARM Architecture
Crêpes For Change
Grocon
James Buyer Advocates
King & Wood Mallesons
K&L Gates
KPMG
Maddocks
Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre
Probuild
Ridge Properties Limited
REA Group
Urbis
Victoria University
VicRoads

Government funding partners

Department of Health and Human Services (Victoria)
Corrections Victoria
Court Services Victoria
Department of Human Services (Commonwealth)
City of Melbourne
City of Yarra

Private supporters

Brad and Geoff Harris
The many landlords who lease their properties through HomeGround Real Estate at below market rents.

Trusts and foundations

Australian Association of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta
Australian Communities Foundation
Collier Charitable Fund
Equity Trustees
Gething-Sambrook Family Foundation
Goldsmith Family Foundation
Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation
Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation – Youth in Philanthropy
Swinburne University
The Barr Family Foundation
The Brian and Virginia McNamee Foundation
The Flora & Frank Leith Charitable Trust
The Gray Family Charitable Trust
The Marian and E.H. Flack Trust
The RE Ross Trust
The Shine On Foundation
The William Angliss Charitable Fund (Victoria)
Ungar Family Foundation
Zalewski Fund

OUR VALUES



EMPOWERMENT



FRESH THINKING



AGILITY



LEADERSHIP



COURAGE

We treat everyone with dignity and respect, and empower them to make informed choices. We find innovative ways to influence lasting change. Our evidence-based approach positions us as leaders in developing new, collaborative solutions to homelessness.

Contact us

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If you are in crisis call **1800 825 955**