



FAITH
HOUSING
ALLIANCE



2021-22

FAITH HOUSING ALLIANCE

Annual Report

FHA.org.au

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Front Cover Image: Wesley Community Housing tenant with her child.

Acknowledgment of Country

The Faith Housing Alliance (FHA) is honoured to work on the ancestral lands of the Darug people and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

We acknowledge the land is, was and always will be Aboriginal land and respectfully support the continuation of the cultural, spiritual and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We recognize the Darug People as the Custodians of the land, seas and waterways and celebrate their history, stories and enduring culture.



Chair's report

I am enormously proud of what Faith Housing Alliance has achieved in the last fiscal year. With our new CEO, Rose Thomson at the helm, and continued support of the board, we have initiated a refreshed approach to increasing our impact as a peak body in the community housing sector.

Faith, purpose, and compassion drive all of us who are part of FHA. Our Members' resilience during these challenging times never ceases to inspire and encourage us. Thank you for all that you do on the frontline, especially in times of pandemic and natural disasters.

The Board has worked with Rose this year to develop a Strategic Framework from which the FHA Strategic Plan will be developed. The Framework was developed in consultation with many of our members and is provided in this Report.

FHA has been busy setting up strong foundations for our evolving environment and policy contexts. We will continue to refine our strategy for the future and with your valuable input, we will shape a Strategic Plan that provides you with the support that you need.

I thank the NSW Department of Communities and Justice for supporting the unique and valuable role our faith sector peak body plays in the provision of community housing to those who have need of it.

With the housing issues receiving badly needed media and political attention, with the strong performance of the faith sector in recent years and with FHA becoming an even more focussed and refreshed organisation, we are extremely well positioned to have a deep and meaningful impact in the coming years.

We look forward to continuing our collaborative efforts on our exciting and impactful projects.

MR ROB BURNELEK
BOARD CHAIR



CEO report

It has been such a pleasure and privilege to serve our Members as CEO of Faith Housing Alliance over the past year. What a year it has been with the ongoing impacts of the pandemic as well as natural disasters affecting thousands of people across the state.

The pathway to housing should be fair and equitable for everyone. Access to affordable rental housing is essential for people to both survive and flourish.
It is a human right.

Our work has never been more important. I echo the Chair's sentiment in expressing our gratitude to everyone who works tirelessly to provide safe, healthy, secure and affordable housing that enables everyone to live with dignity, and to focus on improving their physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing.

In the last Annual Report, I mentioned I hoped to meet our members and sector colleagues as a priority. A year on, I would like to thank everyone for their time and warm welcome.

It has been wonderful to work alongside my peak housing sector colleagues – our Alliance plays a unique role in the sector. We have been strengthening our support of the mission and the work of our Members, and this becomes increasingly important as we face a State Election next year.

As a Membership Association, we have changed our name and updated the Constitution to

reflect a more inclusive direction for Membership across all faiths.

I thank the Membership for the full support for these changes at the last Annual General Meeting. Together we can scale our impact, learn from each other, and challenge ourselves towards more innovative solutions to the housing crisis.

I thank the Board for their support this year, particularly to develop a strong and sustainable Strategic Framework which will provide a clear roadmap for the development of a more comprehensive Strategic Plan going forward.

I look forward to continuing our collaborative efforts for impact and influence.

Faith in action – housing for all!

MS ROSE THOMSON
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

FAITH IN ACTION

FHA highlights 2021 - 2022

Faith Housing Alliance is pleased to provide you with just some of the highlights.

- A change of name and rebranding to reflect an inclusive approach, welcoming all faiths to membership
- A new Constitution to articulate our objects more clearly, update membership classes, and improve board composition
- FHA Strategic Framework and Values developed as a roadmap
- Engagements with the new Federal Minister for Housing regarding FHA and our Member's work
- New refugees to Australia were housed with the support of FHA
- Engagements with the NSW Planning Minister to improve planning outcomes for our Members
- The Vertical Villages: Community, Place and Urban Density Research Report launched on 4 April 2022
- Vertical Villages Toolkit Symposium Day with housing and community care practitioners
- **Submissions to NSW Parliament inquiries along with those of our members:**
 1. Options to improve access to existing and alternate accommodation to address the social housing shortage
 2. Homelessness amongst older people aged over 55 in NSW

- **Two new research partnerships underway:**

1. 'Aftershock – Addressing the Economic and Social Costs of the Pandemic and Natural Disasters' Report
2. 'Living with Urban Heat – Becoming Climate Ready in Social Housing'. This project commenced in May 2022, and will run for three years

- New collaborations with housing and social sector peak bodies, and continued collaborations with Sydney Alliance
- Core and Cluster Funding – FHA advocated successfully for the inclusion of Tier 3 Community Housing Providers (CHPs) in the funding opportunity
- First opportunity by invitation, to submit a proposal under the Community Housing Industry Development Scheme
- Implementation of a Customer Relationship Management system to better manage our engagement
- New website developed
- Revitalisation of digital and social media platforms

FHA continues to engage strategically with emerging opportunities for us to play an influential role in shaping the thinking and direction of housing policy, homelessness services and supply outcomes across the faith sector.

We look forward to carrying the work forward, together throughout 2022-2023.

Our Strategic Framework

OUR VISION

Faith in Action - Housing for All

OUR MISSION

We are a purpose driven faith alliance facilitating the delivery of safe, healthy, secure and affordable housing.

OUR VALUES

Committed to a lived expression of our shared values:



Social Justice

Pursuing what is fair, equitable and inclusive, and considering the rights and aspirations of others.



Compassion

Responding with grace, kindness, and concern, to serve and help others.



Respect

Believing in the richness of diversity and the right of the individual to be heard and treated with dignity.



Integrity

Being honest, transparent, reliable, and accountable.



Partnership

Fostering respectful and inclusive collaboration.



Innovation

Being open, and listening and promoting new and creative ideas.

STRATEGIC PILLARS

Over the next five years we will focus on five strategic pillars to achieve our vision and mission.



MEMBERSHIP COMMUNITY

We work with our Members to build capacity and a shared understanding of solutions which can help solve community housing needs.



TRANSFORMATIVE ADVOCACY

Through transformative advocacy we engage stakeholders to demonstrate how the approach of the faith sector plays a valuable role in the supply of community housing and services that strengthen individuals, families and communities.



POWERFUL PARTNERSHIPS

We work collaboratively across sectors to build partnerships that will increase and improve housing supply.



INNOVATION

We are continually learning, researching and developing ideas to support innovations and thought leadership in faith sector community housing supply and practice.



FIT FOR PURPOSE

We ensure that all areas of the organisation and its governance processes adopt recognised good practice.

A brief history 1990 - 2022

1

Mid 1990s

Churches Community Housing was initially established by the NSW Ecumenical Council, with the support of many of the great advocates of the times for social and affordable housing. The late Mr Derek Yule was appointed as the Founding CEO.

2

2000

Operations commenced as a Community Housing Provider, and to aid church members in the provision of supported housing. This work resulted in partnerships with over 20 church organisations and management of over 300 dwellings across Sydney and Newcastle.

3

2008

Promotion of the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) which became a successful pathway for churches to provide affordable housing. Successful assistance was given to BaptistCare, Uniting and the Assyrian Catholic Church under this scheme.

4

2010

Ecclesia Housing was launched as an independent Community Housing Provider, and Churches Housing was incorporated independently as a Membership Association. Ecclesia Housing later incorporated into Amelie Housing – St Vincent de Paul Society.

5

2013

Mr Magnus Linder was appointed as CEO following the retirement of the late Mr Derek Yule.

6

2015

Engagement occurred with Sydney Alliance to promote the need for action to help the vulnerable in our society. Mr Linder played an active role in developing a collaboration with Sydney Alliance to support their great work in grass roots advocacy for housing, alongside other Churches Housing advocacy and Member services work.

7

2016

Promotion of the Social and Affordable Housing Fund within the church sector – success with St Vincent de Paul (Amelie Housing), BaptistCare, Uniting and Anglicare. These Members have played a major role in the delivery of new housing through this funding.

8

2020

Launch of WelcomeMat – an affordable housing platform – supporting Community Housing Providers to connect eligible applicants. In 2018, Churches Housing was a founder stakeholder in this start-up which went live in 2020, assisting easier access for those in need of affordable housing, and for CHPs to list available homes.

9

2021

Rose Thomson commenced May 2021 as the third CEO in the history of the organisation.

At the 10 December 2021 AGM, Members voted their support for a new Constitution and to rename the organisation as Faith Housing Alliance in recognition of the broader partnerships and Memberships, and as a pathway to building a strong and sustainable future.

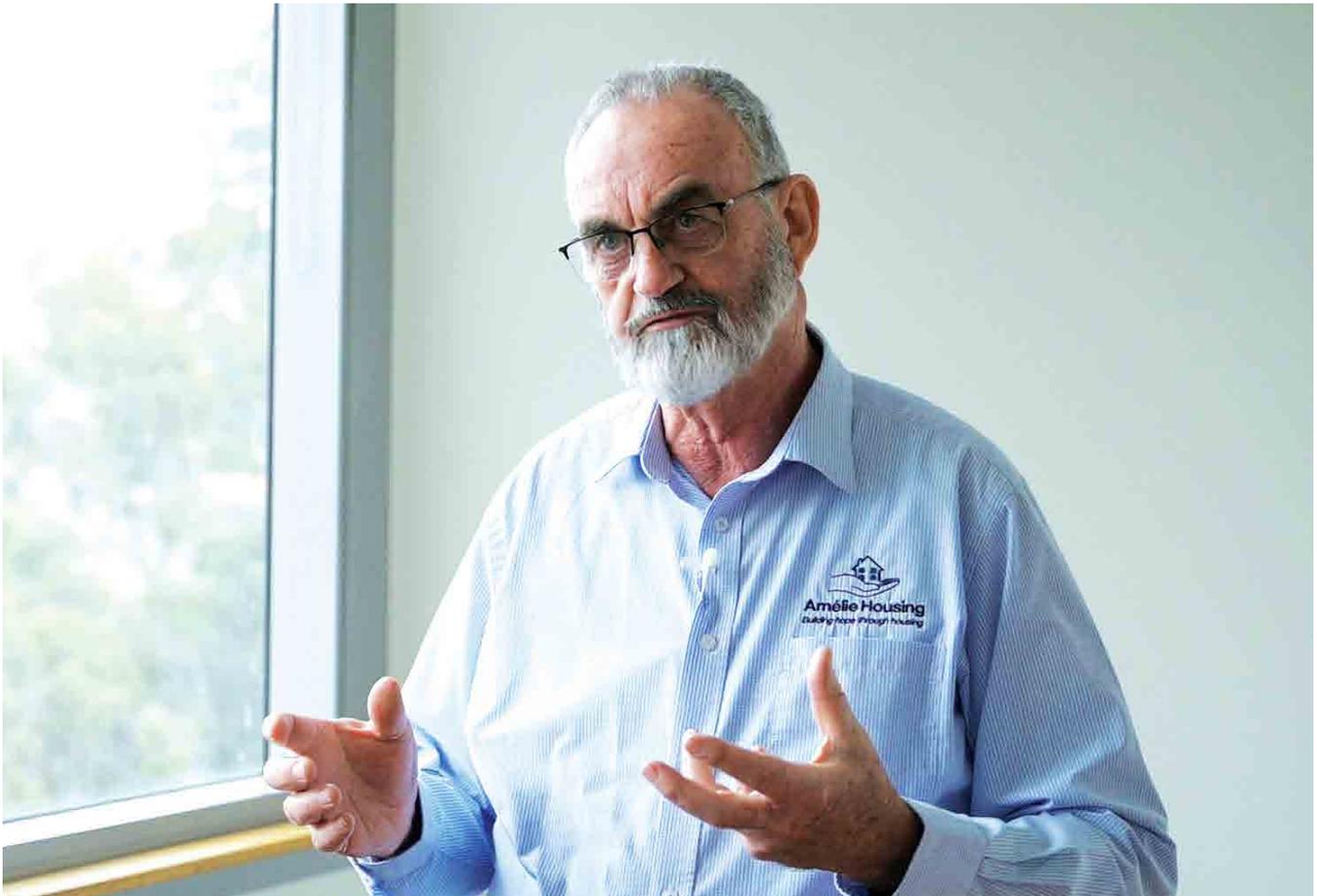
10

2022

In May 2022 the FHA Strategic Framework was endorsed by the Board and will provide a roadmap for the development of a five year Strategic Plan in consultation with Members moving forward.

Brian Murnane

A Champion of Change



| Brian Murnane

Brian Murnane is one of the great housing advocates who helped establish Churches Community Housing in the 1990s – what was to later become Churches Housing and is now the Faith Housing Alliance.

Since that time Brian has continued to play a central role at both FHA and the housing sector more broadly.

He has been part of the significant moments in our journey, serving on the Board for decades and as Board Chair from 2011 to 2015.

He continued his service on the Board until January 2022 and continues his support as our ambassador.

We are incredibly grateful for his long and ongoing work with FHA.

If you want to change someone's life, give them housing. Give them housing that is secure, and that is affordable. You will change their health outcomes because they will have stability in their life. You will change their welfare outcomes because they are not under the stress of being homeless or looking for housing. You will change their children's education outcomes because they will have stability...and you'll change their employment prospects

BRIAN MURNANE
AUGUST 2022

BRIAN'S SERVICE TIMELINE

1970s

- Community Worker in Campbelltown and Southwest Sydney
- Regional President, St Vincent de Paul Society
- Lobbied Premier Neville Wran to donate an old monastery for use as Australia's first residential drug and alcohol rehabilitation center, Odyssey House

1980s & 1990s

- Founder, Macarthur Community Tenancy
- CEO, Argyle Community Housing Association
- President and National Delegate of the St Vincent de Paul International Council, Paris
- Lobbied then NSW Department of Community Services Minister to fund a new community development pilot program in Claymore which became a benchmark for future community housing policy

2000s

- CEO, Amelie Housing (Vinnies Special Project Housing Arm)
- Non-Executive Director, Churches Housing
- CEO, Co-Founder and then Non-Executive Director, BlueCHP
- Member, NSW Community Housing Advisory Committee
- Lobbied Premier O'Farrell to set up the \$1B Social and Affordable Housing Fund, which was the first of its kind in Australia
- Drove the establishment of a national approach to the development and delivery of social and affordable housing for St Vincent de Paul

A remarkable contribution

Brian Murnane stands tall among men - in stature, in reputation, in service. He is a strong and tireless advocate and champion of the right to safe, healthy, secure and affordable housing. This cause has been the centre of his life's work.

Brian is a dedicated Vincentian where faith and action go hand in hand. A heart for social justice and a great compassion for the vulnerable informs who he is and what he does.

A saint you ask? No, but a good man and a kind man, most definitely.

Educated by Josephite nuns while growing up on the far north NSW coast, Brian was called up for National Service in 1971, as Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War was drawing to an end.

The incoming Whitlam Government opposed the war which meant Brian completed his two-year armed service training in Australia. Chaplain Kevin Ryan ran leadership courses for naval personnel and the two formed a friendship that saw Brian chance upon a monastery when he went along with Ryan who was considering its potential for weekend retreats.

Father John Power, head of the monastery's retreat centre sought Brian's help to fix a lawn mower and when Brian returned to fix it he was asked to stay for lunch, then after tending to a few more requests, for dinner. And so, an important relationship began.

When Brian learned that Brother Kieran, who milked the 300-acre property's cows, was going on leave, he put his upbringing on



Brian and colleagues pictured with (centre) Minister Pru Goward and former premier, Gladys Berejiklian

a dairy farm to good use and took on the job in his absence.

Brian ended up living at the monastery for 10 years and went on to manage the monastery known as the Mount Carmel Retreat Centre, where he became all too aware of a shortage of crisis accommodation in Sydney's outer southwest.

Campbelltown was at the end of a suburban railway line, and those seeking support often ended up at the local St Vincent de Paul Society. The Society in turn referred people to the monastery, which had a strong reputation for its hospitality. In late 1973, when a former Christian Brothers monastery on a 400-acre property at Eaglevale was set to be destroyed to make way for housing, Brian took note, wondering why it couldn't be turned instead into a refuge.

Construction giant Lendlease owned the property and quoted \$250,000 for the five acres on which the monastery stood, and Brian wasn't able to negotiate. But a financial downturn and change of government in NSW saw the new Premier, Neville Wran, establish the Urban Land Council which acquired the land from Lendlease in 1976. By then, the NSW state government was sympathetic to Brian's desire to use the property for housing the homeless, and in February 1977, he finally secured keys to the monastery.

The roadblock was the prohibitive cost of \$1 million to make the building habitable. Brian and other members of the St Vincent de Paul Society initially decided to focus on just one

wing. Prayers were answered when local coal mining representatives donated \$25,000. Voluntary labour saw 25 rooms made available, and the first residents moved into the building in August 1977.

Brian's reputation in the housing sector quickly grew and when plans for five big housing estates in the Campbelltown area were announced by the NSW Government in the 1970s, Brian was one of three community delegates appointed to the Community Services Planning Team. In the same decade, he founded the Macarthur Community Tenancy Scheme, which later evolved into the Argyle Community Housing Association.

In the early to mid-1990s Claymore, a public housing estate 54 kilometres south-west of Sydney's CBD, posed a huge challenge. Claymore's problems came to a head in late 1995, when five people died in a house fire on Proctor Way.

Media reports suggested fire bombing. A coroner subsequently found children playing with matches started the blaze. NSW Department of Housing handed over part of the troubled estate to the Argyle Community Housing Association in 1996, after making the call to leave the area.

That left Brian and Argyle Housing with 25 houses in Proctor Way available for lease, and not exactly a crowd beating down its doors to rent them, given that there were 60 police incidents a month in the one street. In a street of 86 houses, there was only one streetlight. And there was graffiti and rubbish everywhere.

When he wrote to 300 people at the top of the NSW housing waiting list, no one was interested.

Brian the great problem solver had a breakthrough in April 1996, when he hired a barbecue one sunny afternoon and began frying sausages and onions in the middle of the street. Curious kids on bikes asked if they could have a sausage. Brian in turn asked if they could return with their parents. Before long, 30 people stood around the barbecue, giving him an opportunity to ask them what they believed was needed to make the neighbourhood a better place.

Subsequently, challenges around street lighting and the lack of a public phone box were addressed. Graffiti was painted over, and more than 17 tonnes of rubbish removed.

People found that by working together, they could make a dramatic change. Within 18 months, the crime rate went from 60 incidents a month, to none. One of the first groups of people Brian housed at Proctor Way was a group of Josephite nuns.

Fast forward to 2017 and Brian, now CEO of St Vincent de Paul Housing (trading as Amelie Housing), was at it again tackling wicked social problems. Against a backdrop of media reports suggesting Sydney has the second most expensive housing market in the world, the community housing company announced a partnership with the NSW Government's Social and Affordable Housing Fund in a \$200 million project to deliver 500 social and affordable dwellings in Sydney and across NSW.

By 2021, over 500 new homes have been built in the Sydney suburbs of Merrylands, Campbelltown and Sutherland, and in regional cities such as Albury, Katoomba, Newcastle, Wollongong and Dubbo.

In 2022, Brian plans to retire and spend time with his wife Geraldine and his family.

It is probably a given, that he will remain connected to the housing mission that has been the hallmark of an outstanding career, and remarkable contribution.

This article includes extracts from the St. Vincent de Paul Society publication, The Record published in the Summer 2017 edition titled 'Brian's remarkable story'. Used with permission.



Brian pictured with Jack de Groot, CEO of St Vincent de Paul Society (left) and colleagues.

I am but one humble recipient of Brian's generosity over 40 years ago.

I was a 7-year-old foster kid who got his drug-addicted father back because of a rehabilitation center that would not have existed at all in Australia (or New Zealand) without the vision and compassion of people like Brian Murnane.

I am truly honoured to pay a tribute to a wonderfully generous and compassionate Australian citizen and remarkable human being.

BRAD BRAITHWAITE,
INTERIM CEO ANGLICARE NSW SOUTH, NSW WEST & ACT

Members in action

For privacy reasons, individual Members have not been listed.





A life transformed

Riccardo, a tenant of Wesley Community Housing with his cat.

ANGLICARE SYDNEY

Kindness and compassion build community



Anglicare Sydney's mission - serving people in need, enriching lives, sharing the love of Jesus - was at the heart of a desire to make things better post COVID when Anglicare set out to help heal the impacts of pandemic isolation, loneliness, sickness and other challenges of recent times.

Mr Rob Burnelek, General Manager of Housing at Anglicare Sydney, had attended an Anglicare event where the theme was 'I am loved, I matter, and I belong'. This stood out to him as it described some of the hopes that Anglicare has for their residents.

While acknowledging they can't get rid of COVID, they set out to listen to how their residents were feeling and what they were needing post pandemic, to restore the strong sense of 'Anglicare' community again across their housing.

Anglicare has been focussed on kind and compassionate listening and responding with their community activities focussed on making residents know that they matter, and that they belong.

They were delighted to receive their annual survey results with an outstanding 92% of residents recording they were satisfied with their community life and care.

Anglicare Sydney has added **626** dwellings over **15** locations in the past **10** years. With a particular focus on providing homes for **over 55s** and **45+** for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



Boroni Apartments, Fairfield

ANGLICARE SYDNEY

Communities come to life

The Calli Community Liverpool

Since August 2021, Calli has come alive with residents from a variety of cultural backgrounds in true multicultural Australian community. The diverse community share their joys and challenges and residents are supported to live as independently as possible.

The on-site tailored support coordinators provide information to guide residents to make their own decisions.

They refer and connect them to services based on their individual wishes and circumstances. They work with them to set and achieve their goals and regularly review their progress with them.



Tenants at Calli create garments with love.

This approach has directly helped individuals achieve their goals. It also builds community, as residents look past Calli to the needs of the broader community in the spirit which they themselves have been recipients of kindness, care and compassion.



Tenants donate garments to their local hospital.

Building on a weekly Arts & Crafts program, many Calli residents have now come together to actively contribute to the wider community by creating crocheted garments to donate to the Liverpool Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU).

These items are made with love and provide families and the little patients at NICU with compassionate support in a small way during stressful and sometimes traumatic circumstances. They have also started making other garments for those in need.

Other activities available to the Calli community include, the Calli Ladies Luncheon, and the guest speaker and empowering women programs.

Calli is an 11-storey mixed development offering homes to 112 residents. It has two community rooms and a rooftop terrace, with an Anglicare Community Services Hub operating from the ground floor, adding the wrap-round care that is particular to the faith housing sector.

The Boroni Community Fairfield

The six-storey, 26 apartment Boroni building opened its doors in February 2022 to very excited residents. Boroni is the latest development in Anglicare's efforts to provide vibrant community with mixed units for sale and affordable rental housing to rent being offered in the same building.



| Art & Crafts group members display their work.

With 26 residents moved in, the first two months of activities supported residents to initiate and form connections with each other, as well as with the wider community.

Everyone has the same access to the communal areas and car parking in this shared use model. Residents do not know who owns their apartment, or who rents their affordable apartment which means the mix is very compatible. This model helps to create connected and inclusive communities.

By encouraging residents to watch out for each other and to consider performing small acts

of kindness, the Tailored Support Coordinators at Anglicare foster a culture of caring and compassion within their communities.

As an example, a resident had turned 70, and had not received a single card in acknowledgement of her birthday. This led to great disappointment as she had collected all the birthday cards she had ever received. It is not uncommon for residents to celebrate birthdays without hearing from loved ones because they simply forgot, or worse do not have family.

Out of this situation came the idea of running a card making group at Boroni. The group create and deliver handmade birthday cards to residents on their birthdays and will continue this act of kindness to ensure all residents feel valued, on their special day.

And such is life in an Anglicare community!



| Handmade birthday cards by Boroni residents.

BAPTISTCARE

Going beyond bricks and mortar



70 years ago, a site in Carlingford became the birthplace of BaptistCare when it opened the Elderly Ladies' Home in 1953 - the organisation's first community housing site.

This year, the Carlingford site has been a hive of activity as BaptistCare's latest community housing development northwest of Sydney nears completion.

Construction of BaptistCare's largest community housing development to date will provide 162 much-needed social and affordable homes for seniors and single-parent families once completed early next year.

It will become a vibrant place that champions intergenerational living and community.

BaptistCare's community housing model goes beyond just bricks and mortar.

Each housing location includes an onsite team located alongside tenants, offering wrap-around support and services that foster well-being and independence.

The Carlingford housing design has three, 4-storey unit blocks with an underground car park and a central courtyard for tenants to enjoy. More than 60% of the housing will be dedicated to seniors.

"Australia has already seen more than a decade of increasing rental housing stress. Now we throw in pandemics and natural disasters such as flooding for good measure," said Mr Moore.

"Access to safe, stable, affordable housing has never been more difficult for individuals and families."

The housing being built here is about creating a future for 162 individuals and their families who deserve a roof over their head and support to live independently with help from our housing team and BaptistCare's wrap-around services.

MR CHARLES MOORE
CEO BAPTISTCARE

“I can’t stress how important social and affordable housing is, it is the foundation stone to healthy, vibrant communities as well as a strong economy.

Research from the City of Melbourne Affordable Housing Strategy* states that ‘for every \$1 invested in affordable housing, the community benefits by \$3 due to worker retention, educational benefits, enhanced human capital, health cost savings, reduced family violence and reduced crime. It is an investment in both essential infrastructure and people that compounds over the long term’,” he said.

The Carlingford development will see BaptistCare owning and operating more

than 650 community housing residences over 13 locations across NSW.

On completion of the Carlingford development, BaptistCare will have financed and developed 500 homes under the NSW Government Social and Affordable Housing Fund (SAHF) program.

A 25-year partnership which will see these social and affordable homes linked to tailored support funded by SAHF. As the SAHF program comes to an end, BaptistCare is ever hopeful that the State and Federal Governments will ensure the ongoing provision of sustainable investment in this area.

*Data accessed via https://participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/download_file/9289/2057



Artist impression of Carlingford Community Housing

GETHSEMANE COMMUNITY

A community that cares



Many years ago, Sister Myree Harris RSJ OAM worked for six months at Corpus Christi Community Greenvale and was impressed by its spirit of love and respect for the alcoholic and homeless men who lived there.

Her experience there saw her establish the Gethsemane Community in 1990, which has at its heart a determination that all people will be respected and treated with dignity.

Gethsemane's first aim was to have a community home where residents and carers lived alongside each other, and that residents would be helped to develop the living skills that might lead them to independent living. The community rented a terrace in Stanmore for the first six months, then moved to another home in Marrickville for the next nine and a half years.

In 1998, a partnership between NSW Housing and Churches Community Housing Inc (the first legacy organisation of what was to become FHA) led to a new home for Gethsemane.

The Department bought a six-bedroom house in Petersham with the agreement that Gethsemane would provide support for the people with disabilities who lived there.

The residents would be tenants managed by a Community Housing Provider which eventually saw them come under the management of Amelie Housing. The house was renovated by the Department and the community moved into it in May 1999 with residential tenancy agreements since.

In the first years, residents were more transient. Then the community stabilised.

Since 1990, about 60 men and women have lived in the community for long or short periods. About 14 have passed away. Seven had funerals organised by Gethsemane, and they attended others. Some have gone into aged care, but the majority have moved on to live independently which is a great success.

Over the years, several former residents have remained in contact, returning for Christmas lunch or to visit. Best of all, once stabilised at Gethsemane, many have reconnected with family.

Gethsemane Community is an Incorporated Association and a registered charity and public benevolent institution with tax deductible status for donations. Gethsemane relies on moderate resident contributions and donations. It currently has no employees and Sr Myree has been the live-in voluntary coordinator since 1990. The current residents have NDIS plans and are well supported by NDIS carers.

The Christmas Project

Gethsemane Community has always engaged in outreach to the wider community. It is a volunteer community with a big heart.

Since 1994, their Christmas Project has reached out to people with disabilities, particularly those in Assisted Boarding Houses. In 2021, Gethsemane provided named gift parcels for 932 people in six Assisted Boarding Houses,



Volunteers preparing Christmas hampers

35 group homes, 24 Aged care facilities, three Disability care organisations and to 13 people living independently. After hearing from mental health teams over the past eight years about rising concerns regarding the poverty and isolation of their clients, especially at Christmas, the Gethsemane Community have escalated their response.

In 2021, Gethsemane provided 390 toiletry, general and festive food hampers to support the clients of the Redfern and Marrickville Mental Health teams, the Mobile Assertive teams at Camperdown and Croydon, the Camperdown

Core teams and the RPA and Canterbury Drugs Health teams. This outreach has been mainly funded by an appeal at St Patrick's Church Hill and other donors. Volunteers help pack and deliver parcels and hampers.

A coded system that protects privacy allows interested people to send a Christmas card to one of the 932 people on our data base. If all labels are used, some people could get up to 10 cards.

For many years, Gethsemane has hosted up to 75 people with disabilities for a full Christmas lunch in our double carport. Since Covid, the numbers have been smaller so they are looking to see numbers increase again this year.



Julie Millard RN (left) with Sr Myree Harris RSJ OAM

932
GIFT PACKAGES

390
GIFT HAMPERS

If you'd like to find out more about The Christmas Project, volunteer, or donate to the cause, scan or click the QR code.



HABITAT FOR HUMANITY AUSTRALIA

Getting back to normal



In its work to provide shelter solutions the organisation supports low-income families and vulnerable groups to access safe shelter.

Habitat relies heavily on corporate and community volunteers who fill a powerful role to support their mission. Their work has been severely impacted by the pandemic restrictions of the past few years which has prevented volunteering, and the challenges of increased demand due to natural disasters in NSW.

However, Habitat life is slowly returning to 'volunteering normality' and the three current programs in action include,

1. Brush with Kindness

- Repairs and maintenance, mainly painting and landscaping, are done on houses and other facilities operated by community groups. Most of this work is performed on family violence refuges, but has also included other accommodation for young people, the homeless and people with disabilities.

2. Bushfire recovery and resilience

- Providing transportable cabins to people whose homes were destroyed by fires
- Clearing debris from bushfire affected properties and planting new trees and shrubs.
- Assisting homeowners to make their properties less susceptible to bush fires by clearing undergrowth and other sources of risk in properties in the Blue Mountains and Southern Highlands.
- Conducting 46 volunteer days with volunteer groups ranging from 4 to 10 people on each day.

3. Habitat women

- A recently commenced program to provide building skills training for women from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds with the aim to enable them to obtain employment in building related work.



JOIN THE CREW

Volunteer with Habitat
Scan or click the QR code.



34

Brush with kindness
volunteer days in NSW

46

Bushfire Recovery and
Resilience volunteer
days in NSW

370

Bushfire Recovery
and Resilience
estimated number
of volunteers

A safe refuge

Habitat for Humanity Australia stands tall with abuse victims as it spearheads a partnership with DV West in constructing a family violence shelter in the Western Sydney area. Habitat will manage the design and build and DV West will operate the refuge.

The refuge will have 9 bedrooms that are divisible into 4 units and staff accommodation. One of which is designed to be fully accessible for people with disabilities. Once completed mid-next year, it will allow for four families to be provided with safe and secure accommodation together with community services made available within an in-house office space and a meeting room.

This is but one of many partnerships Habitat initiated to serve family violence victims.



Construction of family violence refuge

At Habitat, we believe a stable, secure home creates the foundation for change, giving people the opportunity to be healthier, happier and more secure.

DEAN HART
FORMER HABITAT CONSTRUCTION
MANAGER 2018

In 2018, it partnered with many organisations, including Bonnie Support Services, to provide emergency transitional homes for women and children escaping domestic violence.

Habitat has also started a skills training program, Habitat Women, from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds, with the aim to equip them with skills in construction and allied fields.

These initiatives come at a time when the Western Sydney area remains challenged with domestic violence: the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research reported that from 2020 to 2022, Blacktown LGA in Western Sydney had the highest number of incidents of domestic assault in the state. Indeed, a situation not helped by five months of enforced lockdown!

From crowded house to livable home

As any parent would know, caring for five children is a challenge at the best of times!

Alison and Barry were doing well - they owned their own their own home in the Blue Mountains. They are active in their church and help others in need with practical help and building maintenance, as part of a small group from church. They have a son of their own and four foster children. Each of the foster children has some form of disability. Some of them need extra space because of the behavioural challenges they live with.

In 2017, things changed. Barry had a stroke and was made redundant from his work. At the same time each of the children were getting bigger and their house was bursting at the seams.

One of the foster children was a young adult doing a TAFE course and some part time work. If she could have extra space including a bathroom and kitchenette, it would take significant pressure off the crowding that the family was experiencing. Enter Habitat who partnered with the family to put a tiny home on their block.

This worked well as electricity, sewer and water were accessible. It was a cheaper and less disruptive solution than renovation or relocation.

The family entered into a no interest loan of approximately \$80,000 which should be paid off in 2023.

Good things do come in small packages, even tiny ones, just ask Alison and Barry!



Image of tiny home from manufacturer, Designer Eco Tiny Homes website

UNITING

Uniting Village wins design awards



Uniting's new Upper North Shore retirement village Bowden Brae has won two major awards including the Urban Developer Award for Industry Excellence and the Urban Taskforce Australia Award for Best Seniors Living Development in 2022.

Bowden Brae was also a finalist for the Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA) Award for Excellence in Retirement Living.

The recent success of Bowden Brae is an example of the high standard of retirement living accommodation to come as Uniting embarks on almost \$3 billion worth of investment in retirement living and residential aged care services. Over the next 10 years, Uniting NSW.ACT is planning to double its retirement and independent living portfolio from 3,000 units to almost 6,000 units.

Uniting NSW ACT Director of Property and Housing, Simon Furness, said Bowden Brae includes 14 new affordable housing apartments for seniors to meet the needs of households requiring targeted support services and older people at risk of homelessness.

"As a community service provider, Uniting NSW.ACT is also focused on providing essential community and housing support as part of our developments," Mr Furness said.

Uniting is proud to be part of helping to provide affordable housing and homelessness solutions. We support more government action to address this issue, including more investment in social housing and more targeted support services for older people at risk of homelessness.

**MR SIMON FURNESS
DIRECTOR OF PROPERTY AND
HOUSING UNITING NSW.ACT**

"This is a fantastic example of Uniting using its property portfolio to provide quality accommodation for people from all stages of life, including vulnerable communities."

"Bowden Brae will further strengthen connection to community while creating outstanding and affordable seniors living for local residents to age in their local community."

Uniting will deliver access to a portfolio of 600 properties as part of NSW Government's \$1.1 billion Social and Affordable Housing Fund.

Bowden Brae embraces the trend towards housing an ageing population which demands proximity to quality services, affordability and companionship in their senior years, and sets the benchmark for high-quality seniors' living.

The importance of social interaction, shared use of open spaces for recreation and resources such as transport are essential to building community and creating an environment for personal care in retirement living developments.

Uniting NSW.ACT Head of Property Development, Adrian Ciano, said good properties help to facilitate great care and service outcomes and also provide residents with a lovely environment to live in and a great place for employees to work.

"The successful design enables a rich diversity of social interaction, inviting the broader community and family members to use the gym, café, hair and beauty salon and gardens.

Sharing of resources allows people to age in place through mutual caring and support. Mr Ciano said.

Completed in December 2021 after a two-staged approach, Uniting Bowden Brae includes 140 independent living apartments designed to meet the needs of seniors.

Bowden Brae was designed by one of the leading architectural practices, PTW Architects, using evidence-based research, design-led innovation and multidisciplinary collaborations to cater for the ageing population of today.

PTW Executive Director, Diane Jones, said the shared use of open space for recreation, access to fresh air, sunlight and green spaces, shared resources including personal transport and mutual caring and support were critical.

"The apartments are designed and built to meet the changing needs of residents over their lifetime. This approach is based on the principle that better housing design for older people is better housing design for everyone," Ms Jones said.



| The award-winning Bowden Brae Retirement and Independent Living Village

Uniting Village wins design awards

Ninety-nine-year-old, June Boyle, is the oldest person to move into Uniting's new Hawkins Place in the heart of Sydney's cosmopolitan Norton St, Leichhardt.

June said throughout her life she had always been self-reliant and was happy to be the oldest resident to move into a Uniting NSW, ACT independent living village.

"I have been very independent my whole life and it's quite important to me," she said. "I was, as 'Albo' calls it, caught in the single mother syndrome. I had two children, but my husband lived in another state. My two children didn't know their father.

"I bought a house with my own hands and the brain that I inherited - got it myself. I had two children, no husband, a mortgage and two jobs. I was a qualified dressmaker and a legal accountant.

June, also World War II Veteran, said that she didn't mind being the eldest in the village, but that she would rather leave an air of mystery around her age.

"I would prefer to leave people saying, 'I wonder how old June is?' I often have people asking me how I still have such beautiful skin with so few wrinkles? I tell them 'that's a family secret.'

June, who was born in Marrickville, said she loves the atmosphere and community on Norton St.

She said she enjoys making use of the library, rooftop terrace and club room and that the community and had been amazingly welcoming and helpful.



| June Boyle pictured at Hawkins Place, Leichhardt



| Hawkins Place rooftop terrace



“I think my new home is like living in five-star hotel and that the area is just terrific with great restaurants and a lovely atmosphere,” she said.

June is looking forward to celebrating her 100th birthday in her new home at Norton St.

Uniting NSW.ACT Director of Property and Housing, Simon Furness, said Hawkins Place in Leichhardt includes 10 new affordable housing apartments for seniors to meet the needs of households requiring targeted support services and older people at risk of homelessness.

“Uniting is a mission-led not-for profit organisation. It is important for us to make quality affordable housing available to vulnerable people in our community, including older people,”

“The redevelopment of Uniting Hawkins Place provides a range of accommodation options to support the local Leichhardt community and meet the increased need for independent living accommodation in the area, including an affordable housing component.

“High quality independent living apartments in Sydney’s inner west are in high demand and Uniting has created a village community on Norton Street to cater to the needs of the Sydney’s ageing population. The site is packed with amenities to meet the changing health needs of residents, located in a community they know and love.

“It has proved such a success, that a second Leichhardt retirement village located in Marion Street with additional facilities including swimming pool is set to follow in 2023.”



WESLEY MISSION

Soil and smiles



As humans we are wired for connection. If we don't feel like we belong, if we are not connected to others, if we feel isolated and lonely, it has a direct negative impact on our wellbeing.

Wesley Community Housing has taken up the challenge to create a sense of belonging and connection with community. Its partnership with the Royal Botanic Gardens Community Greening Program has found a great pathway to success as community gardening grows connections.

The Community Greening team regularly visits Wesley Mission properties to support the tenants to nurture their community gardens. The tenants take ownership for the development of the gardens created at their complex, deciding what type of garden and plantings they would like.



Residents select the plantings themselves

Wesley Mission involves themselves in each and every one of our lives here – it just depends on how far you want to take it. If you want privacy, they'll leave you alone. If you've got a problem and you want to explain it, they are open. They will listen, and they will help you the best they can. They are there for you, if you want them.

RON
WESLEY COMMUNITY HOUSING

The benefits of these simple activities are immense.

Not only do Wesley's tenants meet their neighbours; they make their outdoor spaces more enjoyable and often cultivate vegetables and herbs to share among themselves. As they connect while gardening, some of the barriers to connection are removed and conversations flow more freely.

Through the COVID lockdowns, the tenants were thankful for the vegetables and herbs

freely available and will continue to find that valuable with current living costs continuing to rise. A range of cooking classes which explore using the produce grown in the garden have also started.

The shared outdoor spaces in the Wesley community become part of each tenant’s home as they take ownership of the space – a garden sanctuary for all, buzzing with bees but also new friendships!



Resident proudly displaying capsicums from the garden



Thriving raised garden beds

Tenancies and properties

Its all about people

485 tenancies
326 properties

During 2021/2022

Over **720 people** housed during the year

Over **179,221 nights** of accommodation were provided

29% of our properties are in regional NSW

89% of our crisis/transitional tenants were homeless when allocated to a property, with the remaining **11% at risk of homelessness**

Mission stories

Rebecca's story

Rebecca is a survivor of domestic violence. She was in a physically, psychologically, and financially abusive marriage. After finding the courage to leave her partner and with her one-year-old daughter in tow, Rebecca went to a women's refuge. With bars on the window, the refuge felt just like the cage she had tried so hard to flee - so she ran away.

She found herself on a bench in the street. Homeless and cradling her sleeping baby in her arms, and feeling like she had nowhere else to go, Rebecca returned to her husband. The violence got worse, and she began to feel suicidal.

Desperate for a safe place for her baby and herself, Rebecca sought advice from Legal Aid who contacted community housing providers and Wesley Mission answered the call.

Rebecca was moved into supported transitional accommodation until a longer-term social housing option became available.

Wesley Mission gave Rebecca hope, "Wesley Mission gave me another open door... they gave me hope and said you can call us and get help any time"

"My life was coming to an end and my baby... he's got a Mum now!" she said.

Every time it rains, Rebecca is reminded of her journey, and she thinks about the people without homes.

Grateful to have a roof over her head, Rebecca said "It could have been a lot different so thank you [Wesley Community Housing] from the bottom of my heart."

Paul's story

For some, a train is simply a means of transportation. For others like Paul, it's the place to find safety and warmth.

For Paul, the warmth and comfort of a train was the only safety he knew. He would catch a different train every week and go to the end of the line and back to the city again. He didn't have a place to make his own and couldn't put down any stable roots for stability, but at least it was warm and dry.

Paul found himself experiencing homelessness after struggling with addiction and facing health concerns.

Today, Paul lives a completely different life. It all changed when Paul found support from the Matthew Talbot Hostel (St Vincent de Paul Society) before being referred to Wesley Community Housing.

This was the start of his journey to safety, recovery, a new home and a new community.

"These days I'm sober but I still [feel the effects] from the years of abuse. But I love living [here]... the neighbours... the morning teas... the staff... I love it, I'm safe here."

Now focussed on his health, Paul joins Wesley Community Housing at their weekly walking group and enjoys a quieter life. He relishes the community morning teas and the simple chats with his neighbours.

Not only has Paul re-connected with his family, but he has also found a new family of friends and support providers at the Wesley Community. "If it wasn't for Wesley Mission, I'd be dead by now..."

Bruce's story

Bruce came into contact with Wesley Mission 23 years ago and he is adamant that that encounter saved his life. Bruce's life was overwhelmed by drug and alcohol addictions, and he was suicidal.



| Bruce, enjoying life at Wesley Community Housing

“Coming from a dysfunctional home and taking a lot of drugs was like playing Russian Roulette.”

Bruce ended up homeless, but Hope Hostel referred him to Wesley Mission who also connected him with a rehab program that provided health and psychiatric support and helped him get on top of his addictions and to begin to rebuild his life.

He is grateful not only for the roof over his head, but for the community of support that Wesley Mission has enabled him to be part of.

“If there is something going on for someone that needs help, they do things to look after them. They help people through who have addictions and are homeless and from broken homes and are not seeing their families and things like that. And they bring us all back together.”

“I wasn't seeing my kids for a while but since being clean and sober through Wesley Mission, I have been able to connect back with the kids. And now I am a grandfather.”

Bruce says that if he had to pay for a house in the private rental market, he would end up homeless again. “The cost is too expensive and there's no trust. I'd have to sell up everything that I have gotten over the last 23 years.”

He also says he would rather be with Wesley Mission than in Housing Commission.

“With Housing Commission, you have to keep looking over your shoulder all the time. You come home and everything is pinched and things like that. But here, everyone says ‘g'day’ each morning and your neighbour keeps an eye out for you.”

Bruce talks about his joy of speaking to his grandchildren on the phone and the warmth he feels when they call him Poppy.

“If I can enjoy the rest of my life here, it's good.”

TRANSFORMATIVE ADVOCACY

A new kind of family table

Advocacy happens in many forms

It was a new day at the Faith Housing Alliance table celebrating the annual Sydney Prayer Breakfast which filled the ICC Convention Centre early on 31 May 2022. Usually, the FHA table would see board and Association Members around it.

But this year, it was a very different family that gathered to join the Board Chair, FHA, Rob Burnelek; CEO, FHA, Rose Thomson; and Belinda Edwards attending for Member Fresh Hope (Churches of Christ).

It reflected how our new name points to a more inclusive approach across all faiths and to broader collaboration as we work together for the common good and housing for all.

Many conversations were had, collaborations and visits set in place, and we discovered a commonality in concern, compassion, purpose and faith for the wellbeing of the citizens in our great city.



| Sydney Prayer Breakfast



Rabbi Mendel Kastel OAM (Left)

- CEO Jewish House
- Rabbinic Fellow, The Great Synagogue, Sydney
- Commissioner, National Mental Health Commission

John Engeler (Right)

- CEO, Shelter NSW
- Chair, National Shelter



Maha Abdo OAM (left)

- CEO, Muslim Women's Association
- Member, 1800RESPECT National Sector Advisory Group

Hon. Rose Jackson, MLC (centre left)

- Shadow Minister for Water, Housing and Homelessness

Cr Yvonne Weldon (centre right)

- 2022 NSW Aboriginal Woman of the Year
- City of Sydney Council
- Deputy Chair, Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council
- Board, of Domestic Violence NSW (DVNSW)

Michele Adair (right)

- Chair, CHIA NSW
- CEO, Housing Trust Wollongong

TRANSFORMATIVE ADVOCACY

The fight continues

A history of advocacy for people with disabilities and residents of boarding houses in NSW 1994-2022

28 years ago, Sister Myree Harris SJ OAM, walked into the back yard of a boarding house in Stanmore and thought she had walked into a scene from a Dickens novel.

When she arrived, about 50 men and women were sitting in a semi-circle under large trees. Most were smoking. Most wore ill-fitting and dirty clothes with cigarette burns and some wore filthy slippers.

In the yard was a table with the remains of lunch - now rock-hard sandwiches and cordial. Some very disabled people walked shakily across the yard.

A resident called Les insisted on showing Sr Myree his room. They passed stinking toilets and she had to tread carefully on rotting floor-boards. Two people shared the resident's room, and the mattresses were dirty. Les was proud of the trinkets he had made from bits of silver foil. A fierce advocate for people with disabilities and residents of boarding houses was created during that visit.

After her visit to the garden that day, she immediately wrote to the Minister for Health, Hon Andrew Refshauge and the Minister for Community Services, Hon Ron Dyer, describing the situation she had discovered at the Stanmore Boarding House. To their credit, both responded. Refshauge sent in the Central Sydney Boarding House team of health professionals and Dyer sent in the new Licencing Team which had begun visiting licensed boarding houses.



Sr Myree Harris RJS OAM

Image Source: The Daily Telegraph

Image Credit: Tim Hunter

Over the next couple of years, the Boarding House was closely watched until it was closed in 1996.

On the day it closed, Sr Myree discovered that the owner of the boarding house had sent about half the residents to his mate John, who owned a boarding house at Katoomba. The others were being collected by other boarding house owners who behaved like they were at a slave auction. "I'll take him". "She'd be good at your place". Boarding house owners were gaining a great source of income, possibly that person's pension for life. There had never been any regulation about the fee that could be charged. Some of the people sent to Katoomba had no idea where they were going. Some absconded later and ended up at the Matthew Talbot Hostel for homeless men. Some "disappeared."

The birth of CASA - Coalition for Appropriate Supported Accommodation

From 1994 – 2008 Sr Myree was the President of the St Vincent de Paul Committee working for the care of people with mental illness. She has worked tirelessly for decades, to speak for those who are often overlooked or mistreated.

In 1995, Sr Myree and together with Graeme Fear also from St Vincent de Paul, John Jacobson from the Council for Intellectual Disability and Laurie Hallinan from the Newcastle Disability Network Sr Myree formed CASA. Sr Myree has been Convenor ever since.

Sr Myree then decided to track down residents who had left the Stanmore Boarding House and to write detailed letters to the State Premier, the Hon Bob Carr, copied to the Ministers of Health, Housing and Community Service. These letters described the parlous situation of residents of what were then called Licensed Boarding Houses, their destitution, lack of care, their loneliness and social isolation.

Around that time, a Gladesville boarding house closed. Residents were told at breakfast about the closure and given a black garbage bag each for their belongings. Buses were waiting out the front. Residents were given no choice as to where they were going.

One man who was deaf, worked out where he was going by watching roadside signs. Sr Myree described this situation to the Premier and Ministers and demanded that the situation had to change.

From 1995 to 1998, as more incidents occurred, a continual stream of these letters reached the NSW government. The head of the Department of Premier and Cabinet asked to be copied. Apparently, Premier Carr said he wanted to read them.

After years of advocacy from CASA, on 15 October 1998, the \$66.23 Million (\$58 million recurrent) Boarding House Reform Program was announced in State Parliament.

Over the years, this program allowed for 500 residents with the highest-level needs to be moved out of boarding houses and into 24hr accommodation in group homes staffed by non-government organisations (NGOs) who won management tenders.

Those who remained were supported by the Active Linking Initiative, run by NGOs. The program provided a range of services such as life skills, travel training, hygiene, cooking lessons, leisure activities like art classes and much more.

Residents were taken into the community. Newtown shops exhibited some of their artwork. The Secondary Health Program provided dental, podiatry, auditory and optical services. Residents were linked to general practitioners and referred to specialists. Vaccinations were given.

This program continued until 2018, when the NDIS commenced in its place.

An ongoing mission against stories of shame

Over the years, Sr Myree visited many licensed boarding houses. Some of the most memorable, and worst, were in the Hunter and Lake Macquarie area. Graeme Fear, Colin Robinson and Sr Myree went together to the first boarding house in that area.

As they approached, Sr Myree wondered why everyone seemed to be outside the building – possibly a former private hospital with wards.

On entering, the stench of urine was overwhelming. Dusty religious statues lined the corridors. At the second boarding house, a large crowd of residents, mostly people with intellectual disability, crowded around, desperate for visitors. An open shed was filled with used clothing.

Following The Boarding House Reform Program, this facility closed. Residents were sent to group homes. At one house, after a day spent shopping for bed linen and other needs, the carer said it was too late to cook and that maybe they could get pizza. A puzzled resident asked, “What is pizza?”

At a Katoomba boarding house, a woman sat in front of an unlit fire. It was winter and freezing in the Blue Mountains. She wore multiple layers of clothing. She said, “Maybe if I sit here and stare into the fireplace, someone will come and light the fire.” It was then 1pm and there was one log beside the fireplace.

The fight for reform continued

By 1996, the Licensing Team was visiting licensed boarding houses. Some of the worst ones were closed quickly. The Hon. Faye Lo Po withdrew prosecutions in 1998. There were obvious abuses but no effective way to prosecute. In one facility, it was known that the

son of the owner was bashing residents. This could not be prosecuted, but years later when it was prosecuted for fire safety abuses, the owners were convicted and fined.

In 2001, another champion of change, the late Rev Harry Herbert and Sr Myree were both appointed the first members of the Boarding Houses Expert Advisory Group (BHEAG).

They reported first to Ageing and Disability (ADD), then Ageing, Disability and Home Care (DADHC). It was clear from the beginning, that they needed to have new, effective legislation.

Also in 2001, after an 18-month delay, the NSW Ombudsman helped Sr Myree as the Convenor of CASA to obtain files from ADD on three of the worst boarding houses using the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Cth).

Sr Myree copied them and gave a set to the late Adele Horin, a journalist with the Sydney Morning Herald. She wrote an article about a boarding house in Millthorpe, where access was just about impossible.

Sr Myree gave copies to the NSW Ombudsman. The Ombudsman began a two-year investigation. In 2004, a report was prepared but not presented to Parliament. This was hair-raising in its accounts of abuse, neglect and exploitation.

In 2006, a report was tabled in Parliament which outlined failures by ADD to consistently monitor boarding houses across the State. In 2011, the final Ombudsman’s Report was one of the last steps that forced the Government to bring forward new legislation.

Over 17 years, there were endless meetings, visits and appeals. The NSW Government seemed spooked by the prospect of boarding houses closing and the government becoming responsible for the care of former residents. BHEAG and ADHC’s legal department worked on a draft document for years.

For many years, Sr Myree put on the BHEAG agenda the item: "Timeline to for new legislation". She continued to do this until BHEAG was told they could not discuss the issue further since it was now before Cabinet.

Justice at last

In 2010, ADHC placed new regulations containing standards into the Youth and Community Services ACS Act (the legislation governing Licensed Boarding Houses), and they were enforceable.

Finally, in that same year, The Guardianship Tribunal after two hearings with 20 residents, invoked the rarely used Section 11 of the Guardianship Act, and removed all residents from the boarding house at Millthorpe and placed in small group homes in surrounding towns, with support provided by NGOs.

Evidence of serious abuse, neglect and exploitation emerged. Some years later, a class action by Maurice Blackburn Lawyers on behalf of about 50 former residents was settled out of court and \$4.05 million was awarded in compensation.

Between 2009 and 2010, six residents of a licensed boarding house in Marrickville had died sudden and preventable deaths. Mary Jerram, the NSW Coroner at that time, was scathing in her 2012 Report which followed.

The Tenants Union and the Boarders and Lodgers Action group worked hard for many years to try to get tenancy rights. This eventually led to Occupancy Agreements being a requirement in the Boarding Houses Act 2012.

The NSW Ombudsman's presented its scathing Report More Than Board and Lodging: the need for boarding house reform in 2011. It was the perfect storm and the government had to act on new legislation.

Prior to the Second Reading of the Boarding House Act 2012, the Hon. Andrew Constance, Minister for Disability Services at the time, commended Sr Myree and CASA for a decade of advocacy for new legislation. It had actually taken 17 years of work to get there.

The Act contained the 2010 standards. There were enforceable sanctions. For the first time, quality of life, care and safety of residents could be ensured.

We must champion this cause

"The only way residents can be protected is by effective legislation and ongoing monitoring and enforcement. This must be done by staff who are passionate about the care and safety of residents."

She remains committed to ensuring the protections that came about in the Boarding Houses Act 2012 are not lost or diluted.

This champion of change, Sr Myree Harris RSJ OAM was an active member in founding Faith Housing Alliance and was a Board Member for many years.

Faith Housing Alliance is honored to have Sr Myree, a transformative advocate, as a Lifetime Member.

SALVOS HOUSING |
SISTERS OF CHARITY FOUNDATION

A choice and a voice



Slavery is a word that most people would not associate with a country like Australia.

Current statistics show that over 1,900 people are victims of modern slavery in Australia and of these, only 1 in 5 victims will be detected.

For ten years, The Salvation Army has led the way in by providing the first known Trafficking and Slavery Safe House in Australia. 10 bedrooms of safety for those who come into its shelter.

Enter the Sisters of Charity Foundation!

A modern slavery transitional housing program (MSTHP)

Victims of modern slavery who manage to escape their situations often have limited rental or employment history and find it difficult to apply for rental housing on their own.

Generously funded by the Sisters of Charity Foundation, a powerful partnership has formed which is transforming and empowering survivors to take control of their future and 'gives them a choice and a voice'.

The program provides an innovative support service for people who have experienced human trafficking, slavery, or slave-like offences. This includes those who have experienced, or are at risk of, forced marriage.

The MSTHP works to establish a rental history for those engaged in the program, most of

whom have been housed at the Safe House, that will allow them to transition out into secure accommodation in the rental market.

It is heart-warming to see the transformation take place in the lives of the people supported in the program, and to know that through the generosity of this partnership with the Sisters of Charity Foundation it will literally change the future and outcomes in life for the participants.

It is an important victory in the fight against modern slavery.

CHERI ERAI-COLLINS
STATE MANAGER, QLD, NSW & ACT
SALVOS HOUSING AUSTRALIA

How the program works

The program aims to address the gap in long-term secure accommodation options in the private market for the survivors.

The Salvation Army takes a 12-month head lease on a rental property with a fully informed real estate agent and subsidises the rental for the first 12 months. This enables the participant to save the money for the bond to then take over the lease.

Participants are encouraged to think about the type of house they want, where they would like it to be situated, and are then supported by a Salvos tenancy support worker to take their first steps into independent living. They are assisted to source suitable, affordable accommodation in an area of their choosing – beginning their journey to having ‘choice and a voice’.

Training in property care and tenancy skills is also part of the program, which along with the first 12 month rental, provides the evidence and confidence to sustain a tenancy in the private market.

The success of the pilot participants who Salvos worked with throughout 2020 and 2021, has led to another three-year financial commitment from the Sisters of Charity Foundation to continue the program. These funds will allow up to 18 more participants through the program.

The positive impacts from the program

Participants identified that they have gained

- Increased financial capacity and literacy
- Self-efficacy
- Confidence in managing their tenancy

Through powerful partnerships, like this, the faith sector provides innovative and much needed housing solutions for some of the most marginalised and overlooked in society.

This Australian first program currently only operates in Sydney despite having upwards of 40,000* people in Australia needing support. The learnings will be used to showcase the positive outcomes for participants to encourage Government and other providers to develop and deliver urgently required programs like this across NSW and Australia.

**This is an approximate figure based on anecdotal calculations by experts in the sector. Research is currently unavailable on specific figures.*

The Sisters of Charity Foundation is an organisation that provides support and financial assistance to initiatives that benefit people who are experiencing poverty, disadvantage and marginalisation.

RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP

A broad collaboration



The Vertical Villages: Community, Place and Urban Density research project was a collaboration funded through an Enterprise Partnership Scheme between Macquarie University, Faith Housing Alliance, supported by a grant from the Salvation Army and BaptistCare, and in collaboration with the Together for Ryde Ministers' Network.

The aim of the project was to explore the role and potential of faith-based organisations to facilitate placemaking and community development in multi-cultural high rise and high density urban environments.

After some COVID delayed starts, the Report and a Tool Kit for practitioners was launched on 6 April 2022 at an event hosted by FHA at Macquarie University.

Mr Charles Moore the CEO of BaptistCare introduced the Hon. Rose Jackson MLC, Shadow Minister for Water, Housing and Homelessness who launched the Report to FHA Members and colleagues from across the community housing sector and related professions.



Pastor Mark Schultz, Chair of the Together for Ryde Minister's Network with guests

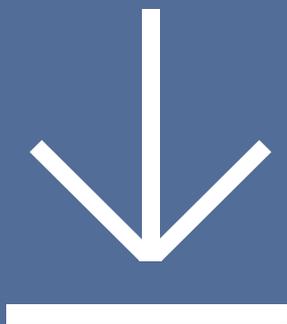


Lead Researcher, Dr Miriam Williams and the Hon. Rose Jackson MLC



199 PEOPLE
RSVP'D

to attend the Vertical Villages Report
launch in person and via Zoom



340

Number of downloads of
the Vertical Villages Report

New South Wales Timeline of Disaster

2019 – 2020 Bushfires

6.2 per cent of the state burnt by more than 11,400 bush and grass fires, 26 lives were lost and 2,448 homes destroyed.

March – May 2020 COVID-19 restrictions

COVID-19 restrictions were introduced across the state, limiting public gathering, operation of businesses and schools.

March 2021 Floods

A total of 52 evacuation warnings and orders were issued, impacting over 80,000 people. The Northern Rivers, Mid North Coast, Hunter-Central Coast and Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley were all severely impacted. A number of educational facilities were closed because of the floods including 376 schools, 244 early childhood centres and 10 TAFE facilities.

July – November 2021 COVID-19 restrictions

COVID-19 restrictions were re-introduced across the state limiting public gathering, operation of businesses and schools. Parts of Sydney were placed under extreme lockdown conditions, with additional restrictions placed on residents' ability to work and move around their communities.

2022 Floods

In March and July 2022 large areas of NSW were impacted by major flooding events, with Northern Rivers once again flooded and large parts of Western Sydney also affected. In the city of Lismore over 3,000 homes were damaged. In July 2022 residents of Camden in Western Sydney were ordered to evacuate for the fourth time that year due to major flooding.

2022 Living with COVID-19

Almost 4,000 lives have been lost to the pandemic with over 3 million cases of the disease since February 2020. As new variants emerge the State remains under high alert, and the health system is struggling to cope.



SEE REPORTS

Scan or click to view

RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS

Aftershock - A social sector collaboration



AND A COALITION OF PEAK BODIES

FHA was a partner in the NCOSS chaired research project which was conducted by Impact Economics and Policy, and supported by a coalition of peak bodies.

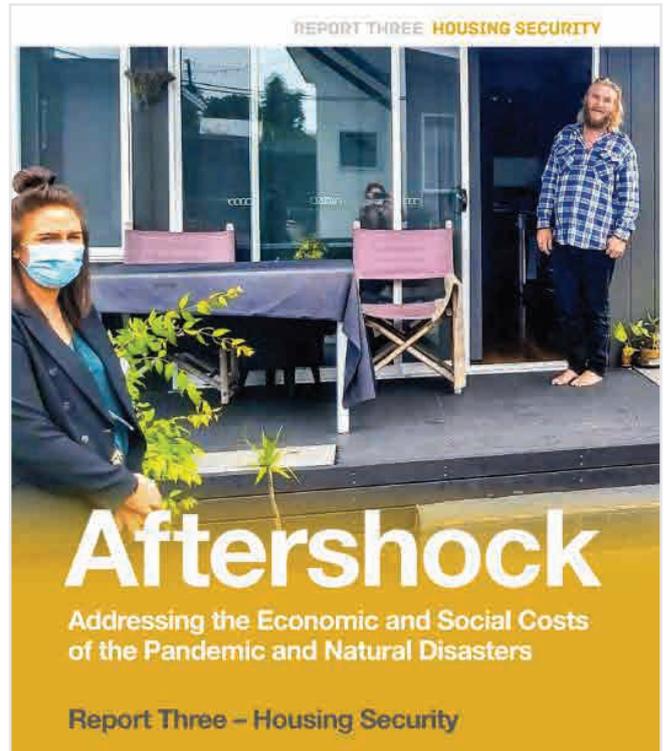
The project commenced in late 2021 with partners and researchers meeting monthly to explore and review emerging impacts across four domains of wellbeing:

- mental health
- family and domestic violence
- housing security
- child development and welfare.

The research includes a report for each of these domains under the umbrella report *Aftershock: addressing the economic and social costs of the pandemic and natural disasters*.

Original early modelling for the House Security Report showed a marked increase in housing stress in regional NSW, with the number of low-income households paying more than half of their income in rent, a measure of severe housing stress, increasing by 47 per cent since the start of 2020.

FHA was pleased to work with the housing peaks and social sector agencies in this powerful partnership to better understand the recovery challenges ahead of us. The faith sector plays an important role in alleviating housing stress and providing tenant care and support across the physical, mental and spiritual domains of wellbeing, which contributes greatly to building healthy and resilient communities.



Local boy Sebastian Eyles helping with the cleanup in the Lismore Central Business District

Image Source: AAP
Image Credit: Jason O'Brien

Meet the Board



Rob Burnelek
Board Chair

Rob is the General Manager of Housing at Anglicare Sydney where he established their community housing operations and now oversees a large development program.

An experienced senior manager in community housing and not-for-profit organisations, notably in 2013, Rob established the community and affordable housing operations for Salvos Housing Australia across NSW and went on to expand operations to Queensland and the ACT, prior to his role at Anglicare.



Antony Anisse

Antony is the Co-Founder of Good Housing and acts as the Chief Empowerment Officer. He is an experienced public-private executive with a record of strong social and economic outcomes in major urban renewal projects including Parramatta Square, Riverbank and the Civic Link Projects.

He has previously held senior positions in private development firms, Local and State Government, and the Urban Growth Development Corporation. Antony was elected to the Hornsby Shire Council in September 2012, an office he held until September 2017. He had oversight of the formation of new town centres and the creation of new social and recreational infrastructure including the transformation of Hornsby Quarry and Storey Park Community Centre.



Brad Braithwaite

Brad is the Interim CEO at Anglicare NSW South, NSW West & ACT. He has a wealth of leadership experience gained as a senior executive and consultant across the public, private and not-for-profit sectors. His expertise is across social and economic policy research and analysis, corporate strategy, serving cross-functional teams, facilitating strategic and operational transformation, and driving business development and IP commercialisation.

Before joining Anglicare, Brad was deputy CEO at Argyle Housing, working on the efficiency and productivity of corporate services, operations, and asset management.



Cheri Erai-Collins

Cheri is the State Manager at Salvos Housing NSW, QLD & ACT. She works with the senior leadership teams on strategy and business development at The Salvation Army Australia and with external partners on new programs and property projects. Cheri is an experienced accountant with almost 15 years working in the Community and Not-for-profit sectors in the UK and Australia.

Her most recent accomplishment is the delivery of the Chermside Salvation Army Complex – a powerful partnership with a \$5.5 million donation from philanthropist Doug Corey through his charity, the Corey Charitable Foundation offering affordable accommodation to applicants who had been sleeping rough.



Lisa Ellis

Lisa leads operations at Wesley Mission Community Housing, managing a portfolio of housing which includes crisis accommodation and transitional housing, through to social and affordable housing. She has over 13 years' experience working in Not-for-profit and government organisations including community housing, health services (cancer control and prevention), disabilities and aged care.

Her roles have focussed on operational management, tenancy management, community engagement, quality assurance and risk management. Her approach includes providing community housing with a whole of person mindset, rather than a transactional real estate model.



Mike Furner

After 20 years as an executive across community development, health, rehabilitation and aged care fields in NSW, the Northern Territory and Tasmania, Mike joined BaptistCare in 2001 to head the newly created Aged and Community Care Operations Division. For four years he took on a broader role as General Manager for the group's strategic development portfolio.

His work led to the establishment of social housing within BaptistCare where he became General Manager Housing and Retirement Living, NSW & ACT, a role from which he retired in 2020. A significant part of Mike's work has been in rural and remote areas of Australia, including Aboriginal communities.



Mark Khoo FAPI

Mark is the Co-Founder and current CEO of WelcomeMat – Australia’s first bespoke tenant-matching platform for affordable rental housing. He was a Property Partner at The Salvation Army’s award-winning social enterprise law firm, Salvos Legal for over six years, and a senior lawyer working across top tier national law firms for over nine years prior.

Mark had the privilege of being appointed as an Associate to Justice Murray Wilcox at the Federal Court of Australia and served on the Law Society of NSW’s Diversity & Inclusion Committee for three years. Mark is a Fellow of the Australian Property institute (API) under its Property Leaders Program.



Mark Nutting

Mark has had a long career in the NSW Government advising on housing policy, strategic resource allocation and service improvement. As a former senior officer in the Department of Family and Community Services (and its many iterations), he led the design phase of the housing common access project that is now known as Housing Pathways, along with housing and homelessness policy reforms, inter-government negotiations, research and funding of social and affordable housing programs.

Mark began his career in community housing helping to establish the Eastern Suburbs Rental Housing Association (now a part of Bridge Housing) in 1983. He is currently the Strategic Planning Manager of the Southern Regional of Councils undertaking advocacy and policy work on behalf of member councils.

Meet the Team



Rose Thomson
Chief Executive Officer

Rose worked in the higher education sector for 16 years which culminated in a global role as Director of External Relations at the University of Newcastle (UON). After ten years at UON, she helped establish the Institute of Civil Infrastructure as Director of Professional Programs for the peak body, the Civil Contractors Federation. She has considerable senior leadership experience, a proven capacity to work and deliver outcomes in complex and challenging environments and an impressive track record of high-level stakeholder engagement and advocacy on a state, national and international level.



Dr Liesel Henn
Policy and Planning Lead

Liesel is a seasoned global management consultant in both the public and private sectors specialising in strategy and policy formulation, best practice research, stakeholder engagement and driving measurable project results. She has nearly 30 years of professional experience in Australia, Africa and the United States managing strategic projects at big four consulting firm Deloitte. She has held senior policy influence and advocacy roles in peak membership organisations. Liesel teaches in the business school at Western Sydney University and works 1.5 days per week with FHA.



Raf Rayos
Administration Officer

Raf completed the Sydney Alliance Internship Program in 2020, where he was part of the team that organised the Oz International Students' Hub - the only grassroots-based hub in New South Wales developed for and by international students. His advocacy-based, not-for-profit work continued in 2021 at Parramatta Young Christian Workers as Youth Engagement Officer. He now assists the CEO across all portfolios.



Kathy Goodfellow
Finance Officer

Kathy is a fellow of the Institute of Professional Accountants and is the longest serving member of the team with ten years' service. She has worked in the not-for-profit sector throughout her career. Kathy brings significant experience to her work in financial management at the Faith Housing Alliance. Kathy works with FHA one day a week.

Assets, Liabilities and Members' Funds

CURRENT ASSETS	2022 (\$)	2021 (\$)
Cash and Cash Equivalents	120,982.28	125,477.48
Others	6,519.53	8,050.00
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	127,501.81	133,527.48
NON-CURRENT ASSETS	2022 (\$)	2021 (\$)
Plant & Equipment	13,538.56	6,732.33
Right-of-use Assets	22,623.00	-
Financial Assets	10,000.00	30,000.00
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	46,161.56	36,732.33
TOTAL ASSETS	173,663.37	170,259.81
CURRENT LIABILITIES	2022 (\$)	2021 (\$)
Lease Liabilities	17,136.00	-
Other Payables	26,941.09	19,742.98
Contract Liabilities	-	20,000.00
Provisions	4,048.51	-
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	48,125.60	39,742.98
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	2022 (\$)	2021 (\$)
Lease Liabilities	5,953.00	-
Provisions	-	10,693.99
TOTAL LIABILITIES	54,078.60	50,436.97
NET ASSETS	119,584.77	119,822.84
MEMBER FUNDS	2022 (\$)	2021 (\$)
Retained Profits/(Losses)	119,584.77	119,822.84
TOTAL MEMBERS' FUND	119,584.77	119,822,84.00

Income & Expenditure

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2022

INCOME	2022 (\$)	2021 (\$)
Government Grants Received (Recurrent)	335,207.12	325,067.52
Other Grants Received	27,000.00	8,000.00
Interest Income	32.45	73.85
Membership Fees Income	-	2,300.00
Fee for Service Income	5,392.50	1,062.50
Government Stimulus - Cash Flow Boost	-	16,416.00
TOTAL INCOME	367,632.00	352,920.00
EXPENDITURE	2022 (\$)	2021 (\$)
Conferences and Meetings	7,453.26	1,682.61
Contractors and Services	13,003.27	7,138.02
Depreciation and Impairment	35,463.77	7,826.39
Marketing and Campaigns	29,060.00	1,305.00
Projects and Research	8,854.53	2,059.99
Property and Office	24,560.98	30,122.45
Salaries and Wages	216,655.62	268,462.49
Softwares Platforms and Website	32,818.71	10,805.00
Other	-	8,000.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	367,870.00	337,402.00
PROFIT/(LOSS) ATTRIBUTABLE TO MEMBERS OF THE ENTITY	(238)	15,518

Independent Auditors Report

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2022

OPINION

We have audited the financial report of Churches Housing Incorporated, which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2022, the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, statement of changes in members' funds and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and the statement by committee of management .

In our opinion, the financial report of Churches Housing Incorporated has been prepared in accordance with Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012, including;

- a) giving a true and fair view of the associations financial position as at 30 June, 2022 and of its financial performance for the year then ended; and
- b) complying with Australian Accounting Standards to the extent described in Note 1 and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013.

BASIS FOR OPINION

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report section of our report. We are independent of the association in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110: Code of Ethics for Professional

Accountants (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Emphasis of Matter - Basis of Accounting and Restriction on Distribution and Use

We draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared for the purpose of fulfilling Churches Housing Incorporated's financial reporting responsibilities under the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

Responsibilities of the Committee of Management for the Financial Report

The committee of management of Churches Housing Incorporated is responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and have determined that the basis of preparation described in Note 1 to the financial report is appropriate to meet the needs of the requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and is appropriate to meet the needs of the members. The committee of managements' responsibility also includes such internal control as the committee of management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of a financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the committee of management is responsible for assessing Churches Housing Incorporated's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters relating to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the committee of management either intend to liquidate Churches Housing Incorporated or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- a) Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- b) Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the association's internal control.

- c) Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the committee of management.

- d) Conclude on the appropriateness of the Committee of Managements' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the association's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the association to cease to continue as a going concern.

- e) Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with the committee of management regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.



THOMAS DAVIS & CO



J.G. RYAN | PARTNER

Chartered Accountants
Sydney 2022

Statement by the Committee of Management

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2022

The Committee of Management of the Association has determined that these financial statements are special purpose financial statements prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the accounts.

- a) In the opinion of the Committee of Management of Churches Housing Incorporated (the Association):
 - b) the accompanying Statement of Financial Position gives a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Association as at that date;
 - c) at the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Association will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable; and
 - d) the financial statements have satisfied the requirements of the ACNC Act.

This declaration is made in accordance with a resolution of the Committee and is signed in accordance with subsection 60.15(2) of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013.

Auditor's Independence Declaration to the Committee of Management of Churches Housing Incorporated under section 60-40 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 (ACNC Act)

I declare that to the best of my knowledge and belief, during the year ended 30 June 2022 there have been:

- a) no contraventions of the auditor independence requirements of section 60-40 of the ACNC Act in relation to the audit; and
- b) no contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.



ROBERT BURNELEK
BOARD CHAIR



MIKE FURNER
BOARD MEMBER



Arista, Mt DrUITT (Anglicare Sydney)



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ALLIANCE**

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