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**CEO Welcome****Dear supporters,**

**Thank you for your continued support. With your help, we can assist those who need it most throughout the whole Melbourne metropolitan area.**

We can't do our great work without continued whole-of-community support and collaboration. Over the last few months, we have made great strides with the help of our volunteers, partners, philanthropists and donors to our latest appeal.

In this edition you'll see the various ways our community can come together to effect change. Read about the first-ever Street Count in the City of Port Phillip, enabled by more than 100 volunteers and more than a dozen partner organisations across the community. You can also learn the various ways our long-standing partner NAB continues to use its core values to help institute change. In addition, learn about our Education Pathways Program, as well as an update on HomeGround Real Estate.

Again, thank you for working with us as we work to end homelessness.

**Tony Keenan**, Chief Executive Officer

## THANK YOU!

**Thank you to everyone who donated during the festive season in support of families like Jessica's. We are experiencing a housing affordability crisis, and a very high demand for housing and homelessness services.**

"It means so much to me to have such a heart-warming response to the letter. My family have a bright future thanks to the compassion of others." - Jessica

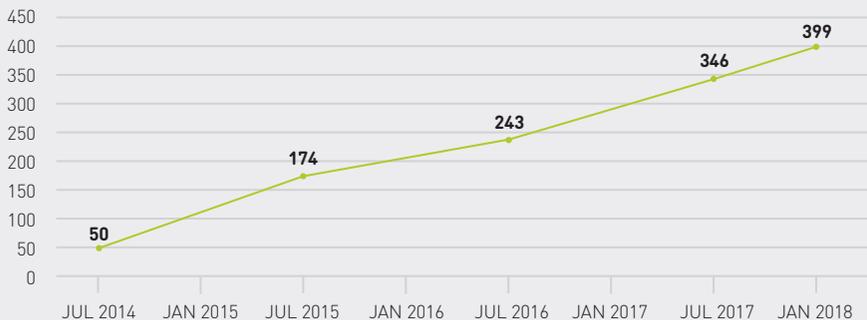
Your generous donations make a difference to people who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness. Your gifts enable us to provide tailored support to the thousands of adults, young people, children and families we work with every year across Melbourne.

Thank you again.

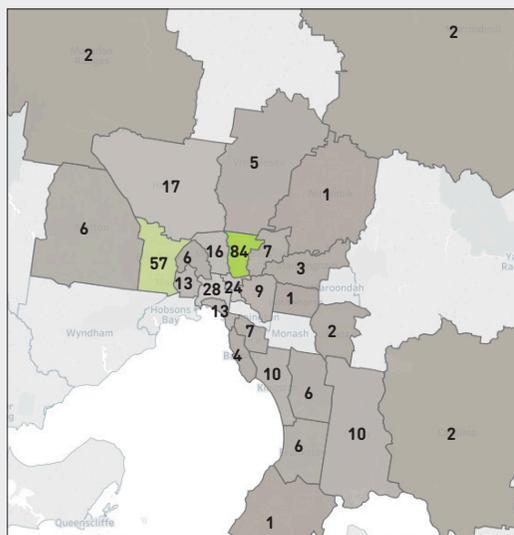


## Update HomeGround Real Estate

### Properties Under Management



### Property Locations



Darebin	84
Brimbank	57
Melbourne	28
Yarra	24
Hume	17
Moreland	16
Maribyrnong	13
Port Phillip	13
Casey	10
Kingston	10
Boroondara	9
Banyule	7
Glen Eira	7
Frankston	6
Greater Dandenong	6
Melton	6
Mooney Valley	6
Whittlesea	5
Bayside	4
Manningham	3
Cardinia	2
Knox	2
Macedon Ranges	2
Murrindini	2
Mornington Peninsula	1
Nillumbik	1
Whitehorse	1

**At the end of 2017 the City of Melbourne’s one-off grant of \$150,000 to HomeGround Real Estate, Launch Housing’s social enterprise, was announced.**

The grant is part of the city’s \$2 million Pathways Innovation Package and contributes to activities that will increase the number of rental properties available to people experiencing homelessness within the municipality.

Despite the current housing affordability crisis, thousands of homes in the City of Melbourne remain empty.

“More and more people on lower incomes are at risk of homelessness due to the lack of affordable rental properties in Melbourne. If you have an empty property please consider bringing it back on to the rental market,” said Launch Housing Deputy CEO Dr Heather Holst.

“It means that people who have otherwise been priced out of the market are offered more affordable private

rental, and HomeGround Real Estate offers landlords expert property and tenancy management services that give them peace of mind, the opportunity to contribute to those in need of housing, and a ‘social return’ on their negotiated, discounted rental fee.”

Investors may choose to have the real estate agency manage their properties at the standard rate, market rate, or at reduced rent and social rent for low-income tenants. The revenue gained from their property management fees is then reinvested into Launch Housing services.

The not-for-profit real estate agency opened in 2014 and has grown to manage a portfolio of 399 properties. HomeGround Real Estate is a significant part of our work towards achieving the Launch Housing mission to end homelessness.

Learn more at [homegroundrealestate.com.au](http://homegroundrealestate.com.au).

## School students fundraise for Launch Housing’s Tenancy Plus program

**In November 2017, representatives from the Thornbury High School Student Council and Community Connections Committee organised a highly successful trivia fundraising night. The event supported Launch Housing and helped raise awareness of homelessness in the community.**

The students focused their support on the individuals, couples and families linked in with the Tenancy Plus-Tenancy Support Program in Northcote. This program was chosen because of the high demand for household items and the opportunity to connect with a service local to their school.

Along with their teacher’s support, the students were able to deliver much-needed household items to the clients in time for the festive season. These included:

- Household cleaning products (dishwashing liquid, tea towels, sprays, wipes, sponges)
- Laundry products (washing detergent, bleach, towels)
- Non-perishable foods (canned, packaged, jams, cereals)
- Toiletries (dental hygiene items, shower products)

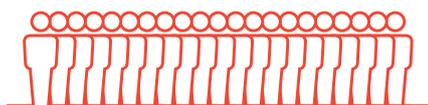
The household items donated were then presented in hampers to a mix of clients with an emphasis on ensuring that those who are most vulnerable are prioritised.



## The first Street Count in the City of Port Phillip recorded 91 people sleeping rough in the municipality.

More than 100 trained volunteers canvassed areas across the City of Port Phillip on 7 February to count the number of people sleeping rough between 2 a.m. and 6 a.m. Additional counts were conducted later in the morning at key homeless assistance services in the municipality to assess people in hard-to-reach areas who could not be engaged in the main count. Those who consented to participate in surveys were individually assessed so we could assist them with housing and services.

### Street Count 2018



91 people sleeping rough in the City of Port Phillip

The Street Count was conducted by Launch Housing in partnership with the City of Port Phillip, the Victorian Government, Sacred Heart Mission and other community partners including City of Melbourne, Star Health, Alfred Health, St. Kilda Community Housing, Victoria Police, Port Phillip Housing Association, South Port Community Housing, Salvation Army Crisis Services, Ngwala Willumbong Cooperative and Prahran Mission.

“With meaningful data we can better understand the extent of the issue and ensure appropriate programs and responses are in place, as well as make immediate responses to the people found on the night,” said Tony Keenan, CEO of Launch Housing.

“These findings will allow us to coordinate our efforts with local agencies to plan, develop and make decisions about appropriate long-term solutions to homelessness.”

This benchmark year sets the stage for comparative data in the future. The collated information will help prioritise support to the individuals assessed as most vulnerable, and target allocation

of existing resources. At a system level, the data also enables services to better plan for the future. A full analysis will be released this year, including an assessment of not just the extent but the complexity of rough sleeping in the area.

Initial findings from the point-in-time 2018 Count show that of the 91 people counted as sleeping rough in the City of Port Phillip, 61 were men, 18 women, 1 identified as transgender, and 11 were recorded as “unknown.”

Most people were between 25 and 55 years old; 72 were single, and nearly 20 percent identified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent.

The Street Count will help to investigate the prevalence of primary homelessness within the City of Port Phillip.

It is modelled on the Street to Home Registry Weeks and the StreetCount run by the City of Melbourne, which has completed seven such counts.

## Students Volunteer for Street Count

Some of the students living at our Education First Youth Foyer (Glen Waverley) attended the training session and volunteered for the Street Count. It was a great opportunity for our students to be a part of the count and they had a great experience.

“The experience meant a lot to me as I am very passionate about helping people. Being someone who is a part of the work of Launch Housing, it is important to give back as it is very rewarding for me. It was a very eye-opening experience for me and I learned about what really happens for those who sleep rough on the streets and how important the count is.” - Annika

“I wanted to help Launch Housing in regards to the research and provide support through giving out care packages...It was a lot of fun doing something so meaningful for the community. Thank you for making the experience fun, enjoyable and rewarding.” - Sean

Read our latest Annual Report at [goo.gl/cyYV8Y](http://goo.gl/cyYV8Y) or call 9288 9600 to request a copy.





## Partner Highlight **NAB**

## NAB continues support of diverse project pipeline

*Over the last few years, the NAB social impact investment team has worked to further strengthen the relationship with Launch Housing and find more ways to support its singular mission to end homelessness.*

*In addition to transactional banking, NAB has also provided a \$10 million loan facility for housing projects, and has involved its staff in workplace volunteering and giving options.*

**On 22 February, Launch Housing's social enterprise HomeGround Real Estate, Australia's first not-for-profit real estate agency, hosted a breakfast forum at a NAB venue, The Bowl (500 Bourke Street). The event brought together panelists from the local government, not-for-profit and corporate sectors, as well as a HomeGround Real Estate tenant and landlord.**

The discussion centred around one theme: How can the corporate sector partner to help end homelessness?

"How do we as corporates identify additional innovative ways to support the not-for-profit sector?" asked Katherine Leong, Associate Director, Product and Channel Development, NAB. "We need more communication and aligned values. We're trying to share what resources we have available and use our core values at NAB to help institute change."

Katherine believes the greatest impact will come from our shared values and



*Katherine Leong, Associate Director, Product and Channel Development, NAB*

corporates should share resources with the community using core skills to help partners.

### Activating Launch Housing's pipeline of projects

"NAB's strong relationship with Hanover continued with Launch Housing," explains Esther Makris, Community Banker at NAB. "We were very impressed with the way Launch Housing was run and how it went about creating real solutions to homelessness. That combination made it easier for us to work with them to create meaningful impact."

Makris says NAB's banking relationship is helping make the organisation's projects successful. "Our transactional facilities are integral to the running of HomeGround Real Estate, a division of Launch Housing that operates on social enterprise principles to provide below market rental properties to people on low incomes. And we're looking to provide similar technology for their car leasing initiative down the track."

Leong highlights another way NAB helps facilitate funding for their 'for-purpose' customers. "We're passionate about ensuring our 'for-purpose' customers are well informed about the various forms of funding available to them and how they can leverage other parts of the bank like JBWere Philanthropic Services team and NAB Private, part of NAB's wealth management business, to tap into investors who can use their granting and investment activities to support an important social cause like homelessness."

NAB has also explored workplace giving options for its employees to designate portions of their salary to charities of their choice. They also encourage NAB employees to support their for-purpose clients through skilled volunteering such as the NAB finance team currently supporting Launch Housing's internal audit.

### Building a partnership

Another way NAB has supported Launch Housing was related to our Rapid Re-Housing project. We were in the process of refinancing and acquiring 167 homes across 4 major projects, when the Victorian Government launched a housing program to assist people fleeing domestic violence and homelessness. Launch Housing successfully won a \$13 million capital grant from the Victorian Government's Rapid Housing Assistance Fund to contribute to the Rapid Re-Housing project and received \$4 million from a philanthropist for its Transportable Housing project however, the shortfall for these projects was still substantial.

Explaining how NAB went about solving this funding challenge, Makris emphasised the importance of protecting Launch Housing's financial flexibility.

"We met multiple times to discuss their plans and the acquisitions they were making. And it was obvious that Launch Housing needed to be able to access capital for their programs."

NAB first worked to understand Launch Housing's business and how we operated before looking at what we needed for the Rapid Re-Housing project and to structure our finances so we could acquire as many homes as possible.



*The Walking School Bus, which ensures regular attendance at school.*

## Pathways for Children's Education

**Launch Housing's Homeless Children's Specialist Support Service (HCSSS), which delivers a specialist response for children experiencing homelessness and family violence, identified that children are especially vulnerable to disengagement from school while their family experiences homelessness.**

To address this need, the Education Pathways Program (EPP) was created in October 2015 with support from the Collier Charitable Fund. With the Fund's longstanding support, the EPP has enabled 182 children to re-engage with school to date.

"We are incredibly grateful for the longstanding support of the Fund. It is only with the remarkable support of Australia's philanthropic community that Launch Housing is able to trial innovative solutions to work towards our mission to end homelessness," said Tony Keenan, CEO of Launch Housing.

The EPP supports regular school attendance, participation and wellbeing of children experiencing homelessness and family violence. It works to reduce lost learning time, empower parents through social and educational inclusion opportunities, and develop strong school partnerships. This is accomplished through:

- outreach engagement at emergency accommodation providers;
- short term school enrolment at a local primary school;
- the Walking School Bus, which ensures regular attendance at school;
- the Healthy Eating Program to provide children with a nutritious breakfast and lunch each day;
- cognitive and educational assessments, counselling and classroom support;
- school supplies and other material aid, such as school uniforms;
- social inclusion through recreational activities; and
- support to enrol in new schools when families find longer-term housing.

The EPP's support to re-engage children in education has meant that participating students have achieved a remarkable 95 percent attendance rate. Parents are actively engaged with their children's schooling, and have reported that their children are thriving. Local primary schools have also demonstrated increased understanding of the children's experiences, which has promoted a more flexible learning approach.

## Tom's story

**The Education Pathways Program engaged with Donna, an Indigenous single mother, and her four children in July 2016.**

The family experienced homelessness after fleeing their interstate home as a result of significant family violence. Shortly after the family arrived at City Gate, Launch Housing's EPP worker was able to gain the family's trust to enrol the children in St Kilda Primary School and attend the Walking School Bus each day.

Within days of attending school, the children's confidence notably increased, their anxiety was significantly reduced, and they began to form positive relationships with staff and other students. The children also began participating in a weekly recreation group, as well as a Homework Club delivered by the Education Pathways Program.

Donna's son Tom and his siblings spent seven weeks enrolled at St Kilda Primary School before the family secured long-term housing in another location, when they transitioned to their new school. However, St Kilda Primary School was keen to support Tom. The whole class roared with applause when Tom's name was called at the ceremony where he received the 11th Annual Elwood Poetry Prize in the City of Port Phillip's Sustainable Schools Festival.

St Kilda Primary School, and the many exit schools, go above and beyond to support children to rebuild positive school experiences for a brighter future.

Now, Donna has consented for Tom to receive an Educational Assessment, which will provide us with crucial information about his educational, social, emotional and developmental needs. This will enable Tom to begin counselling, and the children's teachers at their school to develop individualised learning plans for him and each of his siblings.



**Feedback Stations**

## Pilot for Quality Improvement

**In late 2017, Feedback Stations were installed at three Launch Housing sites: Elizabeth Street, Southbank and IAP Collingwood. This pilot is an important step in the Consumer Participation Strategy.**

The current Lived Experience Advisory Group (LEAG) comprises people with a lived experience of homelessness. The LEAG led Launch Housing in the 'co-design' of our Feedback System and the Feedback form is an important part of that system.

LEAG member Jacqui first saw a feedback station at Star Health. When she heard Launch Housing wanted to develop a better way to collect feedback, she brought the idea to the team.

"I know the station itself was designed by another consumer who was a user of Star Health services. I shared what I saw and people engaged with it. That's how it all came to be," says Jacqui.

LEAG member Emma is also a consumer consultant at a local hospital.

"We knew it was important for Launch Housing to have a visible feedback station in place. It sends a clear message to the consumer from the word go that we take your feedback seriously. There's a lot of dignity and safety in that," Emma says.

"Having actual stations rather than just the traditional feedback loop where you approach staff members is also a critical element. It means you can actually go up and do it anonymously with no repercussions," Emma adds.

The stations include hard copy feedback forms as well as an iPad to submit feedback.

"Emma and I were really passionate about asking the right questions and ensuring they were short and in plain language that was easy to understand and easy to fill in," says Jacqui.

*"When you come to a homeless service you don't always feel in a place of power, or that you have an opportunity to do much at the time. Providing feedback can be one of those few ways to see it come to fruition, which is quite powerful," Jacqui says.*

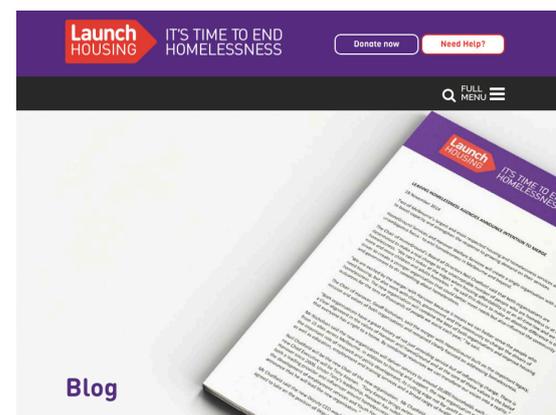
The information we receive from clients will help us design our services so that they work best for the people who use them, and to advocate for change wherever it is needed. We will then report back to clients via 'Feedback News' on the monitors at each station, which the LEAG will regularly create.

During the first six weeks that the stations and new feedback forms were in operation we received 67 pieces of individual feedback, compared to 11 feedback forms received in the previous 6 months.

The feedback received so far has been broad, but includes feedback about improving the IT services we provide to clients; the need to improve our communication of complaints processes; and comments about the harm minimisation policy at Southbank. There were also many positive comments about the quality of staff service delivery.

The data has been sent to the respective teams for consideration and the LEAG has also considered the feedback and will be making recommendations and drafting communications back to clients in the next few weeks.

If these pilot stations are successful in increasing the feedback we receive, we plan to install them at other sites where many people visit. We will also be translating versions of the form into other languages.



**Blog**

### Launch Housing's blog

Visit [launchhousing.org.au/blog](https://launchhousing.org.au/blog) for info on our latest research, our staff and volunteers, clients and more.

## Contact us

## We'd love to hear from you

We're always interested in your thoughts, compliments and feedback on our newsletters, appeals and website. If you would like to share some feedback please contact our Communications and Business Development team at [supporters@launchhousing.org.au](mailto:supporters@launchhousing.org.au) or free call **1800 720 660**.

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