

OUR IMPACT



IT'S TIME TO END
HOMELESSNESS

Launch Housing's Inaugural Impact Report 2020-2021





Acknowledgement

We proudly acknowledge the First Peoples of Australia and recognise both their deep spiritual connection to Country, and their unique ability to care for it.

We acknowledge we live and work on land that was never ceded and pay our respects to the Elders, past, present and emerging, who ensure the world's oldest living culture continues to grow and thrive.

First Peoples of Australia maintain that their sovereignty has never been ceded, and have long called for treaty. From time immemorial Aboriginal Victorians have practised their laws, customs and languages, and nurtured Country through their spiritual, cultural, material and economic connections to land, water and resources.

Through the strength, resilience and pride of Aboriginal Victorians, their cultures, communities and economies endure and continue to grow and thrive today. We acknowledge the diversity of Aboriginal Victorians, their communities and cultures, and the intrinsic connection of Traditional Owners to Country.

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MESSAGE FROM OUR LEADERS

Homelessness across Melbourne is more insidious and widespread than any of us knew before the pandemic. We suspected we didn't have the whole picture but the old adage – if you can't measure it, you can't change it – has been shown to be particularly true this year.

Because of the pandemic, we are finally getting an accurate picture of how many people are sleeping rough. Before this year we relied on an annual street count or the work of volunteers on census night. But we now know that was only part of the full picture.

Overall, nearly 4,000 people sleeping rough were placed in hotel accommodation between April 2020 and March 2021; this is almost five times as many people sleeping rough across Melbourne than the number estimated (798 in metro Melbourne) on census night 2016.

The devastating effects of the pandemic have not let up. Enormous social and economic hardship has increased Melbourne's housing crisis. Sustained commitment, evidence-based solutions and ongoing funding is needed to address the source of these issues while still providing immediate assistance to people in need.

We've seen how a public health emergency can change things. 1,845 households who had been sleeping rough, will now have a secure long-term home through the State Government's *From Homelessness to a Home* (H2H) initiative. This integrated program that combines housing with wrap-around support is providing evidence for an approach that many front-line services have been advocating for, for decades. The challenge now is to be able to scale this up so that the many others still sleeping rough or in insecure housing can find a secure and safe home.

We also know that there are still many people who are highly vulnerable to the flow-on impacts of the pandemic – job losses, family violence, disrupted education, and ongoing illness – that will push them into homelessness when federal and state government support ends.

Our ability to activate different aspects of our services, to deliver the right supports to people, where and when they are needed, and to inspire the community to action has been vital to address the ongoing and shifting impacts of COVID-19. This response will be crucial going forward as the full impact of the pandemic is realised.

We now need to make sure that this new understanding, increased collaboration across the service system and influx of investment is maintained so that we can end homelessness for everybody. And the only way to make sure we are doing that, is to measure it and learn from it.



DRIVING CHANGE THROUGH IMPACT REPORTING

We are committed to holding ourselves to account and to transparently demonstrating our progress on improving outcomes for our clients to ultimately ending homelessness. Our reports will focus on outcomes (what changes), rather than outputs (how much of or how many times an activity was completed).

As we embed impact measurement and reporting into our operations, year-on-year data collection will allow us to compare our progress over time, strengthen our understanding of how and why change is happening and adjust our approaches, to amplify our impact.

This, our first impact report, begins to tell the story of what has changed for people, community and society in Melbourne as a result of our work this year, along with our understanding of what has influenced those changes. We will tell this story through our ten impact measures combined with stories of what this means on the ground.

OUR IMPACT MEASURES

We have over 50 programs across 14 sites which provide support for a range of clients. Our service offering includes: street outreach and entry points, crisis accommodation, transitional housing, supportive housing, tenancy support, outreach, youth and children's services, mental and physical health support and alcohol and other drugs programs. Each program offers a range of activities to support their unique clients and they all work to achieve the same thing – improved outcomes for clients and an end to homelessness.

To help us measure our progress, we have identified 10 impact measures that will help us understand and track the change we are making across the organisation. These supplement our program level data to provide a holistic understanding of what we are achieving. We will continue to review and refine our impact measures over time to ensure that we are not only 'doing things right' but that we are also 'doing the right things'.

Year-on-year, we hope to see our impact increase as we improve our practice, inspire others to act, refine, and test data collection systems, scale up projects that work and increase our advocacy and community mobilisation.

OUR 10 IMPACT MEASURES ARE:

- 1 Increase in number of high acuity clients with secure housing
- 2 Exits into housing exceed the number people sleeping rough
- 3 Increase in number of clients who have a positive transition into secure housing
- 4 Increase in proportion of clients, who received rent or bond payments, with sustained housing
- 5 Increase in number of social housing dwellings owned or managed by Launch Housing
- 6 Increase in number of properties managed by HomeGround Real Estate
- 7 Increase in number of young people employed or enrolled in education after completing the Education First Youth Foyer program
- 8 Increase in number of children participating in school or early childhood education
- 9 Increase in acts of community engagement to end homelessness
- 10 Increase in value of partner support

THE BIGGER STORY

This story will continue to evolve as we build our capacity to measure and report our progress, and as the government and community come together to effect system change. As an organisation, we are committed to continuous learning and improvement and sharing evidence and best practices widely. We will be publishing a Capital Cities Index as well as an annual Australian Homelessness Monitor, to better understand how Melbourne’s homelessness crisis compares to cities worldwide.

LESSONS LEARNED AND THE WAY FORWARD

This past year was an extraordinary year. Being agile and making decisions with real-time data helped us reflect on our services and the sector as a whole.

Throughout this year we identified some key lessons that are informing our client-focused services and will continue to shape the work we do in the future.

Community support for government investment in social housing is essential in making sustained change.

The visible reduction in rough sleeping by supporting people into hotels during the worst parts of the lockdowns started a conversation and showed that homelessness is not inevitable and can be solved when the determination is there. In November 2020, the Victorian government announced \$5.3 billion to build more social housing, and received clear community and industry support for the investment.

Integrated models with wrap-around support services – health, education - are essential to achieving good outcomes.

Our programs, which offer both affordable and secure housing with support services, are providing the evidence for an effective service delivery model that helps people, particularly those with complex needs, sustain their housing.

Collective impact is vital to ending homelessness.

Melbourne Zero, H2H and the partnership between community health services and homelessness services during the pandemic, have demonstrated the power of partnerships and ways to bring diverse stakeholders on the journey.

Prevention is better than cure. To impact change at a systemic level, prevention and early intervention need to be prioritised coupled with ongoing support to tackle immediate challenges in the sector.

Our staff are at the heart of what we do. As essential workers, our staff engage with some of the state’s most vulnerable people and need to be well supported so they can deliver outcomes for clients. Victoria has experienced several lockdowns in this past year and these disruptions have been felt widely throughout our community. Staff wellbeing continues to be of highest priority to us.

TOWARDS IMPACT

We want to track progress and report on the indicators and conditions necessary to end homelessness.

This means tracking progress at a systems level whilst highlighting the contribution we are making at an organisation level. To make this simple and engaging we will produce an impact report instead of a traditional annual report.

This first impact report is mostly focused on what Launch Housing has achieved with its partners, but successive reports will build out a picture of homelessness in Melbourne and our collective success as a community in creating the conditions to end it.

More information about our governance, including our Board of Directors and Senior Leadership Team can be found on our website. Our audited accounts can also be viewed from The Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) website. The Victorian Housing Registrar also hosts publicly available information about our performance as a registered community housing provider.



NEIL CHATFIELD
CHAIR, BOARD OF DIRECTORS



BEVAN WARNER
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



LAURA MAHONEY
CHIEF IMPACT OFFICER

HOMELESSNESS IN MELBOURNE

115,306

people were assisted by a Specialist Homelessness Service (SHS) in Victoria.

(Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, AIHW 2019-20)

Among them,

36% were experiencing homelessness, and

64% were 'at risk' of becoming homeless.

61%

were female

39%

were male

30%

had a mental health issue

10%

were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

60%

were returning clients

46%

experienced family and domestic violence

36% were children and young people (aged 0-24 years)

Status of people at end of support

Over

40,000

people were homeless when they presented at a SHS in Victoria.

21%

exited to some form of secure housing at the end of their support.

Youth Education & Employment

A total of

19,117 young people aged 15-24 years

received assistance from a SHS in Victoria.

Of those with complete data,

33% were enrolled in education or training at the start of support.

A further

4% were enrolled in education by the end of their support period.

17% were employed on some basis at the beginning of their support.

A further

5% were employed by the end of their support period.

As at March 2021, there were

50,839

households on the Victorian Housing Register waitlist

(Social Housing in Victoria, Consultation Paper 1 – Background and scoping paper, Social Housing Regulation Review, June 2021)

LAUNCH HOUSING'S YEAR AT A GLANCE

2020-2021

15,843

clients assisted (approx. 50% male; 46% female; 16% children and young people (0-24 years); 8% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander)

Represents 14% of all clients assisted by SHS- Victoria

4,009

clients assisted into safe accommodation during the pandemic and at all stages of lockdown



420

Government funded housing packages supplied to move people from hotel accommodation to housing

**\$6.5
MILLION**

raised in donations

9,533

clients presented to our Entry Points



1,993

clients assisted by outreach

2,272

clients sustained private rentals through Private Rental Assistance Program (PRAP)

2,245

clients exited homelessness into housing



ABOUT LAUNCH HOUSING

Who we are

Launch Housing is an independent Melbourne-based community organisation passionately committed to ending homelessness. We deliver services and life-changing housing supports to people at risk of – or experiencing – the crisis and trauma of homelessness.

OUR MISSION

To end homelessness.

OUR VISION

We believe housing is a basic human right that affords people dignity. Everyone has the right to a home and it is our job to make this happen.

OUR VALUES



Empowerment



Courage



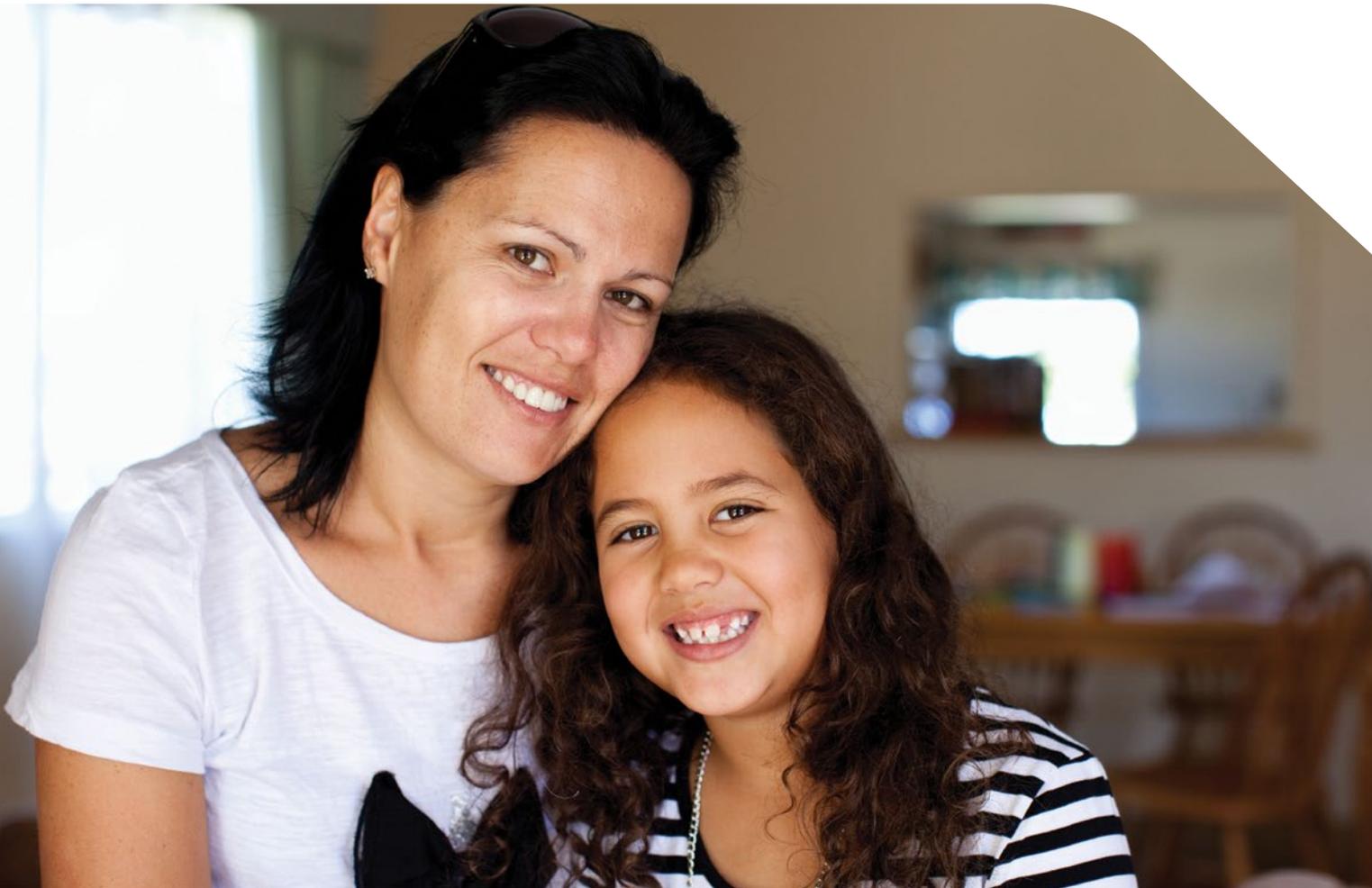
Agility



Fresh Thinking



Leadership



CLIENT OUTCOMES ARE AT THE CORE OF EVERYTHING WE DO

We will only be successful if the lives of the people who are experiencing homelessness are improved. We offer services that meet people where they are, to provide support where and when it is most likely to be needed.

We meet people where they are at

We believe:

- Access to safe, secure and affordable housing is a human right.
- Like everyone else, people who experience homelessness have rights, aspirations and potential.
- The people we work with are experts in their own lives; we walk alongside them to achieve the best outcomes for each individual. Everyone's experience of homelessness is unique.
- We recognise there is a power imbalance between staff and the people they work with. It's our job to work hard to minimise that imbalance.
- We are an independent, non-religious organisation focused entirely on ending homelessness.
- The support Launch Housing provides is always free of discrimination.
- Community is important; connectedness and participation is essential to long-term prevention of homelessness.

We are advised by people with lived experience of homelessness

Our services, policy, advocacy and organisational planning are informed by people with lived experience of homelessness through our Lived Experience Advisory Program (LEAP). As experts on the individual and collective impacts of policies and systems, their expertise reveals any blind spots in our work, and ensures that our services are appropriate, culturally safe and responsive to people's needs. Further, creating a platform for people with lived experience to speak on their own behalf in areas of influence is an important contributor to improve empathy and reduce the stigma of homelessness.

We measure what's important

Our 10 impact measures will help us measure the change we know needs to happen to reverse the rate of homelessness. These measures are collective and will be tracked across the whole organisation, as multiple programs contribute to making progress against each one. This report shows what progress has been made in these areas.

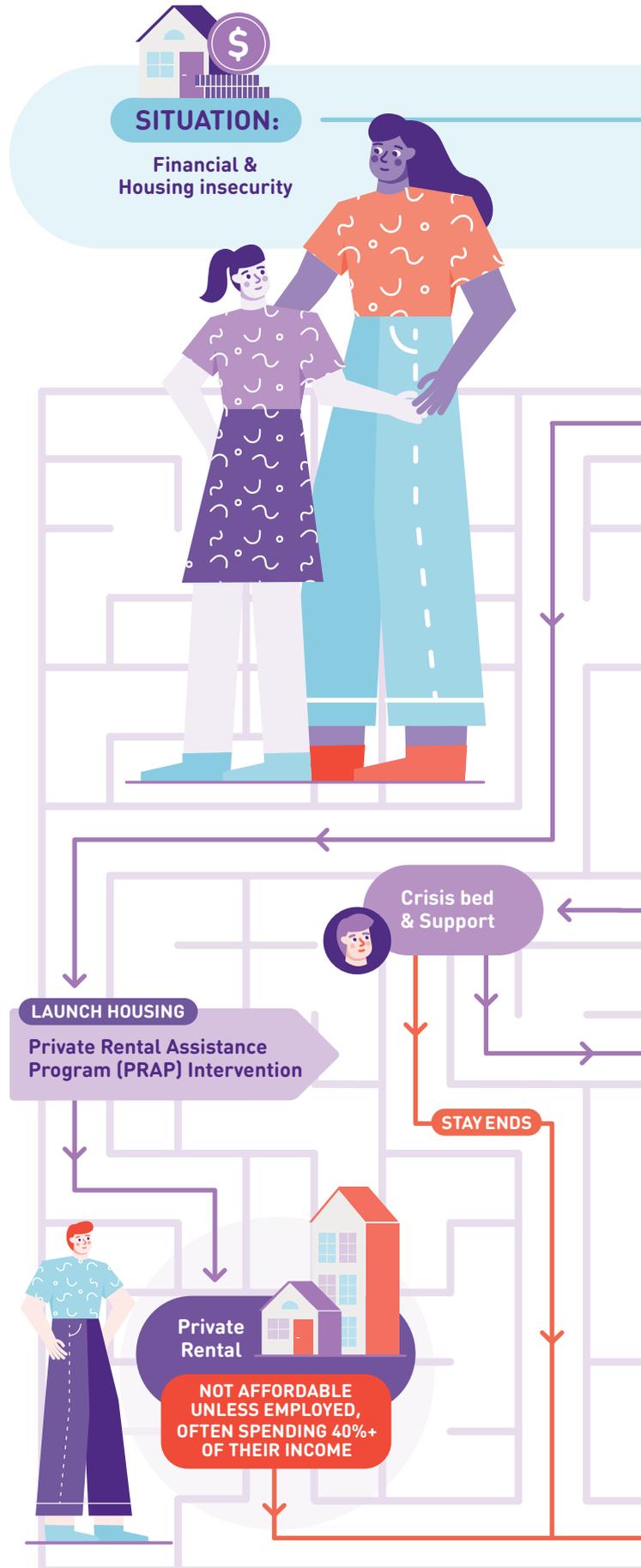
We have developed an Outcomes Framework that will bring our Theory of Change (ToC) into action by helping us embed and implement the 10 impact measures. This will track progress against these 10 measures to understand how we are contributing to ending homelessness.



WE KNOW WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE

There is no one pathway into or out of homelessness. We know it is caused by a combination of trauma, unaffordable housing and inadequate income support, but solutions do exist.

THE JOURNEY OUT OF HOMELESSNESS



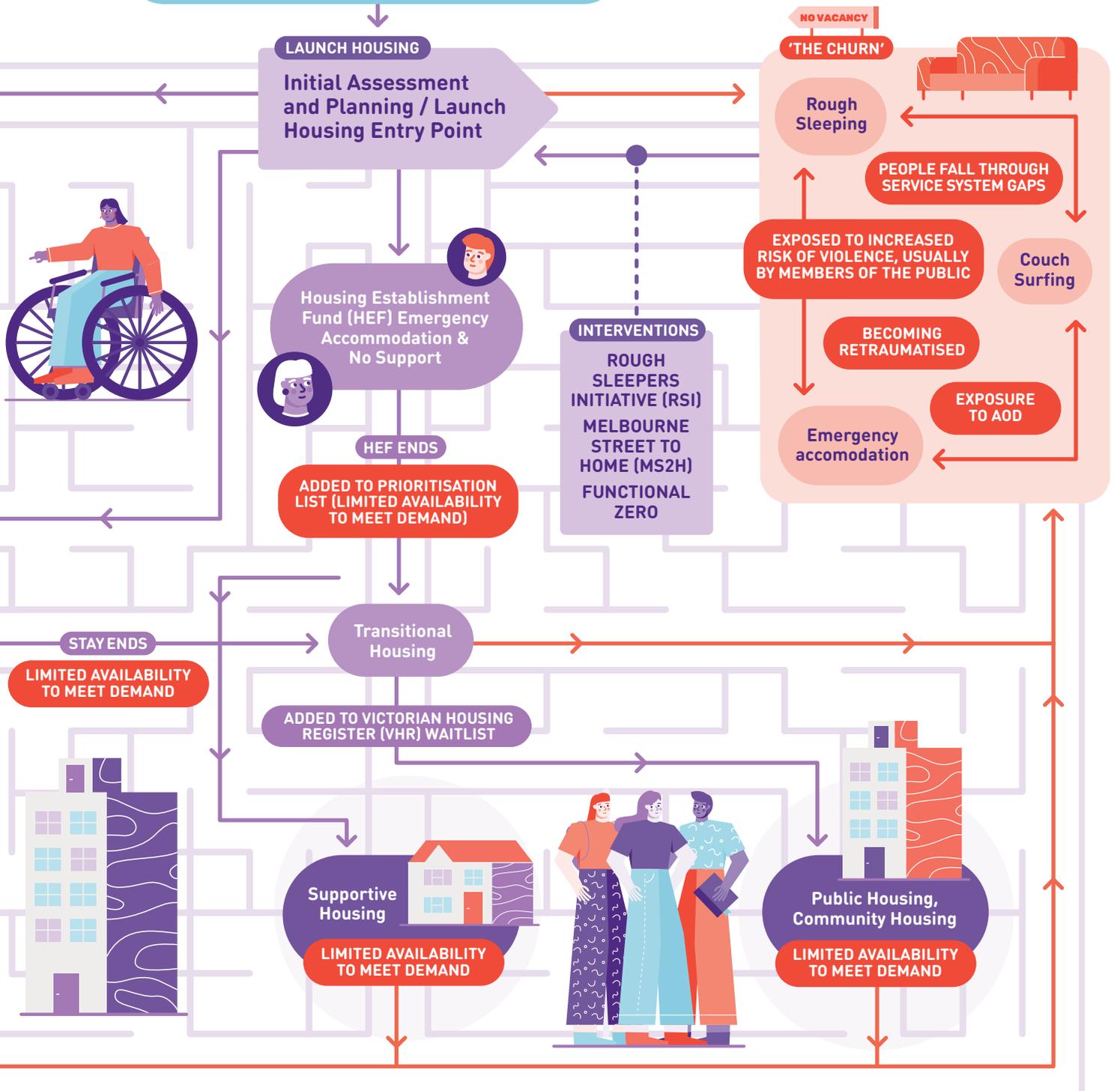
TRIGGERING INCIDENTS & LIFE CHANGES:

- Family Violence
- Inability to work
- Death of partner or child
- Health crises

RESILIENCE:

People often try to resolve crisis by themselves, or resort to couch surfing + staying with friends or family

PEOPLE TEND TO USE AND EXHAUST PERSONAL RESOURCES, SO BY THE TIME MANY CONTACT SUPPORT SERVICES, THEY ARE DESTITUTE



IMPACT MEASURES

Our 10 impact measures draw on a range of Launch Housing programs and data sets and track high-priority outcomes at an organisational level. These measures will collectively track the outcomes we want to see in people, communities and society as outlined in our Theory of Change.

This is the first time Launch Housing is reporting on these measures. Where data was available from the previous year, we have reported a change – increase or decrease – over time.

We know that numbers alone cannot tell the full story. We have included here analysis of the context and our key learnings supplemented by in-depth case studies and client stories.

Over the next 12 months, we will be using a three-step process to test, refine and implement these measures.



Theory of Change (ToC)

The outcomes we aim to achieve



PEOPLE EXPERIENCE POSITIVE CHANGE IN AREAS OF...



Stability, security & suitability of housing



Health & wellbeing



Future readiness



COMMUNITIES...



Have changed attitudes about homelessness



Take action to end homelessness



CONTRIBUTING TO SOCIETY THAT IS...



Working together for change



Prepared for action



OUTCOMES FOR PEOPLE

Each one of us needs a stable, secure and suitable home in order to live fulfilling and healthy lives. Our 'housing first' approach ensures access to safe, stable and secure housing is always a priority, alongside a range of supports tailored to our clients' needs.

Our supportive housing model integrates wrap-around services - intensive case management, access to essential healthcare, critical education and skills training and providing a judgement-free

environment where clients can start to build relationships and connect with their community.

We aim to achieve the following outcomes for our clients:

1. Stable, secure and suitable housing
2. Improved future readiness (education, skills, employment, financial and legal position); and
3. Improved health and wellbeing



Stable, secure and suitable housing

Launch Housing services - entry points and crisis accommodation, transitional housing and long-term housing - are working together and in close collaboration with the broader Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) system in Victoria to provide clients access to stable, secure and suitable housing.

Data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW 2019-2020) indicate that of the 115,306 people assisted by SHS in Victoria, 60% were returning clients, a significantly high number.

For many of these clients, the experience of homelessness has been compounded by the prevalence of trauma, violence, physical and mental ill-health (high acuity clients) and they can often face significant barriers to securing and sustaining housing.

To more effectively end the cycle of homelessness for this highly vulnerable group, we know that:

- **Housing is critical.** First and foremost, clients who are experiencing homelessness, particularly individuals sleeping rough, must have access to safe, stable and secure housing. Impact Measures 1 and 2 track progress against this outcome.

- **Sustaining housing is essential.** Clients must have access to adequate resources and support in order to sustain their housing. Impact Measures 3 and 4 track progress against this outcome.
- **Increasing the supply of safe and secure housing owned or managed by Launch Housing is paramount.** Managing our own social housing dwellings is a key strategy for Launch Housing to help clients who experience complex needs and require support to live independently. Impact Measures 5 and 6 track progress against this outcome.

These are discussed in more detail on the next page.



**OF THE
115,306**

**people assisted
by a SHS in Victoria**

60%

were returning clients



CLIENTS HOUSED

1

INCREASE IN HIGH ACUITY CLIENTS WITH SECURE HOUSING

We will track the average length of time clients spend in crisis accommodation and the underlying reasons for the ongoing cycle of homelessness. Over time, we want to be able to see an increase in the number of high acuity clients with secure housing.

For the first impact report, we have tracked clients with a history of insecure housing as a proxy for high acuity. 558 clients, with a history of insecure housing received a new tenancy and moved into Launch Housing properties.

This included clients in our long-term housing, head lease properties, transitional properties, crisis sites.

Over the next 12 months, we will track their housing status more closely to ensure tenancies are sustainable and that any risk of homelessness re-occurring is prevented.

2

EXITS INTO HOUSING EXCEED NUMBER OF PEOPLE SLEEPING ROUGH

Around 7,300 people in Victoria were sleeping rough when they presented at SHS; but only 11.4% exited to some form of secure housing at the end of support (AIHW 2019-2020). These poor housing outcomes have prompted Launch Housing to explore innovative initiatives specifically focused on tackling rough sleeping, the most extreme form of homelessness.

Our Melbourne Zero project is looking to better understand the constraints faced by people who are sleeping rough and providing

a more effective service response at a local level using a By-Names-List (BNL – a list of every person in the area experiencing rough sleeping homelessness).

Data from the BNL for City of Melbourne suggest that of the 428 people who were sleeping rough, 10% successfully moved into housing.

Results from Port Phillip are encouraging. 20% of people on the BNL in Port Phillip moved into housing (27 / 132 people).

The H2H initiative is working to move people accommodated in hotels into more long-term housing and since its inception, we have housed 287 clients which is 68% of all H2H clients.

To learn more, refer to case studies on Melbourne Zero (pages 22-25) and H2H (pages 30-33) in the next section – Our Projects in Focus.

CLIENTS SUSTAIN HOUSING

3

INCREASE IN CLIENTS WHO HAVE A POSITIVE TRANSITION INTO SECURE HOUSING

According to the AIHW 2019-2020 data, over 36,000 people were experiencing homelessness when they presented at a SHS in Victoria and 21.3% exited to some form of secure housing at the end of their support.

Looking at Launch Housing data, 545 clients exited Launch Housing properties this year which includes exits from our crisis, transitional and long-term accommodations. Among them, 178 clients (33%) were noted to have had a positive transition

into secure housing increasing their likelihood of sustaining it.

Positive transition is defined as clients moving out of Launch Housing properties into: (i) a private rental, (ii) public or community housing, and/or (iii) finding alternative accommodation.

4

INCREASE IN PROPORTION OF CLIENTS, WHO RECEIVED RENT OR BOND PAYMENTS, WITH SUSTAINED HOUSING

Sometimes it can be a fine line between having a home and experiencing homelessness. Unexpected events like illness, rent increases or job losses can expose a person to housing crisis. Our Private Rental Assistance Program (PRAP) provides people financial assistance to help them hold on to their housing until they can find their feet.

In 2020-21, 2,272 clients accessed or maintained housing through the PRAP program, which is a 4% increase from 2019-20. These clients received financial assistance of 'rent in advance', 'rent in arrears' and 'bond' with a total spend of over \$3 million and an average spend of \$1,469 per client.

With support from PRAP, over 2,000 people and families maintained their homes or were able to access secure housing. This type of preventative and early intervention support can make a significant difference in ending homelessness.

To learn more, refer to case study on PRAP (pages 26-29) in the next section – Our Projects in Focus.

MORE SUITABLE HOUSING AVAILABLE TO CLIENTS

5

INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF SOCIAL HOUSING DWELLINGS OWNED OR MANAGED BY LAUNCH HOUSING

Data from AIHW indicates that the number of social housing dwellings in Victoria has decreased over the years – from 64,428 public housing dwellings in 2019 to 64,072 properties in 2020; and a further decrease in

community housing from 15,081 in 2019 to 14,857 in 2020.

Launch Housing managed or owned a total of 1,016 properties over the 2020-21 reporting period, including 369

head lease properties and long-term community housing which is a 56% increase from last year.

We also had 65 studio apartments at Elizabeth Street Common Ground; 37 properties with the Justice Housing and Support Program, and 545 transitional housing properties this year.

6

INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF PROPERTIES MANAGED BY HOMEGROUND REAL ESTATE (HGRE)

HGRE not only helps generate funds for homelessness services provided by Launch Housing, but also helps to increase the number of affordable private rentals for low-income earners. It also provides a way for socially conscious landlords to give back to the community.

There was a 61% increase in the number of properties managed by HGRE. This is a net growth of 140 properties under management from 228 in 2019-20 to 368 in 2020-21.

Of this, there was a 48% increase in the number of landlords offering

their properties at below-market rates. This is an increase from 42 in 2019-20 to 62 in 2020-21.

To learn more, refer to case study on HGRE (pages 34-37) in the next section – Our Projects in Focus.



Improved Future Readiness

Once clients are in housing, Launch Housing continues to support them to further their education, provide advice on employment pathways, improve their health and wellbeing, and support clients to develop

better community connections to build healthy lives.

We know that young people experiencing homelessness need targeted support to help break their cycle of disadvantage.

Many of our programs work directly with young people to help them develop independent living skills and to be more future-ready. We also provide clients access to financial and legal advice through select programs.

7

INCREASE IN NUMBER OF YOUNG PEOPLE EMPLOYED OR ENROLLED IN EDUCATION AFTER COMPLETING THE EDUCATION FIRST YOUTH FOYER

As the state-wide statistics show, of all young people who received assistance from SHS in Victoria only 33% were enrolled in education or training at the start of their support period, and only a further 4% were enrolled in education by the end of their support period. And even fewer were employed (AIHW).

The Education First Youth Foyer program (EFYF) is a targeted approach to supporting young people out of homelessness and through that program:

Employment - 48% of young people were employed (22/46 clients) at the completion of their time at the EFYF

program, which is an increase from last year. The percentage of participants employed, including in part-time or casual work, also increased from 19% at entry to 31% at exit from the Foyer.

This is a notable result considering that COVID-19 has impacted employment rates in Melbourne and the most common industries for our students are retail and hospitality. This reflects the strong partnerships that we have created to provide work opportunities for students in the EFYF program.

Education - 59% of young people were enrolled in education (27/46 clients) at the completion of their time in the

EFYF program. This is on track with what has been achieved in previous years. Throughout the pandemic we continued to maintain our strong focus on education.

These results align with a recent evaluation of the program which highlighted that the percentage of young people who had completed at least Year 12 or a Certificate III increased from 42% at entry to 67% at exit and to 75% a year after exit.

To learn more, refer to case study on the EFYF (pages 39-41) in the next section – Our Projects in Focus.

8

INCREASE IN NUMBER OF CHILDREN PARTICIPATING IN SCHOOL OR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Evidence shows that children experiencing homelessness face multiple forms of disadvantage including: increased exposure to family violence, poverty, poor health and nutrition, and emotional and behavioural difficulties. Transience and uncertainty mean that access to education is severely disrupted, leading to disengagement and learning difficulties.

The Education Pathways Program (EPP) assisted 95 children experiencing homelessness this year which is a 28% increase from last year. Of the 95, 64 children (67%) were not enrolled in school at the time of referral to the EPP. The EPP assisted with 65 new enrolments during the course of the year:

- 15 childcare enrolments
- 8 kinder enrolments
- 35 primary school enrolments
- 7 high-school enrolments

To learn more, refer to case study on the EPP (pages 42-43) in the next section – Our Projects in Focus.



Improved Health and Wellbeing

COVID-19 has spurred into social consciousness the critical relationship between our neighbour's health and our own. Ongoing lockdowns in Victoria has seen an increase in both physical and mental health challenges.

Launch Housing is working with partners on several demonstration projects that integrate housing with expanded health services. Over the next 12 months, we will undertake evaluations of these initiatives – Southbank Expanded Health Program, the COVID Isolation and Recovery Facility and other programs - to

test and refine the model and identify further areas of work. We are currently developing an additional impact measure that will capture change across Launch Housing's integrated health and homelessness programs.

To learn more, refer to project write-up on Expanded Health Programs in the next section – Our Projects in Focus.



CHANGES IN COMMUNITIES

We know that to bring about lasting and sustainable change in the homelessness sector, we also need to work with our communities, partners and the broader system to shift attitudes around homelessness and mobilise the sector for collective impact.

9

INCREASE IN ACTS OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TO END HOMELESSNESS

Our mobilisation of communities aims to contribute to changing negative attitudes and perceptions about homelessness, and inspire community action to end it.

Launch Housing has developed and is testing an internal tool - Acts of Community Engagement (ACE) Score - to measure community engagement levels across a range of areas. The ACE Score tracks

engagements such as: small (\$99 or less) and large (\$100 or more) donations, volunteer hours, Launch Housing event attendance and social media followers among other acts. The ACE Score will be updated twice a year to track progress.

Based on the ACE Score, this year, there was a 38 point increase in major acts of engagement compared to the year before. This includes

increases in major partnerships, donations, and attendance at Launch Housing events. There was a small decrease in minor acts of engagement such as email subscribers and social media followers.

These outcomes are testament to our ongoing relationship building activities and strengthening of connections with our community.

10

INCREASE IN PARTNER SUPPORT

Growth in donations and partnerships are both key indicators of a growing and committed community engaging with Launch Housing to end homelessness. This support also demonstrates the increasing

recognition across the community that homelessness is not inevitable.

We've seen an average increase of 179% in the number of people making donations to Launch Housing. The number of people making small donations (\$99 or less) more than doubled since last year.

We also saw a sharp rise - more than 150% - in partnerships with organisations with skills and resources that complement the core offerings of Launch Housing.

To learn more, refer to case study on The Body Shop (pages 46-49) in the next section - Our Projects in Focus.



CHANGES IN SOCIETY

Launch Housing's aim is that our collective work - with clients, communities and stakeholders across the broader homelessness sector - will contribute to a society that is working together for change and developing partnerships that are sharing knowledge and acting to end homelessness.

The aftershocks of COVID-19 may reverberate for a long time. We witnessed incredible resilience from our clients and the community this past year, and how Melbourne can come together to affect change.

We learnt that everyone's health is connected, and that everyone needs a home.

A social movement for change that envisions a city and state without homelessness is necessary.

A localised Melbourne Zero initiative is complementary to and part of our direct service delivery outlook, to have Melbourne be a world leading city in ending homelessness.



OUR PROJECTS IN FOCUS

The remainder of this report provides a snapshot of specific programs that have had a demonstrated and collective impact on ending homelessness this past year.



WORKING TOGETHER TO REDUCE ROUGH SLEEPING IN PORT PHILLIP

AT A GLANCE

WHAT IMPACT MEASURES ARE WE CONTRIBUTING TO?

1

2

10

WHERE ARE WE CREATING CHANGES?



Stability, security & suitability of housing

- Reduced housing crisis



Working together for change

- Enhanced coordination of services

WHAT CHANGE HAVE WE SEEN THIS YEAR IN THE CITY OF PORT PHILLIP?

20%

of people sleeping rough moved into housing

20

local partners

7

local government areas influenced to adopt Melbourne Zero programs

\$65K

value of partner support



In Melbourne alone, we know that hundreds of people are sleeping rough on any given night. A highly vulnerable group, they face some of the harshest circumstances, experiencing higher rates of violence, major health difficulties, loneliness and isolation. These circumstances can compound the complexity of their needs and make it more challenging for specialist services to provide timely and coordinated housing and support.

Our 'Advance to Zero' approach aims to end rough sleeping in Melbourne by purposively partnering with local councils to bring a locally-focused approach to getting people housed, along with other supports, as quickly as possible.

In 2019, we established a partnership with the City of Port Phillip and nearly 20 other local partners.

With the support of our partners, we developed a By-Name-List (BNL) for the City of Port Phillip to record information about every person sleeping rough in the municipality. No longer, 'the homeless', these members of our community become the people we know by name.

This personalised approach is helping build rapport, enabling people to trust our staff and our services.

The BNL list also acts as 'a single point of truth' about each individual and their needs that can be shared with their consent across services, improving coordination efforts and creating a wider network of support for clients. This in turn reduces the burden and stress on people we are engaging with.

In September 2020, the City of Port Phillip became the third community outside of North America to receive Quality BNL accreditation by the Australian Alliance to End Homelessness and Community Solutions (USA).

Our work establishing the Port Phillip Zero project resulted in the City of Melbourne requesting our support to establish a BNL for their Service Coordination Project. It also inspired the Frankston Housing and Homelessness Alliance to seek our assistance in setting up their own Zero project. Several local governments have expressed an interest in this model and have approached Launch Housing. By the time this report is published, Frankston Zero (July 2021) and Stonnington Zero (December 2021) will have launched, with plans well underway for three additional Zero projects to go live in 2022.

These outcomes would not have been possible without the support of the Jack Brockhoff Foundation, Collier Charitable Fund, Gandel Philanthropy and The Bowden Marstan Foundation, which generously funded the implementation of this approach to ending rough sleeping in key local government areas in the 2021 financial year.



“Without the knowledge and resources of our local partners, we wouldn’t have been able to identify how to reach clients and learn what they need.”

**GEORGE HATVANI, MANAGER,
FUNCTIONAL ZERO**



PORT PHILLIP ZERO

JO FINDS HOUSING STABILITY AFTER 13 YEARS OF CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

Jo* is a 60-year-old woman who first experienced homelessness in 2008. She had been living with a disability which impacted on her ability to learn, regulate her behaviour and trust people.

She was in public housing from 2013 -2017. However, this eventually broke down as the housing was unsuitable for her.

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING, FOSTERING TRUST AND RAPPORT TAKES TIME

It took several months of perseverance and regular contact by outreach workers, from Launch Housing and Star Health, to build a relationship with Jo and understand more about her and her history. Through this they also discovered Jo had an existing diagnosis of autism and that she had no income support, largely due to a lack of personal identification and no bank account.

The Port Phillip Zero Service Coordination facilitated the appointment of a guardian for Jo by the City of Port Phillip and to receive the Disability Support Pension.

INTEGRATED HOUSING AND SUPPORTS SET JO UP FOR A SUCCESSFUL TENANCY

Initial temporary accommodation proved unsuitable for Jo's needs, but following efforts from Port Phillip Zero Service Coordination and Improvement teams, Jo was able to secure a tenancy for community housing property.

With standard tenancy conditions in place, Jo moved into a stand-alone unit along with additional supports to be provided by Sacred Heart Mission. Financial support – bonds and rent in advance – were also arranged.

Jo is about to successfully complete her second 6-month tenancy, and has recently secured a permanent ongoing tenancy. She continues to work with her support providers.

Connections facilitated by the services present at Port Phillip Zero Service Coordination led to Jo:

- Accessing Launch Housing St Kilda
- Seeing a podiatrist via Star Health
- Attending Access Health, keeping and making appointments, helping with a social BBQ.
- Attending X-ray / pathology referrals
- Setting up a bank account which she receives her daily money from State Trustees
- Completing a Victorian Housing Register (VHR) application, receiving approval and being placed on the VHR waitlist.

**Name has been changed to maintain anonymity.*



PRIVATE RENTAL SUPPORT PREVENTS HOMELESSNESS

AT A GLANCE

WHAT IMPACT MEASURES ARE WE CONTRIBUTING TO?

4

WHERE ARE WE CREATING CHANGES?



Stability, security & suitability of housing

- Housing is sustained
- Housing is suitable



Working together for change

- Enhanced coordination of services
- Increased government commitment to act to end homelessness

WHAT CHANGE HAVE WE SEEN THIS YEAR?

3

partnerships supporting referrals for service

2,272

clients accessed or maintained housing

\$3.3M

total value of rental assistance





A lack of affordable housing can often push our most vulnerable community members into crisis circumstances and exposes them to forms of homelessness that can cause irrevocable damage.

This year we saw a notable increase in the number of people struggling to find or maintain affordable housing. With business closures and vanishing jobs, it's no surprise that the most cited reasons for hardship were loss of income and fewer private rental options.

In the last 12 months (2020-21), our private rental assistance program (PRAP) prevented homelessness among 2,272 clients by enabling them to access housing or maintain their current housing. Connecting people to safe and affordable housing and preventing those who had secure housing from losing it and becoming homeless, are significant outcomes. The program has meant stability and security for clients resulting in huge changes to their quality of life.

Victorian Government COVID-19 Rent Relief Grants also helped increase the amount of support we could provide, and referrals to other services helped stabilise the extraordinarily stressful circumstances that many people seeking help were suddenly exposed to.

“As income support falls and unemployment and small business failure rises, we will see a resurgence of rental and mortgage stress, that will almost certainly flow through to increased homelessness. It doesn't have to be this way.”

LAUNCH HOUSING
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,
BEVAN WARNER

PRIVATE RENTAL ASSISTANCE FACES STRUCTURAL LIMITATIONS WITHOUT BROADER SUPPORT

Launch Housing also received strong support from philanthropic partners which enabled us to augment our rental assistance to clients. Suzanne Gray, the Gray Family Charitable Trust, EnergyAustralia and the Marshall White Foundation enabled many women and children to avoid or escape homelessness by supporting the Women's Rapid Rehousing Program, and REA Group and The Body Shop through their support of the National Women's Rapid Rehousing Program.

However, these services alone cannot bridge the gap left by the lack of affordable housing options. Victorian Government COVID-19 Rent Relief Grants period has ended and rising rental costs are increasing the need for our rental assistance programs. This year, more than 15% of our clients have accessed our services at least once before and we are seeing a steady increase in the number of clients who are in rental arrears – unable to pay rent in housing they already occupy.

We need to address the underlying drivers of homelessness while increasing the resources needed to intervene at the right time with the right services, and wherever possible, before people enter housing crisis.

PRAP

300 RENTAL APPLICATIONS, 25 INSPECTIONS...ONE OFFER.

In 2020, Emma was renting a property that was barely liveable. The place had a mice infestation problem which meant she couldn't store food in the kitchen cupboards, the bathroom roof was covered in mould due to a lack of proper ventilation, and a retaining wall next door threatened to collapse on the property at any minute.

"They were continuously putting the rent up and not fixing anything that should have been fixed...the house was falling apart" she said.

On top of this, Emma had been suffering from poor mental health which meant she found it nearly impossible to leave the house at times.

Emma had to give up work and had been barely surviving on Centrelink... spending an average of \$5 a day on food.

She finally got the mental health support she needed and with this, the drive to improve her housing situation. She had a perfect rental history, a number of references, and was not fussy about an 'ideal' property. But securing a property turned out to be a nearly impossible feat during lockdown mid-2020.

As renters downshifted to cheaper properties, it caused a shortage in affordable rentals and Emma was struggling to compete on her Centrelink income.

"It was a big shock being knocked back for every single house... What was I going to do? I'm not going to have anywhere to live... it's just another kick in the guts."

Launch Housing linked Emma with a PRAP caseworker who supported her search for a new home. Debbie helped Emma complete her rental applications and advocated on her behalf with real estate agents; vital help during COVID-19 when those like Emma were missing out to those on higher incomes.

"I reached out to Launch Housing a couple months before my lease was up. I was finding the houses and Launch Housing was helping me apply for them. I did three hundred applications, attended 20 inspections and finally got the house I'm in now."

When Emma finally got the offer of a rental, Debbie also arranged the first month's rent for her new home.

"I can't express how much of a massive relief that was. It doesn't sound like much, but it was a lot."

Since moving into her new place, Emma has been able to gain employment as a Mental Health Support Worker and is working 15-20 hours per week while she finishes her practical placement.

"It feels good. It feels like I'm doing the job I'm meant to be doing. I wouldn't have been in the right place mentally to even apply for this job if I didn't have Launch Housing help me to find a house. Trying to find house and trying and find a roof over your head, just takes over everything."



FROM HOMELESSNESS TO A HOME

AT A GLANCE

WHAT IMPACT MEASURES ARE WE CONTRIBUTING TO?

4

WHERE ARE WE CREATING CHANGES?



Stability, security & suitability of housing

- Housing is sustained
- Housing is suitable



Health & wellbeing

- Improved wellbeing



Working together for change

- Enhanced coordination of services
- Increased government commitment to act to end homelessness

WHAT CHANGE HAVE WE SEEN THIS YEAR FOR H2H?

420

integrated housing and support packages

9

direct and indirect partners

22

Launch Housing staff seconded to deliver the program

287

clients placed in housing in the first 6 months





1,845

households will be provided
with secure housing and access
to support for 18-24 months

Whilst homelessness services provide vital supports for people facing homelessness, the lack of suitable and affordable housing limits the potential to create lasting positive impact. This has also contributed to people cycling in and out of services, compounding the challenges they face without actually stabilising or ending their homelessness.

In 2020 Launch Housing was selected to become the largest provider of services for the Victorian Government's From Homelessness to a Home (H2H) initiative. The government initiative will provide 1,845 households - residing in emergency accommodation - with secure housing and access to support for 18 - 24 months. The support is providing the relief people need to create stability in other areas of their life and reduce the risk of experiencing homelessness in the future. However, for many, longer-term support may be needed to maintain their housing and prevent further experiences of homelessness.

Our appointment to provide housing and support to 420 households was built on our reputation as a trusted service provider with demonstrated credibility, capability and results from supporting high volumes of people with integrated services. Launch Housing will deliver this program with our clinical and allied health consortia partners.

Upon appointment, it was all hands on deck and we effectively mobilised the necessary resources and partnerships, recruiting individuals from nearly every Launch Housing department. Our Lived Experience Advisory Program guided new H2H staff so that we could promptly and appropriately commence our services and help people access permanent long-term housing.

Erdi Foundation helped fund essential housing establishment goods for clients moving into unfurnished homes, while partner REA Group mobilised resources to support us in the critical development stages of this project from recruitment and communications support, to volunteering their skills across a range of our needs to enact our plans.

The success of this program and to end homelessness in the long run will depend on the availability of safe, appropriate and tenured housing options.

The Homelessness to a Home initiative of the Victorian Government demonstrates how a large-scale, speedy response with coordinated effort of the community and can end homelessness.

H2H

LAUNCH HOUSING STAFF WITNESS REAL IMPACT OF RAPID HOUSING

Tim Cronin is one of Launch Housing's H2H Coordinators. Since February Tim has coordinated a team of seven case managers, each supporting 12 clients within H2H, in the intensive support stream.

Formerly a case manager for Launch Housing's Melbourne Street to Home (MS2H) program, Tim says H2H has been a vital program for people who have been experiencing homelessness – some for upwards of eight years.

"One big thing that used to undermine MS2H was a lack of housing options, purely that the service system wasn't able to provide people with the housing they needed" he said.

Tim says H2H has enabled teams to finally offer housing options that their clients can sustain with support.

"Rapid availability of housing and flexibility in housing options, prioritising client choice, providing assertive outreach...we know this works and this is all evidence based and we've been given the opportunity to show this on a massive scale now," Tim said.

H2H SUPPORT OFFERED AT CRITICAL JUNCTURE

Clare* is a 43-year-old woman who has been experiencing homelessness and sleeping rough since 2016. This year she was provided support and access to long term housing through the *From Homelessness to a Home Program* (H2H).

Over the past five years, Clare has slept rough in the City of Port Phillip and the City of Melbourne which significantly impacted her mental health and stability. Over this period, she lived in rooming houses, hotels, back-packers and crisis accommodations. Sadly, she also experienced both domestic and sexual abuse during this time.

In 2019, Clare and her partner were provided accommodation at Launch Housing Southbank crisis accommodation for a short period. It was there that Clare was connected to the Launch Housing Enhanced Engagement Program (EEP) and was diagnosed with both bipolar and schizoaffective disorder. She received essential medical and case management support by the Homeless Outreach Psychiatric Service (HOPS) which helped stabilise her mental health.

In 2020, Clare's partner passed away of a drug overdose which further exacerbated her mental ill health and her condition began to deteriorate once again. She was also sleeping rough at this time. In May 2021, EEP referred Clare to the H2H program - a critical intervention at this difficult time for Clare.

Since being appointed a H2H package – access to housing and case management support - Clare's wellbeing has improved in leaps and bounds. She has regularly engaged with her case manager and has been able to attend, and self-advocate, at an NDIS meeting.

In June 2021, Clare moved into a two - bedroom Office of Housing property and has been making friends in the community. She has also been attending a community mental health clinic and is always on time for her appointments. There has been a significant improvement in Clare's mental health and wellbeing, and HOPS has referred Clare to a less intensive program.

Clare's new property is fully furnished and homely. H2H has provided some support but Clare has sourced many items herself. She is keeping on top of all her bills, eating better, and is now focusing on her medical concerns, attending all her general practitioner and dental appointments.

Now that Clare has safe, secure and affordable housing, her next goal is to apply for her passport so she can visit her family in New Zealand. She has expressed a huge sense of pride in her achievements and in her own self-belief.

**Name changed for anonymity.*



Now that Clare has safe, secure and affordable housing... she has expressed a huge sense of pride in her achievements and in her own self-belief.

HOMEGROUND REAL ESTATE OFFERS ETHICAL CHOICE FOR PROPERTY OWNERS

AT A GLANCE

WHAT IMPACT MEASURES ARE WE CONTRIBUTING TO?

6 9

WHERE ARE WE CREATING CHANGES?



Stability, security & suitability of housing

- Reduced housing crisis
- Housing tenure is secure
- Housing tenure is sustained
- Housing is suitable



Attitudes about homelessness

- Increased empathy towards people experiencing homelessness
- Reduced stigma surrounding homelessness



Actions to end homelessness

- Increased community commitment to act to end homelessness



WHAT CHANGES HAVE WE SEEN THIS YEAR?

\$550K

generated for Launch Housing's homelessness services

61%

increase in properties under management

62

properties offered below-market rent

48%

increase in below market property offerings

HomeGround Real Estate (HGRE) is a social enterprise real estate agency that provides a range of ethical, competitive service options to landlords in Melbourne, competing with commercial for-profit firms. The difference is that HGRE gives back to the community through Launch Housing. In more recent times, HGRE has given landlords who rent out properties for at least 10% below the market rate the option to claim the difference as a charitable tax deduction.

With a 61% increase in properties under management, the success of HGRE amidst a competitive market is testament to the quality of services provided to landlords. As a result, HGRE has generated more than \$550,000 towards Launch Housing's homelessness services. One property owner handed over 52 properties to HGRE in a single transaction with the instruction to offer the properties at social rents as leases turnover.

Along with the overall growth of the business, HGRE also helps Launch Housing grow and target our rental brokerage and support. In 2021 HGRE experienced a noteworthy 48% increase in landlords offering their properties at below-market rates. By offering below-market rates, not only are HGRE's clients helping generate funds for homelessness services, they are helping to increase the amount of affordable private rentals at a time when low-income earners are locked out of the increasingly expensive private rental market. In these circumstances, HGRE works closely with service organisations to match properties with tenants in need.

For instance, a new social property was offered to a mother and her two children who were renting a transitional apartment at St Joe's. HGRE worked with the Accommodations Options for Families (AOF) team and offered them a two-bedroom social housing property in Gardenvale which was more suitable and available long term. This now makes way for another family to move into the St Joe's apartment.

This marked shift in landlords' willingness to offer their properties at below-market rates indicates the shifting attitudes and increased empathy towards people experiencing homelessness and willingness for our community to act to end it.

"HomeGround's growth in new rental providers and properties available, especially those offered at below market rates, is testament to a community that cares,"

**SIMONE CURLEY, MANAGER OF
HOMEGROUND REAL ESTATE**



HGRE

WHY CATH MADE THE SWITCH TO HOMEGROUND REAL ESTATE

Cath is a property owner and investor with a young family in Melbourne who believes everyone should have access to affordable and stable housing. With strong social awareness and concern for people experiencing disadvantage, Cath was interested in finding a way to help families like her own.

"I've read quite a lot about impacts particularly for older women in terms of rental access and affordability and for young families. I reflected on how being in that situation would impact on me and therefore what can I do to help?"

Cath and her partner weren't in a position to make significant financial donations, so began to consider alternative ways to contribute. She wondered if there was some way her existing investment, managed by a for-profit real estate agency, could generate value beyond a passive financial income for her family.

"I came across HGRE and realised that if I just made the shift to a for-purpose agent, I could continue to do what I was already doing but that the outcome of that could have more meaning," she said.

Since making the simple transition to HGRE in 2019, Cath says she's received highly attentive service that is of even higher quality than the commercial real estate agencies she'd used before.

"I must say the thing that probably surprised me most about HomeGround is that it operates just like a commercial agency. With HomeGround there's a range of options for how your property can be used, including at full market rate."

Cath says HomeGround provides landlords with an option that no other agencies can – a way to do social good with the management fees you're already paying. She said it was just as easy as "changing the channel."

"It still feels to me like I'm making a very small contribution as I'm really just diverting funds that were already going somewhere else. It's helping me to deliver on some of my social values but within the limitations of what I can manage."

Cath says she's benefited from HGRE's expertise in more than just property management, with Manager Simone Curley providing a vendor advocacy service when Cath needed to sell one of her properties.

"HomeGround holds its own in the full commercial property market and should be considered by property owners. It gives a service option that aligns with personal values without having to sacrifice high quality service".

"You'll get good tenants, better service and good returns. I'm really proud that we've made the decision to go with HomeGround," she said.

As Victoria's first social enterprise real estate agency, HomeGround Real Estate provides a simple solution for socially conscious property owners.



TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HOMEGROUND REAL ESTATE, VISIT THEIR WEBSITE.





“HGRE holds its own in the full commercial property market and should be considered by property owners.”

CATH, PROPERTY OWNER



STUDENTS SUCCEED IN OUR EDUCATION FIRST YOUTH FOYERS

AT A GLANCE

WHAT IMPACT MEASURES ARE WE CONTRIBUTING TO?

7

WHERE ARE WE CREATING CHANGES?



Stability, security & suitability of housing

- Housing is sustained
- Housing is suitable



Future readiness



Health & wellbeing

- Improved wellbeing



Working together for change

- Enhanced coordination of services

WHAT CHANGE HAVE WE SEEN THIS YEAR?

94%

EFYF students meeting minimum 85% attendance in program

95%

students completed individualized learning plans

100%

occupancy rate across Foyers

43%

students employed while in Foyer



The integrated education, housing and support services provided through Education First Youth Foyers (EFYF) help young people experiencing homelessness to stabilise their circumstances, pursue education and employment leading to a fulfilling and brighter future.

This evidence-based program has a well-documented ability to create substantial impact in the lives of student participants¹ that has sustained itself over time.

The bedrock of the program is its partnerships. In addition to co-locating these programs onsite at local TAFEs – Holmesglen Institute’s Glen Waverley campus and Kangan Institute at Broadmeadows – programs are co-developed and co-delivered in partnership with local TAFEs and the Brotherhood of St. Laurence. This enduring 10-year relationship is indicative of Launch Housing’s partnership-focused strategy to end homelessness by leveraging shared goals and unique strengths among partners to deliver the right services at the right time for people in need.

Programming is run with volunteers from the local community, enabling students to build their independence, expand their social connections and provide options for ways to engage in society in a safe and supportive environment.

The last year has been particularly challenging for many students due to the switch to remote learning for most education activities. However, our students persisted in their education goals, with more than 90% participation rates across the Foyers. In addition, on average, nearly half of all EFYF students were also employed this year and more than 50% of students took advantage of program offerings such as civic engagement and health and wellbeing.

Thanks to the support from our partner Mark Boughey, EFYF students participated in wellbeing and therapeutic activities to help relieve the stress of lockdown. Further, ongoing commitment from our partner, Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre (MCEC) enabled employment pathways and work experience for many of the young people at our Foyers.

We are exploring options to expand the EFYF offering to provide young people experiencing homelessness who are more suited to a small group housing setting. We aim to reach more young people and support them into education and training that will help ensure a brighter future.

Our students persisted in their education goals, with more than

90%

participation rates across the Foyers.



¹ Coddou, M, Borlagdan, J & Mallett, S 2019, *Starting a future that means something to you: outcomes from a longitudinal study of Education First Youth Foyers*, Brotherhood of St Laurence & Launch Housing, Melbourne

FOYERS PROVIDED ANGIE* AN OPPORTUNITY TO SUCCEED

Angie* was just 18 when she experienced the breakdown of her family home and lost her housing stability. Like many young people who first experience homelessness, she was left with no option but to couch surf between friends' houses – all while trying to keep up with her studies and manage part time work.

During this uncertain time, Angie was in contact with a youth worker who referred her to our Education First Youth Foyer where she was accepted as a student.

"I didn't know what to expect at first, to be honest. You never know what kind of places these are going to be, but everyone was really friendly and welcoming."

About six months into Angie's stay at the EFYF she lost her retail job which was another major blow to her confidence.

"So much of my self-worth was tied up in my job and my study – being a good employee, being a good student. So, it was a really hard time," she said.

With support and encouragement from the EFYF team, her confidence grew.

"The team built me back up. They were like 'hey, there are other things about you that are valuable and just because this has happened doesn't mean that you're now not worthy of anything.'"

Around this time, a work skills trainer was doing sessions at the Foyer and suggested an opportunity Angie could

apply for with social enterprise, Homie. After some encouragement from her development worker, she decided to apply and was offered the role.

After graduating from the Homie program with a Certificate III in Retail, she worked with Cotton On, then received an offer to work for a retail tech company. Since then she has been promoted three times, is now responsible for training and she's also involved with the interviewing and hiring process for new staff.

"The main thing that the EFYF provided me was confidence. Having a team of people around you, whether that be the workers or the other students, knowing that they're behind me 100%, pushed me to strive for things that I didn't think I was like worthy of."

Since leaving the Foyer, Angie says it has been "smooth sailing." She said the preparation she was given for private rental and living skills was invaluable, and still uses the budget template she created with her worker.

"These programs teach people to be successful, functioning and an important part of the community. We have so much to offer the world but without these programs, we don't have any opportunities to show it."

Angie is currently renting a private share house with friends, she loves her work and has just one more semester of her undergraduate course to complete.

**Name changed to maintain anonymity*



THE EDUCATION PATHWAYS PROGRAM IMPROVES OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

AT A GLANCE

WHAT IMPACT MEASURES ARE WE CONTRIBUTING TO?

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WHERE ARE WE CREATING CHANGES?



Stability, security & suitability of housing

- Reduced housing crisis
- Housing tenure is secure
- Housing tenure is sustained
- Housing is suitable



Working together for change

- Enhanced coordination of services



Future readiness

WHAT CHANGES HAVE WE SEEN THIS YEAR?

95

children supported

65

new enrollments

FINALIST

in Victorian Department of Education and Training Early Years Awards



The Education Pathways Program (EPP) helps some of the most vulnerable children in our community to find security, stability and support at a time when their lives can feel unpredictable and unsafe. The program is designed to reduce lost learning time for children, develop partnerships with schools and help parents navigate the education system.

We have seen that when children experience homelessness, it can be challenging for them to remain engaged in education. We know that participation in education reduces the risk of vulnerability to an ongoing cycle of homelessness and disadvantage. School often offers the most stable and secure place in the child's life during periods of housing or familial insecurity. Our response recognises that early intervention in education is early intervention in preventing the cycle of homelessness.

As highlighted previously, the EPP assisted 95 children over the reporting period and 67% of those children were not enrolled in school at the time of referral to the program. The program assisted with 65 new enrollments which indicates that a large portion of our clients may have been couch surfing or changing areas regularly, requiring multiple school changes.

Given the significant challenges with onsite and remote learning this year - which further highlighted the technological divide - the EPP continued to support families and advocated for children's schooling even after they completed the program and moved into longer-term housing.

The Victorian Early Years Awards recently recognised the work of the EPP and the program was named a finalist for 'Improving Access and Participation in Early Learning.' The awards celebrate "the exceptional contributions that early childhood professionals make to improving outcomes of children and their families".

The Education Pathways Program is generously supported by the following charitable foundations: The Ross Trust, The Marian & E.H. Flack Trust, The Flora and Frank Leith Charitable Trust, Goldsmith Family Foundation, The Gething-Sambrook Family Foundation, Bowness Family Foundation, The Jack & Ethel Goldin Foundation, The Peter & Ann Robinson Foundation, and donors who wish to remain anonymous.

"We got amazing support, especially from the Launch Housing South Melbourne team. They're caring and have charitable hearts. I would highly recommend them any time to anyone out there that may need support like me. My children and I were well supported and we're very grateful."

PARENT OF AN EPP CHILD

"I didn't like school when I went to my old one, but at this school I like it. I have so so so many friends."

EPP CHILD (7 YEARS OLD)

"Camp was the best time ever x 1000! I've never done anything like that in my life."

EPP CAMPER (9 YEARS OLD)

INTEGRATING HEALTHCARE WITH HOUSING TRANSFORMS LIVES

AT A GLANCE

WHERE ARE WE CREATING CHANGES?



Health & wellbeing

- Improved wellbeing



Stability, security & suitability of housing

- Reduced housing crisis
- Housing tenure is secure
- Housing tenure is sustained
- Housing is suitable



Working together for change

- Enhanced coordination of services

WHAT CHANGES HAVE WE SEEN THIS YEAR?

15 medical emergencies tended to

34 immunisations administered

253 residents received support



Following COVID-19, health has been an increased focus for us and Launch Housing, in collaboration with partners, is trialling several integrated health and housing models.

Prior to the pandemic, we offered primary health services – access to GPs and / or nurses – in some of our sites and this increased funding and support for health has been invaluable to our clients.

These programs support people experiencing homelessness with complex health needs to improve both their physical and mental health. Nurses are instrumental in providing judgement-free supportive services, including health assessments and referrals to appropriate services, ongoing acute and chronic disease management, encouraging clients to continue their treatment and medications, and empowering residents in long-term housing to manage their own health.

Health teams work closely with residents at these sites to develop strong rapport which breaks down barriers to accessing healthcare and helps re-instate trust in mainstream healthcare providers.

In 2020, Launch Housing saw the benefits of this integrated health-housing model in our crisis accommodation. At our Southbank site, there was an increase in overall engagements between nurses and residents. Nurses responded to 15 medical emergencies, which helped reduce the use of emergency services (ambulance call-outs) and avoidable hospital admissions. There was also an increase in the support provided to clients for chronic health issues.

These outcomes would not have been possible without the support of The Shine On Foundation, which has funded this program since its inception in 2016.

The nursing service at Elizabeth Street Common Grounds (ESCG), has been crucial during the lockdowns in Melbourne. Residents often felt isolated but reluctant to leave the building to access health services. Thanks to the long-term generosity of the Brian & Virginia McNamee Foundation, the in-house nursing service continued to provide invaluable health support throughout all stages of lockdown, including encouraging the use of telehealth and overcoming barriers to residents receiving the COVID-19 vaccine.

This year, Launch Housing East St. Kilda (LHESK) site partnered with First Step - a wrap-around addiction and mental health outpatient clinic - who offer residents access to an onsite healthcare team of GP, nurses and mental health nurses.

Mid-2021 saw an increase in COVID-19 cases in the community and amongst people experiencing homelessness. Launch Housing worked in partnership with St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne and the Brotherhood of St Laurence to re-establish a COVID-19 isolation and recovery facility (CIRF), that provides a safe place for people to stay while they await their COVID-19 test results and recover from COVID-19.

It is expected that this facility will transition into a 'Better Health and Homelessness' service in 2022, providing a transitional model of support to those being discharged from hospital. The service is expected to help clients into appropriate housing when exiting hospital and be a bridge between health and housing services.

“Building rapport with clients and assisting them manage their complex health needs, and seeing positive change in their lives, however big or small, is the most rewarding part of the role as community health nurse at Launch.”

NURSE, HEALTHCARE RESPONSE TEAM, SOUTHBANK



COMMUNITY WILL TO END HOMELESSNESS STRONGER THAN EVER

AT A GLANCE

WHAT IMPACT MEASURES ARE WE CONTRIBUTING TO?

9

10

WHERE ARE WE CREATING CHANGES?



Attitudes about homelessness

- Increased empathy towards people experiencing homelessness
- Reduced stigma surrounding homelessness



Actions to end homelessness

- Increased community commitment to act to end homelessness

WHAT CHANGES HAVE WE SEEN THIS YEAR?

236,433

engagements on social media

127%

increase in small donors

107%

increase in material aid donors

167%

increase in private sector & business partnerships

\$6.5 MILLION

value of donations

4 new partnerships



Our experience shows that when the wider community is mobilised and committed to ending homelessness, we can inspire real change. To bring all Melburnians along with us, we are acting to reduce stigma, build empathy and galvanise our community into action.

STRONG FUNDRAISING AND PARTNERSHIPS INDICATE A GROWING COMMUNITY COMMITTED TO ENDING HOMELESSNESS

Over the last year, people have demonstrated greater empathy and increased commitment to act to end homelessness. Stay-at-home orders to prevent the spread of COVID-19 have served to highlight that not everyone in our community is fortunate enough to have a home. Due to the far-reaching economic impacts of COVID-19, many Melburnians now realise that homelessness is not something that only happens to other people.

People are showing this shift in awareness by committing more time and resources to end homelessness. As noted earlier, there has been an impressive increase of 179% in the number of people making donations to Launch Housing.

We also saw a sharp rise – more than 150% – in partnerships with organisations with skills and resources that complement the core offerings of Launch Housing, indicating increasing acknowledgement that partnerships can produce shared value and support sustainable and scalable solutions to ending homelessness.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND PARTNERSHIPS ENGAGE NEW VOICES TO SPEAK OUT AGAINST HOMELESSNESS

Social media is an increasingly important tool to engage our community. Views, likes, and engagements show that people care and are listening. It also helps expand understanding and perceptions of the challenges of homelessness and offers an important pathway for people to increase their engagement and actions.

76% of Melburnians agree that

'HOMELESSNESS COULD HAPPEN TO ANYONE'

'MELBOURNIANS AGREE HOMELESSNESS COULD HAPPEN TO ANYONE: STUDY' 2020 LAUNCH HOUSING



COMMUNITY

THE BODY SHOP X LAUNCH HOUSING

Through Christmas 2020, Launch Housing was proud to work with The Body Shop and rising singer-songwriter, Siala Robson, to tackle stigma and raise awareness of domestic and family violence as the leading cause of homelessness among women in Australia.

The ActTogether campaign enabled access to new audiences including passionate staff from The Body Shop, the media, and families across Australia to hear and learn about women's homelessness and its causes. A key promotional tool was The Body Shop's donation of a portion of their income during the Christmas period.

As part of this campaign, Siala recorded and produced a song and video – a cover of Crystal Water's "Gypsy Woman". Utilising Siala's profile and the newly released song, the campaign launched an Australian-first TikTok hashtag challenge that propelled the song to #4 on the TikTok charts. The challenge received more than 8 million views and helped us reach more young people than ever before.

To engage our existing supporters and fuel conversations beyond social media, a series of conversation cards were developed to encourage people to learn, share, reflect and act.

Throughout the campaign we engaged with women who have lived experience of homelessness as a result of domestic and family violence and they shared their stories and unique experiences with our supporters and the broader audience.

A successful media launch and various media placements produced over the course of the campaign period further demonstrated that homelessness is not an individual failure, but rather the result of systemic failures.

The campaign even attracted SBS TV World News feature on female homelessness, which aired nationally and featured our Chief Executive Officer, Bevan Warner, who spoke of the partnership in The Body Shop's Melbourne flagship store.

Overall, the campaign was well received. Launch Housing's digital channels alone reached 84,700 social media users, and almost 100,000 impressions were recorded in the two-month campaign. The campaign also helped boost Launch Housing's annual Rough Sleeper appeal which reached a record breaking 1.2 million people across social media from November to December 2020.

The partnership and campaign created with The Body Shop is a great example of how we can collaborate with businesses to tackle stigma and inspire real change.



**STAY UP TO DATE ON ALL OUR NEWS
AND ACTIVITIES AND TAKE ACTION TO
HELP US END HOMELESSNESS.**



RAISING AWARENESS, FUNDS AND CHALLENGING STIGMA

In April 2021, Launch Housing called on the Melbourne community to participate in the first ever Roughin' It Challenge to raise awareness, funds and action to end homelessness.

The Challenge required participants to live with no bed, one bag of belongings and just \$10 a day to learn about, about Melbourne's homelessness crisis and raise awareness and vital funds. for Melbourne's homelessness crisis.

The Challenge was designed to engage new supporters and maximise the reach of our cause through participants friends and networks.

Five hundred people took part raising \$120,000 with 1,930 individuals donating to the participants. More than half of the top fundraisers were part of corporate teams and these top teams collectively raised \$44,000. Our social media efforts created 2.5 million impressions and our Roughin' It Challenge website had 48,000 interactions.

The Challenge was tough, but for many it was also profound, helping to break down preconceived notions and stigma around homelessness.

Participants reflected:

"I learnt how vulnerable people are without a roof over their head. How tough it is to feed yourself on \$10 a day. How most people take their homes and access to a kettle for granted! Feels like a luxury when you can finally make yourself a cup of tea..."

"I learned just how hard it is to find a safe place... to stay dry or dry things out if it's raining. I learned about how difficult it is to prioritise when you have very little. I learned there is a very significant impact on your mental health"

The Challenge was enhanced daily by a few extra surprises in the form of 'Game Changers', which were created in consultation with people who have experienced street homelessness. The Game Changers ranged from being "moved on" in the middle of the night to thought-provoking tasks which showed how hard it is to live off a Centrelink payment.

Challenge participant and CEO of Buildxact, David Murray, reflected on his experience and the impossibility of long-term homelessness.

"In Victoria, 24,000 people are experiencing homelessness every night in some form – how do they cope? How do the kids cope? How do they feel not knowing where they will be sleeping tonight or getting their next hot meal?"

Whether it was raising funds, starting important conversations or gaining insight into the unimaginable challenges of homelessness, all participants had a chance to learn more about Melbourne's homelessness crisis and bring their communities into the conversation.



SIGN UP TO RECEIVE MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS YEAR'S ROUGHIN' IT CHALLENGE AND OTHER WAYS TO SUPPORT OUR MISSION TO END HOMELESSNESS.



EXPRESSING OUR GRATITUDE

We extend our deepest gratitude to our Launch Housing team and our partners, without whom our work and this report would not be possible. Your vision, commitment, resources and skills help shape our work and provide better options to serve our clients.

Victorian Government

Launch Housing would like to acknowledge the significant funding and support we received from the Victorian Government over the 2020-21 financial year.

The Victorian Government provided additional surge resources to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic as well support for ongoing entry points, crisis, transitional and long-term housing sites and programs.

Our appointment to implement the *From Homelessness to a Home* (H2H) program demonstrates a trusted partnership, enabling us to promptly assist acutely vulnerable people into sustained housing. Our work would not have been possible without the support of the Victorian Government.

Philanthropic support

Launch Housing wishes to acknowledge and sincerely thank the philanthropic partners, community groups and business supporters who have generously funded and contributed to our core work to end homelessness in the 2021 financial year. We would also like to thank those who have donated to Launch Housing anonymously.

Without your support, the Education Pathways Program, Melbourne Zero, Expanded Health Response

at Southbank, Nursing Response at Elizabeth Street Common Ground, Women's Rapid Rehousing Program National and many other initiatives simply would not have been possible.

We would also like to sincerely thank everyone who has supported our core work by making donations, providing material aid and donating their time and energy in the 2020-21 financial year, including:

- Aesop
- Australian Philanthropic Services Foundation and the Donald Fraser Family Fund
- Australian Communities Foundation through Anonymous Fund CHL-0181 and Initiate Action Community Fund
- 300 Blankets
- The Blueshore Charitable Trust
- Crown Property Services
- DGP Foundation
- Good360
- Hall & Wilcox
- HoMie
- King & Wood Mallesons
- Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation and Charitable Fund Accounts including Jill Chapman Fund and Anonymous Fund CHL-0181
- Masks for Mates
- Orloff Family Charitable Fund
- Perpetual Foundation – The White Family Endowment
- Perpetual Foundation – The Hutchins Family Endowment
- Prahran Rotary Club
- RACV Community Foundation

- Rotary Club of Melbourne
- Simba Global
- Sirius Foundation
- St Mary's House of Welcome
- StreetSmart
- Tzu Chi Foundation
- William Angliss Charitable Fund
- Wotton + Kearney

GIFTS IN WILLS

- Estate of Doreen Margaret Turner
- Estate of Michael Richard Andrew Stambrey

If you are interested in providing philanthropic support to Launch Housing, please contact: Bronwyn James, Head of Philanthropy; Bronwyn.James@launchhousing.org.au

Corporate partners

Our partners worked with us to challenge stigma and the perceptions of homelessness. They raised awareness, provided necessary resources, critical funding and skills from within their organisations to enable our mission to end homelessness. We could not have done it alone and are grateful to our partners listed, and the many businesses who also continue to support our mission and engage in our campaigns.

If you are a corporate interested in exploring partnership options with Launch Housing, please contact: Howard Ralley, General Manager, Campaigns & Engagement Team, Howard.Ralley@launchhousing.org.au

- REA Group
- EnergyAustralia
- Melbourne Convention Exhibition Centre
- NAB Foundation
- Marshall White Foundation
- The Body Shop
- IG
- For Change Co. (formerly Society Melbourne)
- Social Bums
- Shape Australia
- Australia Locked Down
- James Buy Sell

LIVED EXPERIENCE ADVISORY PROGRAM (LEAP)

We recognise the courage and determination of our LEAP participants to contribute to shared efforts to end homelessness through their consultation on local government policies, input to Victorian Government bodies, participation in media campaigns and more.



LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR LIVED EXPERIENCE PROGRAM OR HOW TO ENGAGE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE SPEAKERS.



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If you are in crisis call
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