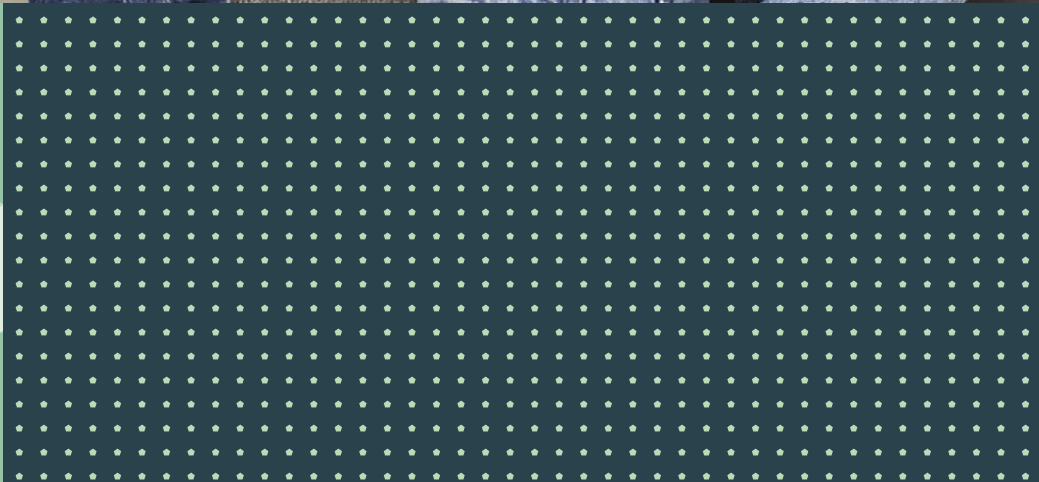




**Council
to Homeless
Persons**

Annual Report

2023–2024



Acknowledgements

We respectfully acknowledge the traditional owners of this land. We pay our respects to elders past and present.

We appreciate and celebrate diversity in all its forms and believe diversity of all kinds makes communities stronger and more effective.




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Jane Barnes, Chair

Executive Report

Jane Barnes, Chair and Deborah Di Natale, CEO

The past year has been challenging for everyone committed to ending homelessness in Victoria. The state's homelessness crisis has grown, exposing more Victorians to the prospect of being without a home, and increasing pressure on our dedicated homelessness workforce. But even amid these challenges, Council to Homeless Persons can be proud to have achieved so many significant accomplishments, working in collaboration with the sector. These important steps keep us energised and focused in our belief that homelessness is within our reach to resolve.

CHP's strong advocacy in the lead-up to the Victorian Budget resulted in homelessness being comparatively well-supported in a Budget that had few real winners. Most significantly, the Government committed \$103.9m over 4 years in new funding for homelessness services.

The allocation of that funding will be informed by the new Ministerial Homelessness Reform Advisory Group (MHRAG), which is co-chaired by Council to

Homeless Person's CEO alongside the Minister for Housing. The MHRAG is an ongoing forum for the Specialist Homelessness Sector and people with lived experience of homelessness to collaborate with the Government to shape system reform, strengthen sector capacity and capability, and guide best practice evidence-based approaches to end homelessness. This is a powerful opportunity for the sector to guide the future of Victoria's homelessness response.

We were excited to be part of the Government's announcement of the \$1 billion Regional Housing Fund, its first ever specific investment in housing for regional Victoria. This was a massive win in our continued advocacy for more social housing and support for the regions.

Of course, much more housing is still required, and a continued missing piece in the government's homelessness response has been its failure to commit to building the 60,000 additional social homes Victoria needs over the next decade.



Deborah Di Natale, CEO

But this year CHP continued to actively advocate for this build, generating considerable coverage across major media outlets.

Through this advocacy, we also raised awareness about the changing impact of homelessness in Victoria. We raised awareness of the increasing number of employed Victorians seeking homelessness assistance. We raised awareness of people experiencing homelessness now having an average life expectancy of just 44, and called for the coroner to officially record homelessness deaths to help us prevent further needless loss of life. And we raised awareness about the toll that increased demand for services is putting on SHS sector, impacting on workers' health and well-being, along with staff retention in the sector.

CHP also went beyond advocacy, implementing real solutions to support the capacity of the SHS.

We know the answer to ending long term and recurring homelessness is more houses combined with a Housing First approach. In 2023/24 CHP launched the inaugural Jenny Smith Housing First Scholarship, worth \$15,000. This Scholarship enables a leading practitioner to study Housing First approaches overseas and bring their learnings back

to the sector. We also appointed Alison Fraser as CHP's first Lead Practitioner Housing First, a role that will see her lead the sector in developing its capacity in regard to Housing First.

We launched the Person-Centred Practice Guide, supported by training workshops delivered by CHP's Learning Program, to help SHS workers develop strengths-based practices that mean they can always make a difference for the people they're supporting, even in the absence of a housing solution.

And we collaborated with RMIT's Workforce Innovation and Development Institute to conduct a workforce analysis research project that will help identify the path forward for a sustainable SHS workforce.

In addition to these projects, CHP's Learning Program continued to provide innovative new training options that are regularly booked to capacity, and *Parity* magazine provided an essential opportunity to dive deeper into the multifaceted aspects of homelessness, reflecting on new perspectives and exploring best practice responses. Indeed, the importance of *Parity* was exemplified by the foundational role its 2021

COUNCIL TO HOMELESS PERSONS

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report “Every Grain of Sand: Preventing Homelessness Deaths” played informing the reporting and campaigning around homelessness deaths this year.

Lived experience is central to everything we do at Council to Homeless Persons, and 2023/24 was an exciting step forward in the development of our Peer Education Support Program. In addition to PESP’s impressive community outreach, this year we welcomed a brand new PESP team to commence their training. Their resilience, humour and keen insight is inspiring, and it’s a privilege for CHP to be able to partner with them. While our new team is already participating in CHP’s advocacy and engagement with policy-makers, the talented past graduates of PESP remain integral to CHP’s work, and this year we started planning on a new project that will formalise and grow that collaboration. Stay tuned.

CHP’s Homelessness Advocacy Service (HAS) also continued to provide support for consumers and SHS workers in 2023-24, advocating for and strengthening relationships between the two, and working to achieve mutually beneficial resolutions for consumers and service providers.

As the homelessness sector’s peak body, CHP exists to represent its members. And this year we introduced new initiatives to engage more with members – particularly in regional Victoria. CHP conducted a series of regional forums to hear from frontline workers about their experiences and challenges. We also announced that the next Victorian Homelessness Conference, scheduled for November 2025, will be held in Ballarat. It’s the first time the Conference has been held outside metropolitan Melbourne.



Deborah Di Natale delivers a sector update at the Central Highlands Homelessness Forum.



Jane Barnes at the Victorian Homelessness Conference 2023

We also commenced work on a major project to transition the IT platform driving our members' portal to enable better communication with members, and to offer improved functionality and benefits that will be part of a renewed membership proposition that CHP will be unveiling in the year ahead.

Speaking of the future, this year CHP developed our new Organisational Strategic Plan and Operational Plan. This foundational piece of planning will guide our work over the next five years to ensure the peak provides our members and their clients with the support they need. Look out for the new Strategic Plan being launched alongside this Annual Report.

We've worked with great integrity and commitment towards our Reconciliation Action Plan this year. We commenced development of our next RAP. We were pleased also to improve representation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community on our Board, with Aboriginal Housing Victoria CEO Darren Smith joining CHP's Board.

More broadly, achieving greater diversity at CHP is an ongoing focus for us – including ensuring lived experience representation on the Board.

Thanks to our strong and skilled volunteer Board, our passionate staff, our amazing PESP team and graduates, and the Department for Families, Fairness and Housing for engaging with so much enthusiasm and energy in CHP's work this year. Your talent and determination have made all these achievements possible.

Finally, this marks the final Executive Report from Jane Barnes, as she will be stepping down from as Chair of Council to Homeless Persons at our 2024 Annual General Meeting. CHP owes a great debt to Jane. She has volunteered for over 20 years to ensure the peak is well governed and can fulfil its function as a peak body. Jane's guidance was indispensable as CHP transitioned to a new CEO last year, and she played an essential role guiding the organisation through the development of our new Strategic Plan. There is a lot of unseen work as the Chair of a peak and we want to thank Jane for the amount of personal time she has taken to support CHP over the years. It's testament to her commitment to the peak and her desire to end homelessness. Thanks for everything – it is appreciated and has helped Council to Homeless Persons to be the leader it is today.

CHP Board and Staff

(during the reporting period)

CHP Board

Jane Barnes (Chair),
Chief of Staff, Wintringham

Lucy Adams (Deputy Chair),
Strategic Advocacy and Policy Manager in the
Civil Justice program, Victoria Legal Aid
Resigned from Board in December 2023

Celia Adams (Deputy Chair),
Chief Executive Officer, Beyond Housing

Anthony Busuttil (Treasurer),
Chief Operating Officer and Chief Financial Officer,
Genazzano FCJ College
Appointed to Board in November 2023

Lee-anne Chapman,
Group Manager Eastern Melbourne, Uniting Vic.Tas
Appointed to Board in November 2023

Bernadette McCartney,
Executive Director of Services, Meli
Appointed to Board in November 2023

Natalie McDonald,
Chief Executive, Quantum Support Service

Wayne Merritt,
Chief Executive Officer, WAYSS

David Porter, (Treasurer),
Head of Infrastructure Australia & New Zealand,
Macquarie Capital
Resigned from Board in November 2023

Stephen Schmidtke,
General Manager of Homelessness and Client
Support, Wintringham

Darren Smith,
Chief Executive Officer, Aboriginal Housing Victoria
Appointed to Board in February 2024

Heidi Tucker,
Chief Executive Officer, Anchor

Paul Turton,
Executive General Manager, Client Services,
VincentCare Victoria

CHP Staff

Deborah Di Natale, Chief Executive Officer

Thomas Johnson, Deputy Chief Executive Officer;
Director, Policy and Communications

Helen Duggan, Director, Services

Maria Murray, Manager, Lived Experience Programs,
Quality and Special Projects

Angela Kyriakopoulos, HAS Advocate

Katrina Nguyen, HAS Advocate

Cassandra Corrone, Team Leader,
Peer Education Support Program

Andrew Edgar, SHS Learning Program Coordinator

Simon Okely, Capacity Building Officer

Alison Fraser, Lead Practitioner, Housing First

Noel Murray, Parity Editor

Lucas Testro, Communications Officer

Kye White, Communications Advisor

Damien Patterson, Manager,
Policy and Advocacy Officer

Elena Robertson, Senior Policy Officer,
Family Violence Project

Kelly Shaw, Operations Support Manager

Emma Killeen, Operations Support Manager

Christy Hackney-Westmore, Administration and
Support Officer

Nilgun Welense, Accountant

Jillie Ly, Bookkeeper



Youth Housing and Homelessness Alliance mark 18th birthday of Victorian Youth homelessness strategy

Driving Change to End Homelessness: How our Strategic Directions created impact in 2023/24

Council to Homeless Persons (CHP) is Victoria's peak body representing organisations and individuals with a commitment to ending homelessness.

We believe that homelessness is unacceptable, avoidable, and within our reach to resolve. As we work towards our vision of ending homelessness in Victoria, we look to direct our resources to where they will have the most impact.

This year we commenced development of our next five year Strategic Plan, guiding our decisions to best respond to the changing nature of homelessness in Victoria. In the meantime, our work this year continued to be guided by our 2020–23 Strategic Plan. Below you will find some highlights of the work CHP completed under those strategic directions.

Strategic Direction: Inform community attitudes and influence government policy and decision making to end homelessness

CHP engages policy-makers and the community to advocate for the solutions that research and practice demonstrate to be effective to end homelessness.

Our advocacy in 2023-24 resulted in a number of policy wins including:

- a \$1 billion Regional Housing Fund to deliver more than 1000 new social homes across regional Victoria;
- \$103.9m over 4 years in new funding for homelessness services;
- \$45.4 million to expand Journey to Social Inclusion (J2SI) Housing First programs to new locations;
- Funding of to implement parts of *The Blueprint for an Aboriginal-specific homelessness system*;
- 12 months funding for Pride in Place and the Homelessness After Hours Service; and
- New funding for rental relief programs.

As well as engaging directly with government, our advocacy was regularly featured in outlets including the *ABC*, *The Age*, the *Herald Sun* and *Guardian Australia*, improving community awareness.

In July 2023, CHP partnered with the Victorian Homelessness Network to stage the Houses At Parliament event. This saw 6,000 origami houses

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arranged on the steps of Victoria's Parliament, representing the need for Victoria to build 6,000 additional social homes every year for the next decade to meet current need.

In September, the Victorian Government released its Housing Statement, outlining its plans to address the state's housing crisis. CHP expressed its disappointment that the Statement included little to increase social housing. We continued throughout the year to advocate for the urgent need for 60,000 additional social homes. As part of this ongoing campaign, we also raised awareness of the growing reach of homelessness. Our report *Employed & At Risk: The new face of homelessness in Victoria* showed a 14 per cent jump in employed people seeking homelessness support.

In October, CHP's Policy and Advocacy Officer Damien Patterson and PESP graduate Jody Letts appeared before the state government's inquiry into the rental and housing affordability crisis in Victoria.

That same month, CHP also made a submission providing input into the development of the National Housing and Homelessness Plan, saying it was an unparalleled opportunity for State and Federal Governments to deliver the coordinated responses that could realise the vision of ending homelessness.

In December, we called on the government to boost funding for outreach workers to identify and assist people sleeping rough in the bush across regional Victoria, to enable life-saving interventions in the event of bushfires or floods. The importance of this need was recognized by coverage of our call in the *Herald Sun*.

In February 2024, CHP made a submission to the Family Violence Reform Rolling Action Plan consultation, urging the government to support women and children leaving family violence by urgently growing social housing stock, and expanding the Private Rental Assistance Program to ensure it can continue to effectively facilitate access to safe homes.

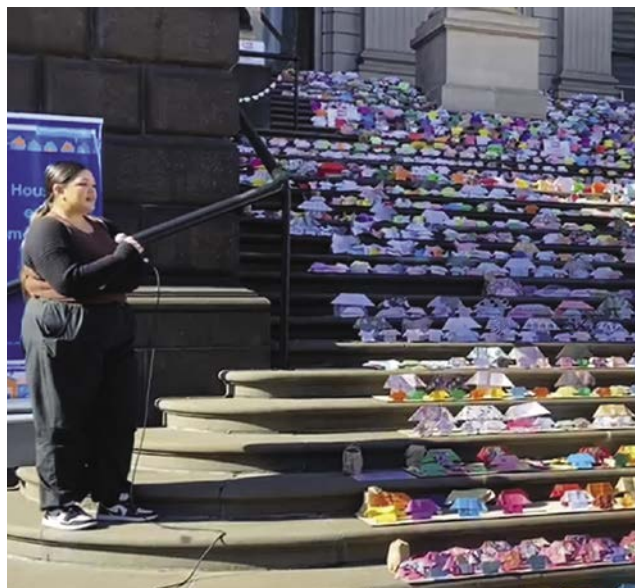
We also contributed a submission to the Yoorrook Justice Commission, the first formal truth-telling process into injustices experienced by First Peoples in Victoria. Our submission called for *Mana-na woom-tyeen maar-takoort*: the Victorian Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Framework to be adopted, funded and implemented in full.

In April, CHP partnered with the Youth Housing and Homelessness Alliance to host an 18th birthday party for Victoria's most recent youth homelessness strategy, highlighting the need for a new government strategy to better support the nearly 16,000 young Victorians who sought help from homelessness services in 2022–23.

Throughout 2024, CHP also led a major campaign advocating for Victoria's Attorney-General to make deaths of people while experiencing homelessness reportable to the Coroner. Coinciding with a major investigation by Guardian Australia into homelessness deaths which found the average life expectancy of a person experiencing homelessness in Australia is now just 44 years of age, the centrepiece of this campaign was an open letter to the Attorney-General signed by more than 20 CEOs from the homelessness and justice sectors, along with former Supreme Court judge the Hon Kevin Bell AM KC. Our advocacy on this issue continues.



Damien Patterson and Jody Letts appear at Parliamentary inquiry



PESP Graduate Joal Presincula speaks at Houses At Parliament event



PESP Graduates Helen Matthews and Jody Letts speak at the Victorian Homelessness Conference 2023

Strategic Direction: Strengthen partnerships with people who are or have been without a home to end homelessness

The voice of lived experience is centred in every aspect of CHP's work. And at the heart of that engagement is our Peer Education Support Program (PESP).

In 2023–24, PESP supported people with lived experience to be an essential part of the work to end homelessness through a number of avenues, including:

- Participating in consultations such as the City of Melbourne Homelessness Strategy Consultation, the Victorian Electoral Commission Advisory Group, the Pregnancy and Homelessness Coalition, the Melbourne Metropolitan Rooming House Group and the Salvation Army Statewide Reference Group;
- Speaking at the major Houses At Parliament public event;
- Hosting Homes Victoria staff for a series of "Walk In My Shoes" tours;
- Co-facilitating engagement training for City of Casey staff;
- Co-facilitating training courses for the SHS delivered through CHP's Learning Hub; and

- Participating in interview panels for job vacancies at CHP.

PESP team members and graduates were regularly featured in CHP's policy submissions to government, and in our media outreach.

This year CHP recruited a new PESP team, to continue our professional development support for people with lived experience of homelessness, and to ensure the lived experience contributions to CHP's work continue to reflect the most current experiences of homelessness. Twenty-one applications were received, and eight positions were offered. Ten weeks of orientation, training and induction were held between October and April, at the end of which time five members chose to continue, becoming our newest PESP team.

Outside of PESP, inclusion of lived experience voices was also prioritised by CHP at the Victorian Homelessness Conference 2023. Lived experience advocates were included in virtually every panel, and subsidised conference tickets were provided to people with lived experience.

CHP's Homelessness Advocacy Service (HAS) also continued to provide support for consumers and SHS workers in 2023–24, advocating for and strengthening relationships between the two, and working to achieve mutually beneficial resolutions for consumers and service providers.

Strategic Direction: Build capacity of the human services system to end homelessness

CHP is tasked with delivering an Industry Transition Plan for the specialist homelessness sector. The Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) Transition Plan provides a path forward for the sector to build on its strengths, meet growing demand, deliver services consistent with best practice, and achieve effective outcomes.

This year we launched a major resource developed as part of the Transition Plan: the Person-Centred Practice Guide. Developed in consultation with lived experience experts, sector leaders and practitioners, the Guide assists the SHS workforce to integrate into practice a holistic, strengths-based and trauma-informed approach, partnering with people seeking support to centre practice on what is safe and meaningful to them.

The Person-Centred Practice Guide was complemented by new Person-Centred Practice training workshops, offered by CHP's SHS Learning Program.

In 2023–24, CHP's SHS Learning Program team delivered 45 training sessions to the homelessness sector, digitally and in person, across Victoria. In addition to the Person-Centred Practice training, other new courses launched this year included Working with Borderline Personality Disorders, Hoarding and Squalor, and Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training. Learning Program workshops were attended by 920 participants.

Fifteen new eLearn programs were created during the period and the 23 pre-existing eLearns in our catalogue were also refreshed. There were 2950 enrolments in eLearns over the year.

CHP also continued to support the sector to better understand and utilise the MARAM risk assessment tools. Our Workforce Needs Analysis Survey and two other family violence-specific surveys gauged the extent to which the SHS works with people experiencing violence and their awareness of existing MARAM training. And eLearns developed by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing were delivered on the SHS Learning Hub

In addition to training resources, CHP built the capacity of the sector in other ways.

In June, we launched a special project in collaboration with Safe and Equal, supported by the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation, to identify how the homelessness and family violence sectors can better respond to the immediate needs of women and children experiencing family violence and homelessness.

As part of CHP's Victorian Budget Submission, we advocated for \$39.4 million dollars to expand homelessness and housing intake services. We undertook an SHS Workforce Survey to support this campaign, finding that 55 per cent of frontline SHS workers were considering quitting the sector due to soaring workloads and a lack of housing options to offer the people they're working with. These findings gained considerable media attention, supporting our advocacy.



CHP's Simon Okely presents a Learning Program training session



Regional forums — Uniting's Jerry Ham and CHP's Tom Johnson

Throughout the year, CHP also collaborated with RMIT's Workforce Innovation and Development Institute (WIDI) to finalise WIDI's SHS Workforce Analysis Report. This Report aims to understand the effects of these increased pressures on the workforce, as well as other sector dynamics that affect the experience of SHS workers and the Victorians they support. The WIDI Report was released in August 2024.

CHP has long been committed to the advancement of Housing First principles and practice in Victoria, and this year saw significant steps forward in our workforce engagement in this area.

We launched the inaugural Jenny Smith Housing First Scholarship, which offered up to \$15,000 covering travel costs for a leading practitioner to undertake an overseas study trip to explore Housing First approaches in other countries. The Scholarship was awarded to Charlotte G, enabling her to undertake training and meet with Housing First providers in five countries in four weeks, across Europe and the UK. For more of Charlotte's story, see p.14.

CHP also engaged Alison Fraser as our Lead Practitioner, Housing First. Since commencing in January 2024, Alison has:

- developed a four-part Housing First for Systems Change training series for Victorian Homelessness Networkers and Housing First Trainers
- participated in Victorian Homelessness Network events, Housing First training delivery and National Housing First Community of Practice

- provided advisory support to Housing First/ supportive housing services; and
- Co-ordinated two seminars for the SHS delivered by Jo Prestidge, visiting Housing First Practice Lead at Homeless Link UK.

Strategic direction: Strengthen CHP as a contemporary and sustainable peak

CHP continually reviews possibilities to strengthen our connection with members, increase their voice to policy-makers, and support them in their work to end homelessness.

In 2023-24, CHP embarked on a tour of regional Victoria, holding forums in Bendigo, Horsham, Ballarat, Sale, Morwell, Warrnambool, Benalla and Geelong to hear from frontline workers about their experiences and needs, so we could reflect local priorities directly in CHP's Victorian Budget Submission and other ongoing advocacy.

These forums were also attended by representatives of the former Minister for Housing's office and staff from the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing's Central office, providing an opportunity for policy-makers to hear directly from the sector.

Among the highest priority issues raised by forum participants were the absolute lack of social housing, the cost of living crisis, the need for more options for young people experiencing homelessness, and the need for assertive outreach to support people experiencing homelessness in regional Victoria.

Postcards From Europe:

Housing First Learnings from the Inaugural Jenny Smith Scholarship Winner

The inaugural Jenny Smith Housing First Scholarship was launched in 2023, offering one leading Housing First practitioner up to \$15,000 towards the cost of travel to undertake a practice development and leadership project in overseas jurisdictions at the forefront of implementing and innovating Housing First principles, policy and practice.

The Scholarship winner, Charlotte G, used this funding to travel to five countries in four weeks, across Europe and the UK. She attended a three day Housing First Europe Hub Train the Trainer workshop; attended the Housing First Europe Hub Trainers Symposium; and engaged with 14 organisations working in Housing First.

“Being able to meet, talk and learn in person with leading Housing First practitioners and policy influencers was an incredibly valuable professional development experience for me”, says Charlotte. “It took my ability to understand, contextualise and communicate information on Housing First to a new level, and has inspired me to continue working and advocating for the broader adoption of Housing First in Victoria.”

Below, Charlotte shares some key learnings from four jurisdictions she engaged with on her study tour.

Finland

Homelessness in Finland is steadily decreasing. Their aim is to end “long term” homelessness by the end of 2027, and to end all homelessness in Helsinki by 2025.

Hearing about this aim reminded me of the value of high aspirations and bold goals.

The Housing First Principle “People Have a Right to a Home” is continually reinforced in Finland. There appeared to be a shared understanding that housing is a human right, and that it is everyone’s responsibility to ensure there are not people experiencing homelessness in the community.

But as many members of the public are no longer familiar with the version of Finland that had encampments, or higher rates of shelters and

homelessness, organisations I visited have a continual focus on maintaining that societal value of housing as a human right.

My conversations with the teams in Finland highlighted the power of having system change built from renewed societal agreements & expectation for action.

The Netherlands

The Netherlands aims to end homelessness by 2030 by focusing heavily on prevention and housing.

Changing hearts and minds appears to have been a core theme in the country’s approach to systems change towards Housing First. Priority was placed on sharing the joyful moments of when someone moves into a new home. It was explained to me that this contributed to the buy-in from local government, and sustaining support for Housing First approaches.

The Netherlands even has a National Housing First Day.

Conversations here had me reflecting on the power of shared language and shared purpose: The consistency of how ‘Housing First’ is understood not just within the sector but also within everyday society, was strong here (and in many of the countries I visited).

Another recurring insight from my trip was that purposeful collaboration appeared to have critically beneficial results. Collaboration with international counterparts appeared to encourage shared continual improvement amongst service providers, tenancy providers, advocacy groups and governments. Openness to this collaboration lifted everybody up, and supported momentum. Collaboration locally was evident through cross-sector capacity building, and focus on Housing First training provision, as well as collaboration between support providers and tenancy providers. This sense that support providers and tenancy providers both had a seat at the table when it came to Housing First was a theme across multiple countries I visited, and appeared to benefit the experience of tenants, and supported a broader systems approach to Housing First.



Jenny Smith Scholarship winner Charlotte G with Helen Duggan and Tom Johnson

In Victoria, we have incredible opportunities to continue to upskill the workforce of tenancy providers with the Australian Housing First Principles. This could improve collaboration with support providers, creating improved outcomes for tenants and increasing alignment between support and tenancy providers when providing long term housing to tenants who have had experiences of chronic homelessness.

Scotland

One of the core learning curves I experienced in Scotland was how Housing First can not only be applied as an intervention to long term homelessness, but can play an impactful role in preventing homelessness. I was fortunate to meet with practitioners and service providers from the Youth sector, who implement a Housing First approach when working with Young People who are at risk of homelessness, and who benefit from an

individual, client-driven support approach that prioritises youth choice & self-determination, amongst other key principles.

Scotland had also commenced their own provision of the Upstream program, described as an approach to ending homelessness at the school gates. Adoption of this program came from the original concept in Australia, with programs currently in Geelong, Albury and Mt Druitt, and with further adaptations that have been implemented in Canada and Wales. In Scotland, it was introduced in October 2023, with universal screening creating opportunities to reach young people and their families before they reach crisis point.

Housing First principles, as well as the principles for Housing First for Youth, appeared to influence a wide range of interventions in Scotland. From seeing the possibilities for Housing First for Youth internationally, I'm eager to see how the Youth specific principles could continue to guide best practice in Victoria.

England

The principle ‘Flexible support for as long as is needed’ resounded throughout my visit to England. Meeting Housing First coaches in Newcastle and London, I heard their confidence that their clients would be able to access their support as long as they needed. One coach used the word “indefinitely”, which struck me in its assuredness.

Language used during these conversations held true to strength-based approaches. Coaches referred to clients as “members”, who would eventually “graduate” from the Housing First program, rather than being “closed” or “exited”.

Coaches spoke about the structure of their program never having targets for “graduating” members.

These conversations reminded me that to be trauma-informed when working with people who have a chronic experience of homelessness and who have complex support needs, is to use a Housing First approach.

The benefits of sector development and sustainability were also clear within many of the Housing First teams I met with in England. The way coaches and team leaders spoke to the logic and outcomes of their work, when aligned with Housing First principles, gave the impression of strong work satisfaction. And the frameworks and guidelines produced by national peaks support sector development and promote best practice in a way that is accessible to the workforce and sector as a whole.

Supporting the maintenance of practice wisdom within Victoria’s SHS can be a significant challenge for a sector who sees workers come and go. The end to contracted programs such as H2H often show us examples of significant loss of practice wisdom. Being able to preserve such wisdom, not only through job satisfaction but also through the collated research and resources of peak bodies appeared to be key protective factors for the specialist homelessness system in England.

Conclusion

At times across this trip, I found myself feeling hyper-aware of the magnitude of the task of “ending homelessness”. But at other times, I felt the confidence that comes from having an evidence-based approach that is proven to work internationally, and felt grateful for the examples of success in so many corners of the world. I was struck by the sheer opportunity present within Victoria, and the number of barriers that are present internationally that we are not necessarily faced with here.

The learnings I’ve gained through this Scholarship have been expansive, and have continued to evolve and unfold in the months since I’ve returned and through my role with the National Housing First Trainers. But at this point in time, in distilling some of these learnings into the above postcards, the following has floated to the surface:

- Housing First is deeply embedded in the right to housing, and to societal commitments to supporting a system that sustains housing.
- Collaboration and shared commitment to continual improvement are key benefits from, and drivers towards, Housing First.
- Housing First is a systems approach not just to ending homelessness, but also to preventing it.
- Housing First approaches support sector capacity building, and knowledge retention, allowing specialist homelessness systems to truly be specialist.

To use a Housing First approach is to be trauma-informed, it is to be efficient, and it is to move from a sector that manages homelessness to a sector that ends it.



Commissioners Doug Cameron and Nicole Gurrie listen to submissions at the People's Commission

Everybody's Home

In 2023–24, CHP continued to host the national housing and homelessness campaign Everybody's Home. Comprised of more than 500 organisations and 40,000 individual supporters, Everybody's Home elevates the need for federal government leadership and investment in social housing into the mainstream public debate.

Over the last year, this advocacy included:

- **The Brutal Reality of Australia's housing crisis**

In July 2023, Everybody's Home produced *Brutal Reality* — a report based on surveys of almost 750 people — revealing more than four in five renters are in housing stress, with homelessness the leading impact of the housing crisis. The report also surveyed housing and welfare organisations across Australia. Nine in ten reported bigger and more complex workloads, while three in five said their staff were experiencing burnout or leaving their roles due to the crisis. The report was launched at a parliamentary event in Canberra during Homelessness Week, featuring CHP PESP team member Jody Letts.

- **Rental crisis inquiry** In August, Everybody's Home made a submission to the Senate Inquiry into the worsening rental crisis in Australia, encouraging individual supporters to complete the community survey and providing evidence at the public Senate hearing in Canberra. The campaign

also signed a joint statement prepared by the National Association of Renters Organisations and National Shelter, along with 80 other organisations highlighting the priority areas for rental reform.

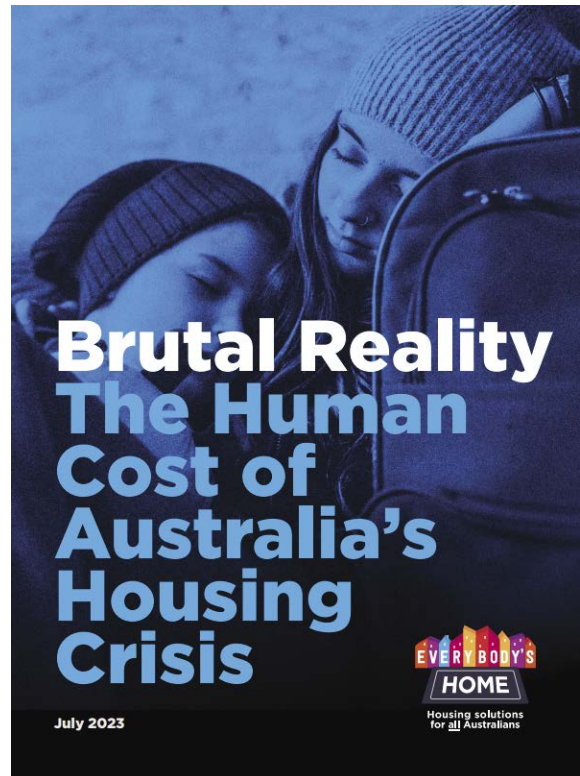
- **Housing policy and legislation** In September, the campaign welcomed passage of strengthened Housing Australia Future Fund legislation through the Senate, including an additional \$1 billion direct investment into social housing. In October, Everybody's Home made a submission to the National Housing and Homelessness Plan and supported the housing and homelessness sectors to make submissions with the development of a key messaging guide. Everybody's Home advocated for a comprehensive plan with the ambition needed to end homelessness and provide a safe, decent and affordable home for all.
- **Housing and migration** In December, the campaign developed a joint statement in response to growing rhetoric surrounding overseas migration and Australia's housing crisis. More than 40 housing, homelessness and community services organisations wrote to the Prime Minister and opposition leader expressing concern that migrant communities are being scapegoated as the primary reason for the housing crisis, urging the government and opposition to show leadership in the housing affordability debate by focusing on the main

drivers. The campaign also developed a set of key facts and messages to support the sector to respond.

- **Written Off: The high cost of Australia's tax system** In January, the campaign launched Written Off — a report examining the last forty years of housing policy in Australia — concluding that housing affordability has crashed because the Federal Government is subsidising the private market instead of directly building homes. Organisational partners were invited to join an in-person briefing in Sydney, while the report was officially launched to an audience of more than 300 people online. The report shows the federal budget is expected to lose almost a quarter of a trillion dollars to negative gearing and capital gains tax concessions between 2010–33, and the cost of investor tax breaks over the next decade could instead build more than half a million social homes. The campaign used this report to engage media and politicians in the urgent need for tax reform to fix the housing crisis in the lead up to the next federal election.
- **Make renting fair** In February, Everybody's Home supported TUNSW's Make Renting Fair campaign with a push to end no-grounds evictions. Hundreds of emails were sent to decision-makers calling on the State Government to uphold their election commitment for all tenancy types. We are delighted to see the NSW Government is



Margaret Quixley and Jody Letts in Canberra for Brutal Reality launch



moving ahead with promised eviction reforms. This will mean renters will be provided with a genuine reason if they are being evicted.

- **Impact event** In March, the campaign hosted a six year impact event in Melbourne, bringing together organisational and philanthropic partners to reflect on how far we have come and look forward toward the next phase of the campaign. Everybody's Home produced an impact report and mapped the path forward over the next 12 months to support the next phase of housing and homelessness reforms in the lead up to the next federal election.
- **People's Commission** Between April and June, Everybody's Home convened Australia's first People's Commission into the Housing Crisis. The purpose of the People's Commission was to convene a national conversation about the housing crisis, its impacts and what can be done to fix it. The campaign appointed former Senator Doug Cameron and Prof Nicole Gurren to act as co-Commissioners, receiving over 1,500 individual and 100 organisational submissions, and convening 12 public hearings over three days. With more than 650 media mentions, the Commission reached a potential audience of more than 16 million people. Recommendations will be used to develop the campaign's 'Roadmap for Reform' ahead of the next federal election.



Professor Eoin O'Sullivan delivers the Conference's Keynote Address

Victorian Homelessness Conference 2023



Heather Holst

The 2023 Victorian Homelessness Conference was held on 20 – 21 November 2023. A passionate crowd of more than 300 practitioners, policy-makers, researchers and people with lived experience of homelessness flocked to the Melbourne Town Hall to participate in two days of sharing and learning around this year's theme of "Overcoming Challenges. Ending Homelessness."

In the Conference's opening Keynote Address, "Effective Systems to End Homelessness", Professor Eoin O'Sullivan from Trinity College, Dublin, emphasised that research shows homelessness is solvable. He outlined an evidence-based framework for ending homelessness, with the following key pillars:

- interventions must focus on changing the homelessness system, rather than changing people;
- the system must have the objective of preventing entries to homelessness in the first place; and
- to prevent homelessness, we must design integrated models of welfare and health service provision. In particular, there must be adequate supply of secure social housing.

The harm caused by that absence of social housing was starkly clear from the Plenary Panel, "A safe home: Unfinished business from the Royal Commission into Family Violence".

Good Shepherd's Livia LaRocca shared that while refuge is supposed to last 6 weeks or less, due to lack of throughput options 58 per cent of Good Shepherd's refuge clients over the past 2 years were being accommodated for 14 to 52 weeks.

Integration and Collaboration

In that same session, WAYSS' Wayne Merrett called for more integrated systems across drug & alcohol, mental health and homelessness services, with a focus on individual needs. As Wayne put it, linking these programs and services needs to be "Phase 2" of the work stemming out of the Royal Commission into Family Violence.

The importance of collaboration was a recurring theme at this year's conference.

That starts with agencies and workers collaborating with consumers to give each individual the support they need. As lived experience advocate Tyler eloquently put it in Day 2's Keynote and Plenary "A new model for youth housing in Victoria": "We're all coming from something ... No one is

choosing homelessness if there's a better option." And as Coen noted in the panel "Addressing housing barriers for LGBTIQ+ Victorians", "An assessment tool can't see the person in front of you. You have to do that".

The "An introduction to Person-Centred Practice" panel explored practical ways to do just that, centring services on what is safe and meaningful to the individual.

Another essential collaboration discussed was the importance of embedding Peer Support Workers throughout the sector. In the Plenary Panel "Empowering Change: Recognising Peer Support Workers as experts in our sector" Uniting's Stacey Park spoke of the essential role Peer Support Workers play, breaking down barriers and building trust with consumers who have been let down by a system for decades.

As Stacey told attendees, successfully embedding peer support requires adequate training, open communication, a willingness to accept raw feedback, and an understanding of the need for organisations to work flexibly with their Peer Support Worker. But most of all it requires funding. Stacey shared how her team



Plenary Panel – "A safe home: Unfinished business from the Royal Commission into Family Violence"



Plenary Panel – “Empowering Change: Recognising Peer Support Workers as experts in our sector”

at Uniting has had to juggle finances to afford their Peer Support Worker Jeremy part time, and that while that investment has paid off ten-fold, “We shouldn’t have to sacrifice existing funding to implement peer support”.

Supporting Unique Needs

Tuesday’s panels focussed on ways the sector can better support cohorts with unique needs.

The day began with leaders of a coalition of peaks presenting “A new model for youth housing in Victoria”. We heard how youth allowance levels effectively lock young homeless people out of social housing options, with the result that although young people make up 15% of people presenting at homelessness services for help, they are currently provided with only 3% of Victoria’s housing stock.

The session outlined a proposed model to address the problem, providing not just a stable roof over the young person’s head but also trauma-informed support that helps them learn life skills.

At the Plenary Panel “*Mana-na woorntyeen maar-takoort: Every Aboriginal Person Has a Home*”, Aboriginal Housing Victoria’s Darren Smith said: “If you can take one thing away today, it’s the importance of Aboriginal self-determination in what we do. We are a people that have been dispossessed and we have had homelessness ever since. And during that period, Aboriginal people have been subject to coercive control by the state ... and we’ve then gone through periods of economic, social and political exclusion. And all of those factors lead up to the point today where Aboriginal people experience homelessness at ten times the rate of non-Aboriginal people. In a modern state, that should be considered unacceptable.”

In the “Aging in a housing crisis” panel, Peter Sibly from United Housing Co-operative showed us an example of a co-operative community apartment development for women over 55, currently being built in Footscray. And Wintringham’s Bryan Lipmann urged the sector to become more informed about aged care as an option, saying that it provides far better options for some consumers than can be provided in private rental or the social housing system.

The potential for transformation

Moving into the final reflection Plenary Panel for the Conference, discussion emphasised the scale of the challenges but also the transformative effects SHS workers can have.

Lived experience advocate Joal Presincula shared the story of a worker who changed her life, and asked the audience never to forget that potential for change: “We’re working with people who’ve reached the hardest point of their whole life, and that’s when we meet them. We don’t get to see them on their best days, we get to see them on their worst days, where they’ve reached rock bottom. And we come in to support them. We work really hard with the constraints we have within our system. But we have to keep real people at the centre of everything we do, and understand we’re working to change people’s lives.”

And with that, the curtain closed on another Victorian Homelessness Conference. Thanks to all our panelists, attendees and sponsors for making it such a special event.

2023 Victorian Homelessness Achievement Awards



Award for excellence in ending homelessness among children and families:
Melbourne City Mission's Youth Refuges and Intensive Child and Family Services Program



Award for excellence in ending homelessness among young people:
NESAY, The North East Support and Action for Youth, for their Transitional Service Team



Award for excellence in ending homelessness among adults:
Anchor Community Care's Rapid Response Program



Award for ending homelessness among Diverse and Over-Represented Groups:
Women's Housing Limited's Women's Justice Diversion Program



Award for excellence in ending homelessness among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people:
VACSAL, The Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association Limited



The Leading Practitioner Award:
Anne Kennedy



The Consumer Achievement Award:
Mario Scialdone



The 2023 Beth Thomson Lifetime Achievement Award:
Joal Presincula

Joal Presincula

A Journey from Lived Experience to Advocacy

As the winner of the Beth Thomson Lifetime Achievement Award was announced at 2023's Victorian Homelessness Achievement Awards, Joal Presincula turned to her friend Vicki in shock. "What is happening?", Joal asked. "They said your name," Vicki answered.

Joal was not only the winner of the award - she was the first person with lived experience of homelessness to ever receive the Beth Thomson Award.

That brings extra meaning for Joal: "It's such an honour. I hope it paves the way for other consumers to see that they, too, can achieve something like this."

A lifetime of achievement

Joal's first reaction walking off the stage was that she didn't deserve a Lifetime Achievement Award. But as a colleague quickly reminded her: "She said, 'You've had a whole lifetime battling. Since you were five years old, you've been going through systems and battling stuff. Don't think you don't deserve this.'"

It's a point well made, and goes to the heart of why it's so important that we value lived experience expertise in the homelessness sector.

As a child and later a young mother experiencing domestic violence and homelessness, Joal spent most of her life struggling through bureaucracies that offered little support. "It took me 18 times going through the access point before I was finally able to get a service. Eighteen times! It's no wonder I felt like nothing, just a number."

It's an experience no one would want to go through, but the insights Joal gained from it are now a powerful strength she uses to help others: "I gained so much knowledge about systems and the way systems work and the way systems should work. So if I can share that knowledge, then all that hard stuff isn't for nothing."

Blooming with PESP

Joal's journey to advocacy started in her mid-twenties when she was approached to join CHP's Peer Education Support Program (PESP).

That Joal was quite different from the confident, passionate advocate who gave the winner's speech at the Homelessness Achievement Awards. "That Joal, well... I only spoke when I was spoken to. I would give you one word answers. I wouldn't talk. I didn't have the confidence to be myself and just let things flow freely."

So the prospect of joining PESP was understandably daunting. "I remember sitting in that boardroom at the first meeting, looking around at the other PESP members, thinking 'Can I really do this?'," she recalls. She gained inspiration from the example of then-Team Leader of PESP, Cassandra Corrone: "I thought 'she's gone through this and now look how amazing she is in her advocacy. If we could get even a little bit of that, maybe this is worth it.'"

Joal didn't have to wait long to have that faith and courage rewarded. Her very first speaking engagement through PESP was a pivotal moment in her journey.

"It was a massive forum held at Federation Square, and I was on a panel with all these experts. It was terrifying. But I remember at the end, the MC introducing us all and saying 'And this is Joal, a real homeless person.'" While it's not the strengths-based



Joal accepts the Beth Thomson Lifetime Achievement Award

language we'd choose today, the MC's words were nevertheless validating for Joal. "I was like, yeah, I just did that. I have experienced homelessness. And I'm sitting up here in between and MP and an ER doctor and I can do this stuff, you know?"

Experiences like that are why Joal says the PESP experience is not just about helping change the system – it's about beginning to thrive again as a person.

"Learning how to tell your story in a way that's beneficial for others is also beneficial for yourself", she says. "The way that we give of ourselves to others, training workers and educating the sector, we also somehow give back to ourselves. And it's really healing for us. So when I see new PESP members come through, I'm like 'I'm so excited for you guys'. I can't wait to see them blossom like a flower. To see bits of themselves come back to them in the way they reveal that to us... that's what I like about being in PESP."

Moving into peer support work

After five years with the Peer Education Support Program, Joal took on a new challenge: becoming a peer support worker in the sector. Peer support wasn't a widely recognized role at the time, and Joal had to navigate uncharted territory. "I had no one to model my practice on," she says. "I had to learn on the fly."

Working at Launch Housing's Southbank crisis accommodation centre, Joal found herself in a unique position to bridge the gap between practitioners and clients. "I was good at getting in the middle, interpreting what case managers were saying and making it understandable for the client," she explains. "There's something about peer work that cuts through in a way that other roles can't."

Joal was a natural at building trust with clients, thanks to her lived experience. She would often join them in the common areas, offering informal support through activities like art therapy or simply having a coffee. "It's about meeting people where they're at," Joal says. "If you need help filling out paperwork, I'll help with that. If you have a job interview and you need a lift, I'll take you. If you're hungry, I'll take you to lunch."

Joal would love to see peer work become more established and valued in the homelessness sector, and believes it can be. But she says a lot of work is still to be done to realise that future. "Peer workers are not being properly trained or supported," she says. "And we're perhaps being micro-managed too much too, rather than given the autonomy to do what we think is best in our roles."

She'd love to see former peer workers like herself brought in to train the next generation of peer workers: "We know what works because we've done it."

A voice for change

These days Joal works primarily as a consultant, collaborating with the Victorian Public Tenants Association, Homes Victoria, domestic violence services and Council to Homeless Persons, along with participating in other advisory groups. "This is the kind of work I love to do", she says.

She believes the current housing crisis presents an opportunity to educate the public about the structural reasons behind homelessness.

"There's a reason why we have a housing crisis," she says. "It's not about personal failure. It's about systems." For Joal, the solution lies in better systems, more social housing, and a deeper understanding of the root causes of homelessness. "We need more housing, and we need programs that actually help people get into that housing," she stresses. "If we build the right systems, we can catch people before they fall."

With her wealth of expertise and the warmth with which she engages people, no doubt Joal will continue to play an important role in advocating for that change.

Final reflections

One other special thing happened to Joal at the Victorian Homelessness Achievement Awards. After accepting the Beth Thomson Lifetime Achievement Award and leaving the stage, she was approached by Beth Thompson's daughter and granddaughter.

Beth's granddaughter told Joal she had been trained by Joal at her induction day in one of her first social work roles. Joal recalls, "She said 'I know you. You trained me. The way you did that, that day, really inspired me in my social work'."

Beth's daughter was equally impressed: "She said 'Beth was really straight out and just said it like it was. And if you're anything like that, which I'm going to guess you are, I think Beth would have been really happy with this choice.'"

And what about that younger Joal? What might she say now, if she could see all that Joal has achieved?

"I think she would be proud", Joal says. "And she'd say, 'Thanks for that. Thanks for getting through all of that for us.'"

Reconciliation Action Plan

CHP has continued its commitment to Aboriginal reconciliation in 2023–24, with a major focus on supporting the Yes campaign for the Voice to Parliament. Self-determination is central to reconciliation, and the clear pathway forward for reducing high rates of homelessness among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The proposed Voice to Parliament was fundamentally a self-determination body giving First Nations Peoples a say in policies and laws that affect them.

In addition to sharing this message of support in our eNews, social media and website, CHP developed a training through the SHS Learning program to help people better understand what a Voice to Parliament is. 354 people took this training. This is in addition to CHP's ongoing work licensing the Centre for Cultural Competence Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Competence training, which has now been delivered to 418 people, including 70 in calendar year 2023.

The learning program also worked with the MARAM Aboriginal Working Group to develop an animated case study and eLearn for ACCO workers, now available to the SHS at no cost. We have also

supported the implementation of the Aboriginal-specific homelessness Access Points and invited the new staff to sector-wide induction training.

CHP continues to support the Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Forum, and to advocate for the full implementation of Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort, and specifically the Blueprint for an Aboriginal-specific homelessness system in Victoria, including in our budget advocacy and media. We thank Aboriginal Housing Victoria for its support in this advocacy.

CHP is pleased to have increased our expenditure with Aboriginal owned businesses, including on gifts for all speakers at the Victorian Homelessness Conference.

We want to thank everyone who has participated in our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) team over the course of the year, including Lisa Briggs, Sue D'Amico, Amber Maihi, Shaun Middlebrook, Fiona Schlensog, Shalese Smith, Liza Vanspall, as well as Cassandra Bawden, Helen Duggan, Angela Kyriakopolous, Simon Okely, Damien Patterson, Andrew Edgar, Noel Murray, Lucas Testro, Elena Roberston, Deborah Di Natale and all the team at CHP.



Jason Russell performs the didgeridoo at CHP Reconciliation Week lunch

Parity 2023–2024

2023

June: Reforming Residential Tenancies Acts

Sponsors: The Victorian Government through the Office of the Residential Tenancies Commissioner, The Tenants Union of New South Wales, Shelter New South Wales, ACT Shelter, Tenants Victoria and Tenants Queensland.

Launched: Online launch event, 27 July 2023

July: Where to Now? Responding to Rough Sleeping Post-Covid

Sponsors: The Victorian Government through Homes Victoria, Launch Housing, Micah Projects Queensland, The Salvation Army, Ballarat Uniting and Cohealth.

Launched: Ballarat Town Hall, 9 August 2023.

August: Gender and Homelessness

Sponsor: YWCA.

Launched: Wheeler Centre, 22 September 2023.

September: Housing First: From Theory to Practice

Sponsors: St Patrick's Community Support Centre (St Pat's) Fremantle, Micah Projects, Community Queensland, Kids Under Cover, Homelessness New South Wales and Noongar Mia Mia, Western Australia.

October: Poverty and Homelessness

Sponsors: Uniting Vic/Tas, VincentCare Victoria, The Salvation Army, TASCOS, Anglicare Tasmania and Catholic Social Services Victoria.

Launched: The Lord Mayor's Court Room, Hobart Town Hall (and streamed online), 10 November 2023.

November: The Future of Youth Foyers

Sponsors: Foyer Foundation, Anglicare WA, Brotherhood of St Laurence, Hand Heart Pocket — The Charity of Freemasons Queensland, Mission Australia, Uniting, Wesley Mission Queensland and For Purpose Investment Partners.

December: Climate Change and Homelessness

Sponsors: The Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation, Sacred Heart Mission, Jesuit Social Services, Spatial Vision, Informit, Melbourne City Council and Sydney City Council.

2024

February: Overcoming Challenges, Ending Homelessness: Victorian Homelessness Conference edition

Sponsors: Homes Victoria, Melbourne City Mission and City of Melbourne.

March: No Other Option? Supported Residential Services and Private Supported Boarding Houses and Homelessness

Sponsors: Winttingham, The Mental Health Legal Centre and Wellways.

April: Going it Alone: Unaccompanied Child and Youth Homelessness — Pathways into and out of Homelessness

Sponsors: Melbourne City Mission, Hope Street Youth and Family Services, Yfoundations (NSW), Kids Under Cover, Brisbane Youth Services, WAYSS, Quantum Support Services, Uniting Communities (SA) and Queensland Youth Housing Coalition.

Launched: Melbourne City Mission on Youth Homelessness Matters Day, 17 April 2024.

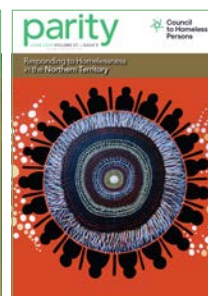
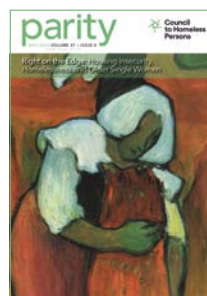
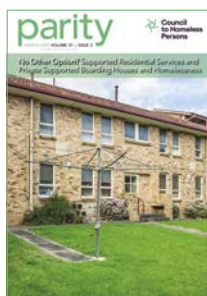
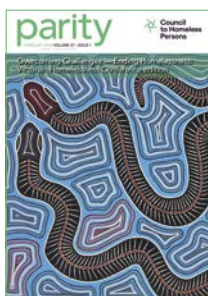
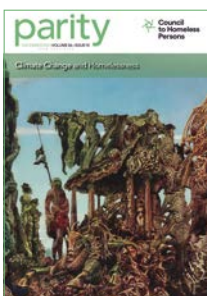
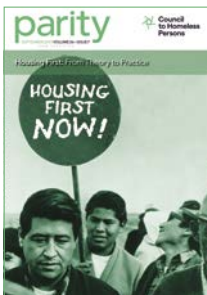
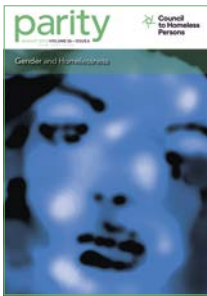
May: Housing Insecurity, Homelessness and Older Single Women

Sponsors: Catherine House, The Women's Property Initiative, Housing for the Aged Action Group (HAAG), The Mercy Foundation, The YWCA Canberra and NSW Older Women's Network (OWN).

June: Responding to Homelessness in the Northern Territory

Sponsors: NT Shelter, The Salvation Army, Anglicare NT, Venture Housing, CHIA NT, Aboriginal Housing NT, The City of Darwin, Menzies School of Health Research, NTCOSS, Charles Darwin Northern Institute, The YWCA, and Mission Australia.

Launched: Northern Territory Parliament House, 18 July 2024; and Alice Springs Town Council, 19 July 2024.



Financial Report

COUNCIL TO HOMELESS PERSONS (CHP) ABN: 20 005 475 007

The directors present their report together with the financial report of Council to Homeless Persons, the “company”, for the year ended 30 June 2024 and auditor’s report thereon.

Directors names

The names of the directors in office at any time during or since the end of the year are:

Jane Barnes	
Deborah Di Natale (Board Secretary)	
Celia Adams	
Wayne Merritt	
Heidi Tucker	
Natalie McDonald	
Paul Turton	
Stephen Schmidtke	
Lee-anne Chapman	<i>Appointed November 2023</i>
Anthony Busuttil	<i>Appointed November 2023</i>
Bernadette McCartney	<i>Appointed November 2023</i>
Darren Smith	<i>Appointed February 2024</i>
David Porter	<i>Resigned November 2023</i>
Lucy Adams	<i>Resigned December 2023</i>

The directors have been in office since the start of the year to the date of this report unless otherwise stated.

Principal activities

To carry out the company’s strategies and to achieve its short-term and long-term objectives, the company engaged in the following principal activities during the year.

- Promoting and fostering the participation of people with experience of homelessness in the development and improvement of homelessness assistance service delivery, the development and implementation of policies and programs to address homelessness, and research, debate and education about homelessness;
- Promoting and contributing to the development and implementation of policies and programs to address homelessness;
- Promoting and fostering the development and improvement of homelessness assistance service delivery;
- Promoting and contributing to research, debate and education about homelessness;
- Promoting and fostering co-operation, collaboration and communication within and between homelessness assistance services;
- Acting as the peak industry and advocacy body for homelessness assistance services in Victoria;
- Doing all other things which are necessary or expedient to further the objects of the Council.

Information on directors

Jane Barnes

Chief of Staff, Wintringham
Qualifications: Bachelor of Art (Recreation)

Lucy Adams

Strategic Advocacy and Policy Manager, Civil Justice, Access and Equity Victoria Legal Aid
Qualifications: BA, LLB (Hons)

David Porter

Division Director, Macquarie Capital
Qualifications: Bachelor of Commerce (Accounting) Bachelor of Laws (Hons) Graduate Diploma of Chartered Accounting

Celia Adams

Chief Executive Officer, Beyond Housing
Qualifications: Bachelor of Arts (Sociology), Adv. Dip Government (Management), GAICD

Wayne Merritt

CEO, Wayss
Qualifications: Graduate Certificate of Business Management, Bachelor of Nursing

Heidi Tucker

CEO, Anchor Incorporated
Qualifications: Bachelor of Social Science; Graduate Australian Institute of Company

Natalie McDonald

CEO, Quantum Support Services
Qualifications: MBA, Bachelor of Commerce, CPA, MAICD

Paul Turton

Executive General Manager, Client Services Vincent Care Victoria
Qualifications: Diploma of Leadership and Management, Cert 4 Workplace and Business Coaching, Master of Arts, Bachelor of Theology, Diploma of Ministry [hons].

Stephen Schmidtke

Executive Director, Client Services, Sacred Heart Mission
Qualifications: Master of Clinical Family Therapy, Bachelor of Human Service

Lee-anne Chapman

Group Manager, Uniting Victoria & Tasmania
Qualifications: Bachelor of Social Science, Bachelor of Social Work

Darren Smith

CEO, Aboriginal Housing Victoria, Board member of CHIA VIC.
Qualifications: Bachelor of Laws and Bachelor of Engineering (Civil), Executive Masters of Public Administration

Anthony Busuttil

Director of Business Services, Genazzano FCJ College
Qualifications: Bachelor of Accounting and Business Law, FCPA, MAICD

Bernadette McCartney

Executive Director, Services at Meli

Meetings of directors

Directors	Board meetings		Governance committee meetings	
	Number eligible to attend	Number attended	Number eligible to attend	Number attended
Jane Barnes	5	4	1	1
Lucy Adams	2	2	1	1
David Porter	2	2	—	—
Celia Adams	5	5	—	—
Wayne Merritt	5	5	—	—
Heidi Tucker	5	5	—	—
Natalie McDonald	5	5	1	1
Paul Turton	5	4	1	1
Stephen Schmidtke	5	3	1	—
Lee-anne Chapman	5	5	—	—
Darren Smith	2	1	—	—
Anthony Busuttil	3	3	—	—
Deborah Di Natale	5	5	1	1
Bernadette McCartney	1	1	—	—

Members guarantee

The company is incorporated under the *Corporations Act 2001* and is a company limited by guarantee. If the company is wound up, the Constitution states that each member is required to contribute to a maximum of \$50 each towards meeting any outstandings and obligations of the company. At 30 June 2024 the number of members was 28. The combined total amount that members of the company are liable to contribute if the company is wound up is \$1,400.

Auditor's independence declaration

A copy of the auditor's independence declaration in relation to the audit for the financial year is provided with this report.



Jane Barnes
Director



Anthony Busuttil
Director

Dated this 25th day of October 2024

Auditor's Independence Declaration to the Directors of Council to Homeless Persons (CHP)

In accordance with section 60-40 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, I declare to the best of my knowledge and belief in relation to the audit of the financial report of Council to Homeless Persons for the year ended 30 June 2024, there have been:

- no contraventions of the auditor independence requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* in relation to the audit; and
- no contraventions of the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* (including Independence Standards) in relation to the audit.



M J HARRISON
Partner



PITCHER PARTNERS
Melbourne

Date: 28 October 2024

Directors' Declaration

The directors of the company declare that:

1. In the directors' opinion, the financial statements and notes thereto, as set out on pages 28 – 35, satisfy the requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, including:
 - a. complying with Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulations 2022*; and
 - b. giving a true and fair view of the financial position as at 30 June 2024 and performance for the year ended on that date of the Company.
2. In the directors' opinion there are reasonable grounds to believe that the company will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

Signed in accordance with subsection 60.15(2) of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulations 2022*.



Jane Barnes
Director



Anthony Busuttil
Director

Dated this 25th day of October 2024

Statement of Profit or Loss

for the year ended 30 June 2024

	Note	2024 \$	2023 \$
Revenue and other income			
Other revenue	3	3,454,409	3,771,005
		3,454,409	3,771,005
Less: expenses			
Depreciation and amortisation expense		(146,516)	(114,428)
Employee benefits expense		(2,241,820)	(1,919,176)
IT maintenance expense		(82,949)	(68,887)
Lease expense		(2,347)	(9,076)
Advertising expense		(27,903)	(7,104)
Finance costs		(33,974)	(11,658)
Project Expenses		(513,536)	(1,137,197)
Parity Publication		(105,570)	(99,498)
Other expenses		(333,040)	(245,072)
		(3,487,655)	(3,612,096)
Surplus before income tax expense		(33,246)	158,909
Other comprehensive income for the year		—	—
Total comprehensive income		(33,246)	158,909

Statement of Financial Position

as at 30 June 2024

	Note	2024 \$	2023 \$
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	5	525,062	305,122
Receivables	6	172,017	95,599
Other financial assets	7	1,664,790	1,833,022
Total current assets		2,361,869	2,233,743
Non-current assets			
Lease assets	9	227,475	9,114
Property, plant and equipment	8	123,710	43,074
Total non-current assets		351,185	52,188
Total assets		2,713,054	2,285,931
Current liabilities			
Payables	10	215,518	259,103
Lease liabilities	9	107,881	9,960
Provisions	11	212,094	200,073
Other liabilities	12	714,793	444,975
Total current liabilities		1,250,286	914,111
Non-current liabilities			
Lease liabilities	9	130,491	—
Provisions	11	18,490	24,784
Total non-current liabilities		148,981	24,784
Total liabilities		1,399,267	938,895
Net assets		1,313,787	1,347,036
Equity			
Reserves	13	—	104,934
Accumulated Surplus		1,313,787	1,242,102
Total equity		1,313,787	1,347,036

Statement of Changes in Equity

for the Year Ended 30 June 2024

	Reserves \$	Accumulated Surplus \$	Total Equity \$
Balance as at 1 July 2022	58,808	1,129,319	1,188,127
Surplus for the year	—	158,909	158,909
Total comprehensive income for the year	—	158,909	158,909
Transfers out of reserve	(58,808)	58,808	—
Transfers into reserve	104,934	(104,934)	—
Balance as at 1 July 2023	104,934	1,242,099	1,347,033
Deficit for the year	—	(33,246)	(33,246)
Total comprehensive income for the year	—	(33,246)	(33,246)
Transfer out of reserve	(104,934)	104,934	—
Balance as at 30 June 2024	—	1,313,787	1,313,787

Statement of Cash Flows

for the year ended 30 June 2024

	Note	2024 \$	2023 \$
Cash flow from operating activities			
Receipts from customers		3,864,139	3,188,720
Payments to suppliers and employees		(3,412,387)	(3,547,138)
Interest received		—	41,722
Net cash provided by / (used in) operating activities		451,752	(316,696)
Cash flow from investing activities			
Payment for property, plant and equipment		(115,444)	(14,825)
Net cash provided by / (used in) investing activities		(115,444)	(14,825)
Cash flow from financing activities			
Principal portion of lease payments		(116,368)	(116,089)
Net cash provided by / (used in) financing activities		(116,368)	(116,089)
Reconciliation of cash			
Cash at beginning of the financial year		305,122	752,732
Net increase / (decrease) in cash held		219,940	(447,610)
Cash at end of financial year ^{14(a)}		525,062	305,122

Note 1: Basis of Preparation General information

The financial report is a general purpose financial report that has been prepared in accordance with the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* and Australian Accounting Standards - Simplified Disclosures, Interpretations and other applicable authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board. This includes compliance with the recognition and measurement requirements of all Australian Accounting Standards, Interpretations and other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board and the disclosure requirements of AASB 1060 *General Purpose Financial Statements - Simplified Disclosures for For-Profit and Not-for-Profit Tier 2 Entities*.

The financial report covers Council to Homeless Persons as an individual entity. Council to Homeless Persons is a company limited by guarantee, incorporated and domiciled in Australia. Council to Homeless Persons is a not-for-profit entity for the purpose of preparing the financial statements.

The financial report was approved by the directors at the date of the directors' report.

Historical Cost Convention

The financial report has been prepared under the historical cost convention, as modified by revaluations to fair value for certain classes of assets and liabilities as described in the accounting policies.

Going Concern

The financial report has been prepared on a going concern basis, which contemplates continuity of normal business activities and the realisation of assets and the settlement of liabilities in the ordinary course of business.

Significant accounting estimates and judgements

The preparation of the financial report requires the use of certain estimates and judgements in applying the company's accounting policies. Those estimates and judgements significant to the financial report are disclosed in Note 2 to the financial statements.

Accounting policies

The following accounting policies have been applied in the preparation and presentation of the financial report.

(a) Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand, demand deposits, short-term deposits with an original maturity of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities in the statement of financial position.

(b) Employee benefits

(i) Short-term employee benefit obligations

Liabilities arising in respect of wages and salaries, annual leave and other employee benefits (other than termination benefits) expected to be settled wholly before twelve months after the end of the reporting period are measured at the (undiscounted) amounts based on remuneration rates which are expected to be paid when the liability is settled. The expected cost of short-term employee benefits in the form of compensated absences such as annual leave is recognised in the provision for employee benefits. All other short-term employee benefit obligations are presented as payables in the statement of financial position.

(ii) Long-term employee benefit obligations

The provision for other long-term employee benefits, including obligations for long service leave and annual leave, which are not expected to be settled wholly before twelve months after the end of the reporting period, are measured at the present value of the estimated future cash outflow to be made in respect of the services provided by employees up to the reporting date. Expected future payments incorporate anticipated future wage and salary levels, durations of service and employee turnover, and are discounted at rates determined by reference to market yields at the end of the reporting period on government bonds that are denominated in the currency in which the benefits will be paid.

Any remeasurements for changes in assumptions of obligations for other long-term employee benefits are recognised in profit or loss in the periods in which the change occurs.

Other long-term employee benefit obligations are presented as current liabilities in the statement of

financial position if the company does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement for at least twelve months after the reporting date, regardless of when the actual settlement is expected to occur. All other long-term employee benefit obligations are presented as non-current liabilities in the statement of financial position.

(c) Leases

Lease assets are measured at cost less accumulated depreciation and any accumulated impairment losses. Lease assets are depreciated over the shorter of the lease term and the estimated useful life of the underlying asset, on a basis that is consistent with the expected pattern of consumption of the economic benefits embodied in the underlying asset.

Lease liabilities are measured at the present value of the remaining lease payments. Interest expense on lease liabilities is recognised in profit or loss. Variable lease payments not included in the measurement of lease liabilities are recognised as an expense in the period in which they are incurred.

Lease payments made in relation to leases of 12-months or less and leases of low value assets (for which a lease asset and a lease liability has not been recognised) are recognised as an expense on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

(d) Property, plant and equipment

Plant and equipment

Depreciation

All property, plant and equipment is depreciated over their estimated useful lives.

Leasehold improvements

Leasehold improvements are depreciated over the shorter of either the unexpired period of the lease or the estimated useful lives of the improvements.

(e) Revenue from contracts with customers

Revenue for the provision of services through Project Funding Agreements and Government Grants

The company derives revenue primarily from Grants and Project Funding. Revenue is recognised as, or when, services are provided or obligations undertaken, and is measured at an amount that reflects the consideration to which the company expects to be entitled in exchange for the services. This income is recognised over time.

Revenue that does not satisfy a performance obligation under AASB 15 that has been recorded in the profit and loss statement but will be expended in future years is acknowledged through a committed expenditure reserve identifying that this funding is to be utilised in future financial periods.

Revenue for which there is no legally enforceable agreement, or sufficient specific performance obligations is recognised when control of the funding is obtained. This income is recognised at a point in time.

Note 2: Significant Accounting Estimates and Judgements

In the process of applying the company's accounting policies, management makes various judgements that can significantly affect the amounts recognised in the financial statements. In addition, the determination of carrying amounts of some assets and liabilities require estimation of the effects of uncertain future events. Outcomes within the next financial year that are different from the assumptions made could require a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of those assets and liabilities affected by the assumption.

The following outlines the major judgements made by management in applying the company's accounting policies and/or the major sources of estimation uncertainty, that have the most significant effect on the amounts recognised in the financial statements and/or have a significant risk of resulting in a material adjustment to the carrying amount of assets and liabilities within the next financial year:

(a) Revenue recognition

Revenue from the provision of services comprises revenue derived from Government grants and Project Funding. These services are provided under contractual arrangements that contain enforceable and sufficiently specific performance obligations. Revenue from the provision of services is recognised over time, as performance obligations are satisfied, based on either costs incurred or service hours performed, consistent with the manner in which services are provided. The provision of services over time requires the estimation of project progression that requires judgement by management.

(b) Leases assets and lease liabilities

At the commencement date of a lease (other than leases of 12-months or less and leases of low value assets), the company recognises a lease asset representing its right to use the underlying asset and a lease liability representing its obligation to make lease payments. In order to measure a lease asset and corresponding lease liability, the company is required to make a determination of the lease term. This determination includes an assessment of whether the company is reasonably certain to exercise an option to extend the lease or to purchase the underlying asset, or not to exercise an option to terminate the lease. In making this judgement, the company considers all relevant facts and circumstances that create an economic incentive for the company to exercise, or not to exercise, the option, including any expected changes in facts and circumstances from the commencement date of the lease until the exercise date of the option.

Note 3: Revenue and Other Income

Government Grants	1,597,697	1,553,545
Parity Income	291,313	259,927
Donations and Other Revenue	1,565,399	1,957,533
	3,454,409	3,771,005

Note 4: Key Management Personnel Compensation

Total compensation paid or payable to key management personnel	580,17	709,013
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Note 5: Cash And Cash Equivalents

Cash on hand	367	203
Cash at bank	524,69	304,919
	525,06	305,122

Note 6: Receivables

<i>Current</i>		
Receivables	172,01	95,599

Note 7: Other Financial Assets

<i>Current</i>		
<i>Financial assets</i>		
Term Deposits	1,664,79	1,833,022

Note 8: Property, Plant and Equipment

<i>Leasehold improvements</i>		
At cost	88,267	—
Accumulated depreciation	(14,711)	—
	73,556	—

<i>Plant and equipment</i>		
Computer equipment at cost	—	30,768
Accumulated depreciation	—	(30,768)
Other capital assets at cost	228,356	201,179
Accumulated depreciation	(178,202)	(158,105)
	50,154	43,074

Total plant and equipment	50,154	43,074
Total property, plant and equipment	123,710	43,074

(a) Reconciliations

Reconciliation of the carrying amounts of property, plant and equipment at the beginning and end of the current financial year

<i>Leasehold improvements</i>		
Opening carrying amount	—	—
Additions	88,267	—
Depreciation expense	(14,711)	—
Closing carrying amount	73,556	—

<i>Other capital assets</i>		
Opening carrying amount	43,074	47,295
Additions	27,177	14,825
Depreciation expense	(20,097)	(19,046)
Closing carrying amount	50,154	43,074

Note 9: Lease Assets and Lease Liabilities

(a) Lease assets

<i>Buildings</i>		
Under lease	327,563	328,111
Accumulated depreciation	(100,088)	(318,997)
	227,475	9,114

Total carrying amount of lease assets	227,475	9,114
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Reconciliations

Reconciliation of the carry amount of lease assets at the beginning and end of the financial year:

<i>Buildings</i>		
Opening carrying amount	9,114	118,484
Additions	327,563	—
Depreciation	(109,202)	(109,370)
Closing carrying amount	227,475	9,114

(b) Lease liabilities

Current		
2 Stanley Street Lease liability	107,881	9,960

Non-current		
2 Stanley Street Lease liability	130,49	—

Total carrying amount of lease liabilities	238,372	9,960
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Note 10: Payables

Current		
<i>Unsecured liabilities</i>		
Trade creditors	87,813	192,293
Sundry creditors and accruals	127,70	66,810
	215,51	259,103

Note 11: Provisions

Current		
Employee benefit	212,09	200,073

Non-current		
Employee benefit	18,49	24,784

Note 12: Other Liabilities

Current		
Deferred income	714,79	444,975

Note 13: Reserves

Committed expenditure reserve	13(a)	—	104,934
		—	104,934

(a) Committed expenditure reserve

The committed expenditure reserve is used to records funds received, which are required to be recognised as revenue, and allocated for future years per obligations.

Movements in reserve

Opening balance	104,934	58,808
Transfers out	(104,934)	(58,808)
Transfers in	—	104,934
Closing balance	—	104,934

Note 14: Cash Flow Information

(a) Reconciliation of cash

Cash at the end of the financial year as shown in the statement of cash flows is reconciled to the related items in the statement of financial position as follows:

Cash on hand	367	203
Cash at bank	524,695	304,919
	525,062	305,122

Note 15: Related Party Transactions

(a) Transactions with key management personnel of the entity or its parent and their personally related entities

There were no transactions with Key Management Personnel, other than the remuneration identified in Note 4.

Directors are not remunerated for the fulfillment of Director responsibilities.

Note 16: Events Subsequent to Reporting Date

There has been no matter or circumstance, which has arisen since 30 June 2024 that has significantly affected or may significantly affect:

- the operations, in financial years subsequent to 30 June 2024, of the company, or
- the results of those operations, or
- the state of affairs, in financial years subsequent to 30 June 2024, of the company.

Note 17: Company Details

The registered office of the company is:
Council to Homeless Persons (CHP)
 2 Stanley Street
 COLLINGWOOD VIC 3066

Note 18: Remuneration of Auditors

Remuneration of auditors for:

<i>Pitcher Partners – Melbourne</i>		
Audit or review of the financial report	7,200	6,900
Total remuneration of auditors	7,200	6,900

Report on the Audit of the Financial Report

Opinion

We have audited the financial report of Council to Homeless Persons (CHP) (“the Company”), which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2024, the statement of profit or loss, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements including material accounting policy information, and the directors’ declaration.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report of Council to Homeless Persons (CHP), is in accordance with Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, including:

- a. giving a true and fair view of the Company’s financial position as at 30 June 2024 and of its financial performance for the year then ended; and
- b. complying with Australian Accounting Standards - Simplified Disclosures and Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulations 2022*.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor’s Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of our report. We are independent of the Company in accordance with the auditor independence requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* (“ACNC Act”) and the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board’s APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including Independence Standards)* (“the Code”) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

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

Other Information

The directors are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Company’s annual report for the year ended 30 June 2024, but does not include the financial report and our auditor’s report thereon.

Our opinion on the financial report does not cover the other information and accordingly we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial report, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial report or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Responsibilities of Management and the Directors for the Financial Report

Management is responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures and the ACNC Act, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, management is responsible for assessing the Company’s ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters relating to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Company or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

The directors are responsible for overseeing the Company’s financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

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

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

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Company's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the directors.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Company to cease to continue as a going concern
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

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

Independence

We confirm that the independence declaration required by the ACNC Act, which has been given to the directors, would be in the same terms if given to the directors as at the time of this auditor's report.



M J HARRISON
Partner



PITCHER PARTNERS
Melbourne

Date: 28 October 2024



Council to Homeless Persons

Council to Homeless Persons is the peak body for homelessness in Victoria.

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Council to Homeless Persons



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