



moss

merri outreach support service

ANNUAL
REPORT

2023



moss Ltd

merri outreach support service Ltd

'Cold Feet to Warm Heart'

*The Journey from Homelessness
to a Home*



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STATEMENTS



VISION STATEMENT

"Striving to end homelessness, sustaining housing, strengthening communities."

MISSION STATEMENT

"MOSS treats all people equally by ensuring they feel welcomed, connected, involved, secure and supported."

THIS YEAR'S THEME

"Cold Feet to Warm Heart" – the Journey from Homelessness to a Home

Get in touch online...

Email: merri@merri.org.au or visit our website: www.merri.org.au

DONATE TO MOSS!

Donations enhance the capacity of MOSS to meet the needs of homeless people in flexible and creative ways.

It's because of our compassionate donors that we've been able to help thousands of Victorians make positive transitions and achieve long term stability in their lives. We're eternally grateful for people like you who are committed to ending homelessness.

To understand how your donation can positively impact our organisation's service delivery, please visit our [donations page](#) on our website or scan the QR code below.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Merri Outreach Support Service acknowledges the Wurundjeri people, the traditional owners of the Kulin Nations and custodians of the lands on which we work and pay our respects to Indigenous Elders past, present and emerging.



MOSS is a place where people of diverse genders and sexual orientations are welcomed and supported



Chairperson's Report

Stephen Gagen

This year's theme, Cold Feet into Warm Heart, encapsulates the challenges faced by our clients as they confront the growing issue of homelessness.

There's a severe shortage of appropriate and affordable housing in Australia, particularly in Victoria. Melbourne is the world's fourth least-affordable housing market, exacerbating the struggle for low-income families.

Victoria has the lowest proportion of social housing in Australia – 3% of all dwellings; the National average is 4.2%. A chronic shortage of affordable private housing further compounds the problem.

Despite the Victorian government's \$5.3 billion Big Housing Build initiative, aimed at adding 12,000 social and affordable homes, the increase in housing stock has been minimal. The discrepancy in promised versus actual outcomes raises concerns about the government's response to the pressing needs of the homeless population.

Compounding these challenges, organisations like MOSS face ongoing pressure to do more with less, necessitating the pursuit of grants and charitable funding to support our critical work. Winston Churchill's famous mantra, KPO – Keep Plodding On, resonates with us. While our feet may feel the cold, our hearts at MOSS remain warm, fuelling our determination not to give up. Our Vision Statement at MOSS is to address the unfair distribution of wealth, power, and community benefits by actively working with those experiencing or at risk of homelessness. It is clear that waiting for government intervention is no longer sufficient: we must actively strive for change.

Over the past year, we have engaged with local MPs and councils, advocating for change, and we helped raise awareness during Homelessness Week – I particularly liked the 6000 origami houses on the steps of the Victorian Parliament.



Collaborations with sponsors such as Kogan, Underworks, HoMie, and Superyard Sustainable Construction have provided both support and substantial donations.

Despite bureaucratic delays, MOSS remains committed to its proposal to build a youth refuge and to become a Housing Provider. Assertive outreach programs with various councils continue, expanding our reach to address homelessness in different regions.

Maintaining financial stability is crucial, considering the increased demand for services and the ongoing funding challenges. The establishment of the Finance, Risk and Audit Committee has been instrumental in implementing measures to stabilise our finances.

While the homelessness situation appears grim, the 2023 Victorian Housing Statement brings us some hope that things will improve. The Statement takes a multi-faceted approach, including renter protections, streamlined planning processes, and increased funding for social housing. We aim to collaborate with the Minister for Housing to contribute to these efforts.

Despite challenges, MOSS remains resolute in its mission to turn Cold Feet into Warm Hearts. The dedication of our directors, managers, staff, and volunteers to provide shelter, support, and hope is unwavering.

On behalf of the Board of Directors I extend a warm welcome to staff who have joined us during the year, and I express my gratitude to those who have left us. I would like to especially highlight the contributions of our departing Treasurer Richard Agar.

Special thanks go to the Board of Directors, CEO Mark Goodie, and the entire MOSS team for their hard work and commitment.

Stephen Gagen – Board Chair

CEO's Report

Mark Goodie

Dear Valued Supporters and Dedicated Stakeholders, as we embark on a journey through the past year, Merri Outreach Support Service (MOSS) finds itself navigating the ever-changing currents of a post-pandemic world, much like the rest of society. This transformative period has brought forth new financial challenges that have touched the lives of many.

The escalating costs of living, encompassing fundamental essentials like food and fuel, along with vital services such as gas, electricity, and mortgage interest rates have weighed heavily on individuals and families. Most concerning is the persistent growth in the homeless population, with an increasing number of individuals experiencing homelessness for the very first time seeking our assistance.

On a positive note, governments have been addressing a long-standing plea from the homeless sector – the imperative need to construct more housing. However, we are compelled to ask ourselves: Have we acted in time? Investment in housing must transcend political divides, forming enduring bipartisan agreements. It is imperative that we explore novel and innovative approaches to combat this mounting crisis, with a resolute focus on a housing-first model.

The Australian dream of homeownership remains out of reach now for many and now ... private rental, as private rental prices soar beyond affordability. Homelessness has reached unprecedented levels, necessitating our consideration of embracing a cost-based social rental model, which has proven successful in Europe. Research indicates that this model may serve as the bridge leading countless Australians from homelessness to a stable home.



At MOSS, our unwavering commitment centres around prioritizing people in the support we extend. We firmly believe that housing is an inherent right for all. Over the past year, as demands for services in the community and health sectors have surged to unprecedented levels, MOSS has been at the forefront, providing support to over 800 families, more than 900 single individuals, and over 650 children, all grappling with homelessness.

Unfortunately, over half of our consumers come from diverse backgrounds, with 8.5% identifying as First Nations peoples seeing these sectors highly overrepresented.

While MOSS has made a profound impact in the lives of those we serve, the challenges of securing funding persist, with State and Federal Governments making cost reductions that compound the difficulties of service and material aid provision.



Nonetheless, this year, MOSS exhibited exceptional financial resilience by proactively implementing strategies to ensure the sustainability of our services, all while maintaining our financial stability. In response to economic hurdles, we efficiently managed our resources, safeguarding our financial wellbeing. These efforts have been pivotal in fortifying MOSS, ensuring MOSS remains in a robust and sustainable financial position, empowering us to pursue our mission of striving to end homelessness.

In the upcoming year, MOSS is poised to take critical steps toward becoming a registered housing provider. This transformation will empower us to provide even more comprehensive support to those in need. Governments, at all levels, have begun recognising the urgent necessity of increasing housing availability, and MOSS stands firmly committed to this shared goal. We have been diligently working in partnership with local governments to address the growing population of rough sleepers, and we anticipate that this challenge will persist in the months ahead.

As the cost-of-living forces more individuals into homelessness, including vulnerable youth and families new to this trauma, timely support is of paramount importance. It is far more cost-effective and humane to prioritise housing as the initial response rather than relying on rental subsidies, health and allied health services or substance and mental health interventions.

At MOSS, our dedication to transforming "Cold Feet to Warm Hearts" remains unshaken. We invite you to join us in the upcoming journey as we continue to strive to provide shelter, support, and hope to those in need. Together, we can effect meaningful change in the lives of those experiencing homelessness, contributing to a future that is brighter, more inclusive and filled with warmth.

We extend our deepest gratitude for your enduring support and unwavering commitment to this critical cause.

Warm Regards,
Mark Goodie
CEO, Merri Outreach Support Service Ltd

North and West Regional Children's Resource Program [NWRCRP] Report

The North and West Regional Children's Resource Program (NWRCRP) was developed to assist specialist homelessness services (SHS) and family violence services to identify and address the specific needs of children experiencing homelessness and family violence.

The program is statewide, with coordinators in each metropolitan and rural region. The NWRCRP are a team of two coordinators usually based at the MOSS Broadmeadows office. The Program Manager and Coordinator provide a range of support to homelessness and family violence services in the North and West Metropolitan Region who work with children.

NWRCRP support includes:

- The provision of secondary consultation, information, support and resources to practitioners.
- The provision of brokerage to enhance opportunities for children to engage and maintain their education and reduce social isolation.
- To provide further encouragement to homelessness support providers to integrate child-focused assessment and case planning into their work practice.
- The development of training for practitioners and SHS agencies.
- Conducting research as required and promoting best practices.
- Advocating for children experiencing homelessness on various issues that affect their health, well-being and status within our community.

The mission of The Statewide Children's Resource Program (SCRCP) is "Giving a voice to vulnerable children", and we believe that every child deserves a safe and nurturing environment, free from the effects of family violence and homelessness.

Through the application of the SCRCP's programs and resources, practitioners have strived to create a positive change in the lives of children, empowering them to heal, grow, and thrive.

The Homeless Children Brokerage Program (HCBP) is child-specific and aims to encourage practitioners to view children as clients in their own right and respond to their individual needs. The HCBP was established to enhance opportunities for children experiencing homelessness and family violence. The brokerage aims to support infants, children and young people to engage and maintain education, reduce social isolation, or provide social and emotional growth opportunities.

In 2022-2023, \$48,960 was allocated to the HCBP. The HCBP was fully expended by the end of February, with 43 practitioners across 17 agencies accessing the Homeless Children's Brokerage program. In the North and West region, the HCBP was used to support children to engage or continue their education, partake in physical and developmental activities, and access specialist medical and developmental supports and other supports they may not have experienced previously.

Over the past year, the SCRCP remained committed to enhancing knowledge across the family violence and SHS sector and promoting the well-being of children and their families living without a home and/or victim-survivors of family violence. The SCRCP focuses on four key areas of work: knowledge building, brokerage management, training provision, and advocacy.

We firmly believe in advocating for the rights and well-being of children impacted by family violence and living without a home. We work tirelessly to raise awareness about their issues, collaborating with policymakers, government bodies, and community stakeholders to drive systemic change. Our advocacy efforts aim to create a society prioritising all children's safety, stability, and holistic development across our communities.

One of our primary objectives is to support practitioners to expand their understanding and expertise in working with children impacted by family violence and homelessness.

By offering comprehensive resources and secondary consultations, we equip practitioners with the tools to provide effective support and care to children using best practice principles.

Our continued partnership with the Council to Homeless Persons, Emerging Mind and Centre for Excellence has ensured we are resilient and creative in delivering our online training sessions. Throughout the last 12 months, The SCRCP released a range of new free resources, including:

- Children Accessing Specialist Homelessness Services: An induction for new practitioners' guide.
- A Child's Rights poster.
- Mock brokerage applications - Successful and unsuccessful examples.
- Children's Wellbeing Case Management Reflection Tool.

Thanks to all the great work you do with vulnerable infants, children and young people in our community. By committing to this work, you are building a solid foundation for children to access necessary support and overcome the challenges of family violence and homelessness. We hope to see many more of you face-to-face over the coming year during agency visits to support you in your work with children.



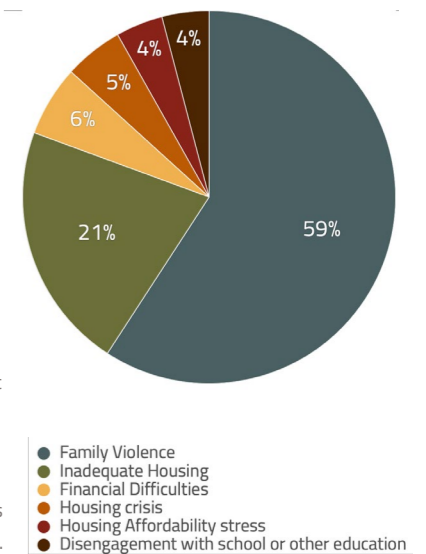
HCBP Statistics 2022-2023

Main Presenting Reason

The top three main reasons for accessing the HCBP are as follows:

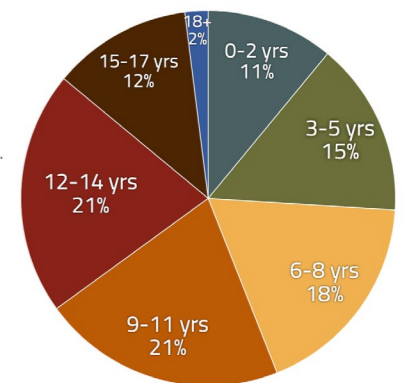
1. Family Violence
2. Inadequate Housing
3. Financial Difficulty

Family violence was listed overwhelmingly as the main presenting reason, with more than half of all children participating. This is a significant increase from last year's report, where the two biggest reasons for accessing support were almost equally the Housing crisis and family violence, respectively.



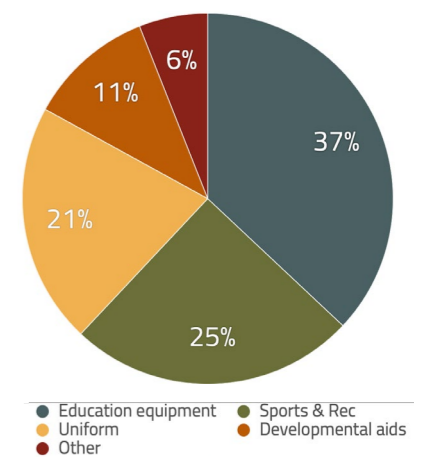
Age of Children

Most children the HCBP supported were school-aged, with primary school-aged children being the largest cohort. This is consistent with previous years and brokerage reports.



Types of Expenditure

The three most significant expenses were equipment for education, such as laptops and tablets, sports and recreation and uniforms. This is a consistent trend for the NWRCRP. This demonstrates a worrying trend that public education is getting increasingly unaffordable for the families our sector supports. Despite various services such as State School relief and rebate programs, families still use the HCBP to access essentials such as uniforms and textbooks.



The funding for sports and recreational activities has increased since the previous brokerage year; easing restrictions and uncertainty has allowed greater confidence and availability in accessing clubs and programs.

Bright Futures Program Report

The Bright Futures team, work alongside children and young people aged 0-17 accessing homelessness and family violence services with their caregivers in the North and West metropolitan region of Melbourne. We are a team of five workers based at the MOSS Broadmeadows office; however, we provide outreach support and facilitate group activities all over the North and West of Melbourne.

The Bright Futures Program offers three support streams

- Stream 1: Assessment and development of a case plan.
- Stream 2: Enhanced case management
- Stream 3: Therapeutic group work

The Bright Futures program engages with children and young people throughout their journey from homelessness to a home; the team may start working with children residing in emergency accommodation in motels through to their long-term homes. During their journey, Bright Futures strives to reduce the impact of homelessness and the associated trauma that affects children's well-being, education, health, and social development. The program achieves this by prioritizing the well-being of children, advocating for their needs, providing specialist-enhanced case management, working closely with other services and schools, facilitating therapeutic groups, holiday programs and reducing overall stress.

In the past year, the Bright Futures team have successfully navigated multiple challenges, including the rising cost of living, increasing disadvantage for children experiencing homelessness, cuts in funding, extensive waitlists for essential services, and staff changes within the team. The team embodied what it means to work within a team case management model to overcome these challenges through providing peer support, peer supervision, being flexible and utilising each other's strengths. An example of this involved the Bright Futures team working intensely alongside the wider MOSS team to support a family experiencing a housing crisis who had unexpectedly lost their housing support, resulting in a positive outcome and the family

moving into long-term housing. As always, the children engaged with the program continue to show remarkable resilience and adapt to the challenges they faced within the homelessness and family violence systems.

One of the biggest 2023 highlights for the team was the annual Bright Futures Summer Camp held at Coastal Forest Lodge in Anglesea. The camp ran for three days and two nights. This year seven children attended aged between 8-11 years old. The activities included surfing, body boarding, a horse trail ride, a beach outing, a low ropes course, a bush walk, movie nights and crafts. Feedback received from the children suggested that horse riding was their favourite activity. For some children, it was their first time at the beach, horse riding and surfing.



Disadvantages may result in children being unable to partake in extracurricular activities. The Bright Futures camp allows children to have similar experiences to their peers. It provides a safe space where children can improve their emotional regulation, social, communication, and listening skills alongside children experiencing similar situations. This year the children created books containing photos of them participating in activities; these books help sustain memories and encourage children to share their experiences with family and friends. Bright Futures are already looking forward to the 2024 camp.



Connections Program Report

The Connections Program provides linkages and short-term case management to singles and couples over 26 years old with unmet health needs in the LGAs of Darebin, Hume, Merri-Bek, Banyule, Nillumbuk and Whittlesea. We are a team of 6 workers, usually based at the Broadmeadows office; however, much of our work is outreach.

Once again, the Connections Program had a very successful year! We supported 65 people with their journeys from homelessness to home and assisted a further 139 people to connect with the support and services they needed. Many of the people who moved into their new homes had either been sleeping rough, were displaced due to redevelopment of their homes, were under financial stress and could no longer afford the high rents imposed on them, lived in accommodation that did not suit their needs, or had experienced trauma and needed a safe and affordable place to call home.

During the year, we partnered with an aged care provider, redeveloping the land where some independent living units were situated. Our role in the partnership was to support the affected tenants to find new homes, and with 25 tenants impacted by the redevelopment, we spent many hours working on housing applications and establishing linkages with other services. Over 90% of tenants have successfully moved and have been supported to develop new connections in their chosen locations.

From January 2023, Connections has been providing services under the new Care Finder program. This Australia-wide program was commissioned following recommendations from the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Standards. Care finders offer face-to-face support to help people navigate and access aged care services, and we have been working across six local government areas to provide this program to eligible people for My Aged Care services. Year-to-date, 64 clients have benefited from our care finder support, and we continue to see a consistent and rising demand for the service.

Our consumers continue to provide us with positive feedback on their experience of working with members of the Connections program, and we are very proud of this feedback. Team members continue their commitment to providing our clients with the best possible service and support and empower them to navigate the complex and stressful barriers that prevent them from achieving their goals.

CASE SCENARIO

Note: John is a pseudonym

"The care finder program is supported by funding from North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network through the Australian Government's PHN Program"

John was referred to our care finder program following early self-discharge from the Hospital. John misused alcohol, and his home environment was cluttered. These factors contributed to the hospitalisation, as he had fallen in his home and fractured his hip. John had approved a level 2 home care package with meals, personal care, domestic assistance, nursing and transport but had opted out and was not receiving any services.

Aged 65 years, John had a history of homelessness and lived in shared accommodation with no support on site. He had a friend whom he relied on for transport to his medical and other appointments, but this friend was suffering from fatigue and was not in a position to continue assisting. Paul's social network was limited and did not have any family support.

The immediate concern for John was his safety within the home. Over several visits, the care finder worked to establish a rapport with John and to help him accept that services could assist him in maintaining his independence and reduce the possibility of any further accidents within the home.

Gradually, John accepted this advice, and our care finder engaged a package provider with a sensitivity towards vulnerable men with histories of homelessness. Services were gradually introduced, but John was re-admitted to the Hospital several times. He is now receiving services and continues to live independently. He continues to receive high-level check-ins from our care finder.

This is a condensed version of our care finder engagement with John, but it does demonstrate that care finder involvement can positively influence a vulnerable client with complex needs to accept the support required to live independently. It also indicates that the care finder program brings a continuity of care to the client experience. With the multiple Hospital admissions that John experienced, he could have become disconnected from services, but the care finder was tracking his situation and was able to ensure that services were aware of his admissions and were able to continue with support when he returned home.

Older Persons High Rise Support Programs [OPHRSP] Report

The Older Persons High Rise Support Programs provides social engagement, community development referrals and housing support to people aged 55yrs+ at Holmes Street, Northcote and Barkly Street, Brunswick. In the journey from homelessness to home, the OPHRSP supported people to have hope and connect with support. We are a team of 3 workers based at Holmes Street, Northcote and Barkly Street, Brunswick office.

During the journey from homelessness to home, the OPHRSP Program supports people to have hope and connect. Each program provides very high levels of service delivery to ensure that the tenants can maintain independent living. Despite system challenges, we have continued to provide programs while maintaining the highest levels of service delivery, via one-on-one calls on the telephone or face-to-face. We continued to work closely with DFFH and other services, creating programs with The Brunswick Police and starting a Community Awareness and Safety event with the Department of Families, Fairness & Housing attending.

The support provided by the Older Persons High Rise team makes a difference to each person we work with, making a positive difference and bringing smiles to clients' faces.

TEAM COMMENT: Building trust with each person that we work with is the first best step to how this journey begins. The tenants know that we have heard what they are saying and that it is a safe place, and we will do our best.

CLIENT COMMENT: Since moving into my home, the team has been so good; your program is number one. I tell everyone that because you are helping people, not just me, helping everyone, and every time I say I need help, you fix it straight away. Everything I am happy here.



CASE SCENARIO

Steve was supported to move by the Older Persons High Rise Support Program in February 2023 after living in a boarding house with 7 other people struggling with various complex needs.

"I was linked to IPC Health, and they supported me to secure permanent housing. I was grateful and lucky to book this housing. My Cat "Bookah" moved in, and together, we were supported by the OPHRSP team to move in. I have been supported to attend medical appointments, visit with my father and with other day-to-day living items, and some food vouchers. Since moving into this building, I have linked into the different social programs; for the first time in ages, I have a stable GP not far away. I am using the counselling services, and I have just linked in with a job network program to find some part-time work. Moving into this home has given me stability and a positive outlook on mine and Bookah's future".

"The journey from homelessness to home has been a journey I am glad it is over; I am grateful for the chance to meet with support services through "Homelessness Week". I now have a place where I can call home. I have lovely neighbours with whom we share lunch and morning teas; we have outings and other social groups. We also have access to the MOSS Foodbank every Friday. Living in the OPHRSP gives me the opportunity to learn and participate in the IT mentoring digital divide program to understand and use an Android phone as living in a healthier home".

Steve is learning to take better care of himself and live independently within the community.



Steve and his cat Bookah

Housing Support for the Aged Program [HSAP] Report

The Housing Support for the Aged Program (HSAP) offers ongoing case management assistance to individuals aged 50 and above, who have experienced homelessness and currently live in public housing within the Darebin, Moreland, Banyule, Whittlesea, and Nillumbik areas.

The program comprises a team consisting of two part-time outreach case managers and a program manager. While the program is typically headquartered in Brunswick, it has successfully adapted to the dynamic and evolving work landscape brought about by the COVID pandemic in order to continue delivering its services effectively.

Recognizing the significant impact of social connection and inclusion on the overall health, longevity, and well-being of our clients, we took an unprecedented step by utilising flexible program funds to enhance connectivity and streamline service access. We purchased mobile phones for those without a functional phone, ensuring they remained reachable by service providers. This proactive approach aimed to sustain the continuum of care, mitigate social isolation, uphold a sense of security, alleviate fear and anxiety stemming from uncertainty, and diligently monitor their mental health status.

TEAM COMMENT: Working in the HSAP team, it is nice to be able to support the clients that we are working with and make a difference in their worlds, and having the flexible funding tailors individualised plans.

CLIENT COMMENT: Working with HSAP, I have gone from having an empty house to a home, I can not thank them enough, a thousand times thank you.



CASE SCENARIO

Greg, a 62-year-old male, was referred to the HSAP program through another MOSS program. Before his referral, Greg had owned and operated a small home maintenance and window cleaning business. However, in 2017, his life took a dramatic turn when he fell from a two-story building, sustaining severe injuries to his back and head. This unfortunate incident left Greg dealing with ongoing challenges, including vertigo, persistent headaches, back pain, memory issues, and a declining mental health state. Unable to work due to these physical and mental health issues, Greg found himself unable to pay rent and eventually faced eviction, plunging him into homelessness.

During this challenging period, Greg resorted to couch surfing, relying on the goodwill of friends, family, and occasionally living out of his car. Fortunately, he received assistance from another MOSS service, which ultimately helped him secure a one-bedroom unit through the Department of Health and Human Services. At the time of his referral to HSAP, Greg had just moved into his new accommodation and needed support to maintain it while addressing his long-term medical concerns.

Shortly after settling into his new unit, Greg encountered distressing neighbor behavior. His neighbor was loud, and disruptive and made threats to harm Greg and his property. These incidents frequently escalated to the point of requiring emergency services. The continuous harassment left Greg too frightened to use his own bedroom and bathroom, as they shared a wall with the troublesome neighbor. Over time, Greg's mental health significantly deteriorated, and his OCD became debilitating, with repetitive rituals often preventing him from leaving the house.

HSAP intervened and provided essential assistance to Greg in various areas including advocacy around the housing situation which involved following up with Police and VCAT. HSAP also supported Greg to be linked in with a local GP to address his outstanding medical needs including a referral for mental health support.

Since Greg started working with HSAP, he has relocated to another long-term property, resulting in a significant improvement in his mental health. He now has regular appointments with a doctor and is actively engaged with a psychologist to address his mental health concerns. Greg has also applied for the Disability Support Pension through Centrelink and is awaiting an outcome. Throughout this journey, Greg has expressed his deep gratitude to HSAP for their support in not only helping him establish a new tenancy but also for their ongoing assistance in addressing his mental and physical health challenges.

Social Support Groups Program Report

The Social Support Group Program provides Social Support Groups and Individual Social Support to participants aged over 50 years (Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islanders) and 55 years. My Aged Care Clients (65 years and over) and NDIS participants in the Merri-Bek, Banyule and Darebin local government areas. We are a team of thirteen workers based across sites in Brunswick, Northcote, and Heidelberg.

The journey to remain living independently in their homes is supported by Social Support Groups Program, connecting participants with their communities, engage in meaningful & purposeful group activities and provide support and respite for carers. Under the Wellness and Reablement principles participants can build on individual strengths, capacity, and goals.

Despite the challenges, we have successfully supported seventy-eight participants in a supportive and welcoming environment to connect with their immediate community, remain engaged in meaningful activity and living independently in their own homes. For those new residents moving into permanent housing, having a familiar and supportive network onsite to assist during transition periods can make a difference to how quickly they feel settled in their new surroundings. Providing regular meals, company within a safe community for those participants to attend establishes connection, easing the stress that comes with being in unfamiliar surroundings. Service to assist in referrals to

new health care providers, monitoring and reviewing health needs ensure that the participants can remain living independently with all their in-home support needs being addressed.

With Aged Care Reforms we have been working through our specialisations to appropriately support and address the various gaps in service for participants from all backgrounds, ensuring that we provide respectful, appropriate, culturally sensitive, and inclusive care to all who attend our program. Undertaking further training and development to improve and enhance practices in place, assisting the program to offer appropriate content and activities, facilitate in safe environments & work collaboratively with external agencies to understand the requirements and challenges for marginalised participants.

Over this year the team have focused on working collaboratively sharing skills, resources & bringing the groups together regularly, celebrating special occasions, outings and providing the opportunity for participants to meet new people, forming new friendships & the chance to get out even more. Working together has had a positive and rewarding impact on the team dynamics, team culture and brought the team closer together. Sharing experiences and our skills, strengthens the program as we learn from each other, draw inspiration from each other's unique creative talents & assists to provide a holistic program.

Our consumers: Thank you for a wonderful Christmas Party, the food was amazing! (Heidi resident) following a successful funding application from Banyule Council to provide a free Christmas Lunch and gift to all residents at 221 Southern Road Heidelberg.



CASE SCENARIO

In 2018, SSG welcomed their first NDIS participant, a 63-year-old, living alone with an intellectual disability (ID). During the pandemic, they were evicted from their SRS which was being redeveloped and placed in temporary housing in Melbourne CBD.

The sudden displacement caused housing insecurity, anxiety and deteriorated their mental, social and emotional wellbeing. They spent two years in the CBD, often travelling long distances to meet with their GP, friends and to attend the Brunswick SSG, a challenging task for this older, intellectually disabled client. Away from their familiar area where they had strong connections, relationships and local supports, they felt isolated and disconnected. Their ID created a barrier for self-advocacy, and they had been on the housing waiting list for 18 years. SSG took the opportunity to assist and applied for priority housing.

In February 2023, DFFH approved a transfer, however due to reduced NDIS funding, the participant was left without a support coordinator. SSG again stepped in to support this client by using their nomination rights to facilitate a transfer to Brunswick. This would reconnect the client with medical, social and advocacy supports, networks that had been severed or strained while they were in temporary housing. The client was excited to live in the same building as other SSG participants of which they had become friends. It also meant that they had daily on-site support through the SSG, a place where the client felt a sense of belonging, safety, and connectedness. SSG liaised with DFFH, their GP and accompanied the client to inspections. Appropriate furniture was sourced and arrangements for relocation were made in May 2023. Since the move to permanent housing, this client has reported feeling happier and that they 'love' their new home.

The sense of security that comes with long-term housing, the connectedness of living amongst friends and the integrated supports that now wrap around this person have enriched this client's mental, social and emotional health, ultimately helping them to live independently in an area that they feel the happiest.



Hume Program Report

The Hume Program provides transitional outreach support to individuals and families in the Hume and Merri-bek LGA's. We are a team of eight workers normally based at the Broadmeadows office, however we are currently working a 50% office and 50% work from home split, the team also has an outpost every Thursday morning from the Unison building at 7 Pearcedale Parade.

The journey from homelessness to a home has seen the Hume Program support people to have hope and connect and engage with appropriate support to achieve positive outcomes. The Hume program has experienced challenges because of the current high level of need in the homelessness sector, as well as a lack of affordable housing outcomes for the most vulnerable and complex consumers we support. Despite this, the Hume program works with consumers to explore all options for achieving positive housing outcomes. Through client-centred service delivery, strong advocacy, and positive partnerships with local services and key stakeholders.

Despite these challenges, we continue to provide the highest standard of quality support to those who have been referred to the service. To achieve positive outcomes for people, the Hume program is continually exploring and developing relationships with other services.

The Hume program builds on the partnership with Unison, which has resulted in a number of people securing social housing. As part of this partnership, we have also been able to provide access to a small foodbank, to ensure people in the areas have access to fresh food. The food has been donated from Second Bite, Fareshare, and The Bakers Block Brunswick. A partnership with Second Chance Animal Rescue has also provided pet food to people who may be in need. A special mention to Hume charitable fund for providing a grant in 2022 to support the food bank. A further special mention to Walter and Eliza Hall Trust for the generous support they have provided Hume consumers in the past financial year, and the ongoing support of Uniting Kildonan for the support provided through Family Violence support packages to ensure that our consumers are able to access goods and services to support their journey of recovery.

As a team, the Hume program has been able to support many families experiencing homelessness in ensuring they are well connected and linked with support to sustain housing and move on in a positive way.

Recently, a consumer who secured a long-term public housing outcome stated that she would not be here without the Hume program's support. She stated that the support and care that she had received had helped her to start over and take control of her life, rather than allowing the situation she was in to control her. She stated that it meant so much to her that the Hume program did not give up on her, even when she wanted to.



CASE SCENARIO

A referral was received from IAP at VincentCare for Hakan. He was described in the referral as a person wanting a safe and secure home to die with dignity. Using an arranged on-site interpreter, staff were able to set up a meeting, and assess his immediate needs.

Hakan presented to staff as an older, vulnerable man who had multiple health issues, including terminal cancer and leukaemia. He made a desperate plea for more appropriate accommodation. Hakan was a resident of an SRS (special residential Service). The environment had been identified to have several detrimental impacts on Hakan's well-being. Hakan had a strong distrust of homelessness services because of negative experiences in which services just stopped making contact.

Surrounded in the SRS by other residents who shared poorly maintained facilities and individuals with severe mental health, Hakan was threatened and forced to take an IVO against another resident. With no other option, Hakan remained in this poor environment. He was severely isolated, with no family to support him and no way to advocate for himself having the language barrier.

Hakan has experienced numerous challenges since his arrival in Australia in 2016. Placed in rooming houses and subsequently the SRS, which took all his pension income, leaving him with very little money to cover his ongoing medical expenses.

After assessing the urgent needs presented to staff, the following plan was put to action.

Contact was made with Unison Pearcedale Parade staff, whom the Hume program have an ongoing and collaborative relationship with. The team were advised there was a vacancy at the building, and a viewing could be arranged for the following day.

When Hakan was informed about this option, his initial distrust quickly turned into one of gratitude and a very emotional heartfelt thanks and relief. Hakan was able to view the property and complete a sign up the same day.

Hakan was supported by the Hume program to access a bond loan through DFFH, and funds through Walter and Eliza Hall Trust to establish and furnish his long-term accommodation. The collaborative work, communication between services, and speed in which services came together, ensured that Hakan was able to find a place to call home and have a place he can live with dignity.

Hakan is now living at the property and has said he feels relief and gratitude for the support to get to this point in his journey.

Transitional Outreach Support Team Report

The Transitional Outreach Support Team (TOST) Program provides case management to individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in the Banyule, Nillumbik, Darebin and Whittlesea LGA. We are a team of 3 full-time workers, including a Program Manager and a part-time worker. Historically, we have been based in Northcote; however, we are currently working from our Broadmeadows office until we can relocate to another office in our funded LGAs.

The journey from homelessness to a home for the many clients in the TOST Program is ongoing and filled with many challenges once a client is picked up for housing support. The limited HEF available for accommodation and lack of long-term housing options means every housing option is explored, including shared housing, rooming house, private rental, community/social housing, hostel and transitional housing. Many of these options are not suitable for families with young children, individuals with complex mental health and physical issues or those with pets due to the location or size of the property and most importantly the rent. Our primary goal is to assist clients in accessing the most suitable housing exit for their needs; however, it is only sometimes possible to deliver the best outcome, or at times, there is no housing outcome.

Despite these ongoing challenges, TOST were able to exit some of our long-term households in transitional housing via one of Haven Home Safe's Social housing development, which therefore allowed others on the waitlist to access transitional housing. One of the families whom TOST had supported was in transitional housing for more than 5 years, and they were successful with an offer of housing in the Banyule LGA.

We have seen an increase in referrals for rough sleepers in our LGA, and despite applying for all housing options available to these individuals, some continue to sleep rough in their chosen locations. We continue to advocate for more housing options and highlight the need for assertive outreach in the Whittlesea and Banyule LGA.

Intensive Case Management Initiative Report

The Intensive Case Management Initiative (ICMI) Program provides case management to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in the LGA of Darebin, Banyule, Nillumbik, and Whittlesea. This is a sole-worker position operating 4 days a week and working closely with the WT Onus hostel based in Northcote where the bulk of referrals for ICMI are received.

The journey from homelessness to a home for the ICMI Program has had some great housing outcomes in the last financial year. The program was able to support individuals to access housing exits through Community Housing, over 55's housing estates, and accessing funds to establish and sustain tenancies through the provision of rent in advance, household items, and distribution of donated clothing and toiletry items.

Despite these great outcomes, we were not able to access housing for every client that was referred to our program due to the lack of housing options and the sheer number of supply and demand against the growing number of people entering the homeless sector in Victoria.

The ICMI program would like to pay its respect and acknowledge the sudden and very sad loss of one of the individuals supported by the program – an Aboriginal man in his early 60's. This client passed away less than a week before he was about to sign up for his permanent housing in an over 55's building. This passing has been a great loss to his community and ICMI and it is important to highlight here that the ICMI worker considered it a genuine privilege and pleasure to have worked with this wonderful person.



TOST & ICMI TEAM

Banyule Housing Support Report

The Banyule Housing Support Program extends crucial case management services to both individuals and families who are grappling with homelessness or precarious tenancies within the local government areas (LGAs) of Whittlesea, Darebin, Banyule, and Nillumbik. Our dedicated team, typically headquartered at the Shop 48 office, remains committed to achieving a harmonious work balance between in-office and remote operations.

The path from homelessness to secure housing remains riddled with challenges for participants in the Banyule Program, chiefly due to the lack of affordable housing options and a growing waitlist of families and individuals seeking case management support. Recent alterations to tenancy laws have introduced strict time limits on transitional housing access. Consequently, irrespective of whether clients are prepared for private rentals or not, mounting pressure necessitates finding alternative housing solutions to expedite the transition and enable the next family on the waitlist to access transitional housing.

Despite these formidable challenges, we have managed to respond to every referral originating from the Access Point, as well as address concerns raised by local members of the Banyule LGA regarding individuals experiencing homelessness in local parks.

The Banyule Housing Support Program, operating under the umbrella of the broader Transitional Outreach Support Team at MOSS, has achieved remarkable outcomes for our clients over the past fiscal year. These accomplishments underscore the dedication of our team and the undeniable need for our program within the community.

Two particularly noteworthy success stories involve distinct individuals who were previously sleeping rough in separate parklands within the Banyule LGA.

One individual fell outside the catchment area for the DACO program, which is based in Darebin. Consequently, our Banyule program assumed responsibility for the referral and offered support. Simultaneously, another referral came through the Access Point, also seeking support. Both individuals exhibited a strong willingness to engage with our support services and eagerly followed through with agreed-upon tasks designed to assist with access to safe and affordable housing options. As a direct result of the support provided through our program, one individual was able to secure crisis accommodation through a registered rooming house, while the other received an offer for permanent housing through an Office of Housing property.



Reconciliation Action Plan update

“The road to making amends is eternal”
A statement from Uncle Jack Charles

In line with our commitment to reconciliation, the MOSS RAP Working Group- Mark (CEO), Kathryn (Chairperson), Lorraine, Jesse, Louise, Claire, and Alice, are proud to present our first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Report. This report highlights our progress and achievements in fostering reconciliation in partnership with First Nations organisations, communities, and individuals across all our service delivery areas in the northern regions of Naarm (Melbourne).

In August 2022 we received a formal endorsement from Reconciliation Australia of our “Reflect” RAP. Reconciliation Australia CEO Karen Mundine welcomed us stating “This Reflect RAP enables MOSS to deepen its understanding of its sphere of influence and the unique contribution it can make.”

In undertaking our first RAP, MOSS as an organisation has been able to further our knowledge and understanding of Racism and its ongoing impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and provides an opportunity for all at MOSS to work towards, and meaningfully contribute to partnerships, and change to genuinely benefit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within our communities. This progress report captures the period from August 2022 to June 2023, highlighting that we have made significant progress in implementing our reconciliation initiatives.



RAP launch event 2022 - L to R
Jesse, Kathryn, Lorraine, Uncle Shane Charles, Mark, Alice, Claire

Relationships

We have promoted reconciliation through our sphere of influence;

- Communicating our commitment to all staff.
- Developing and maintaining a library of formal and informal resources.
- Identifying external stakeholders and like-minded organisations to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.

Respect

As part of our RAP, we have sought to foster respect and awareness for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and culture by observing cultural protocols and facilitating participation in cultural events of significance. This has included:

- Several smoking ceremonies conducted by community elders Uncle Ringo and Uncle Shane Charles.
- The celebration of NAIDOC week events held on location at our Barkley Street Brunswick site in 2022 and our Holmes Street Northcote site in 2023.
- The launch of our inaugural RAP, with a smoking ceremony held at our Broadmeadows office conducted by Uncle Shane Charles.
- Staff participation in Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC activities held across various local council areas.
- Commencement of discussions for flexible options in response to changing the date for Australia Day celebrations.

These very special events were attended by both MOSS staff and consumers and provided amazing opportunities for participation, learning, and reflection.

Opportunities

- Engaged in the procurement of goods and services from First Nations businesses and individuals in the undertaking of events.
- Strengthened our relationship with Hume Council’s Community Development Program, to support engagement and attendance at events and activities for staff and consumers.
- Allowed flexible working options for staff to attend cultural events across working days.
- To continue our enduring partnership with WT Onus we supported and attended the 50th anniversary of Aboriginal Hostels Australia. A beautiful smoking ceremony and Welcome to Country conducted by Uncle Rocky’s cousin Perry Wandin, an information session and planting experience of plants indigenous to Melbourne regions, followed by a great BBQ.
- MOSS accepted the invitation from Reconciliation Australia to join many other RAP partner organisations in supporting the voice-to-parliament statement and the “Yes” vote referendum.

Governance

- Establishment and maintenance of an effective RAP Working Group, the establishment of terms of reference, and meetings to track progress.
- Defined and maintained an appropriate system to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.
- Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges, and learnings both internally and externally.
- Reflect RAP survey underway

Challenges and areas to improve

Currently, 77% of our RAP obligations have been successfully completed: to be addressed by ensuring RAP actions and timelines are front of mind for those responsible this will ensure the remaining 3 objectives are underway and completed within the coming months.

- Update HR processes to be more inclusive of First Nations applicants.
- Update the procurement process to ensure consideration of First Nations suppliers.
- Review and improve policy and strategies to promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.

Working in homelessness in this country puts you in the cold face of the direct and enduring impact of colonisation on First Nations people of this land. The RAP Working Group would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge all the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers that MOSS is privileged to work with, along with our colleagues at Aboriginal Controlled Organisations - for all that they have experienced and shared over the years.



NAIDOC 2023 event - L to R
Shirley, Jesse, Mark, Uncle Shane Charles, Grady Walsh, Kathryn, Louise, Claire



About the artwork

Our commissioned artwork by Bitja (Dixon Patten Jnr) of Bayila Creative represents community support. Connection is the foundation of our mental, emotional, and spiritual health and well-being. The middle circle represents both Moss and at-risk people sitting in a circle to share and listen and to seek and give support. The ripples depict the positive influence we can have on one another when we come together as a community. The art represents the Reconciliation journey for MOSS, immersing First Nations knowledge that will provide opportunities to embed Cultural Safety in the workplace and to consumers.
Artist: Bitja (Dixon Patten Jnr) of Bayila Creative
Tribes: Gunaai, Yorta Yorta, Gunditjmarra and Yuin

Crisis Response Program Report



The Crisis Response Program provides short-term case management to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in the Darebin, Banyule, Nilumbik and Whittlesea. We are a team of three workers working from our head office in Broadmeadows.

The goal of the Crisis Response program is to provide immediate support to those who are experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness by providing housing options and support. Crisis Response program have seen an increase in people seeking housing support for the first time. Despite the increased challenges faced the past year—particularly those related to financial stability, the rental market, and lengthy wait times for public housing—the Crisis Response team utilised their strong networks and relationships with services to work together with clients to achieve amazing long-term housing outcomes.

The recently finished Unison and Haven Home Safe Community housing projects have given the LGAs of Banyule and Whittlesea much-needed long-term, affordable housing possibilities. Through our ongoing relationship with these housing providers and strong advocacy from the Crisis Response team the Journey from Homelessness to a Home has been realised for several of our eligible clients.

The Crisis Response team recognises the importance of developing a safe and trustworthy network of services for those who require extra support in establishing and maintaining their tenancy. They can ensure supports are in place through collaborative work, advocacy, and investigation, all of which are driven by strong case management skills and expertise.



CASE SCENARIO

Isabelle was referred February 2023 from Haven Home Safe. Initially it was very difficult for Isabelle to engage with a new service, given Isabelle's anxiety and trepidation in asking for assistance and trusting people with the pivotal milestones that have shaped her and led to her to us.

Isabelle had endured many years subjected to family violence and controlling behaviours in the family home, childhood exposure to AOD, and neglect. The situation had been volatile and unpredictable for many years before Isabelle came to Moss.

Isabelle was forced to leave the house for her own safety and stayed with a close relative. Not wanting to bother others, Isabelle would sleep in her car by the lake some nights so she would not be a burden to others.

Isabelle had certain unmet support needs as a child that were hindering her ability to thrive in the world. An acquired brain injury and intellectual disability caused by a vehicle collision affecting her memory and decision making, causing frustration and exacerbated by feelings of depression and anxiety. Isabelle found Moss to be supportive, and she often felt better after going through some of these issues.

Moss has been working on a NDIS application to ensure Isabelle receives assistance with grocery shopping, budgeting, and utility reminders, as well as psychosocial services to assist with mental health recovery.

Housing Isabelle was particularly difficult because there was no funding for emergency accommodation on nights when she slept rough. Isabelle's loyal pet was also a consideration when looking for dog-friendly accommodation. Isabelle also has no rental history because she has always lived with family. MOSS helped with acquiring personal references, building a profile on realestate.com, and applying.

She was also referred to an indigenous family violence organisation for additional assistance in replacing goods damaged by family violence and safety planning.

Her supportive GP will assist her with the NDIS and refer her to a psychologist. Moss compiled applications in July for an offer of community housing, specifically for women who endured violence.

Isabelle's housing nomination was accepted, and she is now preparing to move into a lovely new apartment where her dog is welcome. Isabelle felt she did not deserve this and was in shock; she did not believe she was entitled to opportunity and believed she was undeserving. We hope to see Isabelle's confidence increase as she progresses in her life, being independent and, most importantly, safe.

Darebin Assertive Community Outreach Program [DACO] Report

The Darebin Assertive Community Outreach (DACO) Program offers short-term, assertive outreach and case management to homeless people sleeping rough within the City of Darebin. The program consists of three workers: 2x case managers and a coordinator based at the Northcote office.

The DACO program continues to significantly contribute to the Darebin area by assisting clients with their housing needs. DACO provides personalized support, including case management, practical aid, referral services, service navigation, advocacy and information resources for individuals currently homeless or at risk of homelessness.

DACO continue their focus to assist people who are vulnerable and/or disadvantaged people, specifically those who are rough sleeping or living in unsafe and unsuitable accommodation. Their outreach involves offering essential supplies such as sleeping bags, swags, toiletries, and non-perishable food. These provisions are kept in work vehicles to increase responsiveness to people experiencing homelessness and can be distributed to individuals encountered during weekly assertive outreach.

StreetSmart Australia graciously awarded the DACO program a grant of \$8000. The team are immensely grateful for this kind gesture, as it will enable DACO to extend support to clients by ensuring their security, stability and access to shelter.

The DACO team engages in outreach efforts and maintains a weekly outpost at DIVRS - Darebin Information, Volunteer & Resource Service. The outpost is a direct connection between DACO workers and individuals in the DIVRS support program who are identified as rough sleepers or at risk of homelessness. The DIVRS outpost enables DACO to reach people who were previously unable to meet their needs or did not know where to go for assistance. The outpost extends the reach of persons seeking homelessness assistance.

DACO also provides frequent homelessness training and information sessions to community members, organisations, and services in the Darebin area. DACO hopes to raise awareness of homelessness, reduce homelessness stigma, and promote understanding of persons who are experiencing homelessness.

The team feels privileged to be a part of a program that assists those who are sleeping rough, do not have a home, and are at the mercy of Melbourne's weather. DACO assists people in navigating the homelessness system and helping them through various stages of homelessness until they can relocate to a place where they can finally warm their cold feet and call home.



DACO Team

CASE SCENARIO

A recently arrived 71-year-old male migrant moved into a private rooming house due to a family relationship breakdown. However, when the rooming house was sold, they found themselves homeless. He slept in the surrounding areas of Bundoora and Preston Market, taking a tram route from end to end so they could sleep in a warm and relatively safe environment. After sleeping rough for a few weeks, he approached the local access point, Haven Home Safe, seeking help. A referral was made to the DACO program by Haven Home Safe (HHS) because of the system challenges he could experience due to a language barrier, his age, lack of service knowledge, and experiencing homelessness for the first time.

DACO referred him to the Bolton Clarke Homeless Persons Program, culturally specific services such as interpreting services, age-appropriate housing options, My Aged Care and St Vincent Aged Care Assessment Services. HHS secured emergency accommodation for two nights in a motel. HHS offered rooming

house options, but it was not appropriate accommodation, and he could have been susceptible to exploitation in such settings. With funding exhausted, his only alternative was to return to sleeping rough. DACO provided a sleeping bag, safety planned and checked in regularly.

Using the Human Rights Charter, DACO advocated for urgent appropriate housing and expedited the approval of their public housing application. He moved into an over 55 high-rises with onsite support from MOSS Older Person's High Rise Support Program and Food Bank. Seeing services collaborate to support a first-time homeless person's transition into long-term housing in a miraculously short period was heartening. DACO is grateful to have been a part of his care team and will remember this experience of The Opening Doors Framework working successfully to help a person exit homelessness and move into their forever home.



DACO consumer

Youth and Family Program Report

The Youth and Family (Y&F) Program provides short-term case management and family mediation to young people aged 16-25 in the northern suburbs of Melbourne. The Program is funded for one FTE and shared between 2 workers. The Y&F team works from various locations, including outposts and different office locations.

The Youth and Family Program assisted young people in having hope and connecting with support and assistance around AOD and mental health, which has increased in presentation, providing an excellent opportunity for the program to build new connections with youth-centric services around these specific needs.

The Youth and Family team maintains weekly outposts due to a strong connection with Birribi Residential Service, part of the Youth Support and Advocacy Service, and Darebin Youth Hub, which attracts young people with onsite services and programmes. The outposts facilitate streamlined and wrap-around support for young people, allowing them to fulfil their needs at all phases of their journey from homelessness to home.

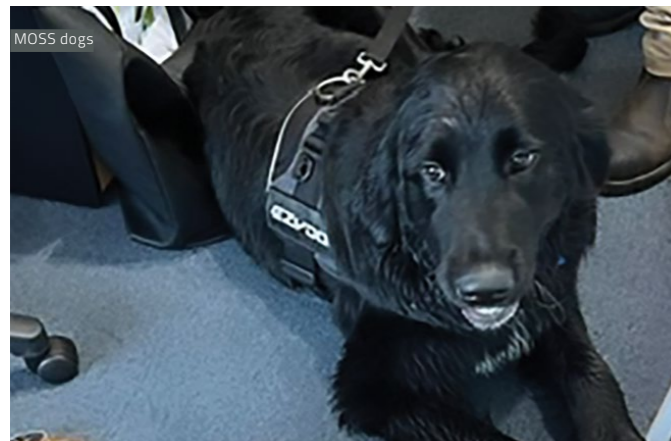
The team has encountered an increase in the number of young people requesting assistance, particularly those who have lived in out-of-home care settings or have experienced repeated homelessness. The fact that young people and/or their supporters can self-refer ensures that obtaining assistance is uncomplicated.

CASE SCENARIO

Haven Home Safe referred a young aboriginal man new to Melbourne and the service sector who had suffered family violence and had few community supports to the Youth and Family team. The young person demonstrated a significant commitment to improving their situation by establishing early trust through flexible working styles and person-centred goals.

The teams formed a solid working relationship after a successful referral to Melbourne City Mission Stopover Youth Refuge. Because of tremendous culturally therapeutic and harm reduction interactions, the young person could stay at the refuge for an extended period. Identity documents could be secured during this period, which was a highlight for the young person and enabled them to participate actively in society. Conversations on the young person's internal grieving and substance struggles became more in-depth as trust grew. The Young Person communicated their desire for detox and rehabilitation programs by providing gentle support and time and space.

Connecting with Dardi Munwurro and working together to advocate for the young person resulted in acceptance to YSAS Fitzroy detox and the Bunjilwarra Koori Youth Alcohol and Drug Healing Service. The young person has had access to cultural healing trauma counselling and is engaging with wraparound services. It has been an absolute pleasure for the Youth and Family team to see this young person achieve these goals and to work together with services that could support and advocate for the young person to take the time needed to achieve these results.



MOSS dogs



More MOSS dogs

Catchment Youth Refuge Report

Catchment Youth Refuge provides accommodation and case management to young people and accompanying children in the Inner Northern Suburbs of Melbourne. We are a team of 9 workers, who are normally based at the Refuge.

The Catchment Youth Refuge Program supports young people in cultivating essential independent living skills, equipping them for future successful tenancies. Our refuge instills hope and fosters confidence in the young people we support through a dedicated approach to case management, where goals are collaboratively established, and tasks are organised, with the young people actively participating in the decision-making process.

Despite the difficulties associated with securing stable housing, especially for young single-parent families, the refuge's dedicated team tirelessly collaborates with young people to attain housing solutions through private rental coaching and counselling. Additionally, we have recognised the importance of promoting socialisation within the refuge environment, which had been greatly missed by many young people during extended Covid-19 lockdowns and periods of isolation.

The workers at the refuge work closely with specialist services to educate and equip the young people in areas of healthcare, education, child development, and financial independence. Greater knowledge and support in each of these areas serve as a preventative measure against reoccurring homelessness.

CASE SCENARIO

In the previous year, Martha and her son, Tom, sought refuge at CYR after an extended stay in a hotel. Their journey to CYR followed their departure from a shared private rental with family members, which had become unsafe due to various issues, including drug use within the household. During their stay, Martha revealed that she had been exposed to addiction and lifelong family violence in her previous living situation. CYR marked the first place where Martha and Tom could live without experiencing abuse, providing a safe haven for Tom.

In 2022, Tom received a diagnosis of autism, and Martha noted that he frequently experienced social and classroom meltdowns and faced various challenges. Martha was determined and proactive in her efforts to address Tom's needs, find suitable housing, reintegrate into the workforce, and ensure Tom's educational progress. Fortunately, Martha was already connected with an exceptional family worker who had successfully arranged an NDIS package for Tom and similar support services.

The dedicated staff at CYR swiftly connected the family with essential health, well-being, and housing resources, offering financial assistance and playing a crucial role in creating a safe environment where Tom could be himself without fear of judgment. CYR staff even accompanied Martha to Tom's kindergarten, advocating on his behalf and providing the kindergarten staff with valuable information and resources. They encouraged the acquisition of stimulating gadgets for Tom, provided safe spaces, and emphasised the importance of not expecting neurotypical behavior, as it significantly impacted Tom's well-being.

Tom began to thrive once the kindergarten staff adapted their approach to better suit his needs. This year, with excellent support systems in place, Tom transitioned to primary school. During an advocacy meeting for Tom, the kindergarten staff encouraged Martha to explore part-time childcare work, and she soon secured employment.

After applying for more than 50 private rental houses and spending over six months at CYR, the family has finally settled into their new home. We extend our best wishes to Martha and Tom and will forever be grateful to Tom for teaching us so much about dinosaurs.



Catchment card

Volunteering & Community Development Report

The 'Decrease the Digital Divide' Program provides one-on-one tutoring in basic technology skills to residents living in High Rise Estates of Barkly and Holmes Streets.

The program recruits community volunteers, and trains and supports them to work, one one-on-one, with residents enabling them to learn basic technology skills to manage everyday life.

The program is unique, and its success lies in the fact that it offers individual, 'needs-based',

self-paced learning in a familiar and supportive environment, on a one-to-one basis. It removes many of the barriers to learning that often prevent marginalised and disadvantaged people from accessing learning opportunities.

Recent success in a funding submission has enabled the program to access \$18,000 to support employing a part-time staff member to further grow the program.

TEAM COMMENT: Jo- really enjoy working with Buk. Not only am I enjoying getting to know him, but I also enjoy helping him discover useful tools he can use each day. He takes such delight in learning new things. I also like hearing and learning about his country and his Sudanese culture.

CLIENT COMMENT: Buk- Jo, has taught me to email and message, understand how to use and download apps so I can manage my affairs i.e., MyGov, Medicare, online banking and find my way around Melbourne, using PTV. The best thing is learning how to use communication platforms to keep in contact with my family and friends in Sudan



Buk & Jo

BARKLY FOODBANK

Continues to meet the growing demand for food parcels, from both residents of Barkly High Rise and the local community. Despite the challenges presented by COVID, and then the need to vacate the Community room and work from a small container in the garden (while the community room was being renovated), the Barkly Foodbank has been able to continue to distribute between 30 & 40 food parcels each week. The success of Foodbank is due to the hard work of a 'tight-knit' group of volunteers who work with Cate. On Thursdays, they collect large quantities of fresh and non-perishable food from Second Bite and Yarraville Foodbank. They then unpack the vans, store the food, pack food parcels, which are distributed every Friday morning.



Working outside Food bank room



Container delivering food parcels

NEWSLETTER

Regular bi-monthly Resident Newsletters are distributed to residents from both Barkly and Holmes St. Content usually includes reports on what is happening on both estates, notification of upcoming events, interviews with staff and volunteers, and relevant community and government news.

It also provides residents to enter the free raffle. The newsletters are printed in color by Ged Kearney and Peter Khalil offices and distributed to each resident's mailbox



One of the lucky raffle winners



New Foodbank storage in Community

Specialist Services (SHS) Summary for Annual Report 2022/2023

During the 2022/2023 financial year, MOSS Specialist Services (SHS) continued its mission to provide vital support to individuals and families in need. The work undertaken by the SHS programs displays our unwavering commitment to making a positive difference in the lives of those we support.

These statistics display the diversity of the individuals and families supported by the SHS MOSS programs. MOSS remains steadfast in its commitment to delivering tailored assistance that addresses the unique needs of each person. We continue to strive for a positive and lasting impact on those who we support, with the aim of building stronger and more resilient communities.

2022/2023 TOTAL CLIENTS NUMBER	1198
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GENDER BREAKDOWN	Number
Adult females	274
Adult males	247
Non-binary	3
Children and young people under 26 years	674

FAMILY VIOLENCE SUPPORT	Number
Individuals identified family violence as a contributing issue to their homelessness	373

FAMILY TYPE	Number
Single parent families	550
Single People	363
Other families	263

ACCOMMODATION	Number
Primary homeless	141
Crisis accommodation	119
Transitional Housing	410
Public/Social Housing	150
Private Rental	170
Other	230

CULTURAL IDENTITY	Number
Anglo/Australian	591
Culturally Diverse Background	501
Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander	101

Older Persons Programs Summary for Annual Report 2022/2023

MOSS remains unwavering in its dedication to creating a positive impact and enhancing the lives of those we support through our diverse older persons programs.

During the last financial year, Merri Outreach Support Service (MOSS) continued its steadfast commitment to supporting older individuals through a comprehensive range of programs. These programs included the Home and Community Care Program for Younger People (HACC PYP), The Care Finder Program, the Commonwealth Home Support Program, and NDIS-funded Programs.

Consistent with previous years, MOSS supported a higher number of men in these programs compared to women. This demographic distribution aligns with the population profile of the public housing estates where our programs are offered, with the majority of our service users living independently.

The occupants of Barkly Street and Holmes Street high-rise estates found value in the range of MOSS initiatives. These included the Older Persons High Rise Support Program, the Volunteer Program, and the Social Support Groups. These programs collectively nurtured a dynamic and nurturing community atmosphere, empowering numerous individuals to preserve their tenancies and effectively tackle challenges that might have otherwise resulted in early admission to residential aged care or hospitals.

Our impact extended beyond high-rise estates through the Connections Program, which focused on addressing housing vulnerability and health-related challenges in broad-acre estates.

While most of our consumers reside in public housing, it's worth noting that the Community Connections Program provided significant outreach support to individuals living in rooming houses, low-cost accommodations, private rentals, and those experiencing homelessness.

Chronic health issues, psychiatric illness, and physical disabilities were among the most reported challenges, though a broad spectrum of health issues were identified. As a registered NDIS provider, MOSS also extended support to a select number of NDIS participants through the Social Support Groups.

2022/2023 TOTAL CLIENTS NUMBER	540
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GENDER BREAKDOWN	Number
Adult females	196
Adult males	344

LIVING SITUATION	Number
Lives alone	467
Lives with family	47
Lives with others	36

CULTURAL IDENTITY	Number
Anglo/Australian	303
Culturally & Linguistically Diverse	155
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander	109

AGE RANGE	Number
Under 45	38
45-55	34
56-66	156
66-75	295
75+	33

HEALTH	Number
Acquired Brain Injury	12
Asthma	32
Chronic health issues	134
Dementia	13
Drug and Alcohol	29
Intellectual disability	11
No Disability	23
Physical Disability	113
Psychiatric Disability	79
Other	8

ACCOMMODATION	Number
Primary homeless	5
Public/Social Housing	442
Private Rental	61
SRS	8
Other	49

MOSS and the Child Safe Standards Report

The Child Safe Standards aim to protect children and young people by requiring organisations to implement policies, procedures and processes to prevent and respond to abuse. The Child Safe Standards provide a framework for creating child-safe organisations. They are designed to drive cultural change to develop, maintain and improve child-safe practices. When organisations apply the Standards, they build a culture where abuse of children is prevented, responded to and reported.

The new Child Safe Standards came into effect in July 2022. The Child Safety Officers have ensured that MOSS is aligned with the updated standards. Thankfully, due to the extensive work done in previous years, aligning with the new standards has been relatively straightforward. The MOSS Child Safety officers have continued working through the MOSS Child Safe Standards Implementation plan this year. The Child Safety Officers have also continued to provide Child Safe Standards inductions to new MOSS employees and give updates at staff meetings around the standards.

Looking forward, the Child Safety Officers will continue providing Child Safe Standards inductions to new staff members and providing the agency with up-to-date information and resources. The Child Safety Officers will also run an in-house training session on the standards.

Background



Finance Statements

PROFIT & LOSS STATEMENT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

MERRI OUTREACH SUPPORT SERVICE LTD ABN: 42 318 912 323		
STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023		
	2023	2022
	\$	\$
INCOME		
Government funding	\$6,806,882	\$6,587,645
Donations and philanthropic income	\$15,891	\$2,405
Interest received	\$3,574	\$1,653
Other Income	\$649,823	\$1,109,132
	\$7,476,170	\$7,700,835
EXPENDITURE		
Employment benefit and expense	\$6,255,205	\$6,420,343
Occupancy	\$264,825	\$391,496
Computer	\$134,204	\$124,641
Telephone	\$45,137	\$49,298
Depreciation	\$45,181	\$52,711
Motor vehicle	\$247,798	\$270,109
Client expense	\$417,222	\$519,164
Other expense	\$153,859	\$97,858
	\$7,563,431	\$7,925,620
Surplus / (deficit)	(\$87,261)	(\$224,785)

Our audited statutory accounts can be found on our website

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

AS AT 30 JUNE 2023

MERRI OUTREACH SUPPORT SERVICE LTD ABN: 42 318 912 323		
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 JUNE 2023		
	2023	2022
	\$	\$
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash	\$986,659	\$1,116,649
Trade and other receivables	\$195,139	\$294,707
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	\$1,181,798	\$1,411,356
NON- CURRENT ASSETS		
Property, plant and equipment	\$1,239,706	\$1,252,297
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	\$1,239,706	\$1,252,297
TOTAL ASSETS	\$2,421,504	\$2,663,653
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Trade and other payables	\$404,482	\$539,691
Provisions	\$716,154	\$710,541
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	\$1,120,636	\$1,250,232
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Provisions	\$16,375	\$41,667
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	\$16,375	\$41,667
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$1,137,011	\$1,291,899
NET ASSETS	\$1,284,493	\$1,371,754
MEMBERS' FUNDS		
Retained surplus	\$1,284,493	\$1,371,754
TOTAL MEMBERS' FUNDS	\$1,284,493	\$1,371,754

Our audited statutory accounts can be found on our website

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

The 2022-2023 financial year saw MOSS address the cost challenges it faced in 2022 and work towards a stronger year end result. At June 30 year end there was a \$87k loss compared to \$224k loss the previous year.

The cost reduction strategies implemented throughout the year resulted in reduced expense in areas such as occupancy, fleet, operations and employment. So while expenses did exceed revenue, we continued to meet client needs. Again it was the agencies retained earnings that covered committed contractual expenses.

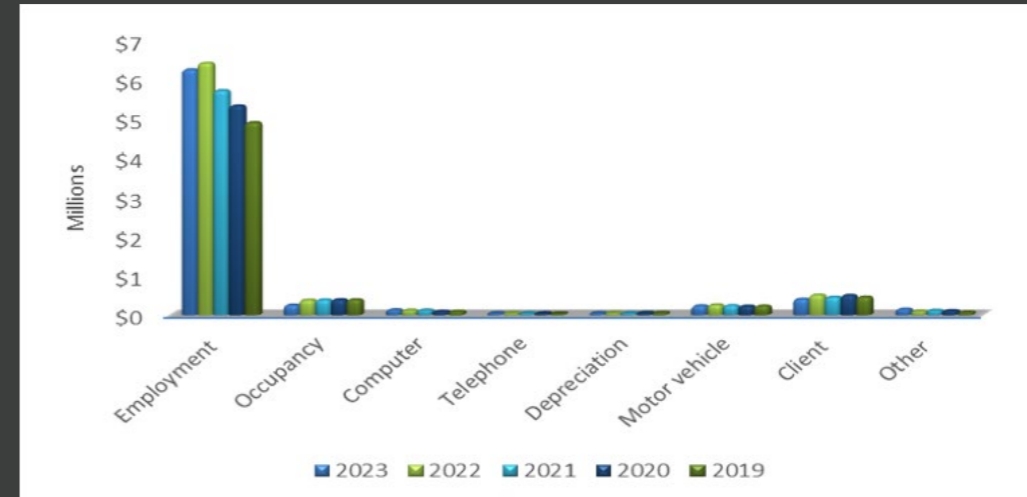
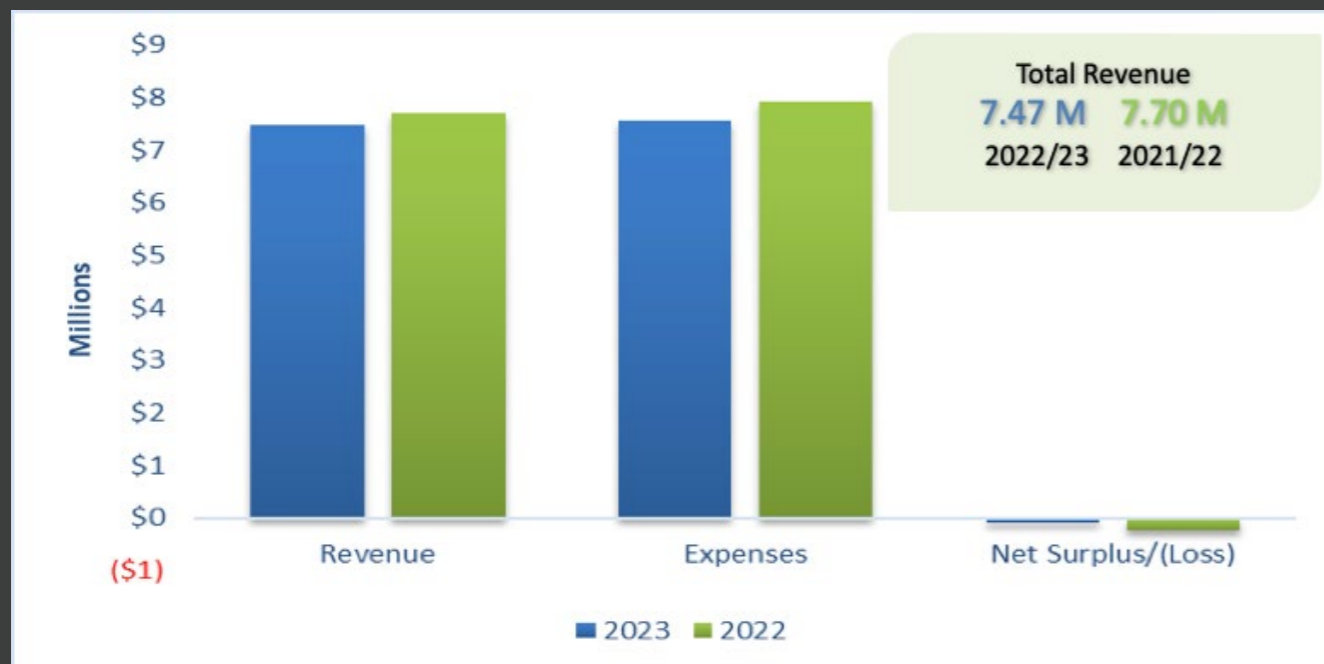
MOSS's balance sheet has remained strong and in a relatively healthy position with a current ratio of 1.05 and a total debt to asset ratio of 47%.

Looking ahead, all major funding agreements have renewed with new agreements and variations being put in place. Cost management continues to remain a focus for 2024 as we continue to strive to support clients and balance our expenditure.

The year at a glance

Year ended 30 June 2023

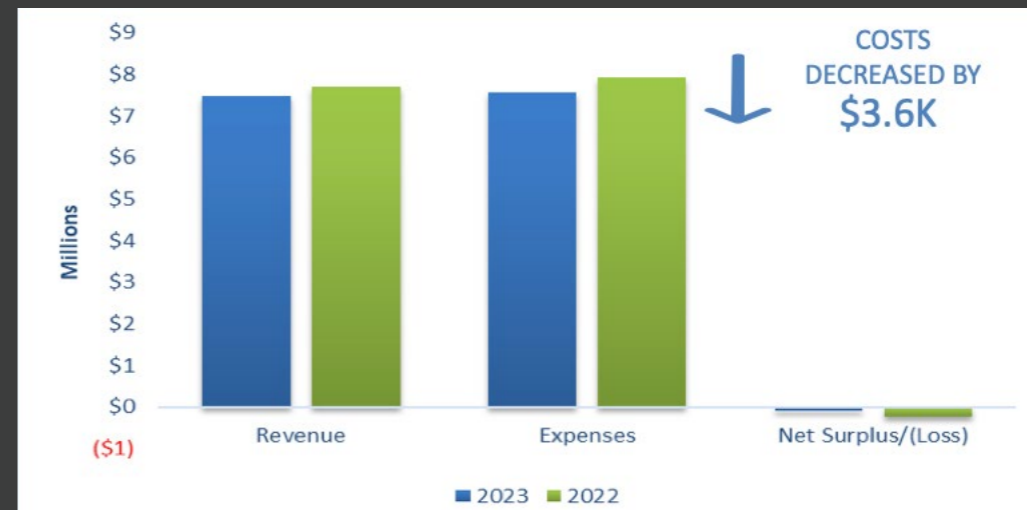
In 2023, our total income was \$7.4 million, a decrease of 3% from 2022. This change was primarily due to the decrease in other income received from the cessation of various COVID related contracts.



Where the money went

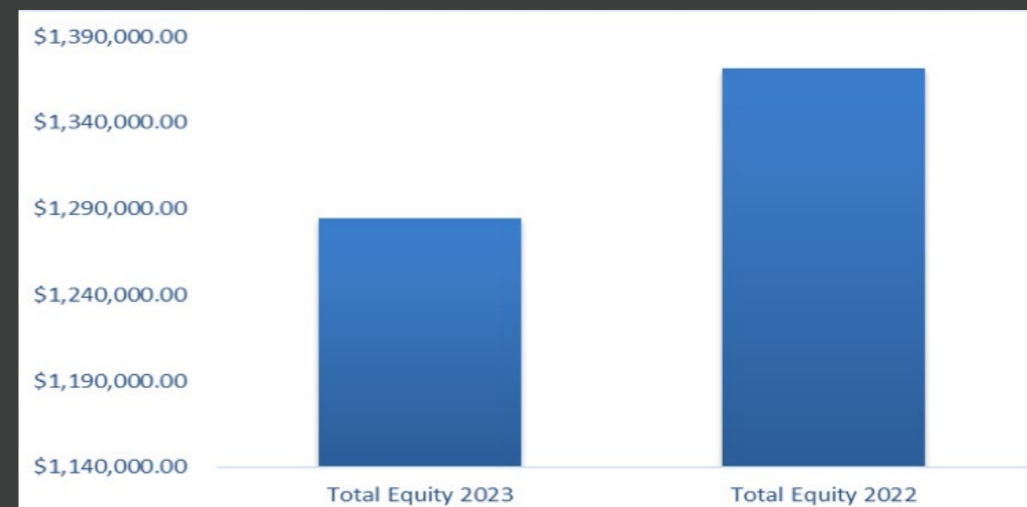
Five year trend

With our continued investment in our staff, employment expense continues to remain just over 80% of our total expenditure with Client expenses being just under 10%. As we worked towards sustainability throughout the year the agency had a total spend of \$7.5 million or 5% less than 2022.



Where the money went

Year ended 30 June 2023



Balance sheet as at

30 June

Total equity 2023 & 2022

Thank you to the supporters of Merri Outreach Support Service Ltd

- | | | |
|---|---|---------------------------------------|
| 300 Blankets | Family Safety Victoria | Presentation Sisters Balnarring |
| All Saints Greensborough | FareShare | Preston Rotary |
| Alana Bennett | Fire Rescue Victoria | Public Transport Victoria |
| Australian Communities Foundation | Foodbank Victoria | Queens Fund |
| Banyule & Nillumbik Youth Executive Committee | Friendly Moving Men | Reservoir Leisure Centre |
| Banyule City Council | Guy Donald | Reservoir Neighbourhood House |
| Banyule Community Health Service | Haven; Home, Safe | Reynard Neighbourhood House |
| Banyule Support & Information Centre (BANSIC) | Hearing Australia | Rosanna Fire Community House |
| Big Group Hug | Himilo Community Connect | Salvation Army Moreland |
| Bolton Clarke | Homeless Youth Dual Diagnosis Initiative | Salvation Army Preston |
| Bon-Dent Dental Laboratory Pty Ltd | HoMie | Second Bite |
| Br Harry and Olympic Village Exodus Community | Hume City Council | Second Chance Animal Rescue |
| Bridge Darebin | Impactology | Services Australia Sunbury |
| Bunnings Fairfield | Inner North Community Foundation | Staddon Family |
| CBA Staff Social & Charity Club | Intuitive IT | St Kilda Mums |
| Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare | James Greer | St Martin of Tours Primary School |
| Citylife Church - Whittlesea | James Liberopoulos | StreetSmart Australia |
| College of Optometry | Jordan Papadopoulos | Sunbury Square Shopping Centre |
| Collingwood Children's Farm | Julie O'Brien | Telstra |
| Commonwealth Bank Social Club | Kat Theophanous MP | Tenants Victoria |
| Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) | Kogan | The Bridge |
| Corpus Christi Community | Magistrates Court of Victoria | The Walter and Eliza Hall Trust |
| Council to Homeless Persons (CHP) | Melbourne City Mission | Thread Together |
| Darebin City Council | Melbourne Youth Support Service | Tobin Brothers |
| Darebin Information Volunteer & Resource Centre DIVRC | Mike Williams | Tucker Bakery |
| Darebin youth Services | Milan Industries | Unison Housing |
| Department of Families, Fairness and Housing | Minuteman Press Broadmeadows | Underworks |
| Diamond Valley Community Support | Moreland City Council | Voula Allimonos |
| DPV Health | NAB | Victoria Police |
| East Reservoir Neighbours for Change (ERNfC) | Natio | Victorian Public Tenants Association |
| Emerging Minds | National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) | VincentCare Victoria Housing Services |
| | Northcote Aquatic Centre | West Heidelberg Legal Service |
| | Northern Care Works | Yarra Plenty Regional Library |
| | Office of Housing - Broadmeadows | Yarra Valley Water |
| | Otto IT | YMCA |
| | Paul Harrison | Your Community Health |
| | Pinchapoo | Zib Digital |





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DONATE TO MOSS!

Donations enhance the capacity of MOSS to meet the needs of homeless people in flexible and creative ways.

It's because of our compassionate donors that we've been able to help thousands of Victorians make positive transitions and achieve long term stability in their lives. We're eternally grateful for people like you who are committed to ending homelessness.

To understand how your donation can positively impact our organisation's service delivery, please visit our donations page on our website or scan the QR code below.

