



HOPE STREET
YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES
ANNUAL REPORT 2024

Solutions to the crisis

Housing for young people
HUMAN RIGHTS



OUR VISION IS A
FAMILIAR



Who we are

Hope Street Youth and Family Services Limited ("Hope Street") is one of the longest established specialist youth homelessness services in Victoria, with over 40 years' experience in delivering responsive services to young people in local communities. Based in the northern and western regions of Melbourne, Hope Street provides both strategically targeted and holistic programs for young people 16-25 years old including young families.

OUR VISION

A society in which all young people and young families have a safe place to call home.

OUR PURPOSE

To influence change to end youth homelessness and empower young people and young families to achieve their full potential.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

Resolving homelessness is the responsibility of: federal, state and local governments; the community; families and individuals. Hope Street believes that young people have the right to safe, secure, affordable housing and to be treated as equal citizens in our society. This means equal access to resources, decision making and life options.

OUR VALUES

- Fairness
- Collaboration
- Social Justice
- Integrity
- Diversity
- Hope

Front cover image: Photo by Shannyn Higgins

Board of Directors



Judith Cooke – Director
MBA, BA, Dip Ed; Equity/human rights professional in universities since 1995. Joined March 2007 to develop and ensure strong governance systems and practices and to support the vision and strategic development of Hope Street, with particular focus on risk management.



Andrew Nette – Director
Doctor of Philosophy, Grad Dip Journalism, Bachelor of Arts (Hons). Joined October 2012 to ensure the governance of the organisation is effective and robust and that the organisation is meeting its strategic plan and making the most of opportunities for expansion.



Anthony Goldsworthy – Treasurer
BComm (Finance & Accounting), Member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand, CFO Advisory & Assurance Director. Joined June 2020 to utilise my expertise in continuous improvement of financial governance and to assist the drive of sound commercial outcomes supporting the strategic direction of Hope Street.



Neb Kocovski – Director
MConstrLaw, BEng. Joined March 2024 to support Hope Street's purpose and strategic goals and to give young people the opportunities they deserve to stay safe and thrive in the community.



Simon Jackson – Director
BPsych(Hons), MPsychOrg; Human focussed, People, Technology and Projects professional. Joined December 2021 to support governance and to help build on the unique strengths of the organisation through support and collaboration with the Board Directors and CEO.



Katherine George – Chair
BA Arts (Media & Communications), LL.B, LL.M; human rights and consumer policy professional. Joined February 2019 to support the governance of the organisation and help it to meet sustainable long term strategic goals.



Riley Ellard – Secretary
BA, LL.B, LL.M; Human rights, justice and social policy professional. Joined November 2020 to support the governance of the organisation through evidence-based decision making and a focus on the needs, goals and experiences of young people.



Elizabeth Young – Director
Bachelor of Applied Science; Grad Dip Health Science; Master of Public Health. Joined December 2021 to support the governance and strategic direction of the organisation.



23% of all people experiencing homelessness in Australia are aged 12-24 (28,204 people).

SOURCE: ABS DATA, ESTIMATING HOMELESSNESS, CENSUS 2021.

32% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that present to Specialist Homelessness Services are young people aged 12-24.

SOURCE: AIHW.

Young people are only 16% of the population in Victoria but 26% of the homeless population in Victoria, which means they are nearly twice as likely to experience homelessness than anyone else.

SOURCE: VICTORIAN PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY INTO HOMELESSNESS, 2021.

People on Youth Allowance are living well below the poverty line, receiving just half of the \$87.32 per day required as measured under the Henderson poverty line.

Across Australia, only 2.9% of properties are leased to people aged 15 to 24.

Teenage girls and young women aged 15-24 face a spike in homelessness. 60.5% of recorded youth homelessness in Victoria aged 15-24 are teenage girls and young women.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Acknowledgement

Hope Street acknowledges the Traditional Owners on which our sites operate on the lands of Wurundjeri nation and pay respect their Elders past and present.

FIRST NATIONS CADETSHIPS

The partnership between Hope Street, AFL SportsReady and RMIT, saw two First Nations cadets studying Social Work and Youth Work Bachelor's Degrees, commence their paid placement and employment with Hope Street in February 2024.

Ruby Guthrie-Kelly, a proud Wemba Wemba, Yorta Yorta and Mutthi Mutthi woman, undertook a paid placement with her Youth Work studies, at Hope Street Thomastown. Ruby's journey through her placement with her cadetship provided academic pursuits with practical experience, learning and sharing knowledge a unique opportunity and exchange.

Gi Brown, a proud Koorie and Bungala person made significant strides at the Hope Street First Response Youth Service, in Melton. Gi's placement while completing their Bachelor of Social Work (honours), specifically engaging with First Nations young people.

Ruby's and Gi's cadetships continued through 2024, learning about the Specialist Homelessness sector, developing relevant skills and expertise, including assisting with case management. Hope Street benefitted enormously from their knowledge and perspectives as young First Nations people. The cadets worked together on a project; to develop a Welcome Kit for young First Nations people coming into the Hope Street services.

SISTERS DAY OUT AN ANNIVERSARY OF THE APOLOGY TO THE STOLEN GENERATIONS

Members of the team had a wonderful day taking part in the Djirra 'Sisters Day Out' in Melton. The team met with community and shared information about Hope Street and other agencies including Melton Council. Hearing from Djirra's CEO, Antoinette Braybrook AM and elder Aunty Wanda on the Anniversary of the Apology, this respected community, and cultural day showcases the importance of being connected. Sisters Day Out is Djirra's long-standing wellbeing workshop for Aboriginal women to support each other and learn about what services are in the community, as well as enjoy a little pampering and meet up for a day of wellbeing and socialising.

KOORI COURT WITH UNCLE RALPH

Members of our team have been privileged to attend Koori Court at the Broadmeadows Magistrate Court where Uncle Ralph White operates with another Elder providing cultural support and guidance. It has been an honour and insightful to see this First Nations led mode of justice, with the people before the court supported and guided in a culturally safe way.

CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

In July 2023, an all-staff cultural training and development session was conducted by Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA). Feedback from the 60% of staff including senior leaders and managers was that this valuable and insightful learning will support our cultural competence and ability to support young First Nations people and children who access Hope Street programs and services.

PLACE BASED RELATIONSHIPS

Hope Street values its relationships with local community First Nations services as we strive to provide culturally safe services to young people and young families experiencing homelessness. Kirrip Aboriginal Corporation in Melton supports young people to access Hope Street services and to keep their connection to land and community strong.

RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

Hope Street have committed to develop an Innovative Reconciliation Action Plan. Establishing a RAP Working Group where members researched the colonisation of the First Nations country they were born on, developing a deeper awareness and understanding of the intergenerational trauma and its impacts. Strengthening our commitment to allyship by providing cultural awareness training across the organisation and improving the cultural safety in our services, for the First Nations young people and their children accessing our services.

REFERENDUM ON A VOICE TO PARLIAMENT

Hope Street Youth and Family Services proudly supported the First Nations Working Plan and accepted the invitation offered through the Uluru Statement from the Heart, acknowledging that it was developed through consultation with First Nations people across Australia.

The Hope Street team and Board are committed to the principles of self-determination, social justice, access, and equity. We commit to walk hand in hand with our First Nations people, partners, and allies, to yarning, listening, learning, and owning our responsibility for educating ourselves, and enhancing our knowledge. In doing so we aim to strengthen cultural safety for First Nations young people and their children accessing our services.

MARGARET TUCKER PARTNERSHIP

This year's NAIDOC (National Aboriginals and Islanders Day Observance Committee) Week Breakfast was the first time Margaret Tucker Hostel partnered with a non-indigenous organisation for their popular signature Breakfast.

We were honoured to have Nakia Firebrace conduct a powerful smoking ceremony, involving members of the Margaret Tucker community. This year's NAIDOC's theme to "Keep the Fire Burning," Blak, Loud and Proud. With local Koori radio station 3KND KOOL N DEADLY providing a live outdoor broadcast.

The long-term relationship between both organisations has been strengthened with the development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), enabling stronger support for young First Nations women and their children, in the Margaret Tucker community. With a dedicated family unit, in the new purpose-built First Response Youth Service in Whittlesea, with naming rights given to the Manager of the Margaret Tucker Hostel. Reflecting the commitment of working together for a better future for First Nations young women and their children.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

It has been another exceptional year for Hope Street as the organisation continues to progress its four 2022-2027 Strategic Priorities in partnership with key community stakeholders. During the 2023/2024 period, this was achieved within the broad sector's environment recovering from the major socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the continued escalating housing crisis and the entrenched escalation of cost of living and resulting poverty. Understanding the causes of homelessness experienced by young Victorians is critical to developing solutions. Hope Street's strategic, business and financial plans are solution focused, place based, youth centred and community driven.

The first Strategic Priority is Young People and Young Families. 586 young people 16-25 year olds including young people with children were provided essential services ranging from immediate emergency relief and/or crisis accommodation to access to more stable private rental or public housing. Hope Street data shows an increased number of young people reported housing in-affordability as the major factor causing their homelessness. Other factors responded to by Hope Street's program teams were nil income; impact of poverty and cost of living; family violence, poor health including mental health and social isolation. Hope Street's program service delivery models (solutions) are designed utilising leading industry theoretical approaches and practice. These have been tested and fine-tuned over many years to provide the best possible outcomes with young people. Forming new and nurturing existing relationships with diverse community services is in response to the diversity of young people accessing Hope Street programs and providing client centred services. Post COVID-19, Hope Street refocused its attention to re-engaging with leading community organisations and developing new ways of working together. Hope Street re-ignited its relationship with the Margaret Tucker Hostel for young First Nations women. Hope Street was delighted to sign a Memorandum of Understanding outlining several shared activities to benefit the young people and teams of both agencies. The Operations Report in the pages ahead provides a detailed overview of the models, socio-economic and structural barriers as well as the program successes.

Leadership and Community is the second Strategic Priority which aims to promote Hope Street's engagement with a range of potential supporters; advocate on key government policy issues related to youth homelessness; and become a recognised practice leader in youth homelessness. In 2023 a Communications Lead position was established to enhance Hope Street's community reach for supporters via social media, website, mainstream media, newsletters. The Youth Homelessness edition of Parity (April 2024) was a staple opportunity in which Hope Street highlighted its leading practices. Showcasing the architectural purpose designed youth centre in Melton and its integration with best practices for optimal client outcomes, to the Victorian Government Members of Parliament as well as other major stakeholders, formed a key part of Hope Street's advocacy. Highlighting that this model of service delivery, established in partnership with the Victorian Government, local government, corporate sector and local community, is a successful solution in responding to and diverting young people from long-term homelessness.

The third Strategic Priority of Resources included the introduction of a First Nations Cadet opportunity in partnership with AFL SportsReady, which was a highlight with two cadets joining the Hope Street team. There was improved recruitment and retention particularly in support of the growth of the organisation with new positions. A workforce capacity plan was drafted documenting many of the activities already occurring. For more information on these areas as well as Diversity, Inclusion and

Wellbeing please refer to the People and Culture Report on page 18.

During the 2023/2024 period the Hope Street Board and executive achieved significant progress on **the fourth Strategic Priority: Organisational Development and Sustainability.**

Specifically Hope Street is committed to partnering with local government and community organisations to establish place-based services in growth corridors and peri-urban areas severely struggling to support their vulnerable young people. Hope Street conducted consultation with three key municipalities identifying need and is working to secure funding for the establishment of vital services for young people experiencing homelessness. Place based services are critical to enable young people to stay in their local community – schools, employment, family, shops, services, cultural and other connections all of which assist in providing a familiar safety net for young people to better cope with the impact of homelessness.

A stellar example of place-based community partnerships responding to youth homelessness, is Hope Street's First Response Youth Service in Whittlesea centre. Doors will be open to young people and their children following the launch of the centre in December 2024. This project has been underway since 2018 and is realised with tremendous support and advocacy from many areas of the local community. This leading designed centre will assist 100 young people and their children each year in this fast-growing metropolitan corridor. For more information regarding key projects please

refer to the Business Development and Partnerships Report pages 8-9.

For decades Hope Street has highlighted the appalling lack of access to public, community and social housing by young people experiencing homelessness. The gravity of the situation has been researched over the decades, most notably beginning with the Brian Burdekin led National Inquiry into Youth Homelessness in 1989 as Australia's first Human Rights Commissioner. The documented figures are consistently devastating. 32 years on from Brian Burdekin's report, The Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into Homelessness, 2021, reported that 26% of the homelessness population in Victoria are young people with young people comprising a total of 16% of the total Victorian population. This shameful social construct is due to decades of inadequate government policy, planning, or resourcing and wider community apathy. Today the media attention is focused on the housing crisis yet remains relatively silent on the impact of young people on incomes below the poverty line who are forced into homelessness. For decades there has been a shift to social and community housing owned/operated by not-for-profits to create affordable housing. The reality however is that most socio-economically disadvantaged young people are prevented from accessing this form of housing. Hope Street has been advocating for many years that housing and support resources must be quarantined for young people as they are not prioritised by mainstream housing and homelessness services therefore are less likely to access government funded/subsidised accommodation and housing programs. With very

little change in this space, Hope Street has progressed its commitment to establish a youth focused registered housing provider agency. Much work has been done to explore the feasibility of this as a significant and obvious solution to curbing the social trajectory of increased youth homelessness.

Special acknowledgement to the program teams who see the strengths in each young person, empowering them to strive to achieve their goals in response to their situation. The Leadership Team for motivating, guiding, validating and supporting the purpose driven work of the teams within an extremely despairing socio-economic environment. My acknowledgement to the Executive Leadership Team who continue to support the program teams and partners, building on the strengths of the organisation to achieve its vision, purpose and strategic priorities.

To the Hope Street directors who form the Board, govern the organisation with immense professionalism and expertise, I commend their collective drive and determination for Hope Street to excel as a leading youth homelessness and housing specialist organisation committed to achieving its vision and purpose. They provide stability and excellence in conducting all governance activities, improving the capabilities of the organisation for the benefit of all stakeholders. My immense gratitude for the leadership and support of Kat George (Chair), Andrew Nette, Judith Cooke, Anthony Goldsworthy (Treasurer), Riley Ellard (Secretary), Simon Jackson, Liz Young and Neb Kocovski. After almost 18 years

of service, local resident Jude Cooke is stepping off the Board. After 12 years of service, local resident Andrew Nette is also stepping off the Board. Both Jude and Andrew are strong social justice advocates for vulnerable young people and have been instrumental in shaping the governance and steering the strategic direction of the organisation and its successes in responding to youth homelessness.

I give heartfelt acknowledgement to each young person and child who has been a part of Hope Street. I commend your courage, perseverance and many strengths in living your life as you determine and with hope.

Donna Bennett, CEO

Above

Donna Bennett, CEO, and Worrell Blow, Manager at Margaret Tucker Hostel at the First Response Youth Service in Melton during Reconciliation Week 2024

Donna Bennett, CEO, speaks at the Property Industry Foundation Fun Run in May 2024



BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS REPORT

Hope Street is well placed to work collaboratively with partners in the community to provide solutions for young people and young families experiencing the impacts of homelessness. Hope Street upholds Housing as a Human Right for young people and their children as a nation leading service provider and advocate.

There has been a focus on expanding relationships with community leaders, donors and partners to solidify Hope Street's impact and awareness. This has developed further relationships and a deeper connection on existing partnerships. This includes Corporate, Philanthropic, Local, State and Federal Governments. Below is a summary of key initiatives:



Right, clockwise from left:
City of Whittlesea Zachary Melvaine, Youth Mayor, Lydia Wilson Chief Commissioner, Donna Bennett CEO and Kaynat Virk, Deputy Mayor touring the site as the building progressed

Steve McGhie MP, Donna Bennett CEO, Jordy McGauran, Aoife Fitzpatrick, Josh Bull and Kathleen Matthews-Ward at First Response Youth Service in Melton

Donna Bennett CEO and Katie Hooper at the Property Industry Foundation Melbourne run for homeless youth

FIRST RESPONSE YOUTH SERVICE IN WHITTLESEA

The capital build of the First Response Youth Service refuge in the City of Whittlesea is a major priority for Hope Street during this reporting period. Site establishment commenced 24th July 2023 and construction began 3rd August 2023. WP Contractors' passion for the work of Hope Street and commitment to detail has been evident from the moment they submitted their tender for this leading designed youth centre.

There has been an engaged Project Control Group lead by Hope Street CEO, Donna Bennett with representation from Homes Victoria, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, City of Whittlesea, Property Industry Foundation, all supporting the project management by Brand Architects.

As the building occurs and various stages of construction progress, it is evident that the design, materials and quality of this centre are state of the art. The generosity of goodwill, financial and material contributions from partners and the wider community eager to support young people experiencing the impacts of homelessness, has also been evident. The community participation and contributions to the success of this project is with recognition that Housing is a Human Right including for young people and young families in Australian society.

In early July 2023 MP Lily D'Ambrosio was guest speaker at a Hope Street Corporate Breakfast at and supported by, the Sofitel on Collins in Melbourne. Philanthropic and corporate partners heard from Clive Scott OAM, Sofitel and Hope Street CEO Donna

Bennett on the significant benefits the centre will be for young people, young families and the wider community.

The City of Whittlesea were the first major partner to come on board with this project in 2018 passing a resolution at a Council Meeting endorsing the leasing of land to build the centre. This is a major contribution from the City of Whittlesea on behalf of its community. Special acknowledgement to Lydia Wilson, Chair Administrator (City of Whittlesea), who has supported this project and continued to engage in its development.

The partners involved in the building of this centre include: the Victorian State Government providing the majority of the capital funding via the Big Build Youth Housing Grant; the unwavering support of State Member for Mill Park Lily D'Ambrosio MP; Victorian Government Minister for Housing Harriet Shing MP; Mirvac who committed to the project in its early stages when capital funding was being sought, the major contribution of landscaping; the Property Industry Foundation for a significant donation to the capital.

Hope Street is extremely grateful for the ongoing pro-bono legal representation from HWL Ebsworth Lawyers, providing much comfort in relation to contracts and risk management.

PROJECT NORTH WEST Z30

Hope Street partnered with three philanthropic funds; Australia Community Fund (Peel Fund), Equity Trust (RM Ansett Trust) and Lord Mayors Charitable Fund to undertake pre work and to establish interest regarding a Community of Schools and Services

(CoSS) in the Melton area. Funds were committed in May 2022 and project work commenced in November 2022 and concluded in June 2024.

The project saw Hope Street get an understanding the CoSS model in theory and practice, share the model with the Melton community and expand the Melton working group to share information, ideas and develop potential solutions and a model for the local area.

The Upstream Australia and CoSS budget bids were not successful in gaining establishment funds via the Victorian State Government so activities will continue to advocate for ongoing CoSS funding.

BIG SKY YOUTH HOUSING PROJECT

The Big Sky Youth Housing Project is an innovative housing, health and skills development opportunity arising from collaboration between the Health and Community Services Union, Australian Manufacturing Workers Union and Hope Street. For this project to progress land needs to be identified and build needs to progress. Focus is on identifying land and securing capital and operational funding.

COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS

With partnerships key to Hope Street achieving its strategic goals, engagement with community and corporate partners are vital. Special thanks to ecoDynamics, Woodgrove Shopping Centre and Pacific Epping, John Holland, Mirvac, Swiss and Sheridan. Welcome to staff at Microsoft who are making a significant impact by engaging in workplace giving and selecting Hope Street as their charity of choice.

Special thanks to Lily D'Ambrosio MP, Kathleen Matthews-Ward MP, Josh Bull MP, Steve McGhie MP.

CORPORATE COMMITTEE

The Hope Street Corporate Committee enables expert external stakeholders to contribute to the promotion and sustainability of Hope Street in accordance with the Hope Street Strategic Plan. Core activities in this period include advice and network forming to raise funds and awareness of the First Response Youth Service model in the City of Whittlesea.

ADVOCACY

Victorian Homelessness Network – On the 31st of July 2024 6000 origami houses were displayed at Victorian Parliament to raise awareness for the extra 60,000 social houses needed in Victoria to end homelessness for Homelessness Week 2024.

Going It Alone – Unaccompanied Child and Youth Homelessness - Pathways into and out of Homelessness. Hope Street co-sponsored this edition and published six articles in this youth specific edition of Parity April 2024. Articles available on Hope Street's website.

Property Industry Foundation Fun Run – Donna Bennett CEO gave a keynote speech on the positive long-term impact of the grant contribution to Hope Street for its First Response Youth Service in Whittlesea project to an audience of hundreds of participants raising money for youth homelessness

National Children and Youth Homelessness Conference July 2023 – Hope Street CEO Donna Bennett presented as a panel member on Innovative Models to Address Youth Homelessness. A number of Hope Street team members also attend this conference which brought together lived experienced advocates, government, media and service providers from across Australia.

Housing as a Human Right – Hope Street was pleased to contribute with an article in response to the National Housing and Homelessness Plan Bill 2024. This is available on our website.

State and Federal Ministers tour Hope Street in Melton and the City of Whittlesea to see these nation leading centres and program models for young people and young families experiencing homelessness.

Please follow updates on **Hope Street's social media pages** which include Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn. Please subscribe to the Partner e-Newsletter and engage with the Hope Street website for regular updates and articles.

Special welcome to Jamileh Hargreaves, Communications Lead who joined the Hope Street Corporate Services team in January 2024 and whose expertise has been central to Hope Street conveying key messaging of youth homelessness and Hope Street's leading responses to the wider community.

Katie Hooper, Business Development and Partnerships Manager

Bringing innovation to address the needs of young people in the City of Whittlesea



Hope Street Board, CEO and team watched with delight as the capital build has taken shape on a beautiful piece of land on Wurundjeri Country, with visiting kangaroos and protected by a majestic Red River Gum hundreds of years old. In partnership with the City of Whittlesea and Victoria State Government, as well as Mirvac, HWL Ebsworth Lawyers, the Property Industry Foundation, WP Contractors commenced construction in August 2023, on the award-winning Brand Architects' leading designed 13-bedroom youth centre (refuge).

The First Response Youth Service model is centred on the integration of physical environment (therapeutically designed centre) and evidence base industry led approaches to service delivery. This combination enables a better response to the immediate needs of young people (16-25 years) and young people with children, experiencing homelessness and multiple at-risk issues (e.g. poor mental

and physical health, unsafe situations, social isolation, poverty, educational dis-engagement). Young peoples' needs are considered and responded to holistically encompassing life domains such as housing, safety, culture, health, relationships. The youth centred model is strengths based and solutions focused aiming to empower young people on their pathway ahead as they plan and commence the steps to achieve their goals as they begin to move out of homelessness and into safe and sustainable accommodation. Each year, 100 young people and their children will be provided with this valuable service.

The First Response Youth Service centre is under construction and will be open to young people and young families December 2024.



Clockwise from left:

As the frame goes up on the First Response Youth Service administration office

The smooth curved bricks at the entrance to the youth refuge building

John Boje WP Contractors, Andrew Giles MP and Katie Hooper Business Developmental and Partnerships Manager

As the alfresco dining space at the youth refuge takes shape
The river red gum from the family unit

OPERATIONS REPORT

Hope Street is seeing firsthand the profound impact that the national housing crisis is having on young people and their children who access its services. The rental market across Australia, including Victoria, is failing, leaving many without secure, affordable housing. The proportion of vacant properties is 2.2% for metro Melbourne and it also remained at 2.1% for regional Victoria. As the median weekly rent for houses in both metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria is \$580 and \$470, respectively (as reported by Real Estate Institute of Victoria - REIV), young people are priced out of the market due to low incomes, casualised and insecure labourforce and no rental history. Even more concerning, only 0.4% of social and public housing properties are leased independently by young people.

In March 2024, there were 58,459 applications for public and community housing on the waiting list. The Federal Government's Youth Allowance, provided through Centrelink, is \$43 per day, which is just half of the Australian poverty line, being \$87.32 per day. The 2021 ABS Census highlighted that 23% of all Australians experiencing homelessness (28,204 people), were aged 12 to 24 years, with the 19–24 age group having the highest rates of homelessness. Despite these confronting statistics, Hope Street stands by its purpose and in partnership with the Victorian Government, Local Governments, the corporate sector and philanthropy as well as many other community based service providers, to continue to deliver high quality services to assist vulnerable young people and young families to navigate and secure accommodation/housing.

The theme for this year—**Solutions to the crisis – Housing for young people is a human right**, reflects the urgent need to address this crisis. Every young person and child has the right to safe, secure housing as a basic human right, yet too many are being denied this fundamental necessity. During the 2023/24 reporting period, Hope Street supported 586 young people and their children across its nine programs. Hope Street offers a comprehensive, four-stage service model designed to address the immediate and long-term housing needs of young people:

- 1. Immediate:** An emergency response through assertive outreach, providing intensive case management support.
- 2. Emergency:** 24/7 staffed communal crisis accommodation that offers safety, stability, and access to essential resources in the short term.
- 3. Stable:** Medium-term supported accommodation for up to 18 months, focused on education, employment, social/cultural connections, health/wellbeing and life skills development for young people.
- 4. Sustainable:** Long-term housing solutions with access to resources and opportunities aimed at preventing further homelessness, poverty, and disadvantage.

It is no surprise that the most common reason young people and families sought support in the 2023/24 year from Hope Street has shifted from 'relationship or family breakdowns' (main reason in 2022/23) to 'housing affordability stress', further evidencing the challenges young people and their children are faced with in the current housing crisis.

The Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) underscore the fact that a lack of secure and affordable housing is a key driver of homelessness for young people. The longer young people experience homelessness, the higher their risk of becoming entrenched in a cycle of homelessness throughout their lives. This challenge is compounded by the trauma many have experienced, from family violence, neglect, poverty, and social isolation.

Hope Street strongly advocates for **Solutions to the crisis – Housing for young people is a human right** for young people and children and is committed to addressing the disproportionate impact the housing crisis has on this vulnerable population. In the 2021–2022 period, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) reported that 25% of Victorians experiencing homelessness were aged 12–25 years. Aboriginal Australians are particularly affected, with Council to Homeless Persons (CHP) noting that while Indigenous Australians make up 0.8% of the Victorian population, they represent 10.2% of those accessing homelessness services.

At Hope Street, 9% (52) of the young people and families we support identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or both, and 29% of our clients were born overseas.

In response to this housing crisis, Hope Street continues to be a vital source of support in local communities such as Melton, Merri-Bek, Whittlesea, and beyond. Our work goes beyond temporary shelter—it's about ensuring young people, and their children have the long-term stability they need to thrive. Housing is not just a privilege; it is a right, and Hope Street is committed to upholding this right for all young people.

Our programs are designed using leading industry practices, including strength-based, trauma-informed, and solution-focused approaches, with young people at the heart of everything we do. Each young person is empowered to collaborate with specialist youth homelessness workers to create an individualized support plan that reflects their unique needs, aspirations, and capabilities.

The key outcomes achieved with and by young people and their families in 2023-2024 are presented in the pages that follow. These outcomes underscore the importance of our work in addressing the housing crisis and ensuring that the right to safe, secure, and affordable housing is realised for all young people and their children.

Sue Scott, Operations Manager



From top: Operations manager, Sue Scott, hosted a panel of two young people, Conor and Jonathan, both currently being supported by Hope Street indifferent programs.

General manager Worrell Blow from The Margaret Tucker Hostel, at their annual NAIDOC breakfast, with Operations manager, Sue Scott. Photo by James Henry: jameshenryphotography@gmail.com

THE YOUTH RECONCILIATION PROGRAM

The Youth Reconciliation Program strengthens a young persons' experience within the Hope Street programs models that provide outreach, case management, and supported accommodation, by offering additional protective interventions. The young person is the primary client and determines the type and intensity of the intervention such as including one-on-one counselling, mediation, and support. This specialist one to one therapeutic response benefits young people facing mental health challenges, such as anxiety, depression as well as young people experiencing family or relationship breakdowns, domestic violence, lack of support, social isolation, and homelessness, to navigate their circumstances. Through this support, participants begin to reconcile their experiences, build resilience, and take meaningful steps toward their personal goals, fostering positive change in their lives.

I want to acknowledge that the success of this program, particularly with young people and families, is largely due to the compassion, professionalism, and unwavering dedication of the practitioner Corey Gray. The Hope Street Youth Reconciliation program supported 67 young people in the 2023 -2024 year, meeting 152% of its target. This type of support is critical to assist young people to feel safe in their place of living.

Thanks to the Hope Street teams
My sincerest and most heartfelt thanks to the program and leadership teams at Hope Street. The youth residential support staff and case managers contribute to affecting the greatest change in the lives of young people experiencing homelessness. Dedication, persistence and resilience always shine through as our team face increasing challenges and barriers to secure housing for young people. Enormous appreciation to the leadership team for their support and management, exemplifying the values of Hope Street by providing valuable expert guidance in driving our purpose forward. It is through our collective driving force as a team that we are able to assist young people and young families to build a better future.

Immediate

181 young people and their children

Emergency

242 young people and their children



At the “Immediate” stage of the service continuum, delivered through the Boost Program, co-located at the Brunswick West Youth Refuge, as well as the First Response Mobile Outreach program, based in Melton, Hope Street provides critical support to young people and young families, many of whom are new to both homelessness and in the homelessness service system. These programs operate utilising an assertive outreach model going to where young people are located, offering intensive case management that achieves strong outcomes, particularly in connecting young people to specialist services and meeting urgent material, health and safety needs. However, housing and accommodation outcomes remain distressingly out of reach.

Hope Street’s data highlights that the top six most frequently identified needs in this stage are:

- short-term or emergency accommodation,
- essential assistance, advice and information,
- retrieval/storage/ removal of personal belongings,
- medium-term/transitional housing, and
- long-term housing.

Despite these needs, the data shows a troubling reality: despite referrals being made, 100% of long-term housing remain unmet, largely due to the severe shortage of youth-specific housing, transitional programs, and affordable public or social housing options. This lack of accessible housing leaves young people facing homelessness with few to no viable medium- or long-term housing solutions. Of those supported in this phase, 21% accessed private rental accommodation, 8% moved into transitional accommodation, 6% into public housing and 1% into community housing. Of the remaining young people and young families who were not able to access longer term housing, 23% were in emergency accommodation, 23% had no tenure, and other young people were either staying with friends or in other rough sleeping situations.

The crisis is compounded by the insufficient social income young people receive, which entrenches them further in poverty and homelessness. With a youth social income of \$639.00 per fortnight—\$538 per fortnight below the Australian poverty line— young people are forced to survive on incomes that preclude them from accessing the private rental housing market.

Despite the housing crisis challenges, the programs had some success in linking young people into employment and education, ultimately improving their future trajectory. At the end of Hope Street support, 19% of young people were engaged in employment and 14% were participating in education.

While immediate responses and basic necessities like safety, food, clothing, transportation, medical services, and shelter are crucial during the crisis stage, the long-term solution lies in recognising housing as a human right for young people. The persistent and alarming lack of adequate housing must be addressed through increased government intervention and a commitment to youth-specific housing solutions. Investment in youth specific medium- and long-term housing infrastructure is essential and will prevent homelessness from becoming a cyclical and chronic issue for young people.

The data underscores the urgent need for more accessible and affordable housing options integrated with support models that are designed specifically for youth. As the housing crisis intensifies, structural changes—such as increasing the availability of public, social, community and transitional housing—are necessary to uphold the human right to housing for young people. This would provide the foundation for them to pursue education, employment, and overall well-being, breaking the cycle of homelessness and creating a pathway to a stable, thriving future.

The “Emergency” stage is a critical point in the continuum of services, where young people face significant crises and are in urgent need of short-term or emergency accommodation, as well as comprehensive support. Hope Street addresses these needs through specialised programs such as the Youth Support Service, Brunswick West Youth Refuge, and the First Response Youth Service in Melton (refuge).

At this crucial juncture, Hope Street provides a broad range of assistance, including six-week therapeutically supported crisis accommodation, intensive one-on-one case management, life skills development, educational engagement, cultural and community connections, and access to long-term resources.

However, the most pressing issue is the severe lack of long-term and transitional housing for young people, which remains one of the most challenging needs to meet. The Hope Street data shows that 0% of long-term housing needs and 0.8% of medium-term/transitional housing needs were met with this cohort. Victorian statistics reveal that only 0.4% of young people receiving Centrelink income hold a primary lease in public or social housing.

With the Victoria private rental vacancy rate 1.47% in June 2024 and average rents rising by 10.9% to \$550 per week for the same period, young people relying on a weekly Centrelink income of \$319.50 find private rental options financially out of reach. As recognised in the High Court, **housing for young people is a human right**. Australia has Treaty obligations on the Convention on the Rights of the Child to uphold housing as a fundamental human right and protect children and young people from experiencing homelessness.

The current housing crisis underscores the need for systemic solutions. To transition young people out of homelessness, Hope Street’s primary objective is to help them secure housing that is suitable, affordable, and sustainable, providing the safety and stability necessary for them to pursue education, employment, health, and social or cultural connections. Without this stability, the risk of long-term homelessness only increases. Yet the scarcity of medium and long-term housing options stems from structural challenges, including a severe shortage of

transitional, public, and social housing, widespread discrimination, inadequate social income and wages, and the high cost of living.

Although opportunities were limited, some young people successfully transitioned from Hope Street’s two 10 bed refuges into private rental accommodation (10%) and into transitional and community housing (10%).

Despite these barriers, Hope Street’s team has demonstrated remarkable tenacity and youth-focused dedication, making significant progress in addressing other vital needs of young people. Of the 242 young people and families with dependents supported during the “Emergency” phase, 50% successfully achieved half or more of their goals identified of non-housing needs and were provided with timely access to essential services and goods. The team also supported their young people to make substantial strides in areas such as living skills and personal development to empower them with some of the tools they need as they work towards building stable, independent, and successful lives.

The need for increased youth-specific housing solutions is urgent and undeniable. Government intervention to safeguard housing for young people has never been more critical. A proactive, rights-based approach is essential to ensuring that all young people have access to safe, supportive, and sustainable housing, enabling them to break the cycle of homelessness and achieve their full potential.

Hope Street’s response to youth homelessness is to recognise the integration of wrap-around supports that young people and their children need to go from surviving to thriving. Building a sense of community connection, security, comfort and safety, alongside practical goals in a therapeutic setting empowers young people to access community services, plan and commence steps for a better future.

BRUNSWICK WEST REFUGE AND YOUTH SUPPORT SERVICES PROGRAM

Two brothers were referred into the Hope Street Brunswick West Youth Refuge, supported by the Youth Support Services team. The referral came from an out-of-region access point, after the brothers’ safety was deemed to be at risk.

Residential Youth Support staff completed a telephone assessment and the two brothers were accepted into the crisis accommodation family unit, later moving to the 6-week bed stay within the main communal refuge building. Both boys were recently sponsored to move to Australia from Afghanistan, however, due to family conflict, after twelve months the brothers left their father’s home.

They presented to the refuge as 16 and 18 years old, however the Boost specialist case manager quickly ascertained they were a lot younger. This posed many challenges in linking them with appropriate support services. DFFH Child Protection were contacted but were not willing to provide support to the brothers as their passports showed them to be 16 and 18.

During their stay at the Brunswick West Youth Refuge their case manager completed a referral to the Bolton Clark Youth Homelessness Nurse (with scheduled visits to the refuge), spending part of the week at the refuge. The Nurse made referrals to a GP for a full medical check-up, optometrist, podiatrist and dentist.

With help from the Hope Street case manager, the younger brother enrolled into a nearby language school and the older brother was enrolled in the alternative school for Year 11. They were both reconnected with their support to Foundation House. Additionally, their case manager assisted them in accessing the specialist youth counselling services – the Hope Street Youth Reconciliation Practitioner co-located in the refuge. The practitioner supported the brothers to develop strategies to help manage their family conflict.

With guidance and access to resources from the case manager, the brothers were able to contact their mother and other siblings in Somalia, connecting them with their community, culture and religion. After many challenges and persistent advocacy by their case manager, both brothers obtained Centrelink support.

The brothers contacted their father – and with the support of the youth reconciliation practitioner and case manager, they were successfully reunited and returned home.

BOOST PROGRAM

JORDAN’S STORY (he/him)

21-year-old Jordan was experiencing significant family displacement and transience which resulted in his homelessness. He was accepted into the Boost program, moving into a 1-week Short Stay bed at the Brunswick West Youth Refuge, followed with access to a 6-week bed stay within the refuge.

Through his time at the refuge, Jordan worked diligently with the support of the specialist case manager, developing a case plan noting his goals. Jordan was very eager to gain employment and find longer term accommodation. A Victorian Housing Register (VHR) housing application was completed, with a referral to the Bolton Clark Youth Homelessness Nurse (visits Hope Street refuge) to support him with medical, dental and optometry needs.

Jordan’s Boost specialist case manager completed a referral to a Transitional Housing (THM) property managed by VincentCare. The outcome was successful and Jordan moved into the property.

The Boost specialist case manager continued to provide support to Jordan throughout his Transitional Housing Tenancy (16 months). This enabled a consistency of service, building on the trust and rapport already established as Jordan continued to work towards achieving his goals.

Recently, Jordan was successful in obtaining a Community Housing long-term property in Prahran, assisted by the Boost specialist case manager who provided bond and rent information, helped him obtain furniture and settle into his new home. This has been an amazing outcome for a young person with no family supports and who was initially supported in a one-week short stay bed. Jordan is extremely happy now he has settled into his new “forever home”. He says he never has to worry again about having a roof over his head.

Stable

33 young people and their children

Sustainable

28 young people and their children

Conclusion

HOPE STREET IN WHITTLESEA PROGRAM DAISY + SON'S STORY

18 year-old Daisy moved to Victoria from NSW, escaping family violence to make a better life for herself and her son. Daisy accessed accommodation via a homelessness access point and secured a short-term refuge stay at the Hope Street Brunswick West supported crisis accommodation family unit.

While at the refuge the young family were supported by their Hope Street Case Manager, Maternal Child Health Nurses, Mental Health and Family Services and were supported to lodge a public housing application on the Victorian Housing Register.

The family were referred to a two-bedroom unit and place vacancy with the Hope Street in Whittlesea program. This is a youth specialist foyer-like supported accommodation program in Thomastown, with case managers and residential support staff located onsite seven days a week.

A case management (support) plan was developed for Daisy and her son, identifying goals and actions to achieve while in the program. Consistent mental health management for regular medication reviews to support her recovery more effectively was key for Daisy during this time.

Daisy's son was approved for an NDIS package and started attending day care in a home setting which matched his specific needs. The program allocated case management funds towards purchasing play items which were responsive to her son's developmental needs.

Daisy's case manager supported her with strategies to address her anxiety and accessing places to increase her independence.

A Creating Connection Education, Employment Pathways (CEEP) application was completed to assist with a laptop and MYKI funding to increase engagement in her English course.

The family had their Victorian Housing Register application updated to include exceptions to ensure Daisy's housing supported her mental health recovery.

After being in the program for 18 months, Daisy and her son were offered a long-term Public Housing property which met their needs. The young family moved in August 2024 with support from their Case Manager. They have both settled into the area and are looking forward to their new life.

The "Stable" stage of Hope Street's continuum of services, delivered through the Hope Street in Melton and Hope Street in Whittlesea programs, provided support to 33 young people, including children of young families. This program model is based on a cluster of one- and two-bedroom units, with a dedicated unit for operational functions, including specialist support staff available seven days a week. Resembling a Foyer-like employment and education model, the program enhances youth development by offering individually tailored and integrated services. The goal is to prevent homelessness from becoming entrenched, providing young people with the tools to stabilise their lives before facing long-term detrimental effects. This wholistic approach recognises young people as active participants in shaping their housing, employment, education, and social development outcomes.

At the "Stable" stage, young people are no longer in immediate crisis but are working diligently toward their long-term goals. Hope Street supports this by offering up to 18 months of semi-independent accommodation, along with case management and on-site specialist youth residential support staff. The program helps young people develop essential independent living and tenancy skills, as well as build community connections and pursue education or employment opportunities.

The outcomes at this stage demonstrate that when young people are provided with safe, stable, affordable, and supported housing, they can make significant progress in other areas of their lives, aiding to prevent entrenched homelessness. Among the 33 young people and children in the program, 36% moved into Public Housing, 12% into transitional housing, 12% into private rental, and 30% into other forms of accommodation.

Importantly, for all those young people who had independent case plans, 63% of the self-determined goals were mostly or fully achieved, underscoring their commitment and progress when given stable housing and on-site support.

Recognising that education and training are fundamental pathways to independence, a notable achievement is that 30% of young people were engaged in study. Employment, a critical element of self-sufficiency and homelessness prevention, also saw significant progress, with 10% of eligible young people gaining employment.

The "Stable" stage provides a crucial foundation for young people, offering them secure, low-cost housing (25% of their income) and wrap-around support services. These conditions enable young people to achieve better housing and personal outcomes compared to the "Immediate" and "Emergency" stages.

However, despite these successes, young people continue to be disproportionately affected by the broader housing crisis, particularly in the private rental market. Structural issues such as inadequate public and social housing options, the soaring cost of living, and long-standing community housing practices contribute to the ongoing disadvantage experienced by young people. The housing crisis underscores the urgency of recognising **housing as a human right** for young people. Without a significant investment in youth-specific housing models, many will continue to face systemic barriers to stability and long-term success.

Addressing this crisis requires not only government intervention but a fundamental shift toward safeguarding housing as a basic right for all youth. With safe, stable housing, young people are empowered to focus on their education, employment, health, and personal development, enabling them to break the cycle of homelessness and build thriving futures.

The Hope to Home in Whittlesea program aimed to reduce the risk of homelessness for young people and young families by tackling the barriers that contribute to housing insecurity in the City of Whittlesea. This youth-focused private rental initiative provided long-term case management, with the primary objective of helping young people and young families obtain, maintain, and sustain private rental housing. However, due to the worsening private rental crisis and the increasing difficulty for young people to access affordable rental properties, the program concluded 30 June 2024.

The Hope to Home program operated within the "Sustainable" stage of Hope Street's continuum of services, which supports those on the brink of securing safe, long-term housing. A key factor in its success has been the comprehensive support model, which focused on young individuals, couples or families who had never rented a home privately and were ready to make the transition to stable, long-term housing. The program provided 12 months of case management through a dedicated Private Rental Support Worker, financial assistance to achieve private rental goals, and connections to a network of support with the aim that they access required assistance to sustain their private rental.

The outcomes achieved at this stage were transformative, although the program was unsuccessful in accessing private rental accommodation for its cohort. The program had some success in accessing community housing (7%). All young people were engaged in intensive case management, and all were significantly deemed as rental ready, with robust links for ongoing support in aiding them to build a stable foundation for the future. Young people had increased their skills to continue to seek out long-term housing, with the skills necessary to sustain the private rentals when they achieved their goal.

Financial security is another critical element of self-sufficiency. Within the "Sustainable" stage, 100% of young people were able to improve or maintain their financial stability through government support payments or employment. This provided a crucial stepping stone toward independence, with additional income to meet essential financial responsibilities associated with private rental housing.

Education and training are vital pathways out of long-term homelessness, better employment therefore income opportunities. The stability of Hope to Home enabled young participants to re-engage or continue studies or training essential to build skills, confidence, and the qualifications they need to thrive long-term.

However, despite the program's many successes, the increasing difficulty in securing private rental properties for young people due to high rental costs and low vacancy rates has made it unsustainable to continue. The broader housing crisis—marked by soaring rental prices, the shortage of affordable housing, and systemic barriers in accessing private rentals—has severely limited the availability of rental properties for young people. This highlights a key structural issue: the inability of youth to compete in the current housing market, which further entrenches their vulnerability to homelessness.

The Hope to Home program underscored that **housing is a human right**, and that without safe, stable, and affordable housing, young people cannot achieve long-term stability or success. This crisis requires urgent solutions, including greater government intervention increasing youth allowance, increased availability of affordable housing and youth-specific rental programs. It is essential to recognise that housing is not just a basic need but a fundamental right. Until society addresses the structural causes of housing insecurity, young people will continue to face severe and entrenched disadvantage.

In conclusion, while the Hope to Home in Whittlesea pilot program has provided life-changing support for young people, the broader crisis in the private rental market has made it impossible for the program to continue as intended. The need for systemic change is clear: without accessible, affordable, and supported housing options, young people remain at risk of falling through the cracks, reinforcing the urgency of recognising housing as a fundamental right, upheld by the Australian High Court.

Reflecting on the **Hope Street continuum of service delivery** for vulnerable and disadvantaged young people, including children, underscores the significance of diverse program models that respond to the unique circumstances each young person faces upon presenting to Hope Street. The data illustrates that when young people are offered safe, low-cost, supported housing with security of tenure, they can achieve remarkable outcomes.

Conversely, the data also highlights the profound impact of persistent disadvantage when young people lack access to essential services and secure, affordable housing. Without these fundamental supports, young people are at increased risk of entering into a cycle of instability that further entrenches their vulnerabilities.

Alarmingly, **young people and children represent 25% of the total homeless population** recorded in Victoria (Census 2021), yet they are significantly underrepresented in tenancies of key housing and accommodation models, with only 0.4% of both public and social housing tenanted by young people, minimal transitional stock allocated specifically for young people, and both structural and systemic barriers to accessing the private rental market. compared to individuals aged over 25 years. This disparity indicates that young people and their families are disproportionately affected by the current housing crisis.

Recognising that **housing is a human right**, it is essential to advocate for systemic solutions that ensure equitable access to affordable and secure housing for all young people. Addressing this crisis requires urgent action, including increased investment in youth-specific housing initiatives, better integration of essential services, and the creation of policies that prioritise the needs of young people. By ensuring that every young person has access to safe, low-cost, and supportive housing, society can break the cycle of disadvantage and empower them to build brighter futures.

PEOPLE AND CULTURE REPORT

Hope Street values its staff who provide impactful outcomes for the young people and young families experiencing homelessness and to influence solutions in addressing youth homelessness. 2023-2024 saw a focus on building organisational capabilities to ensure all staff have what they require to enable the organisation to achieve its vision of *a society in which all young people and young families have a safe place to call home.*

WORKFORCE PLAN DRAFT

The core strategic priority of a Workforce Plan was drafted during this period. The Plan which emphasises **Recruitment and Retention** also focuses on 4 other levers or key features:

Engagement – staff and teams, Psychosocial Health and Wellbeing, Diversity and Inclusion and Learning and Professional Development.

Whilst much of the work is underway and some completed under these headings, this Plan developed through research, consultation and analysis of “people” data and metrics, brings in contemporary thinking and workforce practices to ensure Hope Street is positioned well to meet the exciting and imminent growth.

LEADERSHIP CAPABILITY

A focus area in our workforce planning is building our leadership capability. Practical and developmental workshops held with the Executive Leadership Team and/or Program Managers included on *Psychosocial Health and Wellbeing for Leaders, Recruitment and Retention and Workforce Planning.* Briefings also occurred on Psychosocial hazards and duties for the People, Health and Culture Committee, Risk Management and Compliance Committee and Board.

Members of the Executive Leadership team and a team member attended conferences on First Nations Employment Meanjin, Brisbane and Victorian Homelessness Sector, Naarm, Melbourne. Learnings were shared back with all staff to excite and engage about contemporary, best practices and thinking through online presentations.

CADETSHIPS

During 2023 through a strengthened partnership with AFLSportsReady (AFLSR) and RMIT, two paid cadetships for First Nations students were established. This Nation-leading approach saw the two cadets studying bachelor’s degrees in Youth and Social Work, undertake their student placement and university requirements whilst gaining skills in paid employment.

STAFF ENGAGEMENT

E-Newsletter

Four quarterly editions of the Staff e-Newsletter were issued. Coordinated by People and Culture with the expert contribution of our Communications Lead, Jamileh, the Newsletter is a communication staple covering updates on growth including Hope Street in Whittlesea build, philanthropy and advocacy, diversity and inclusion, wellbeing, First Nations engagement. Introduction to new team members, and updates on legislative and policy changes affecting staff are also included. Staff contributions are encouraged, often with a competition and the e-Newsletter highlights are often the client successes or stories and photos contributed by Hope Street team members.

On 21 March 2024 which was Harmony Day, a celebration of diversity and inclusion, the first quarterly, **all staff day** was held. The Melton City Council (MCC) Youth Community Centre was the venue for 22 Hope Street team members who, celebrated Harmony Day with speakers; 2 MCC Youth team members sharing their experience of inclusion and a West African drumming session. Cultural diversity was celebrated with team members wearing the colour representing Harmony; orange, by sharing food and team experiences as well as updates on key projects. These days are a great way to connect and are planned to continue quarterly.

Diversity, Inclusion and Wellbeing

Diversity, Inclusion and Health and Wellbeing were all celebrated with activities and events held throughout the year many coordinated by the Wellbeing (staff) Group. These included in chronological order staff participation in NAIDOC Week; Merri-bek and Melton Council activities; Wear it Purple Day; RUOK awareness; and World Mental Health presentations; attendance at Djirra’s Sisters Day Out (Melton); Harmony Day (celebration of cultural diversity); staff day and quiz; Idahobit Day; Pride Month in June; participation in and skills building with sector-specific training offered through Elmo on supporting LGBTQIA+ young people.

GROWTH READINESS

Recruitment/retention

Hope Street continued to build and promote the Employee Value Proposition (EVP) to attract and retain talent at Hope Street. Initiatives included revised and targeted advertisement, promotion in Koori Mail and on RMIT and Federation University jobs boards. Staff enjoyed engaging with members of the public, community and students at jobs fairs and expos including Woodgrove (Melton) and Pacific Epping shopping centres and the RMIT careers expo.

Recruitment and preparation for the new purpose designed First Response Youth Service refuge in South Morang commenced early (April 2024), to ensure full and effective operations and staffing by opening date, November 2024. It was a considerable team effort, with a power of work completed by many in the team to ensure communications, advertisement, updates and readiness. Overcoming challenges in a difficult workforce market, the Team Leader role was filled early which meant the Program Manager and Team Leader could commence building and planning for their new team.

ELMO Implementation

2023-24 saw a new Human Resource and Information System ELMO, implementation commence. ELMO modules are designed to streamline and automate many of Hope Street’s payroll and human resource processes. Despite some initial delays, by June 30 all Recruitment, Onboarding and Learning and Development modules were implemented.

Nicole Misurelli
People and Culture Manager



Above, clockwise from left: All staff day March 2024 where learning, sharing and drumming occurred

Bianca Nash, Kate Jones Hao Nguyen, Hang Pham at Wear it Purple Day 2024

Ruby Guthrie-Kelly and Gi Brown at First Response Youth Service in Melton. Photo by Saina Turner

HOPE STREET YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES LIMITED

DIRECTORS' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2024

The directors present their report together with the financial statement of the company for the year end 30 June 2024.

Directors

The following persons were directors of the company during the whole of the financial year and up to the date of this report, unless otherwise stated:

Name	Date of Appointment	Date of Cessation
Judith Cooke	31.03.2008	
Andrew Nette	16.10.2012	
Katherine George	27.02.2019	
Anthony Goldsworthy	24.06.2020	
Riley Ellard	25.11.2020	
Simon Jackson	08.12.2021	
Elizabeth Young	08.12.2021	
Neb Kovetski	06.03.2024	

Principal Activities

Hope Street Youth and Family Services Limited ("The Company" or "Hope Street") has provided services to young people, young families and local communities since 1981 in response to youth homelessness. The organisation's constitutional objectives continue to be achieved through a range of specific projects and initiatives:

- To provide specialist support, crisis accommodation and housing services to vulnerable young people and their children who experience homelessness or are at risk of homelessness.
- To promote social and economic development and economic diversification for the sustainability of the Company.
- To achieve partnerships with stakeholders in the wider community that redress youth homelessness.
- To expand funding/income streams to grow the Company's capacity and responsiveness to the growing needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged young people and families in our communities.
- To facilitate the receipt of funding from the Commonwealth, State/Territory and private funding sources, in order to improve the Company's capacity and capability in responding to youth homelessness and adding social value to local communities.
- To establish or be a member of any corporation or association for the purpose of furthering the participation of the Company in the provision of services, products and/or housing for young people.
- To develop innovative programs that achieve meaningful outcomes in service delivery, sector development and social change that will benefit young people and their children experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of homelessness.

Hope Street has experienced a productive twelve-month period and is achieving significant progress in actioning its Strategic Plan 2022 -2027.

Hope Street has continued to expand its services, reinforcing its reputation as a provider of high-quality housing and homelessness services, with a focus on youth and a secular approach. Over the past year, staff have shown significant dedication in maintaining current services while actively seeking opportunities for further growth.

The imminent opening of First Response Youth Services in Whittlesea in November 2024 is a crucial addition to Hope Street's service offerings. Hope Street's efforts in breaking ground and building the Whittlesea First Response Youth Service have been a significant achievement for the organisation and are a testament to its commitment to delivering responsive and leading youth homelessness services, creating a positive impact on the lives of young people and young people with children.

Strategy for achieving the objectives

Hope Street is actioning and well on the way to achieving the outcomes identified in its Strategic Plan for 2022 – 2027. The strategy reflects Hope Street's commitment to adapt and thrive in the face of evolving challenges while fostering robust governance through close collaboration with the Board.

- The Hope Street Board is currently in the process of exploring becoming a registered youth housing provider. This ambitious endeavour showcases Hope Street's determination to expand its reach and better serve the young people and families it is dedicated to assisting.
- Hope Street is actively exploring partnerships and opportunities to expand services and increase the geographic reach of its youth specific housing services, including consultation with the Macedon Ranges Shire Council, Hume City Council, and Moorabool Shire Council as well as The Victorian State Government and other key stakeholders. These potential partnerships will serve to further strengthen Hope Street's service offering and ability to serve young people and their families in areas of high demand.
- The active involvement of the Board in shaping, committing to and supporting these strategic directions underscores the organisation's collaborative and visionary leadership, positioning Hope Street for a more impactful and sustainable future.

Financial Governance

The Board of Directors continued to prioritise robust finance governance of the Company. The Finance Committee of the Board continued to provide oversight over the financial performance and position of Hope Street, its adherence to policy and the operation of an effective internal control environment relating to the financial reporting processes.

Hope Street is in a sound financial position at the end of FY24. The Company holds sufficient cash and short-term investments of \$3,390,829 (FY23: \$3,499,720) to continue to provide essential services to its clients and prioritise expansion through the execution of the Strategic Plan.

The Company achieved a net surplus of \$2,059,887 in FY24 (FY23: \$80,184) which was inflated by one-off grant income of \$1,870,000 relating to the Whittlesea First Response Youth Service. Excluding the one-off grant income, the net surplus was \$189,887.

Capital expenditure of \$2,080,253 related to the First Response Youth Service in Whittlesea was spent during FY24. Further capital expenditure will be incurred in FY25 in which the project is expected to be completed.

The ongoing operations of Hope Street are only made possible by the continued financial support provided by The Victorian State Government, the Department of Families Fairness and Housing, Homes Victoria, the City of Melton, the City of Whittlesea and the City of Merri-bek, as well as our philanthropic partners including the Marian and E. H. Flack Trust, the Property Industry Foundation, STREETSMART, The Lord Mayors Charitable Foundation, and the Australian Communities Foundation. On behalf of the Board, we'd like to extend our deep appreciation for this unwavering and long-term support.

Meetings of directors

During the financial year, directors were eligible to attend, and attended, the following meetings:

	Attended	Held/Eligible
Katherine George (Chair)	8	8
Anthony Goldsworthy (Treasurer)	7	8
Riley Ellard (Secretary)	5	8
Judith Cooke	7	8
Andrew Nette (Director)	7	8
Simon Jackson	7	8
Elizabeth Young	8	8
Neb Kovetski	3	3

Held: represents the number of meetings held during the time the director held office.

Solvency of the Organisation

The Board confirms that, pursuant to Section 347A(1) of the Corporations Act with respect to the Annual Financial Statement, and having reviewed and considered the Company's current and projected financial position, in the directors' opinion, the Company is solvent and there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Company will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due.

Contributions on winding up

Hope Street Youth and Family Services Limited is a Company limited by guarantee and was incorporated on 21st February 2014. In the event of the Company being wound up, the 8 members' (2020: 7 members') liability is limited to an amount not exceeding \$20 (2020: \$20).

Auditor's Independence Declaration

A copy of the auditor's independence declaration as required under section 307C of the Corporations Act 2001 is set out immediately after this directors' report.

This report is made in accordance with resolutions of directors, pursuant to section 298(2)(a) of the Corporations Act 2001.

On behalf of the directors



Katherine George
Director



Anthony Goldsworthy
Director

Signed in Brunswick, this 9th day October 2024.

Statement of Financial Position

as at 30th June 2024

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
Assets		
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	1,700,248	867,531
Trade and other receivables	83,687	95,743
Financial Assets	1,690,581	2,632,189
Total Current Assets	3,474,516	3,595,463
Non-Current Assets		
Trade and other receivables	43,762	70,356
Property, plant and equipment	5,736,377	3,597,025
Total Non-Current Assets	5,780,139	3,667,381
Total Assets	9,254,655	7,262,844
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Trade and other payables	338,545	363,565
Employee entitlements	604,565	596,926
Contract liabilities	19,360	72,613
Total Current Liabilities	962,470	1,033,104
Non-Current Liabilities		
Employee entitlements	50,342	47,764
Total Non-Current Liabilities	50,342	47,764
Total Liabilities	1,012,812	1,080,868
Net Assets	8,241,843	6,181,976
Equity		
Retained surpluses	8,241,863	6,181,976
Total Equity	8,241,863	6,181,976

Statement of Cash Flows

For the year ended 30th June 2024

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
Cash flow from operating activities		
Receipts from customers (inclusive of GST)	6,716,709	4,343,513
Payments to suppliers (inclusive of GST)	(4,695,488)	(4,100,735)
	2,021,221	242,778
Interest received	103,429	54,333
Net cash from operating activities	2,124,650	297,111
Cash flows from investing activities		
Payments for / (proceeds from) investments	941,608	(1,675,690)
Payments for property, plant and equipment	(2,282,995)	(37,504)
Proceeds from disposal of property, plant and equipment	49,454	0
Net cash from/(used in) investing activities	(1,291,933)	(1,713,194)
Net cash from financing activities	-	0
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	832,717	(1,416,083)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year	867,531	2,283,614
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year	1,700,248	867,531

Statement of Profit or Loss and other comprehensive income

For the year ended 30th June 2024

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
Revenue	6,872,020	4,539,915
Expenses		
Client and program costs	(2,889,180)	(2,541,208)
Employee benefits expense	(1,298,038)	(1,184,938)
Depreciation and amortisation expense	(136,842)	(157,641)
Other expenses	(488,073)	(575,944)
Surplus before income tax expense	2,059,887	80,184

The Statement of Financial Position, Statement of Cash Flows and Profit and Loss and other comprehensive income Statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying Notes accompanying and forming part of the financial statements, available at www.hopest.org

HOPE STREET YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES DIRECTORS' DECLARATION 30 JUNE 2024

In the directors' opinion:

- the company is not a reporting entity because there are no users dependent on general purpose financial statements. Accordingly, as described in note 1 to the financial statements, the attached special purpose financial statements have been prepared for the purposes of complying with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and associated regulations and the Corporations Act 2001 requirements to prepare and distribute financial statements to the members of Hope Street Youth and Family Services;
- the attached financial statements and notes comply with the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Act 2012 and associated regulations, the Accounting Standards as described in note 1 to the financial statements, the Corporations Regulations 2001 and other mandatory professional reporting requirements;
- the attached financial statements and notes give a true and fair view of the company's financial position as at 30 June 2023 and of its performance for the financial year ended on that date; and
- 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 a resolution of directors:



Katherine George
Director



Anthony Goldsworthy
Director

9 October 2024

William Buck

ACCOUNTANTS & ADVISORS

Independent auditor's report to the members of Hope Street Youth and Family Services Limited

Report on the audit of the financial report

Our opinion on the financial report

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report of Hope Street Youth and Family Services Ltd (the Company) has been prepared in accordance with Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, including:

- 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
- complying with Australian Accounting Standards to the extent described in Note 1, and Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulations 2022*.

What was audited?

We have audited the financial report of the company, which comprises

- the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2024,
- the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the year then ended,
- the statement of changes in equity for the year then ended,
- the statement of cash flows for the year then ended,
- notes to the financial statements, including material accounting policy information, and
- the company's declaration.

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 Hope Street Youth and Family Services Ltd 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.

Emphasis of matter – Basis of accounting

We draw attention to Note 1 of the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared for the purpose of fulfilling the director's financial reporting responsibilities under the ACNC Act. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

Responsibilities of the Directors for the financial report

The directors of the Hope Street Youth and Family Services Ltd are responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and have determined that the basis of preparation described in Note 1 to the financial report is appropriate to meet the requirements of the ACNC Act and the needs of the members. The directors' responsibility also includes such internal control as the directors determine 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, the directors are responsible for assessing the company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the directors either intend to liquidate the company or to cease operations, or have 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 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.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial report is located at the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board website at:

https://www.aasb.gov.au/auditors_responsibilities/ar4.pdf

This description forms part of our auditor's report.

William Buck
William Buck Audit (Vic) Pty Ltd
ABN 59 116 151 136

C. L. Sweeney
C. L. Sweeney
Director

Melbourne, 10 October 2024

Auditor's Independence Declaration under Section 60-40 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012

To the directors of Hope Street Youth and Family Services

As auditor for the audit of Hope Street Youth and Family Services for the year ended 30 June 2024, I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, there have been:

- no contraventions of the auditor independence requirements as set out in the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* in relation to the audit; and
- no contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.

William Buck
William Buck Audit (Vic) Pty Ltd
ABN 59 116 151 136

C. L. Sweeney
C. L. Sweeney
Director

Melbourne, 10 October 2024

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2023.01.31 Hope Street 2022 - Auditors Independence Declaration

Thank you to our Partners.

The incredible impact on the life and situations of young people and young families who do not have a safe place to call home, was made possible in 2023-2024, thanks to the compassionate and generous support of the following partners and supporters.

GOVERNMENT



TRUSTS AND FOUNDATIONS



CORPORATE



Thank you to our Community Partners.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- Aboriginal Private Rental Assistance Program (APRAP)
- Anglicare
- Bert Williams Aboriginal Youth Services
- Bolton Clarke Homeless Persons Program
- Catholic Regional College Melton
- CAFS Bacchus Marsh
- Caroline Chisholm Society
- Council to Homeless Persons
- Centrelink Melton
- Centre for Multicultural Youth
- Combined Churches Caring Melton
- CWA Melton
- Djerriwarrh Community & Education Services
- Foodbank
- Haven Home Safe
- Headspace
- HoMie
- Hume Whittlesea Local Learning & Employment Network
- Jesuit Social Services (Job Advocate Program)
- Kirrip Aboriginal Corporation
- Kurunjang Secondary College
- Launch Housing
- Lighthouse Foundation
- Lort Smith Animal Hospital
- L2P Project
- Margaret Tucker Hostel
- Melbourne City Mission
- Melbourne Period Project
- Melbourne Youth Support Service / Frontyard
- Melton Secondary College
- Melton Waves
- Mind Australia
- Northern Community Legal Centre
- Northern and Western Children's Resource Centre
- Northwestern Mental Health – SUMITT (HYDDI)
- Northern Local Areas Services Network
- Orange Door
- Orange Door – Brimbank
- Orygen Youth Health
- Oxygen – Moreland Youth Services
- OzHarvest
- Reclink Australia
- Rotary Club of Melton
- Salvation Army Social Housing and Support (SASHS) Network
- Salvation Army YAC
- Share the Dignity
- STREAT
- Unison – Footscray & Werribee
- Upstream
- Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA)
- Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO)
- Victoria Police
- Victoria University
- VincentCare Victoria
- Western Emergency Relief Network
- Western Local Areas Services Network
- The Edge – Whittlesea
- Whittlesea Community Connections
- Whittlesea Community Futures Partnership
- 6801 Youth Outreach – Melton City Council
- Youth Affairs Coalition of Victoria
- Youth Law
- Youth Projects
- Youth Support and Advocacy Service (YSAS)

Thank you Hope Street team: our driving force

The individuals who make up the team are the driving force behind Hope Street. Collectively, the team members leverage their diverse skills, knowledge, and experiences, all united by a common purpose, vision, and shared values with Hope Street. The team take great pride in supporting all young individuals and families who turn to Hope Street, commending their resilience and determination to pursue their aspirations in the face of extreme adversity.

THE HOPE STREET TEAM

- Abdulai Barrie, Youth Residential Support Worker
- Airlia Hornsey, Youth Residential Support Worker
- Anna Marincic, Youth Residential Support Worker
- Aoife Fitzpatrick, Youth Case Manager FRRM
- Bianca Nash, Team Leader Whittlesea
- Cian McLoughlin, IT Coordinator
- Ciji Philip, Youth Residential Support Worker
- Corey Gray, Youth Counsellor (Reconciliation Practitioner)
- Divya Sinha, People and Culture Administrator
- Donna Bennett, CEO
- Duncan Adams, Finance Manager
- Emilie Theunissen, Youth Case Manager OPM
- Fiona McNaughton, Youth Residential Support Worker
- Gary Humphrey, Program Manager - Northwest
- Gary Hoang, Youth Case Manager OPW/Youth Private Rental Support Worker
- Gemma Reid, BOOST Case Manager
- Georgina Sullivan, BOOST Case Manager
- Gi (Gadanya) Brown, First Nation Cadet
- Gion Getachew, Youth Residential Support Worker
- Hana Omar, Project Officer
- Hang Pham, Program Manager - Northeast
- Issy Gennari, Youth Case Manager OPW/Youth Residential Support Worker
- Jacqueline Hempshall, Youth Residential Support Worker
- Jacqueline O'Bryan, Youth Residential Support Worker
- Jamileh Hargreaves, Communication Lead
- Jayde Lillico, Operation Project Officer
- Jenni Clark, Youth Residential Support Worker
- Jeremy Lusung, Youth Residential Support Worker
- Jordy McGauran, Youth Case Manager FRRM
- Katie Hooper, Business Development and Partnership Manager
- Kudzai Chiwonzoro, Youth Residential Support Worker
- Kylie Radville, Youth Residential Support Worker
- Kym Clark, Youth Residential Support Worker
- Lisa Settineri, Youth Residential Support Worker
- Mafata Dumbar, BOOST Case Manager
- Manmeet Kaur, BOOST Case Manager
- Melissa Gibbons, YSS Case Manger /Community Engagement Coordinator
- Nasteho Omar, Youth Residential Support Worker
- Neeve McEwen, Executive Assistant
- Nicole Misurelli, People and Culture Manager
- Paula Forrester, Youth Residential Support Worker
- Pei Cai, Finance and Payroll Officer
- Prisca Kot, Youth Case Manager OPM
- Robyn Hoult, Youth Residential Support Worker
- Ruby Guthrie, First Nation Cadet
- Samantha Hopkins, Youth Residential Support Worker
- Samantha Minerds, Youth Case Manager
- Selvelyn Guillermo, Youth Residential Support Worker
- Shakeel Ahmad, Youth Residential Support Worker
- Stephanie Flynn, Youth Case Manager OPW
- Sue Scott, Operations Manager
- Sue Watt, Team Leader Northeast
- Trish O'Donohue, Consultant – Operational Capacity Building

Annual Report production

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Hope Street is proud to be an all-inclusive organisation.

We acknowledge the Wurundjeri People, the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work, live and play and we pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

Hope Street has zero tolerance for all forms of violence, including child abuse, and is committed to creating safe communities which honour the best interests of children and young people.

The National Redress Scheme is in response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Hope Street Youth and Family Services is a committed member.



Hope Street acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government.

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Hope Street Youth and Family Services

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