

**WOMBAT HOUSING  
SUPPORT SERVICES**

# **Annual Report 2021**



# Our mission

Wombat supports people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to attain and maintain suitable housing in and around Melbourne’s West. Wombat will continue to deliver high-quality, well-regarded services and take a leading role in sector improvement.

## COPY AND EDITING

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All content has been written by  
wombat staff members and our clients.

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# Chairperson Report

**SASCHA SURGEY**



On behalf of the Wombat Board, I am pleased to present the Annual Report for 2021. It has again been a year of significant challenge, in the context of the global pandemic associated with COVID-19, and it is a credit to the staff at Wombat that the organisation has continued to deliver high quality and responsive services to a very vulnerable group of people in our community.

The Board is pleased to report the addition of 3 new members this year: Kim Berry, Trystan McWatt and Joy Tansey. Each of them individually brings immensely valuable skills to the organisation, including a range of financial management, fundraising, philanthropic investment, communications and marketing, and housing sector skills, and we welcome them to the Board. We also extend our sincerest gratitude to Shorna Moore, who has stood down from the Board this year. Shorna has been an incredible asset to the Board and to Wombat since she commenced in 2014, thanks to her significant expertise in financial management, legal issues, the community sector and strategic planning and policy. We wish Shorna the very best in her new professional role, and thank her for her time with us.

I would like to thank the other members of the Board for their engagement, perseverance, and thoughtful regard for the governance of Wombat this year: Serge Sztrajt, Ilana Jaffe, Brianna Davidson, John McCarthy and Mark Baldwin.

This year Wombat has again achieved a healthy financial position, and has ensured that appropriate financial management and oversight mechanisms are in place to support this to occur. The Board would like to thank our accountants Tonic and our auditor Sean Denham and Associates for their services this year.

This time last year, the Wombat Board acknowledged the impact of the pandemic on the organisation and particularly on the lives of people that access our services and homelessness services. This year, these impacts are just as significant, possibly more so. Wombat continues to adapt and innovate to ensure that the organisation can not only continue to deliver its services to the fullest extent possible, but also to develop service models and engage and communicate with their

clients. On behalf of the Board, I would like to sincerely and emphatically thank the entire staff team for their persistence, resilience, sound practice and hardiness in continuing to deliver Wombat's services. I would also like to commend the management team of Carmelo, Mark, Steve and particularly the Executive Office Rebecca for their work this year. Many thanks to Rebecca and her team for thoughtful and considered leadership, and for continuing to develop a culture where responsiveness and innovation is supported to occur.

## Meet the Board

### **SASCHA SURGEY (CHAIRPERSON)**



Sascha has many strings to her bow. She has worked for the Department of Health and Human Services focusing on disability and other areas. She has more than 20 years of experience in the human services and education sectors. As well as her extensive experience in community housing, Sascha is also a secondary school mathematics teacher. We are grateful that she also manages to dedicate her time to the Wombat Board.

### **SERG SZTRAJT (DEPUTY CHAIR)**



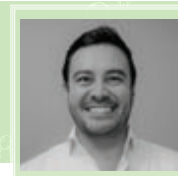
Serge joined the Board in 2008 and has more than 25 years of service to Victoria Legal Aid under his belt. Previously with the Neighbourhood Justice Centre (NJC) and holding the position of acting Principal Solicitor at Fitzroy Legal Service (FLS), Serge once again finds himself working with Legal Aid 3 days a week.

### **SHORNA MOORE (SECRETARY)**



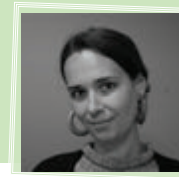
Shorna is the Director of Policy and Engagement at the Federation of Community Legal Centres. With a passion for social justice, Shorna is the chair of Smart Just for Women and sits on several other reference and advisory groups. Shorna is also involved in a number of local community projects addressing youth homelessness and housing. Shorna joined the board in 2014.

### **JOHN MCCARTHY (TREASURER)**



John has over 16 years of financial services experience across domestic and international banks working predominantly with ultra-high net worth clients including charities, not-for-profit organisations and private ancillary funds. Most recently he was the Investment Manager at Spotlight Group Holdings where he developed the equities trading capability for the Fried and Fraid family office. John joined the board in October 2018.

### **BRIANNA DAVIDSON (BOARD MEMBER)**



Brianna is a policy, strategy and communications manager and is currently leading the Social Policy team at the Office for Women (Vic Gov) . She has more than 10 years' experience developing strategies for domestic and international for-purpose organisations including: International Women's Development Agency, Foundation for Young Australians and Anglicare Victoria.



## MEET THE BOARD

### KIM BERRY (BOARD MEMBER)



Kim has extensive experience in fundraising and marketing, having been engaged in the sector for over 20 years. She has worked across a wide variety of sectors with a focus on social justice. Kim has a track record of fostering innovation and growth. She is currently National Fundraising and Manager at Ardoch, a non-profit supporting children and youth in disadvantaged communities.

### TRYSTAN MCWATT (BOARD MEMBER)



Trystan is a passionate commercial Chartered Accountant with extensive experience in financial services and aviation industries with a specialisation in the technology and operations domains. Trystan has spent the past two years advising large scale projects as a Finance Partner at NAB, and supports reporting and insights to help executives and C-suite solve business problems that improve performance.

### MARK BALDWIN (BOARD MEMBER)



Joining the Board in 1998, Mark is Wombat's longest serving Board Member. He is a local resident and respected architect, with projects focused heavily on environmental sustainability. Mark pioneered 'earth sheltering', which is the most ecologically sustainable approach to domestic and small-scale architecture. Mark brings a unique perspective to the ever-changing housing landscape.

### ILANA JAFFE (BOARD MEMBER)



Ilana has over 15 years experience working in homeless, family violence and health services. Ilana received the Melbourne Award for services to the community and was an expert witness on two panels in the Royal Commission into Family Violence. Ilana now works for Family Safety Victoria.

### JOY TANSEY (BOARD MEMBER)



With her background of 24 years in community housing and 15 years as a residential youth worker, Joy brings an experienced perspective to the board. Now largely retired, Joy is still employed for approximately 3 months a year on compliance reporting for a community housing organisation. In a past life, Joy spent 12 years as a Board Member at Wombat, many of them as Treasurer. After several years in the volunteering wilderness, Joy couldn't think of a better organisation to be involved with and returns to the Wombat Board with renewed vigour.



# Executive Officer's Report

**REBECCA CLEAVER**

Our community was turned upside down in 2020 as we grasped the impact of COVID-19 and modified our work lives, our service delivery, and our communication processes. Thanks to our flexibility we did well to adapt to the changes.

In 2020-2021, Wombat has continued to pivot its resources and service delivery to respond to the needs of people in emergency housing and helping those in need to find safe long-term housing. The year has required perseverance, patience and creative thinking.

It is a credit to all the staff at Wombat that they have continued to maintain connection and support to their clients in the face of such challenges.

Last year Wombat provided case managed support to over 700 young people, adults, and families plus an immediate response to many people accommodated in hotels/motels during the lockdown.

The pandemic has highlighted the importance of a home and the need to provide more and improved housing. We were thrilled when the Premier announced in November 2020 the biggest investment in social housing in Victoria of \$5.3 billion which will deliver 9,300 new social housing properties. The West will gain 497 new social housing properties plus the accommodation and support provided to 282 people through the Homelessness to Home program (H2H). This has added hope to an exhausted sector.

In addition, the announcement of funding from the State Budget in May 2021 to continue delivering accommodation responses for young people leaving care was great news for Wombat's Pathways to Independence program. This program has contributed to an increase in positive housing and life situations for young people exiting care. They now can continue this great work.

While we continue to provide a high standard of service delivery, the adjustments we have made in response to COVID-19 have been challenging for both staff and clients. It is undoubtedly easier to complete complex tasks, build rapport and assess the well-being of clients face to face. The constant upskilling of IT processes, navigating service delivery pathways and adjusting to the changing environment while working remotely has been challenging.

Throughout, the teams have worked tirelessly to ensure they are supporting each other and their clients and against the odds have achieved great outcomes and developed new ways of working. Simultaneously assisting those most vulnerable to understand and adhere to the health restrictions and lockdown requirements.

I would like to acknowledge the great work of DFFH during this difficult time and I thank all the many department staff that have assisted and guided Wombat over the year, your efforts and involvement in our work is appreciated.

Wombat has many partners (Pg 64) and we enjoy valuable relationships with small and large agencies in the sector. I thank them for their work. Together, we are well placed to continue working collaboratively to find solutions to homelessness and the best outcomes for clients.

I would like to thank the Board for their commitment to Wombat and for providing a source of knowledge and expertise to support Wombat's planning and development. Thanks also to the management team for their energy and diligence and drawing on their many years of experience and all the staff for their perseverance and persistence, it is a pleasure working with a positive and dedicated team.

Community needs will continue to increase as Wombat plays a vital role in working with the sector to respond to the most vulnerable. Wombat will pursue additional opportunities over the next 12 months to continue to address the needs of those experiencing homelessness and further marginalized by COVID-19.



Melrose Hotel 1983 sheet 02 0015. Photo: Graeme Butler, commissioned by the City of Melbourne Library 2014.

## 20 Years at Melrose Street

Two years on from amalgamation, the Wombat faithful were getting restless. Still operating from two sites – one above a church hall in Kensington, the other a dilapidated old dairy in Moore Street Footscray – the search for a new, combined premises had been frustrating and fruitless.

Then out of the blue came Melrose Street. It seemed too good to be true. Even though it was only the upstairs and reception, it was big, airy, and of course there was the deck!

It was quirky too – the creepy cellar and the dentist chair in what is now the interview room only added to the charm.

Surely, we couldn't afford it there must be a catch, but there wasn't. The purchase went through followed by a hive of activity – a new phone system and cabling, a pregnant Rebecca traipsing endlessly around IKEA with Beth sourcing new office furniture, walls going in, painting, plumbing (removing the spa and toilet from Mark's office).

Finally! It was moving day. For the ten intrepid staff it was like moving into a palace.

In 2005 we were able to purchase the rest of the building which was very timely as the organisation was expanding.

In 2012, the front corner artwork was unveiled and the building officially renamed 'Beth Thomson House'.

It's been a great place to work!





#### MANAGEMENT

Steve Maher, Rebecca Cleaver,  
Carmelo Maccarrone and Mark Rayner

## Wombat Values

Wombat's organisational values guide our approach to service delivery, decision making and our engagement with service users and external bodies.

### RESPONSIVENESS

We endeavour to respond to the individual need of people seeking our support and provide a flexible approach where possible.

### AUTHENTICITY

We place high value on being honest, genuine, and communicating as directly and as clearly as possible.

### CONNECTION

We foster connection, warmth, and good humour within our organisation and in our dealings with others.

### ACCOUNTABILITY

We endeavour to be open, transparent, and accountable to each other, to the people who use our services, to government and to the wider community.

### INNOVATION

We are open to new ideas and embrace change. We will continue to explore new and innovative service delivery models and advocacy strategies. We acknowledge success and failure to learn from both.

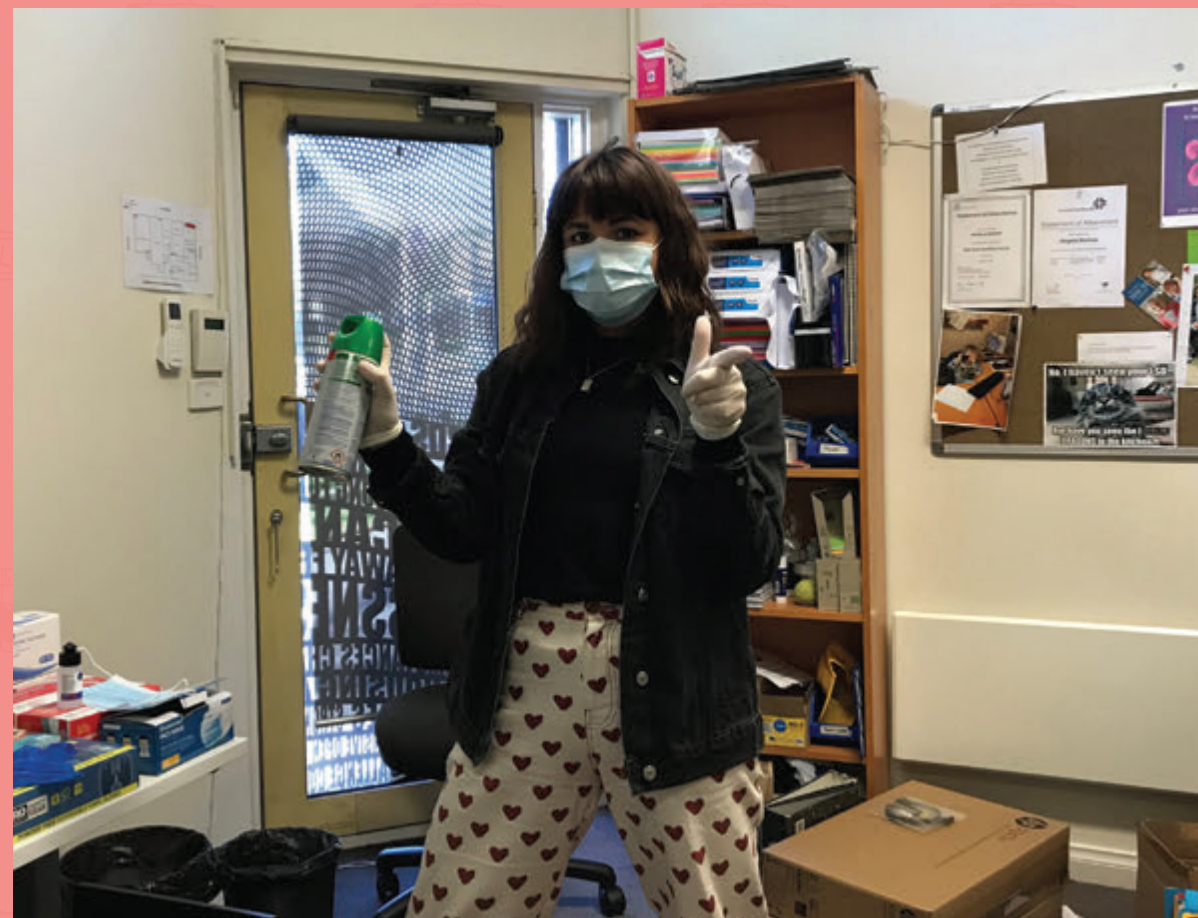


# HEART

## HOMELESSNESS EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION TEAM

Our Homeless Emergency Accommodation Team (HEART) response continued this year, supporting homeless people who were placed in hotels during lockdown. It was a challenging task, with COVID-19 restrictions forcing us to alter our approach to engagement and support for these extremely vulnerable clients. We even developed an initial response outreach material aid program with the assistance of our partners Christians Against Poverty and Hotham Mission, providing food parcels to ensure that people could feed themselves and their families during this difficult time. We viewed the HEART initiative as an extremely positive development; for the first time all homeless people were being housed.

Many of our clients were long term homeless who had disengaged from services, or the hidden homeless - like young people who had been couch surfing and ran out of options. HEART highlighted not only the significant need out there, but the incredible results that can happen when homelessness is prioritised and resources are put in place. As the role changed from supporting the hotel stay to finding an exit option, we were consistently amazed at the resourcefulness of our case managers obtaining some remarkable, potentially life changing housing outcomes and support linkages that really could change the trajectory of our clients lives.



# HEART

## HOMELESSNESS EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION TEAM



We were really proud of the incredible outcomes Wombat case managers were able to achieve with their HEART clients. Such as:

- A single mother and baby fleeing family violence who we assisted to obtain a Transitional Housing Property (THM) and we still support in our Family Program.
- A young homeless family for whom we were able to negotiate a public housing tenancy.
- A single woman with significant mental health issues who was previously living in her car after fleeing family violence who we were able to assist to obtain community housing.
- A single mother and child who were homeless due to family breakdown who we were able to link into our THM program and we still support.
- A single woman who we were able to assist obtain a share house which was ultimately unsuitable so we linked into the Homeless to Home Initiative (H2H) and now has stable housing.



**ROOMING HOUSE IN THE WEST**

## North and Western Homelessness Networks Consumer Survey

The 2020 Consumer Survey focused on consumer's experiences of the pandemic and their reflections on the adaptations made by the Sector.

Consumers reported:

- The majority of participants identified a deterioration in mental health through the pandemic. 72% of participants reported experiencing a mental health issue, which was more difficult for them to manage during the pandemic, particularly during lockdowns.
- Most respondents talked about stress and distress.
- Most respondents identified that they were satisfied with the support they received from the homelessness sector during the pandemic. 29 respondents said that there is nothing that the homelessness sector could have done differently.

- We asked consumers which of the new approaches, adopted through the pandemic, they would like to see continue. Just over half of the participants identified that they would like services to continue to text as a preference (55%) and just under half would like to see the first appointment continue over the phone (45%). Participants have identified that they would like to see a variety of forms of communication continue as an option, particularly phone calls (53%) and texting, followed by holding the first appointment over the phone, rather than presenting to the service.

A portion of participants would not like to see any alternative forms of communication to continue. This suggests that the homelessness sector should continue all forms of communication adopted during the pandemic but that we should ask consumers to choose their preferred mode of communication.



01.

### Rental Calculator



Easily calculate how much rent you can afford >

02.

### Rental Checklist



Create your Personal Rental Checklist >

03.

### Application Cover Letter



Fill in the form to create your application cover letter >

04.

### Reference Letters



Access sample reference letter templates >

## Private Rental Online Resource

In 2020 Wombat was fortunate to receive a Maribyrnong City Council Community Grant with which we developed the Private Rental Online Resource for Young People project.

Due to the overwhelming demand on homelessness services many at risk young people are turned away from support until they reach crisis point. We believe that a greater focus on educating and working with young people who are at risk and providing them with the tools to obtain and maintain private rental could alleviate some of the burden on the system.

With support from the Maribyrnong Council we have developed an interactive online resource that will assist young people with information, tips and tools to develop the skills they need to obtain a private rental property or share house. It's a tool specifically developed for young people to use on their phones or laptops

– which has been particularly pertinent during COVID-19 pandemic due to the limits to face-to-face appointments.

Accessible on the Wombat website, the resource allows young people to create their own rental pack that they can use when applying for properties. It provides clear information and much needed guidance, allowing young people to work through the resource at their own pace.

We would like to thank the Maribyrnong City Council and Yakkazoo for their very generous contribution to this project. Yakkazoo's in kind development support enabled us to create an eye-catching, intuitive tool that young people will be able to learn from for years to come.

We hope to add further living skills modules to the Private Rental Online Resource in the future.



**WOMBAT TEAM LEADERS**

***“It has been a tough year, but I think Wombat has been pretty remarkable throughout the pandemic. We’ve continued to stay positive, caring and responsive despite the challenges.”***

**–WOMBAT STAFF MEMBER**



## Freemasons Funds

Early in 2020 Wombat met with members of the Freemasons Old Scotch Collegians' Lodge to discuss potential ways of partnering to assist people using Wombat's services.

The result was a generous combined donation of \$21,000 from the Freemasons Foundation Victoria and the Old Scotch Collegians' Lodge to establish Wombat's COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund.

This fund enabled Wombat's case managers to act quickly and flexibly to provide a range of assistance that would otherwise not have been possible to those impacted by the pandemic.



As well as Wombat clients, the fund enabled us to respond to people who were placed in emergency hotel accommodation. As an initial response, workers ensured these people had food, phones and the basic necessities required to stabilise their situations in what for many was understandably a time of high anxiety.

Some of the assistance included:

- Providing emergency accommodation to people who would otherwise have been homeless
- Ensuring people had mobile phones and credit which was essential during times of extended lockdown
- Food and essential supplies

- Assistance with costs associated with education
- Help to pay utility bills.

As well as responding to the initial challenges raised by the pandemic, funds have also been used to assist people coming out of crisis. However, the continuing waves and lockdowns has meant this has not been a straightforward process!

In all 83 individuals and households were assisted through the grant. All funds donated have gone directly to clients.

Wombat has appreciated the support of the Old Scotch Collegians Lodge and Freemasons Victoria and we look forward to continuing to work in partnership in the future.

“

***Hi Wombat, I am not a homeless youth. I am an x wombat youth house resident. It is great to see you are still helping kids today. I lived in your house when I was 20, I am now 54. Keep saving lives. If it wasn't for your help back when I was homeless, I doubt I'd be here today...***

**—FORMER RESIDENT OF WOMBAT HOUSING SUPPORT SERVICES**



## Everyday Life Skills Tool

In 2019 Wombat was funded by the West Melbourne Area of the Dept of Families Fairness and Housing (DFFH) to evaluate and redesign the Housing Readiness for Young People (HRYP) tool. The tool, which was originally developed by Wombat about five years ago enables young people in Out of Home Care to identify the skills they need to develop to enable them to live successful, independent lives when they leave care.

Members of the Continuing Care Alliance (CCA), a forum comprising all Out of Home Care providers in the Inner West, formed a steering group to guide the project as we consulted with case managers and young people about their

leaving care experience and use of the tool.

On the basis of the evaluation an updated set of questions, response options and life skill domains was developed to form the basis of the redesign. It was also clear that the tool needed to exist online, so Centauri, a company specialising in developing customised interactive web-based portals, was enlisted to bring the design to life.

The renamed and revamped Everyday Life Skills Tool (ELS) is an innovative new web based, interactive assessment resource. It has been designed to be completed by the young person with their case manager or carer and the questions are really prompts to encourage discussion. The ELS also has links to on-line resources which enable the worker to pull-up videos, fact sheets and the like as part of a discussion.



PRE COVID TIMES

The tool is now being used by case managers from numerous agencies in the inner-west, and we are working with DFFH about the potential for its broader and further enhancement and development.

Wombat is enormously proud of the ELS. We believe it is a huge development in how we engage with and support young people leaving care. We would like to thank the Steering Group for their support and commitment, DFFH (particularly Louise Atherton and Mark Lee who were strong advocates for the tool from the outset) and Centauri for going above and beyond with the build.

“

***The Everyday Life Skills Tool would be useful for young people to use before they leave Out of Home care and transition into independent living. It gives young people the opportunity to work on their goals, of things they don't know how to do before they're on their own and bombarded. And they have the support from a staff member to become independent and confident before they are faced to do it by themselves. It would have prepared me for what I still needed to learn before I moved out by myself – it would have helped a lot.***

–EMILY – LIVED EXPERIENCE AMBASSADOR





## Wombat Programs:

Family Program

LGBTI+ Project

Maribyrnong Youth Accommodation Program (MYAP)

Pathways To Independence (PIP)

Single Adults Program (SSP)

Support For Families At Risk (SFAR)

Tenancy Plus (TP)

Western Homelessness Network (WHN)

Youth Justice And Continuing Care Program (YJCC)

Youth Support Program



## Family Program

The Family Program provides outreach case managed support for families who are homeless or in transitional housing, where parents are aged over 25 years.

### STATISTIC:

Over the past financial year, the Family Support Program has supported 55 children living in transitional housing.

Our clients Carl and Edward (father and son) were living in transitional housing for five years, being supported throughout by the Family Support Program. The family and their case manager left no stone unturned during this time to explore options that would help them obtain stable long-term housing, despite the challenges of a resource-poor housing system. This year, Carl and Edward accessed a permanent community housing tenancy which they are really happy with. The family is doing really well and wished to provide the following quote:

“My worker has been fantastic with me and my son, they always went above and beyond when representing Wombat. My worker is worth their weight in gold.”

-Identifying details have been changed



## LGBTI+ Project

The LGBTI+ project was an innovative initiative designed to develop and enhance the knowledge, skills and capacity of the homelessness and family violence sectors in Melbourne's North West in their provision of support to LGBTIQ+ clients.

In the project's first year we surveyed workers in the homelessness sector to identify gaps in worker knowledge and skills. From this we developed case studies reflecting the experiences of LGBTIQ+ people with lived experience of homelessness - to highlight the issues that needed

to be addressed. Finally, a training package was produced and delivered to workers in homelessness organisations. Feedback from the training was overwhelmingly positive.

The project was refunded in 2019 by Family Safety Victoria (FSV), allowing us to work alongside the Zoe Belle Gender Collective (ZBGC) to develop a practical guide booklet for workers, informational videos and a number of other complementary resources. The training videos are available on Wombat's website.



## LGBTI+ PROJECT

In 2020, the project was again refunded, this time by the DFFH with a shift of focus to the out of home care sector. Working again with ZBGC, Wombat ran six online training sessions for workers in care and protection services, with some great feedback and outcomes. The previously developed resources were also tailored to fit the specific needs of this sector.

The project was a significant step in contributing to better outcomes for the LGBTIQ+ community from the Housing and Homelessness, Family Violence and Out of Home Care sectors by resourcing workers and organisations. The evolution of the project over three years is a testament to the significant need that is still out there. Wombat hopes to continue to work with the LGBTIQ+ community in the future, particularly within the out of home care sector to further embed some of the important gains this project has made.





## Maribyrnong Youth Accommodation Program (MYAP)/ Youth Support Program

These programs provide support to young people aged 16-25 who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. MYAP has a specific focus on supporting culturally and linguistically diverse young people.

Sally is 22 years old and was referred to MYAP in May 2021. This was the first time she had found herself with no permanent place to live and navigating the homelessness service system. Despite being in this unprecedented and daunting situation, Sally immediately utilised the support offered to her by the MYAP program, to begin working towards her goals, with the ultimate goal of securing permanent housing and ending her homelessness.

During her assessment with MYAP, Sally described herself as “ambitious, independent and organised, with a confidence in achieving things.” She certainly proved this in the way she took the lead in her work with her case manager! From the outset she made it clear that she wanted to secure a private rental

property for herself and that she would do whatever she needed to, to make this happen. Through weekly phone appointments, the development of a support plan and guidance from her case manager, Sally used her existing skills and strengths to complete task after task at an amazing pace. She also achieved one of her main goals and commenced a full-time job mid-June.

With a sound understanding of the private rental application process gained through housing education provided by her case manager, and 3 months of full-time work and savings under her belt, Sally is now applying for properties with confidence and optimism!

-Identifying details have been changed





CLIENT SUPPLIED

## Pathways to Independence Program (PIP)

The PIP program is a shared, short term transitional housing program for young people who are exiting or have recently exited statutory care, offering a pathway into longer term housing such as head leased private rental.

Ann\* was referred to Wombat's Support from Care program in 2016 and transitioned into Wombat Continuing Care Transitional Housing (THM) in 2017. Ann remained in her THM until 2021, when she was referred to Wombat's Pathways to Independence Program (PIP). Ann had historically struggled with motivation due to her autism however when she found out that PIP would support her into her own Private

Rental, she hit the ground running. Ann knew she wanted to live in the Dandenong Ranges as she wanted to be close to her partner and be immersed in nature. Ann attended an inspection in Ferntree Gully and instantly fell in love with the property. There were cockatoos perched on the handrails and it had an amazing view the Dandenong Ranges. As PIP is a flexible program that can adapt depending on the young person's needs, we were able to secure the Ferntree Gully property under a 12-month headlease arrangement for Ann. Despite Ferntree Gully not being our usual catchment area, PIP knew that it would significantly increase the sustainability of the tenancy for Ann. Ann has said that 'PIP helps a lot. I would not have been able to get into private rental just on my own. It's good to know that I have not been held back from getting my own place. I give PIP 5 stars; they really are a life saver'.

-Identifying details have been changed



CLIENT SUPPLIED



## Single Adults Program (SSP)

The Singles Support Program offers outreach case managed support to single adults over the age of 25 who are homeless or in transitional housing.



Ben is a thirty-seven-year-old who has been involved with Wombat Housing for five years. Prior to his involvement with Wombat, Ben had sustained various injuries from a near fatal accident, including an amputation and an acquired brain injury. After his stay in the trauma rehab ward at Royal Melbourne Hospital he was placed in Emergency Accommodation until funding was exhausted. Ben was then linked in with an outreach mental health practitioner who assisted in obtaining a transitional housing unit for Ben to move into.

Ben had no prior experience living alone or sustaining a residence on his own prior to this. Life became very unfamiliar to Ben during this time, as he not only needed to get used to using a prosthetic leg and wheelchair but also familiarise himself with living independently.

Upon working with Wombat, Ben received support from his case manager who provided emotional support as well as the life skills needed to assist Ben in reaching his long-term goal of obtaining permanent accommodation. Throughout his time with us, Ben obtained support in organising an NDIS package, a companion card, and began to learn more about the housing market. With this knowledge and help, Ben was then able to purchase his first home – something we have never experienced at Wombat before.

Ben has been residing in his newly purchased apartment for nearly 4 months now. He is grateful for the help in not only finding long-term permanent accommodation but also for the skills needed to sustain his new home.

-Identifying details have been changed



CLIENT SUPPLIED

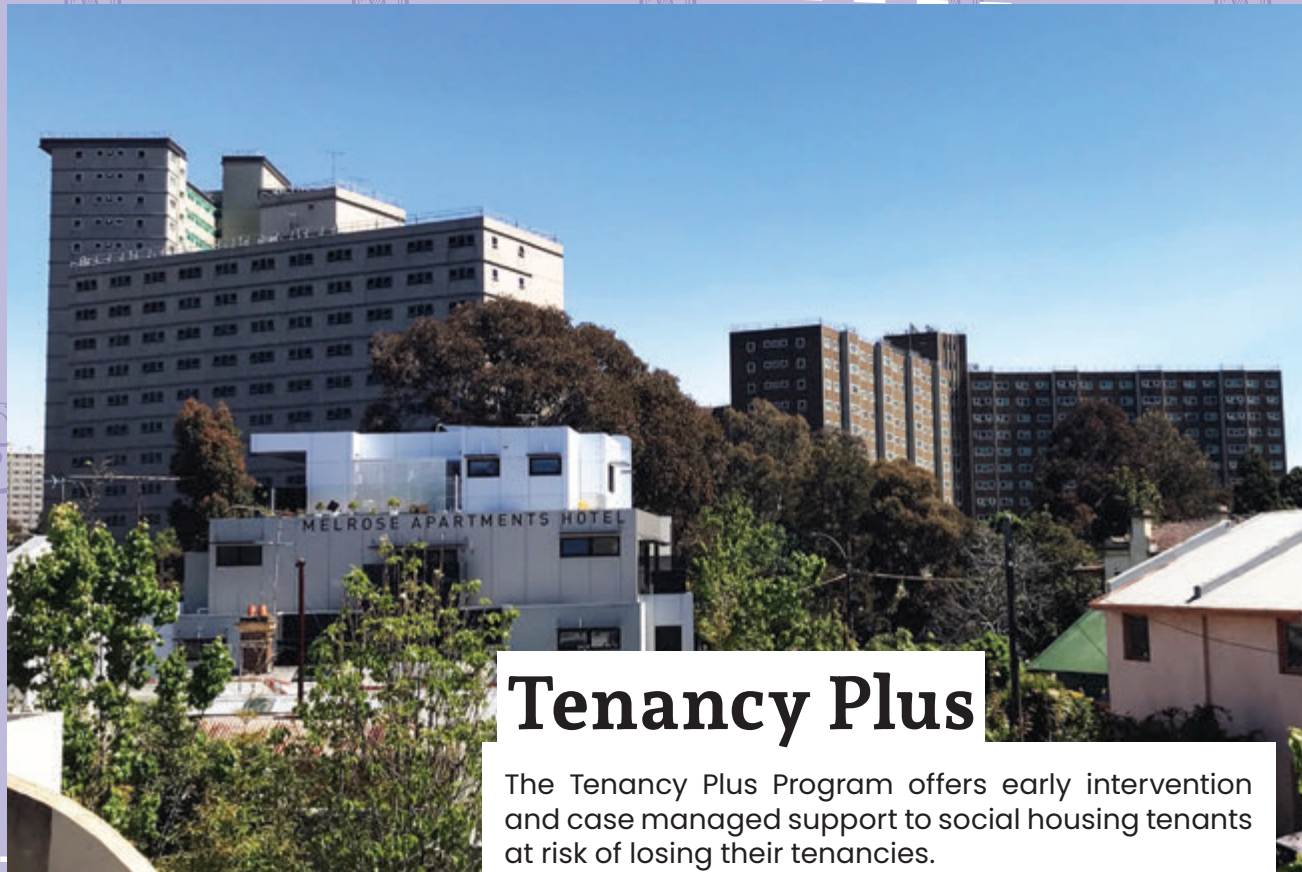
## Support For Families at Risk Program (SFAR)

SFAR provides intensive early intervention and case managed support at risk families in social housing and private rental. We work with all family members who wish to receive case management to enhance their personal and shared circumstances and prevent housing breakdown.

“

***My SFAR worker has helped me to settle in my new house, provided me with mental health support, helped me to carry on with my kids and settling in this country permanently. I believe the service offered by wombat are very essential to women. They assist me as a person. The workers are very respectful. I am very grateful for the support I have received.***

**—SFAR CLIENT**



## Tenancy Plus

The Tenancy Plus Program offers early intervention and case managed support to social housing tenants at risk of losing their tenancies.

***“Honestly, I don’t see how you could have possibly helped me further. Your advice was not only practical but achieved results. My 91 year old disabled mother and myself are now being moved to (a property) appropriate for a wheelchair. I have been working on this for years before contacting Wombat back in March/April.***

**–TENANCY PLUS CLIENT**



## Western Homelessness Network (WHN)

2020/21 was, of course, dominated by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic for the Western Homelessness Network and the experience was a roller coaster.

On a practical level, the demands on the Sector were enormous. Services were challenged with the dual responsibility of providing responsive services to highly vulnerable members of our community, whilst finding ways to ensure the health of consumers and workers, whilst managing unprecedented levels of demand. This required constant 'pivoting' of service models.

The Sector was overjoyed to see the millions of dollars allocated to providing hotel accommodation for people who would otherwise have been sleeping rough; enabling purchase of short-term accommodation for people who we have previously had to turn away, due to a lack of resources. However, the relief was short-lived as the funds were limited to periods of lockdown. It was disquieting to know that, when it was deemed to be in the community interests, funds could be found to accommodate people experiencing homelessness but that these funds are not routinely made available to create emergency accommodation options that are appropriate to consumer need.



## WESTERN HOMELESSNESS NETWORK (WHN)

A handful of services with the Western Homelessness Network formed the 'Hotel Emergency Accommodation Response Team' and, through remarkable collaboration and coordination, were able to provide a level of support to 40% (600 households) of those people experiencing homelessness, who were accommodated in hotels through the 2020/21 lockdowns.

The announcement of the Big Housing Build in Victoria was extremely positive and the West will benefit from 497 new social housing properties (although the social housing wait list sits at approximately 12,000 in the West). Similarly, the establishment of the Homelessness to a Home Initiative, providing 18 months of linked accommodation and support to 282 people, who had previously been sleeping rough, was extremely positive.

Throughout the year the Network continued with the 'Crisis in Crisis' campaign, following release of the "Crisis in Crisis: the appalling state of emergency accommodation in Melbourne's north and west" in 2019. Network services, together with those from the Northern Homelessness Network, boycotted the worst of the private rooming house providers. This has already contributed to a reduction in the number of private rooming houses in Brimbank and Melton.

Together the Northern and Western Homelessness Networks auspiced the 'Crisis Accommodation Options Project', funded for 12 months by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing. The project report was completed in December 2020, presented to the Department and will be launched in 2021/22.

“

***I was staying in an office of housing property and was dug deep in heroin. No food no money and I met Wombat. My worker took me to the doctor and paid for one month of methadone. Its been ten years now. I am out of those harsh drugs with your help. Please say my thanks to the team... You helped me. Please let me know if I can do something for your team. I may donate all my body parts to your team if you send me the form. Little cash to spare or any other thing. I will be obliged to do that. Thanks for saving me. My good wishes are always there.***

—EX TENANCY PLUS CLIENT



## Youth Justice and Continuing Care (YJCC)

The Youth Justice and Continuing Care provides intensive case managed support to young people leaving care on a youth justice order.

“

*Wombat workers have a very high standard and are always comforting and are very supportive. They have helped me greatly. I have grown so much as a person due to their support and they hold activities to get everyone involved. Wombat is very reliable; they have great staff that are always on standby. Please trust in this organisation.*

—YOUTH JUSTICE CLIENT



# Financial Reports

## WOMBAT HOUSING SUPPORT SERVICES STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2021

	2021 \$	2020 \$
<b>INCOME</b>		
Grants- Federal and State Government	3,496,162	3,328,483
Donations	1,096	220
Interest	3,350	6,828
Government Subsidies-Cashflow Boost	50,000	50,000
Other Income	191,882	40,038
Profit on Sale of Assets	-	1,655
	<u>3,742,490</u>	<u>3,427,224</u>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Employment Expenses	3,033,682	2,853,265
Operating Expense	382,810	362,357
Depreciation	71,644	69,515
Relief Payments	246,176	162,456
	<u>3,734,312</u>	<u>3,447,593</u>
Surplus/(deficit) before income tax expense	8,178	(20,369)
Income tax expense	-	-
Surplus/(deficit) after income tax expense	<u>8,178</u>	<u>(20,369)</u>
Revaluation of land and buildings	1,300,000	-
Other comprehensive income for the year net of income tax	<u>1,300,000</u>	<u>-</u>
Total comprehensive income for the year	<u>1,308,178</u>	<u>(20,369)</u>

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 JUNE 2021

	2021 \$	2020 \$
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash	924,973	1,066,046
Receivables	16,045	36,527
Financial Assets	501,263	500,000
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	<u>1,442,281</u>	<u>1,602,573</u>
<b>NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Property, Plant and Equipment	3,176,404	1,887,353
TOTAL NON CURRENT ASSET	<u>3,176,404</u>	<u>1,887,353</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>4,618,685</u>	<u>3,489,926</u>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Creditors and accruals	280,989	274,443
Amounts received in advance	330,080	574,147
Provisions	679,064	620,950
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	<u>1,290,133</u>	<u>1,469,540</u>
<b>NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Provisions	37,820	37,832
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	<u>37,820</u>	<u>37,832</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES	<u>1,327,953</u>	<u>1,507,372</u>
NET ASSETS	<u>3,290,732</u>	<u>1,982,554</u>
<b>MEMBERS' FUNDS</b>		
Retained profits	1,345,188	1,337,010
Reserves	1,945,544	645,544
TOTAL MEMBERS' FUNDS	<u>3,290,732</u>	<u>1,982,554</u>



## Our Prospectus/ pro bono support

As a small community-based organisation, Wombat is responsive and flexible in adapting to the needs of our clients. We understand that there is no “one-size-fits-all” homelessness response. Luckily we can provide an individualised response that identifies and supports different levels of need and diversity amongst the people using our service.

Over the years Wombat has been at the forefront of responding to need with innovative service responses and has built a solid reputation for providing flexible, high-quality services.

Recent examples of this include:

- the Everyday Life Skills Tool,
- the LGBTIQ+ Project,
- the Pathways to Independence Program and
- the HEART response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Wombat is always looking for ideas to enhance the services we provide as well as opportunities to address service gaps or needs that arise.

Lately the provision of housing and support to older women has been emerging as an area of real concern. Women over 55 are the fastest

growing cohort of homeless people in Australia today. A broad range of factors including family violence, inadequate superannuation and the impact of significant life events can lead to poverty, income insecurity and homelessness.

Wombat is shaping program responses for issues such as this that focus on assisting people to live independently as well as empowering them to connect with the broader community.

To do this we need the assistance of individuals, philanthropic organisations, service partners, companies and government – there are many ways to help, not just financially.

If you would like to hear more about some of our ideas or donate, please feel free to contact us for more information!



## Thank You's

Wombat has been fortunate to receive help and support from a broad range of trusts, organisations and individuals. This generous assistance means we are able to provide more support to more people. All funds and goods donated for clients go directly to the people we work with.



## PHILANTHROPIC AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT PARTNERS:

Collier Charitable Fund—Client housing packages affected by COVID-19

Freemasons Foundation Victoria and the Old Scotch Collegians Lodge—COVID-19 response and recovery grant assisting people affected by the pandemic to establish housing and get back on track.

StreetSmart—Staff wellbeing support

Maribyrnong City Council—Private rental resource kit

Community Support:

Christians Against Poverty—provided Food Parcels and frozen meals

Hotham Mission—Food Parcels

Georgina and family for children's Xmas gifts, toiletries and Xmas trees

Arabella Dowd—donated new men's clothing for vulnerable clients.

Share the Dignity—toiletry bags for homeless women

Joining Threadz—Gift packs containing beanies, scarves and mittens.



We would also like to acknowledge anonymous donations of cash and vouchers throughout the year.

Our Regular Organisational Partners:

St Kilda Mums

Kennards Self Storage Flemington

Magistrates Court Fund

Streetsmart really stepped up to support our staff during this difficult time, allowing us to arrange some valuable staff wellbeing training and partnering with a local café to provide us with free coffees - which was later extended by a community donation.

If you are interested in supporting our work please contact us. We're always exploring new ways to assist our clients.

# Our partners

Working with like-minded agencies helps us provide more support to more people in new and innovative ways. We would like to thank our partners because without them we wouldn't be able to do what we do:

The Department of Families, Fairness and Housing  
Homes Victoria  
CHP  
Salvation Army Social Housing Services (SASHS)  
Unison  
Berry Street  
Jesuit Social Services  
Uniting Vic  
Anglicare  
Concern Australia  
Life Without Barriers  
Mackillop Family Services

Melbourne City Mission  
VACCA  
YSAS  
VICSEG  
Haven Home Safe  
Next Level  
Phoenix Youth Hub  
Orygen Youth Health  
Bridge It  
HoMie  
For Change Co  
Yakkazoo  
Centre For Excellence in Child and Family Welfare (Open)  
Salvation Army Victoria  
Women's Property Initiative  
Women's Housing Limited  
Zoe Belle Gender Collective  
Thorne Harbour Health  
Latitude



Department of Families, Fairness and Housing



VincentCare  
Victoria

unison



BERRY STREET  
We're for Childhood  
SINCE 1877

VICSEG  
new futures

YSAS  
YOUTH SUPPORT + ADVOCACY SERVICE



Jesuit  
Social Services  
Building a Just Society

STREETSMART  
ACTION AGAINST HOMELESSNESS

family  
safety  
victoria

Infoxchange

PHOENIX  
YOUTH  
HUB





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