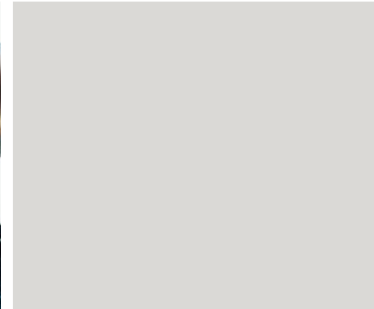


ST FRANCIS
SOCIAL SERVICES



2015 ANNUAL REPORT

OUR VISION

Enhancing the lives of marginalised at risk young people, families, refugees and asylum seekers.

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OUR PEOPLE

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Fr Nicholas Lucas ofm
(Chairman)
 Peter Hennessy
(Managing Director)
 Dina Cavazzini
 Carol Dettmann
 Deacon Anthony Hoban
 Fr Phillip Miscamble ofm
 Margaret Morgan
 Sr Libby Rogerson ibvm
 Ms Shona Seeton

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

Come In Youth Resource Centre

Christina Reid

The House of Welcome

Paul Bottrill-Chau

OUR TEAMS

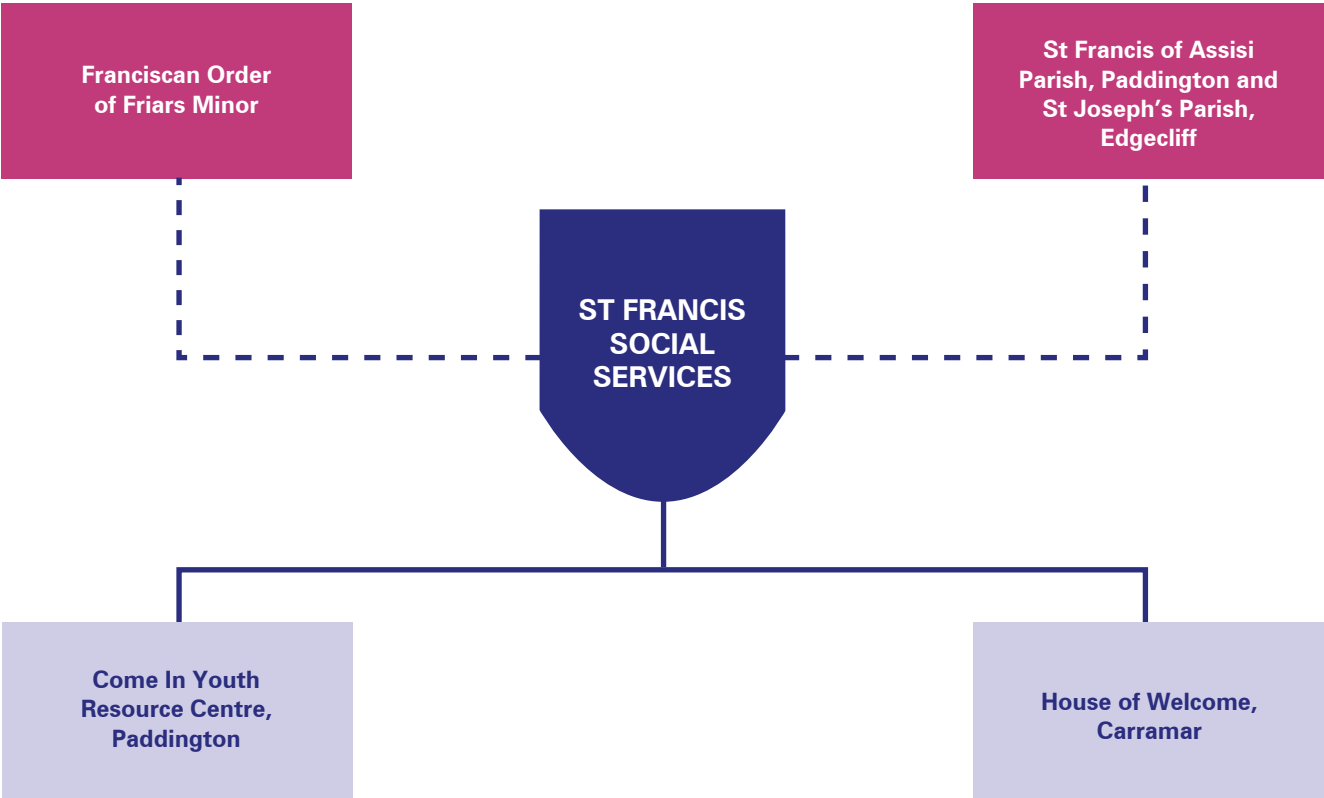
Come In Youth Resource Centre

Ashleigh Holmes
 Carlie Tubridy
 Danika Chapman pt
 Diane Warren cas
 Gary Stocks
 Jaclyn Rae
 James Hughes pt
 Jane Maher
 Kate Dunmore pt
 Martin Guy pt
 Monique Freeman cas
 Rachel Fabian pt
 Simon Ronkson
 Sophie Lee pt

The House of Welcome

Amy-Louise Smith pt
 Emma Gatehouse pt
 James Puk cas
 Jen Davie pt
 Jessica Punch pt
 Joanna Hill
 Shilan Meer loa from Apr 15
 Joanne Millington pt
 Maryanne Sneddon pt
 Suma Pillai
 Tatiana Halay pt

ORGANISATIONAL CHART



A BRIEF HISTORY

1978	The Come In Youth Resource Centre opened its doors in Paddington. The Centre was operated by two De La Salle Brothers (Max Scully fsc and Martin Blattman fsc) supported by the parish priest of St Francis of Assisi, Peter Clifford ofm. David Leary was among an original group of volunteers and became the first paid employee in December 1978. The Centre was open only in the evenings from 7pm to 1am, Tuesday to Sunday.
1981	The De La Salle Brothers withdrew from the Centre and David Leary and new parish priest, Nick Lucas ofm, had to decide on the ongoing role of the Centre and its governance. St Francis Welfare Committee was established, comprising parishioners of St Francis of Assisi parish, to oversee the Centre and its development. The Franciscan Order increased its level of support for the Centre. There were three paid staff. The Centre's operating hours gradually expanded to a fulltime service open 5 days a week and some evenings. The Centre is a Catholic agency, inspired and directed by Gospel values, the social teachings of the Catholic faith and St Francis of Assisi.
1994	The Centre was incorporated as St Francis Welfare Ltd, a public company limited by guarantee and with the status of a "public benevolent institution". The number of staff had grown to over 12. It was a medium sized social service and specialist youth service employing counsellors, psychologists, social workers and support staff. Almost half of its funding was from the State and Federal governments. It was also supported by the Franciscan Order, the local parish and private donors.
2007	St Francis Welfare Ltd changed its name to St Francis Social Services, reflecting a change in direction with a focus on a more appropriate intervention model emphasising community service rather than "welfare". The Centre has a reputation for providing clinical excellence.
2010	The House of Welcome, based at Carramar, became a project of St Francis Social Services. The House of Welcome provides transitional housing and financial assistance to refugees and asylum seekers. It commenced operation in 2001 under the auspices of the NSW Ecumenical Council of Churches in a property owned by the Franciscan Friars and run by Fr Jim Carty. It relies entirely on donations for all of its funding.
2015	The Come In Youth Resource Centre and the House of Welcome are now fully integrated with St Francis Social Services but operate as independent services. The House of Welcome has satellite offices in Auburn and Surry Hills. The Come In Youth Resource Centre has 15 staff (full time, part time and casual) and the House of Welcome has 11 staff (full time, part time and casual).

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

St Francis Social Services (SFSS) operates the Come in Youth Resource Centre (CIYRC) in Paddington and the House of Welcome (HOW) in Carramar. The CIYRC has operated for over 35 years providing services and support for young disadvantaged people and their families. The HOW has provided accommodation and support services for refugees and asylum seekers since 2001 and has been operated by SFSS since 2010. Both organisations faced significant challenges during the year which resulted in changes to programs and services offered.

The CIYRC was unsuccessful in tendering for the New South Wales Government contract for the provision of housing and other related services for young homeless people. The result was a reduction in Government funding of approximately \$116,000 (equivalent to one and a half staff positions) and an end to the long standing service provided. However the loss of housing service funding was offset by the CIYRC taking responsibility for the Greenlight Movement, a learn to drive program for disadvantaged young people, from Easter Suburbs Community Youth Accommodation (ESCYA). ESCYA had been forced to close as a result of losing its Government funding. The CIYRC also received a large grant from the Property Industry Foundation to establish TeamUp, a new mentor program for young people.

HOW in its early years was principally a provider of housing. However in the last two to three years its services expanded to include financial assistance, educational and other support services including a Foodbank. There is a very strong demand for services from refugees and asylum seekers and only a small number of service providers. This means that the HOW is never able to meet all the requests for assistance that it receives. HOW continually reviews its programs to ensure they are directed at the primary needs of its clients. During 2015 this resulted in a greater focus on programs developing employment skills.

While housing remains the main service provided by the HOW, notice was given during the latter part of the

year that half of the housing stock (thirteen properties owned by the NSW Government) will no longer be available in twelve to eighteen months' time. This will have the potential to be a major disruption to HOW services but the team at HOW are busy exploring other options and possibilities.

During the year the IT network was upgraded with the installation of a single server located in Paddington. This provides better integration of the two main offices and the smaller satellite offices in Auburn and Surry Hills.

SFSS is regulated by the Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission (ACNC) and the Board of SFSS supports this regulatory model. The ACNC is a very important resource for the sector and provides an excellent window for the community to examine what is happening in the not for profit sector. SFSS revised its Constitution during the year with the pro bono assistance of Herbert Smith Freehills. The new Constitution was adopted in March 2015. There were no changes to the Board membership during the year. The Board is a skilled and committed group and I acknowledge and thank them for their contributions.

SFSS has also been exceptionally well served by committed and enthusiastic staff at CIYRC and HOW. Christina Reid at CIYRC and Paul Bottrill-Chau at HOW continued to provide strong leadership throughout the year. Both organisations have also been greatly assisted by large numbers of volunteers. Many of the programs, such as the Greenlight Movement, TeamUp and HOW community lunches

would not be possible without our volunteers. I thank them for their continued support.

Financially, SFSS stemmed the depletion of funds experienced over the last two financial years. Despite the loss of a portion of our Government funding, there was an increase in donations, especially from some of our long standing supporters. The result was a small surplus for the year. I especially acknowledge the assistance received from the Parish of St Francis - St Joseph, the Franciscan Order of Friars Minor, the Marist Fathers and the NSW Department of Family and Community Services.

The Board approaches the next financial year aware of the many challenges facing our clients and the staff and volunteers remain committed to try and make a difference.



Nick Lucas OFM

COME IN YOUTH RESOURCE CENTRE



EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

Near my home there is a very large paw paw tree in a front yard. Around the same time every year when I drive past I get a massive smile on my face. The tree looks to be randomly decorated with bags. It is not actually decorated, although that is what I thought the first time I saw it, but rather someone has put a bag on each piece of developing fruit. The massive smile is because I look at all the bags on the tree—at least 40—and think about the care and effort that someone has taken. The bags are all different and look like they have been collected over many years. The person who cares for the tree and fruit has gone to the trouble of repeatedly climbing up and down a ladder to reach the fruit on different parts of the tree. They have done this in order protect the fruit from birds and possums. It is done in a way that allows the fruits continued healthy development. It seems like it would be much easier and quicker to get a net over the top of the tree. Whatever their reasons they go to great effort every year.

Every day we come to the Come In Youth Resource Centre (the Centre) not knowing exactly what the day will bring. There may be predictability in who we are seeing, but not in what has happened since we last met. It is unknown what referrals will come through and how immediate a response is needed. Yet we come in with our collection of bags and find ways to support the continued development of young people and their families. We do not want to stifle their growth but we do want to ensure that they have the skills and support necessary for their development to be healthy. We do this because like the owner of the tree, we are passionate about their futures and want to see them grow and thrive—free from interference by birds and possums!

2014-2015 resulted in some significant changes for the Centre. We were not successful in our tenders for the Going Home Staying Home (GHSH) reform which was conducted by the State Government. The loss of funding resulted in 1.5 staff positions at the Centre not being filled. It also meant that the Centre could no longer provide housing to disadvantaged young people, which after more than 20 years changed the services we could provide. Whilst we continue to support and assist young people to access housing and gain stability we no longer have the buildings in which we can accommodate them. The loss of both funding and properties meant that our ability to provide for young people's basic needs and right for stable accommodation was gone. We could no longer provide

them with a home and work with them on their basic living skills, education, employment and emotional development.

Overall the reform process had a destabilising effect on services and clients. Many great services closed and many of our young people were required to start relationships with services and new people all over again. The young people reported feeling increased anxiety and fears regarding their ongoing stability and their futures. There were impacts on their capacity to maintain their living skills, pursuit of education and employment. The reform "transition" period and the ongoing impact of the reform felt as though someone had come in and taken away quite a few of our paw paw bags. It felt like the continued healthy development of young people was not being prioritised. Those with complex needs were deemed too hard to work with and hold. Whilst this has been a difficult period for both the young people and the team, there have also been new opportunities as a result.

The Centre took on the Greenlight Movement. The program was developed by the Eastern Suburbs Community Youth Association (ESCYA) in 2011. The program targets disadvantaged young people who do not have access to a roadworthy vehicle or a responsible adult who can supervise the 120 on-road driving hours required to sit for their Provisional Licence. Greenlight pairs disadvantaged young people with volunteers from the community, provides training and support to the volunteers and the Centre provides the vehicles in which the driving occurs.

ESCYA closed in September 2014, as a result of the GHSH reform, and the Centre agreed to take on the coordination of the program. At the time of handover Greenlight was well established in the Bondi Junction area and ESCYA had commenced an expansion of the program to Bankstown and Sutherland. Greenlight has been an exciting challenge for the Centre and has increased our involvement with the broader community, both geographically and especially through the contact with volunteers.

The Centre was successful in receiving funding from the Property Industry Foundation for a new volunteer mentor program for young people. TeamUp is a social and wellbeing mentoring program. It provides opportunities for disadvantaged young people to form a trusting, long-lasting relationship with a caring, positive adult role model. The relationship that is developed allows young people to build on their strengths in order to realise their potential, and become active and positive members of the community and wider society.

TeamUp works by pairing young people with adult volunteers from the community. The mentor and mentee meet in the community on a fortnightly basis for 2 hours over a 12 month period. TeamUp draws from the qualities created by forming relationships, healthy activity, sport, social and cultural experiences and education as the primary forms of intervention. Volunteers have been recruited from the community and are

being trained. They will be paired with young people very soon.

A new Strategic and Operational Plan has been developed for the Centre. The plan has been based on client and stakeholder feedback, strength, weakness, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis from the team and board. Areas from the previous plan that were considered priorities for continued development were also rolled over into the new plan. The Strategic Plan for 2015-2018 continues the development of the Centre and incorporates the changes to the Centres ways of engaging and working with those young people and their families who are most disadvantaged in our society.

The last major development is in relation to the increased partnerships the Centre has developed during 2014-2015. These relationships are with other youth services, high schools, corporates, clubs and

community members. The group work we provide and Greenlight Movement have played a significant part, as has the recruitment of volunteers for the Centre. There are further details regarding these developments to follow in the report.

Throughout 2014-2015 the team have been amazing. Whilst there have been difficulties and changes they have supported one another, our young people and their families and have risen to the challenge of exploring and developing new programs and ways of working. The continued success of the Centre and the development of our young people is a credit to the hard work, thoughtfulness and passion for the work we do. I would personally like to say thank you to the team for their support of myself and the ongoing development of the Centre. It is a pleasure and a privilege to work with you all, be part of your ongoing development

as well as the incredible work that you do with the young people and their families who come to the Centre.



Christina Reid, Executive Officer,
Come In Youth Resource Centre



This year the Centre was excited to welcome Hermie and Hermione, two hermit crabs who have become the Centre's mascots. They live at reception but make frequent visits with young people into counselling rooms, the young mum's group and have been spotted at community events including Beating the Blues and Blessing of the Animals.

Whilst they may seem an unusual addition to the Centre family, clients of all ages have taken an interest in them and their wellbeing. They have proven to be a valuable addition and have provided avenues for talking about anxiety, coming out of your shell, safety, loss and death. They also feature in regular updates on the centre's Facebook page.

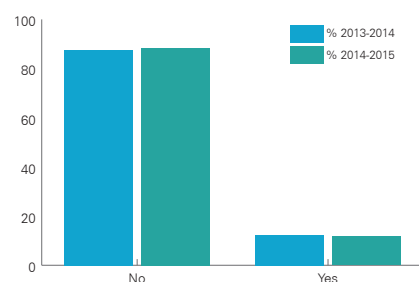
 Come In Youth Resource Centre.

COME IN YOUTH RESOURCE CENTRE - OVERVIEW

Between July 2014 and June 2015 we worked with 339 young people and their families. There continues to be an increase in the numbers who are engaging in group processes and also families of adolescents. Both of these are areas that we have been focussing on developing and hope that these programs continue to develop.

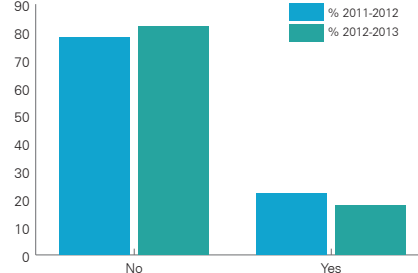
There has been very minimal change in the figures for clients who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (ATSI)

ATSI



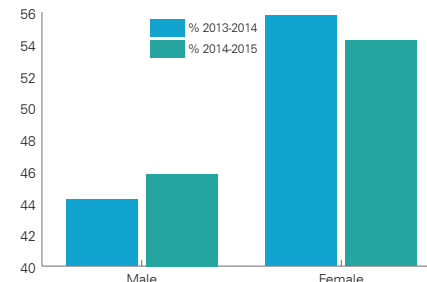
There has been a decrease in the number of clients who identify as Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Background (CLDB).

CLDB



Lastly with regard to gender there has been an increase in the number of females accessing the Centre.

Gender



As with previous years there has been minimal change in the average age of young people accessing the Centre. The average for 2014-2015 was 19, whilst age at referral was 17.

TOM'S JOURNEY

"He is however, going to school and has told his mentor he definitely wants to finish his schooling."

Tom, an indigenous 15 year old, was referred to the Centre for brokerage assistance with school clothing. At the time, he was living with his mother, 3 sisters and brother in short term accommodation. His family had moved from the regional NSW to Sydney, after Tom's mother left his father due to domestic violence. Tom had been school avoidant and when he went he regularly arrived late. While an accommodation service was working with the family to find safe, secure, permanent accommodation they also identified that Tom's family could benefit from other support services. Specifically, there was need for an organisation that could work individually with the children but also have the capacity to work with the family when his mum was ready. It was identified that Tom was in need of emotional support, following such a traumatic time for him and his family. The Centre offered to meet with Tom weekly in a mentoring capacity. It was agreed with Tom, his mother and the Centre's worker that Tom would be collected once a week from school. The plan was for Tom and his worker to do an activity together, have some afternoon tea and a chat before Tom was dropped home. At first it seemed that Tom may not want to engage with his mentor and there were many times that he failed to show up to appointments. Slowly but surely however, Tom has made great progress over an 18 month period. The Centre has continued to offer him a consistent time to meet and he has become much more engaged, talkative and misses fewer and fewer appointments. To his credit, Tom's school attendance is also no longer an issue, which is a very positive turn around. He has used his meetings with his worker to create and explore experiences which he says he otherwise would not have the opportunity to do. Some experiences have been small such as a request to try a hot chocolate or a donut at a particular shop. Other experiences have been much larger such as his participation in the Centre's HSF scholarship program. Life for Tom continues to have its challenges, his family are still not settled in a permanent property, his mother experiences depression and he has been suspended from school twice after incidents of fighting. He is however, going to school and has told his mentor he definitely wants to finish his schooling. Another great improvement is Tom's capacity to reflect and talk about things that upset him.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Over the last 12 months the Centre has been more actively engaged with the community by attending events.



Coffee station blessing of the animals

Blessing of the Animals

In October, the Centre participated and provided coffee at the Blessing of the Animals Event with St Francis of Assisi Church. For two young people from the Centre it provided an opportunity to connect with the wider community. On the day, the young people from the Centre had the role of serving coffee to those people who were getting their animals blessed. This occasion provided the young people with the opportunity to develop their barista skills and improve their customer service skills. The day appeared to be enjoyed by everyone who attended including our own pets, the hermit crabs who were also blessed.

Beat the Blues

On October 10th the Centre participated in "Beat the Blues" in support of World Mental Health Day at Prince Alfred Park. This event was organised to raise awareness on mental health and reduce the stigma of mental illness. The Centre had a table at the event and engaged with people in the

community through sharing information about mental health, interacting through games and art and partaking in the walk. A few clients of the Centre came as well and enjoyed the festivities of the event which included yoga, tennis and basketball.



Matt and Tussy from the Bulldogs appear at the Greenlight Movement stall



All sorts of vehicles to have fun with



Adding a bit of colour to Youth Week in Bankstown

Youth Week with Greenlight Movement

The Greenlight Movement participated in two Youth Week events at Bankstown and Sutherland Shire. The purpose of these events was to promote Greenlight Movement to young people and potential volunteers in those communities. Staff shared information through interactive activities promoting and teaching safe driving. There was also a bumper sticker competition which allowed people to creatively promote the Greenlight Movement. The day was also attended by members of the Bulldogs and Sharks. We would like to thank those members of the community who came out despite the weather conditions to participate in the Colour run at Bankstown and to support both Youth Week and the Greenlight Movement. We can't wait to come back next year!



YouthPoint

www.youthpoint.com.au

As part of a partnership with South Eastern Sydney Local Health District (LHD), Sydney LHD, and Yfoundations, the Centre provided service information that had been part of our youth services directory CYRUS to establish YouthPoint. It is a mobile service directory for young people that works on desktops or mobile devices. The directory contains information for young people and those working with them in the Sydney and South Eastern Sydney Districts.

ANNUAL SURVEY

In the annual survey, young people and families accessing the Centre were asked to comment on our service.

There were a number of positive comments about the staff and the service provided by the Centre. Clients felt that staff at the Centre 'respect all your comments and thoughts' so that 'you can always be yourself'. Someone felt that the Centre was 'a good friendly environment' whilst others commented that 'everyone is nice and smiling' and more generally that the Centre is 'helpful' and 'friendly'. Some of the young people who replied valued the support from the Centre, in particular that there is 'someone to talk to'. Another elaborated on this by saying 'you can talk about whatever you want and everyone, especially the people who run it, listen to you'.

Young people were also asked about what two things they had gained or learned from the Centre. Themes ranged from patience and motivation, to becoming more confident and developing self-control. Specific skills developed with workers at the Centre such as playing pool and cooking were valued by some young people. Others valued the fact that the Centre had helped them believe in themselves and recognise their own independence.

Suggestions for improvement included adding more activities such as a 'dance class', 'excursions' 'games', increasing the age to 30, or practical skills such as first aid for young mums. The upper age limit of 30 was suggested by a young person, reiterating a point made in what someone did not like about the Centre. In terms of the service provided someone felt that there should be 'more one-on-one counsellors'. A couple of young people shared more personal observations which would make them feel more at ease.

More general contributions about what the Centre should be doing highlighted the difficulties faced by the sector, particularly around providing accommodation and doing more outreach work in the light of recent changes to government funding. One aspect of the Centre that was described as excellent was the Greenlight Movement.

Herbert Smith Freehills Social Mentoring and Scholarship Program

In 2015 the Herbert Smith Freehills (HSF) Social Mentoring and Scholarship Program expanded to providing 13 young people with mentoring support and scholarships to assist them in their educational pursuits.

Over time, the program has developed. In addition to monetary support, it now includes young people and mentors having the opportunity to engage in eight events across a period of 6 months. There is a variety of events including drumming workshops, making gnocchi and scavenger hunts where young people are teamed up with solicitors from HSF and set out to explore the city.

The events are designed to promote team work and to provide the young people with new experiences. Some of the fantastic feedback from the young people included: "to always be open to new things"; "I'm not too old or dumb to keep learning"; and that "meeting new people is not that scary". Feedback from a mentor: "the opportunity to hear from several young people and share experiences, it has been a rewarding experience to think that I was able to contribute to someone's 'growing up'".

In 2015 the scholarships were awarded by the chef 'Fast Ed' Halmagyi. After the night 'Fast Ed' was spoken about very highly by the young people, and all others in attendance. The scholarship night, hosted by HSF was a great success and an occasion remembered by young people and their families



'Fast Ed' Halmagyi speaks of his experiences



2015 Scholarship winners with Ed Halmagyi



'Fast Ed' Halmagyi present scholarship to young person



Herbert Smith Freehills staff enjoy the evening

Interview with a Greenlight Movement Mentee

Why did you join Greenlight Movement?

"I joined Greenlight to learn how to drive, I didn't have anyone that could teach me and I didn't have enough funds to pay for professional lessons. If Greenlight wasn't able to support me then I would definitely still be on my Ls looking for someone to teach me."

What did you enjoy most about Greenlight Movement?

"Greenlight gave me friendships, advice and helped to point me in the right life direction. I got more out of the program than just a driving lesson, the mentoring relationship helped me to build life skills."

"I appreciated the members of the community who weren't able to be a mentor but were able to sponsor me. Donating is a lot more than just paying for driving lessons its helping to improve someone's life and set them in the right direction and it's a skill I'll have for life."

The YP achieved her P1 licence last week thanks to the support of Greenlight Movement "Having a licence has given me freedom, I can drive everywhere I need too."

"If you're really looking to help someone and give back, you should definitely think about becoming a mentor, a mentor's support really does make a difference."

Interview with a Greenlight Movement Mentor

How has the program helped the young person you work with?

"He will be able to get his driving licence and hopefully this will open up career options for him. He had to stop his work as a 4th year motor mechanic because he had no licence, in his position he had to be able to move cars around all the time."

What do you enjoy about volunteering for the Greenlight Movement?

"I am able to give something back to the youngsters, my two sons are grown up. I enjoy seeing them achieving a big milestone."

How will Greenlight Movement impact on the local community?

"I think it can only be positive, it shows youngsters that people care about them no matter what they have done. Everyone makes mistakes and Greenlight is there to help them work through these."

Quote from a volunteer

"I feel so proud of my mentee. She overcame so many obstacles to get to where she is today. It has been an absolute pleasure to support the Greenlight Movement and for my mentee to achieve her licence. She has grown so much from the time that I first met her and is now a confident young lady!"



www.greenlightmovement.com.au



Greenlight Movement



Greenlight Movement Images provided by Jodie Barker.

GREENLIGHT MOVEMENT

Greenlight Movement operates in 3 locations: Bondi Junction, Bankstown and Sutherland Shire. The vehicles at each location were handed over from Eastern Suburbs Community Youth Assn. and had originally been donated by the Mazda Foundation. BP have provided gift cards for fuel for the program.

Bondi Junction:

Mentees: 30

Mentors: 27

Young People who have achieved their Provisional Licence: 4

Partnerships: Waverley Council provide a parking permit for the car

Challenges: recruiting new volunteers to match the demand from young people and maintaining their support and interest.

Benefits: As the program was already well established in the area there have been people and companies that have approached the Centre to offer their support to ensure the program continues

Bankstown

Mentees: 13

Mentors: 2

Young People who have achieved their Provisional Licence: 3

Partnerships: Bankstown Multicultural Youth Service provide office space, car parking, as well as orientation to Bankstown and support to the young people.

Challenges: Generating interest and support for Greenlight and recruiting volunteers.

Benefits: Connecting with a community that has diverse cultural backgrounds; exploring and enjoying the diversity. The number of young people who do not know what a manual car is and demystifying this!

Sutherland Shire

Mentees: 11

Mentors: 11

Young People who have achieved their Provisional Licence: 1

Partnerships: ProjectYouth provide office and parking space. They have assisted with community connect, as well as referrals of both young people and volunteers.

Challenges: Prioritising the best way to use community support to enhance the program.

Benefits: the number of young people who have never been in a car before and are keen to learn!

GROUP WORK Teen Triple P

The Centre is now accredited to facilitate the research-based parenting program Group Teen Triple P. The course is for parents of teenagers 12-16 and promotes strategies to strengthen the relationships of parents and their adolescents. The first two programs have already proven to be a success with evidence from parent feedback and qualitative assessments.

Snapshot

- Programs run: 2
- Parent participants: 23 (14 mothers, 9 fathers)
- All parents who completed assessments reported a reduction in conflict with their adolescent
- All parents agreed or strongly agreed that they felt more confident in their parenting

What parents said about the change in their relationship with their adolescent:

"It's getting better as we bond over positive things"

"I'm trying to keep calm and listen."

"Understanding that teenage years are difficult and to take this into consideration when certain behaviours occur".



DARLINGHURST



Katy Leibovitz and Carlie Tubridy won a \$5000 Commonwealth Bank grant for their project. Picture: JOHN APPLEBY/ABC

Welcome cash for student program

STRIVE HELPS ANXIOUS KIDS

Nick Hansen

ADOLESCENTS at risk of expulsion from city and eastern-suburbs public schools are being taught to deal with stress and anxiety to save their education. Strive is a scheme run by Come In Youth Resources Centre in Darlinghurst, placing social workers in schools to engage students struggling with behavioural and learning difficulties. "These young people at risk of expulsion are often suffering a lot of stress and anxiety and very low self-esteem," the centre's adolescent and family counsellor, Katy Leibovitz, said. The 14-week program has

received a boost with a \$5000 commitment from the Commonwealth Bank through its 2015 Community Grants program. Ms Leibovitz said among the Year 8 and 9 girls who had completed the course in the opening terms of 2015, many had improved and no longer needed help. "We did see reduced anxiety and stress among some of the girls and we are also able to assess at the end of the course which students might require individual counselling and mentoring," Ms Leibovitz said. Year 7 and those from city and eastern-suburbs high

schools were taking part in the program in terms two and three this year. The money will be used to support the program as it expands, including outdoor adventure-based activities such as rock climbing. "These sorts of things can be great at helping students establish a greater sense of self and better self-esteem," Ms Leibovitz said. The centre is run by the St Francis Social Services, located at St Francis of Assisi parish in Paddington. Anyone wanting to know more about the services offered at the centre can visit comincentre.org.au.

STRIVE received a \$5000 Commonwealth Bank Community Grant to expand the program to incorporate adventure-based activities which will strengthen the therapeutic benefits.

STRIVE Strength through Resilience, Identity, Validation & Empowerment

STRIVE is a new program developed by the Centre. It is an early intervention therapeutic group which targets students in years 7-9. The program aims to improve self-esteem and confidence while decreasing stress and anxiety common to young people in adolescence. Activities are targeted to build strengths through mindfulness, using experiential-based activities and intentional discussions around self-care and relationships. Every group is modified to meet the needs of that specific group. Young people who need extra support such as counselling, mentoring or family work are referred to these services at the Centre.

Program Information:

Where is it held? 2 programs at Rose Bay Secondary College for year 8 and year 9 girls.

How long? 14 weekly sessions held over 2 terms.

What are the outcomes? We have seen significant decreases in depression, anxiety and stress and an increase in self-esteem for students based on qualitative assessments.

What have the students said about STRIVE?

"It's really good and you can talk to all the teachers, it's really fun and trustworthy".

"It is amazing and helpful and I am grateful I chose to come".

"It keeps you calm and helps in stressful times and you can talk about life and it makes you confident".



Lessons for Life

Lessons for Life helps young people to develop practical life skills needed to live independently.

The past year has seen large amounts of funding taken away from housing providers leaving young people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless without services to address these basic skills.

In order to address this need the Centre has approached other services on an outreach basis to run groups with young people who are living out of home.

A partnership has been established with Noffs Foundation to run Lessons for Life with their client group.

47% of all homeless People are young people.
Source -Homelessness Australia



Inside Out

Inside out is a group that has been developed to address young people who identify as being socially isolated or who would like to access supported ways of connecting with other young people.

Inside out was established as workers noticed that many Centre clients had no connection to other young people with few or no youth friendly, positive, social programs for them to participate in.

Commenced in July 2015.

Young Mums Program

"I love these groups. It's my favourite day of the week". Young mum.

It has been another wonderful year for the Young Mums' Program. We have welcomed some new bubs, with two of the mums having their 2nd children. We have also seen two mums move back into study and resume their University degrees, and others have explored other study options and returning to work. Two mothers were also successful in being selected to be a part of the Herbert Smith Freehills Social Mentoring Program and received a scholarship to support them in their studies. Other mums have received support for a range of issues including homelessness, schooling and daycare for their children, domestic violence and relationships, and general emotional support.



Love Bites

LOVE BITES is an extremely successful school-based Domestic and Family Violence and Sexual Assault prevention program

Love Bites is based on best practice standards for education programs as recommended by the Federal Government funded Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearing House, White Ribbon and other leading academics in the area of violence against women.

As part of the Come In Centre's commitment to decreasing the prevalence of Domestic and family violence and sexual assault in our community we have taken on the responsibility of lead agency for Love Bites in the Eastern Suburbs area and have several schools booked in to run the program in the coming months.

The Centre's commitment to Love Bites, supports and is in line with the NSW government Safer Pathways program.



LOVE 
BiTES
NAPCAN
PREVENTING CHILD ABUSE

HOUSE OF WELCOME



EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

2014-15 was once again a year of tremendous challenge for the House of Welcome (HOW) and for the people we support. The number of referrals for our services, including housing, financial assistance, Foodbank and Community Development initiatives continues to increase at a rate greater than our capacity. The wonderful and dedicated team of staff and volunteers has once again gone above and beyond the call of duty in doing everything that is practically possible to assist those who've walked through our doors. This has resulted in us being able to support more people in the past year than we ever have before. Far from resting on our laurels, our hope is that in the coming year we will be able to extend our offer of Welcome, Shelter, Empowerment and Community to even more people seeking asylum.



Paul Bottrill-Chau, Executive Officer,
House of Welcome

A year of volatility

The past year has been one of great volatility for the entire sector. This volatility has been caused by a hostile policy environment created by both the previous and current federal governments. It impacts on people seeking asylum, the organisations that support them, and the volunteers and funders that we rely on to deliver our essential services.

Policy changes in the past 12 months have included the removal of legal protections allowing asylum seekers who arrived by boat an independent review of their claims; the removal of the legal assistance program that ensures asylum seekers get a fair hearing; the removal of permanent protection visas and the re-introduction of temporary protection visas (TPV) for those who arrived by boat and the re-introduction of work rights for people living in the community. In addition there has been

the introduction of the 'fast track' claims processing system, a system that seems designed to increase the rate of rejections and deportations for people seeking asylum.

In addition to the ongoing challenges, in March of this year the House of Welcome was informed that 13 of 25 properties that we manage would need to be returned to the New South Wales Government, the principal lessor. The timeframe for returning the properties was subsequently extended but not before it created significant angst for our clients. Despite these challenges our clients continue to display character, integrity, resilience and hope for the future.

The endurance, compassion and tenacity of the HOW staff must also be noted. Often they are the ones that have to deliver bad news and then walk with our clients through the consequences. Yet they continue to be optimistic and committed to supporting our clients.

In the coming year

We expect that in the coming year the demand for support services will only continue to increase, in particular amongst those who will be rejected under the new 'Fast Track' system. A key challenge will be to access the resources necessary to provide high quality services and support to an increasing number of people. One way in which we are preparing for this is by significantly increasing our focus

on programs that empower people toward employment. Although we will seek to increase funding for our essential support programs, the reality is that we simply will not be able to support everyone in need. We also hope to increase our activity in the area of advocating for the restoration of rights and protections for those seeking asylum on our shores. The vulnerable must be protected, not treated as less than human for the simple goal of political gain.

Thank you...

As always, I wish to thank all the compassionate, passionate and dedicated people that have supported us either financially or practically over the past year. Without our valuable donors and volunteers we would not be able to provide our essential programs. It cannot be said enough that every contribution helps, no matter how small or large it is.

The combination of our supporters and the resilience and dignity of those we work with inspires us every day to press on. We offer our heartfelt thanks for the ongoing support we receive.

Paul Bottrill-Chau

Executive Officer HOW

PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING:

The House of Welcome receives no government funding, with our income coming from private grants, faith-based groups, community members, schools and fundraising campaigns.

Continuing on from the 2013/2014 year, we have seen the development of new partnerships and the strengthening of relationships with ongoing supporters. The amount we received from grant funding increased by 10% with a number of new partners becoming involved. This included Auburn City Council who provided us with funds to develop our Men's program which has been highly successful in reducing isolation and promoting social inclusion.

Our greatest challenge this past year was in our 'Safe Place' Housing program which saw us lose half of our properties. After alerting the wider community of our diminishing housing stock we received a number of donations from supporters including the Scully Fund to assist us in rebuilding our Housing stock. At the beginning of 2015 we started a campaign "Buy a Brick, Build a Home" to strengthen and grow our housing program. We have raised \$30,000 for the campaign so far and are aiming to raise \$200,000 by the end of 2015.

We have increased our presence on social media to engage the wider community and promote the work of House of Welcome. As a result of this, the number of followers we have on Facebook has doubled, and our engagement and awareness within the wider community continues to increase on a weekly basis. We hope that by using social media to actively engage with the wider community we will build more support through volunteering and donations, both financial and material.

This year we have again partnered with Simple Love and a number of school groups and other community groups who regularly give donations towards our foodbank. This has allowed us to significantly increase the impact of this program, providing essential foodstuffs, toiletries and household items to more than double the people we supported in the previous year.



A young helper displays FoodBank collections

STATISTICS FOR 2013-15

	2015	2014	2013
Direct casework clients	506	512	489
New registrations/intakes	103	103	65
Referrals	909	576	302
Drop-ins	3,221	2,172	1,222
FoodBank recipients *	503	343	867
Case work appointments	941	816	826
Activities attendance	4,162	2,141	615
Class attendance	648	389	295
Clients receiving financial assistance	311	181	107
Financial assistance provided \$	66,515	61,110	44,810
No interest loans \$	2,354	2,354	5,810
Clients in HoW housing	360	353	272
Clients granted permanent residency	13	18	25

* 2013 FoodBank recipient amount based on number of distributions not number of clients

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

The House of Welcome Community Development programs include the Ladies Group, Monthly Social Activities, Community Kitchens, Welcome Feast Cooking Classes, Employment programs, Community Gardens and Skill Development Courses. These programs provide opportunities for community participation, reduction of social isolation, building social networks and community connections, empowering people with employment skills, leadership development and capacity building.

Over the past three years our community development initiatives have grown more than any other area of our work. This past year was no exception with almost 5,000 people participating in these programs. The areas we have seen the most growth are in the programs run out of our new satellite office in Auburn. We now run a fortnightly community lunch, an employment program, men's and women's groups, women's craft hub, welcome feast cooking classes, a Foodbank and provide casework from our space at the Auburn Centre for Community.

One of the key focuses of the Community Development program this year has been on empowering people into work. As more and more people have been granted work rights, in combination with the reduction in funded supports, the need to practically assist people in finding employment has become paramount. This has meant a great effort on our part to develop existing programs like the Welcome Feast Cooking Classes and the Work & Welcome Program, and to develop a new 'Empowered to Work' work program that assists people with English, CV preparation and job search skills. All these programs have been further developed in partnership with other organisations such as Asylum Seekers Centre, Jesuit Refugee Service and Auburn Council, to name a few. We hope to further expand the scope and impact of these programs in the coming year, seeing significant numbers of people entering the workforce

and experiencing a greater level of independence and self-efficacy.

We also saw major staffing changes this past year. Our long-time Community Development coordinator, Jo Hill, left us in January to welcome her first child, Mae, into the world. Suma Pillai has now taken on the role of coordinator and Amy Smith has joined us three days a week to assist Suma particularly in the area of employment programs. We are incredibly excited about the skills, experience and passion that both these wonderful people bring to the team and we look forward to seeing how Community Development at the House of Welcome continues to grow and flourish under their direction.

Besides the wonderful work our staff do, it must be noted that without the dedication and hard work of our volunteers most of our community development programs would not exist. Our volunteers are a key part of our community development team, often being the key people that deliver the programs face-to-face with the clients. We now have close to 100 volunteers working with us on a regular basis, answering phones at the office, distributing Foodbank, teaching English, preparing CVs, assisting job searches, teaching arts and craft, visiting people in their homes, picking up and delivering household goods, assisting at community lunches and being mentors to our clients. These are but a few of the tasks they are involved in.



Art for Refugees display



Welcome Feast Cooking Class volunteers prepare to serve

Our deepest, heartfelt thanks go out to all who support us through volunteering their time and through donating generously of their hard-earned finances. We could not do all the work we do without each and every one of you. We hope you will continue to be part of the House of Welcome family, building into the lives of those we support.

THE YEAR IN NUMBERS

4162

Social Activities
Attendance: **4162**
(Social Activities,
Community Kitchen
lunch, Cooking Classes,
Homework Tutoring,
Celebrations, Winter
Clothing Drive)

648

Skills Development
Classes: **648**
(Weekly English,
Sewing & Computer
Classes)

45

Client Volunteers: **45**
(Cooking Class
teachers, furniture
removers, newsletter
writers, gym
supervisors, gardeners
and lunch chefs)

97

Local Volunteers: **97**
Regular volunteers
over 12 months

A FAMILY FINDING A FAMILY – THE AZIKIWE'S EXPERIENCE

"Since 1990 I have lived in permanent fear of being killed."

I really cannot express how much my family and I appreciate the kindness of the House of Welcome in welcoming us and providing us with accommodation, food and financial assistance since we arrived in early 2014. It was a delight to find a loving and caring community organisation like the House of Welcome.

First of all, as Asylum seekers, our family really didn't know where to go to in Sydney after our arrival in Australia. After fleeing our country, we were very desperate and had no hope of living peacefully again. We came to Australia after a life of instabilities due to war, exile, persecution, discrimination, and inhumane treatment that started when I was still a child. Since 1990 I have lived in permanent fear of being killed. Our country is ruled by a dictatorship. Since a war in the early 1990's that saw hundreds of thousands of people killed in a mass genocide our country has never been the same. There is an artificial peace with no freedom of expression and people still living in a permanent state of fear. If anyone dares to publicly criticise the government they are immediately oppressed, people are jailed, killed and forced to leave the country.

I was tortured, beaten, and jailed several times after denouncing and criticising the violation of human rights by the regime. Even the countries neighbouring ours are not safe. All political refugees who sought asylum in neighbouring countries were kidnapped and brought back and were denied the right to fair justice. Many of them were killed, others tortured. I didn't want this to happen to me again and decided to flee the country. Before coming to Australia we had nowhere else to go; I had no one to talk to. I didn't know what to do. I knew what had happened to my compatriots who criticised the government.

I started living every day as the last. I thought the best thing to do was to flee the country and seek safety very far away. I thought of Europe, America or Australia. At least my family and I would be safe in any of those places. The easiest way to get a visa was to apply for admission in a higher education institution. I applied for admission in one of Universities in Sydney and they responded positively. To have the chance at this new life we had to borrow money from friends and relatives and I had sell or rent family assets. I had to find safety for myself and my family.

We first heard of The House of Welcome from the Red Cross. It was on a Tuesday morning when my family and I first arrived at the office in Carramar in March 2014. As it was impossible for us to afford a private rental in Sydney we were given accommodation by the House of Welcome. This was a great blessing because we had nowhere else to go. We also received ongoing food and financial assistance until I was able to find a job.

Our Asylum process is still ongoing and we are still being given much kind assistance from the House of Welcome. We Thank God who has given us such a lovely community organisation with beautiful and awesome people, from Paul the CEO to all of the House of Welcome staff. We really appreciate the kind help, care and support we have received since we came.

My wife and I were orphans but we know we have got the House of Welcome as our new family. May God bless the House of Welcome, all the work it does, and may God bless Australia and its people.

We thank you.

The Azikiwe Family (Not their real name)

CASEWORK

Casework continues to ebb and flow as the needs of our clients change. The casework team consistently reflects on the way in which we deliver support for clients, how to engage clients in meeting their needs and how to connect with other services. Casework involves many practical tasks such as making referrals, exploring avenues for support, providing financial assistance, advocating for additional services, writing support letters and linking people to community development activities and opportunities. However the richest component of casework is the relationships which are developed as we journey alongside our clients. Taking the time to share stories and listen as people share their sadness, fears, hopes and joy is indeed a privilege.

We continue to receive numerous referrals. Financial assistance and accommodation continue to be the greatest need. One of the great challenges we face is the limited number of alternate avenues to explore in order to meet the demand. Accommodation for families is a most difficult area to find support. The cost of living across Sydney and the uncertainty of income makes this even more challenging. We have also seen an increase in the need for assistance with preparing for and finding employment.

Foodbank continues to be a highly valuable service at House of Welcome. We now provide Foodbank at both Carramar and Auburn. This has given us a greater scope and we can minimise the impact of travel for some clients. We have numerous families and clients accessing Foodbank every week and the demand is ever increasing. So much of Foodbank is stocked thanks to the wonderful generosity of community groups, church groups, school and other kind individuals. These fabulous people have ensured that there is a wide range of useful and much needed items. It is great to see the mix of delight and relief for clients who are able to take a wide range of items. Foodbank has a big impact on the financial situation and the health and wellbeing of individuals and families.

Financial assistance is offered to many clients and continues to be an essential service at the House of Welcome. We offer financial assistance to vulnerable clients with no income. These funds can make a difference in many ways such as assisting someone to maintain their current accommodation and assist with the ever increasing costs of food and transport whilst they wait for other payments or potential employment.

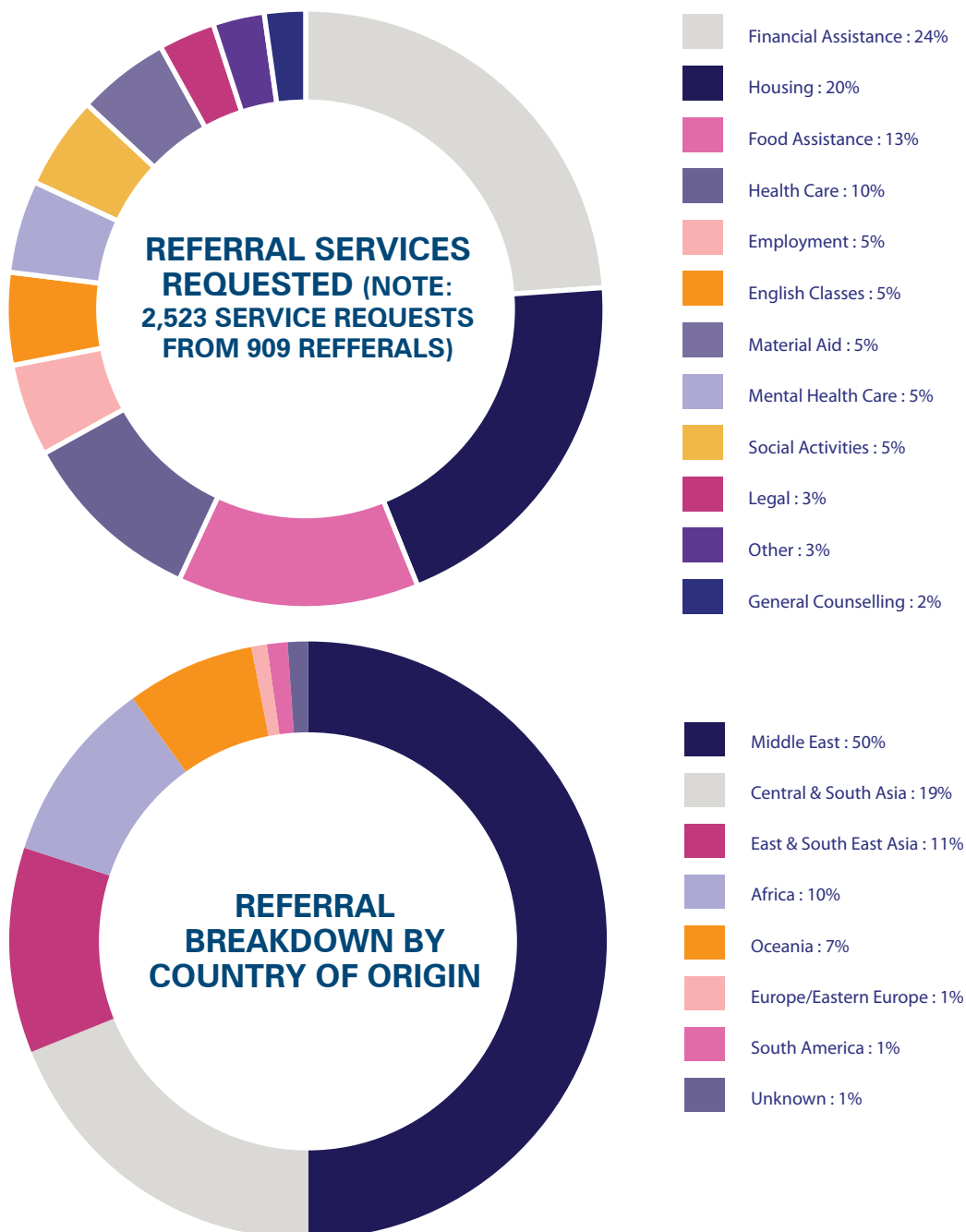
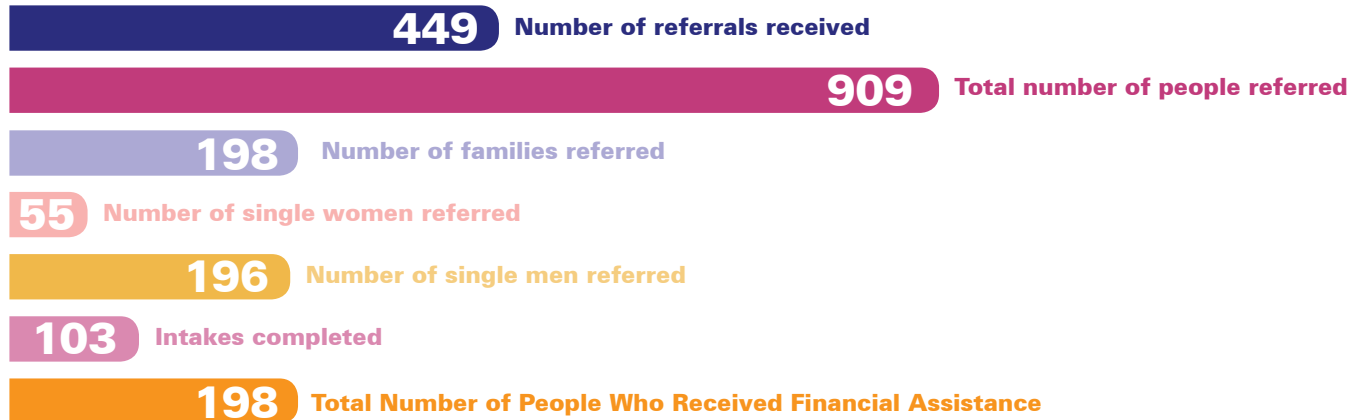
This year, the loss of numerous properties in the Bonnyrigg area presented one of the greatest challenges for the casework team. The case work team was involved in the difficult process of informing many clients, within a short timeframe, that they would be needing to move out of their accommodation. This was an extremely distressing process for both clients and staff. The House of Welcome prides itself on providing quality support for people who are most vulnerable and we were very discouraged knowing that there were very few options for our clients to transition to. It felt as though we were placed in a situation that contradicted all that our service represents. It is most important to acknowledge the House of Welcome team and their incredible professionalism during this time. The team pulled together to not only support each other but to consistently ensure that the process could be managed with integrity and the highest regard for our client's welfare. Thankfully we were given a small reprieve and the timelines to return the properties were softened. This has now given us time to explore other avenues for accommodation and assistance.

We have been so grateful to the numerous services and agencies that we work closely with in order to provide casework. It is always humbling to see services working collaboratively to advocate for clients, seek further supports and brainstorm ideas for identifying gaps and meeting need.

Casework at the House of Welcome will continue to evolve as the year ahead brings further changes via government initiatives and policy. Our focus will continue to be one of reflection in order to grow and respond to the plethora of challenges faced by people seeking asylum.



CASEWORK FIGURES



HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AND SETTLEMENT SERVICES

Providing accommodation to refugees and people seeking asylum remains a key focus of the House of Welcome. Safe and secure accommodation helps clients achieve better outcomes in an otherwise unstable environment. It leads to better health, employment and education opportunities. It provides hope for a better future.

The House of Welcome has maintained a steady portfolio of accommodation throughout the year. However due to unforeseen circumstances we have been informed that a large proportion of our Bonnyrigg accommodation will need to be returned to the housing provider. In total we will lose 13 cottages that house mostly families. While this is a major blow to our ability to provide safe and secure accommodation we are working closely with other stakeholders in order to acquire replacement properties.

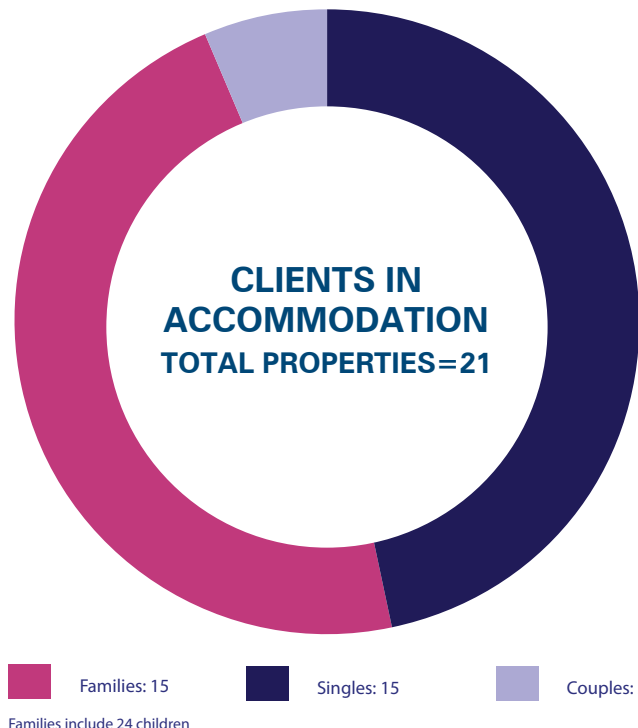
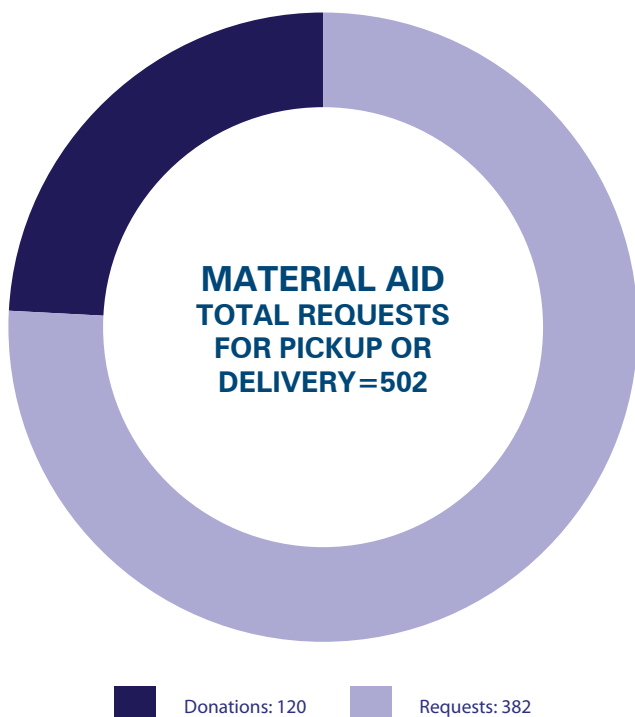
For the majority of the period July 2014 to June 2015 House of Welcome successfully maintained 25 properties. However, in early 2015 we handed back several properties to Newleaf Communities and the National Council of Churches. These five properties reduced the portfolio and we have managed to pick up one additional property in May 2015 from Ecclesia Housing to bring the portfolio back to 21 properties. On average we accommodated approximately

90 clients throughout the year, an increase on previous years. House of Welcome continues to offer a total of 72 rooms for both families and single clients.

The demand for housing assistance continues to be strong and the availability of accommodation continues to be an issue for our vulnerable client group. The ability to maintain single accommodation is managed successfully through our two larger accommodation units located in the city and western suburbs. These provide safe accommodation for both male and female clients. The average period of housing accommodation for 2014-15 has exceeded that of the previous year (fifteen months) and in some situations is now up to 27 months.

The properties we manage come from different organisations and comprise a mixture of head lease agreements with various religious orders and community housing providers. Without these partnerships we would not be able to provide safe and secure accommodation. We are grateful for all our partners and the contributions that they make.

The Material Aid program continues to be very successful and received 502 requests this year. This comprised 382 requests and 120 donations of material aid items. The program works hard to find and utilise regular volunteers, who are the back bone of this program.



STATEMENT OF PROFIT & LOSS

	Jul '14 - Jun 15	Jul '13 - Jun 14	Var
Income			
Government Grants	537,604	612,152	(74,548)
General Donations	806,108	560,868	245,240
Contributions - Church Groups & Foundations	686,887	685,357	1,530
Operating Activities	204,124	191,200	12,924
Investment Income	37,016	53,109	(16,093)
Total Income	2,271,739	2,102,686	169,053
Expense			
Total Staff Costs	1,340,137	1,438,176	(98,039)
Office Supplies & Administration	75,847	47,019	28,828
Client Support Services	173,677	162,833	10,844
Depreciation - Motor Vehicles & Equipment	37,746	32,360	5,386
Insurance Premiums	16,601	18,131	(1,530)
Motor Vehicle Expenses	41,959	34,319	7,640
Property Maintenance Costs	45,545	50,929	(5,384)
HoW Client House Rents	88,154	89,193	(1,039)
Telephone & Internet	21,630	21,626	4
Utilities - Electricity, Water	69,876	67,445	2,431
Rent of Premises Paddington	161,020	155,112	5,908
HoW Centre Rent	40,000	40,000	0
Total Expense	2,112,192	2,157,143	(44,951)
NET SURPLUS/DEFICIT	159,547	(54,457)	214,004

BALANCE SHEET

	JUN 30, 2015	JUN 30, 2014
Current Assets		
Cash at Bank - Come In Centre	395,892	240,205
Cash at Bank - House of Welcome	271,283	344,530
Investment - CIC	858,300	690,000
Investment - HOW	200,000	257,771
Total Current Assets	1,725,475	1,532,506
Non-current Assets		
Property, Plant and Equipment	147,574	83,614
Total Non-current Assets	147,574	83,614
TOTAL ASSETS	1,873,049	1,616,120
Current liabilities		
Accounts payable	52,133	15,453
Other Current Liabilities	130,931	135,037
Total Current Liabilities	183,064	150,490
Long Term Liabilities	9,544	29,737
Total Long Term Liabilities	9,544	29,737
TOTAL LIABILITIES	192,608	180,227
NET ASSETS	1,680,441	1,435,893
EQUITY		
Retained Surplus	1,435,894	1,490,351
Net Operating Surplus/Deficit	159,547	(54,457)
Funds Transfer Greenlight Movement	85,000	0
	1,680,441	1,435,894


THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

Auburn Council
Baptist Community Services
BP Australia
Buck Foundation
Commonwealth Bank Foundation
De Iuliis Wines
Dominican Sisters of Eastern Australia
and Solomon Islands
Ecclesia Housing
Franciscan Friars
Grill'd Bondi
Herbert Smith Freehills
Herbert Smith Freehills Foundation
Hume Community Housing
Jenour Foundation
Loreto Normanhurst
Macquarie Group Foundation
Marist Fathers
Marist Sisters
Mary Immaculate Parish, Waverley
Mary Mackillop Foundation

Mercy Foundation
Newleaf Housing (St George Community Housing)
North Sydney Community Centre
Oceania Province of the Christian Brothers
Parish of St Francis of Assisi, Paddington
Parish of St Joseph's, Edgecliff
Presentation Sisters, Wagga
Sidney Myer Foundation
Sister of Mercy, Parramatta
Sisters of Charity Foundation
StreetSmart Australia
The Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney
The Catholic Diocese of Parramatta
The Government of New South Wales
The Lewis Foundation
The Little Company of Mary
The Property Industry Foundation
The Scully Fund

The many individuals, not wishing to be named,
who give so generously

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