

**STREETSMART**

ACTION AGAINST HOMELESSNESS

**StreetSmart Collective  
November 2016 Grants Impact Report**

FEBRUARY 2018

In December 2016 through a partnership between Australian Communities Foundation and StreetSmart Australia six projects in Victoria, tackling homelessness and its causes, were co-funded. This report provides a summary of feedback from each project through their acquittal reporting. Given the increasing difficulty small homelessness organisations face in securing funding, these outcomes have only been made possible through our collective partnership, where the whole has truly proved to be greater than the sum of the parts.

## SUMMARY

\$66,000 funding provided

---

6 Projects Funded

## IMPACT

846 nights of shelter provided to Asylum Seekers

---

15 Older people supported into permanent housing

---

21 people given legal advice and 18 assisted to remain housed

---

5 young people given access to therapeutic counselling, pilot program completed

---

66 families provided with cots and bedding to provide safe sleeping for their baby

# Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc.

\$11,000 – Housing Program

**IMPACT - 846 nights of shelter provided**

**People seeking asylum are particularly vulnerable to homelessness due to lack of work rights, poverty, uncertainty of legal status, social isolation and mental health. The ASRC supports some of these people through paying their rent, allowing them to stay in safe and stable housing.**

The ASRC housing budget provides for covering a reasonable rental cost: a maximum of \$310 per fortnight for a single person, scaling up to a maximum of \$770 per fortnight for a family with 3 or more children. Without such support, many women, men and children would be forced to sleep rough or seek help from homelessness services.



Beyond shelter, this means that they are able to remain connected to their communities, (including schools, churches, health professionals, and friends, as they continue through the refugee determination process.

\$11,000 in support allowed ASRC to pay for 846 nights of shelter, preventing homelessness.

# Housing for the Aged Action Group Inc

\$11,000 - Home at Last – Client re-housing project  
**IMPACT - 15 Older people supported into housing**

**The goals and objectives of the project are to enable clients (older people experiencing homelessness or insecure housing) to not only secure housing, but to ensure as much as possible, they are doing so debt free.**

Being debt free enables them to sustain their tenancy and prevent them falling into homelessness. If a client needs to borrow money for the essentials of establishing a tenancy, they continue living in a debt cycle for many years and often this means they are going without essential medication and decent food. All clients assisted through this grant are assured of a future that enables them to keep a roof over their head by affording to pay their rent, along with paying for life essentials such as decent food, medication, transport, utilities etc.

Some 15 older people facing homelessness, or living in undesirable and unsafe accommodation, were



provided with immediate information, options, support and re-assurance about their housing future. This included housing and legal support where people were facing eviction including VCAT hearings and practical reassurance about financial support they would need to access and establish a new tenancy.

HAAG were able to leverage the StreetSmart grant to attract funding from the Lord Mayor's Charitable Fund.

# Home at Last Case Study

**Terrence presented to HAAG with an eviction notice for rent arrears. He was on a low income which was not enough to cover his increasingly high rent.**

Tenancy worker Shane advocated for Terrence over a period of 18 months to help him maintain his tenancy, whilst the outreach team worked with Terrence to find alternative housing. Over this period Shane represented Terrence at VCAT 3 times over attempts to evict him and also during a change over of real estate agents. HAAG paid a portion of Terrence's arrears to ensure he was not evicted until he had somewhere to go. As Terrence spent all his super paying his rent he was then eligible for social/public housing. Anne worked with Terrence over 7 months and made three housing applications. Due to Terrence's fluctuating income, his eligibility for public housing changed and Anne worked to have Terrence's early housing status appealed. This was successful and Terrence was eventually offered a

public housing unit where he could stay for life and only ever pay 25% of his income in rent. Shane and Anne both helped Terrence move into his new property with the assistance of a removalist and purchased whitegoods to set him up.

Having an in-house tenancy service working alongside our housing service -and the brokerage to help Terrence with rent arrears and moving in costs - kept Terrence off the street whilst his housing applications were processed. This had a significant impact of course on Terrence but also on services that would have otherwise had to support him had he become homeless.



# Justice Connect – Homeless Law

\$11,000 Dollar Value Project  
**IMPACT – 21 people assisted**

**Access to brokerage (small amounts of money that can be used to help people catch up with rent or pay other small expenses) can be the difference between eviction and keeping a roof over clients' heads.**

Last year Justice Connect Homeless Law helped prevent 121 people being evicted into homelessness through a combination of legal representation and social work support. Through this work, they know that even with the best legal representation, they wouldn't be able to prevent some of these evictions without having small lump sums to chip in to get negotiations started or to cover expenses so that people's limited money can be freed up for rent. Sometimes this money is for a week's rent, sometimes it's to help clean up the property, sometimes it's to help someone move their belongings so they don't get taken to the tip when a tenancy ends.

Combined with legal representation and social work support, access to this flexible brokerage plays a big role in homelessness prevention. Of the 21 people assisted with brokerage through Dollar Value, 17



were female and 4 were male. Homeless Law were able to save 12 tenancies and contribute to 6 clients being re-housed. In total, the brokerage helped prevent homelessness for 18 people and their families.

The benefits of homelessness prevention are personal, social and financial. In addition to avoiding the severe personal hardship and social dislocation that homelessness brings with it, preventing homelessness has been calculated to avoid costs of approximately \$30,000 per person per year in health, justice and welfare costs. A 2006 Victorian Government paper also identified a potential cost of over \$34,000 per year to support a tenant evicted from public housing through homelessness services. This was compared to approximately \$4,300 in service costs per year for a household in public housing.

# Merri Outreach Support Service

\$11,000 - Bright Futures Program  
**IMPACT – 5 young people assisted,  
pilot program completed**

**The existing Bright Futures program provides enhanced case management and/or group work responses to infants, children and young people whose families are accessing Homelessness and/or Family Violence Services in the North West Metropolitan Region of Melbourne.**

This project piloted an additional stream (Stream 4 Counselling/Advocacy) including service delivery to five children and their families. Three included medium-term interventions and two included a brief intervention.

The Counsellor/Advocate was employed for 0.4EFT in stream 4. All of the five children who were supported by S4 had been through S1 (assessment and case planning) and were being concurrently supported in S2 (enhance case management) alongside S4.

The pilot was successful and has provided Merri Outreach with greater experience and evidence with which to advocate for ongoing funding. The project enabled Merri Outreach to assist 5 children, with long term benefits (including: increased emotional intelligence, increased resilience,



stronger parent/child relationships, improved social connectedness), along with testing processes of S4 to further develop, refine and recommend for future incarnations of S4.

*“We are incredibly grateful to have received this StreetSmart Grant and to be provided the opportunity to pilot our counselling stream. This experience has been invaluable not only for us to provide support to vulnerable children who often miss out on therapeutic support, but also to help build and strengthen our program. We are now in a stronger position to advocate for further funding to implement Stream 4 which is wonderful. Thank you StreetSmart, their supporters and to the funder who matched the donation – it means a lot to Bright Futures and to the children we work with.”*

Talia Barrett, Bright Futures Project Manager

# St Kilda Mums

\$11,000 – Safe Sleep for All Babies  
**IMPACT - 66 families assisted**

**The community supports St Kilda Mums in a multitude of ways, one of which is the donation of pre-loved nursery equipment. However, the donations received are not enough to fulfil the requests received from caseworkers assisting families.**

They therefore need to continually purchase nursery equipment - material aid will be an ongoing and growing cost for them, which can be challenging for grant applications, as it is not a new or capacity building project. Cots are the most frequently requested items, as every baby needs a safe place to sleep. At the time of the application they had 44 women on a waitlist who were due to give birth in the following two months and need a cot for their baby.



Causes of disadvantage amongst the families assisted were:

- Migrant, refugee or asylum seeker 28%
- Homeless or at risk of homelessness 17%
- Family Violence 15%
- Mental Health 12%
- Young Parents 10%
- Other causes 17%

Not only does a cot provide safe place for a baby to sleep, but on many occasions case workers say that once parents have the essentials they need to keep their children safe, they can focus their energy and limited finances on housing, employment and study.

Support from StreetSmart enabled St Kilda Mums to purchase and distribute 66 cot packages to families in need.



# Flat Out

\$11,000 – LGBTQIA Homelessness  
Awareness Project  
**IMPACT - Project Ongoing**

Due to a staff member leaving the organisation the project has been delayed and should be completed in first half of 2018.

Client interviews have been completed, organisation liaison is underway and service materials are being designed and put together.

# November 2016 Community Grants

These Lead Grants were part of a larger Community Grants program funding 118 projects (28 were first time recipients).

StreetSmart grants go to support projects **local** to the cafes who participated in CafeSmart 2016, funding a wide variety of responses to homelessness including **Pets in the Park** to run outreach clinics,

**Coast Shelter** to refurbish a shower and laundry, **Sherwood Neighbourhood Centre** to provide hygiene packs, **Hobart City Mission** to support homeless young mums, **Merri Outreach** to provide intensive support for young children and **My Friends Place Womens Refuge** to build storage for women's belongings.

State	No. of Grants	Grant Amount
VIC	46	\$ 121,200.00
NSW	32	\$ 53,250.00
QLD	15	\$ 17,750.00
WA	13	\$ 17,100.00
SA	6	\$ 5,350.00
TAS	2	\$ 3,850.00
ACT	3	\$ 3,000.00
NT	1	\$ 1,500.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>\$ 223,000.00</b>

The StreetSmart Collective initiative is the most recent of a number of successful StreetSmart projects which together have now raised and distributed \$4.8 million to support 554 local community organisations and 1584 of their projects. During 2017 StreetSmart, through our CafeSmart, DineSmart, StreetFunder and Collective initiatives empowered the public to raise over \$650,000 to support grassroots homeless services.

In 2018 our community grants will be distributed in April/May and November/December, and each month our regular giving program 'StreetFunder' supports a project/s.

We thank all our supporters and partners for enabling the impact we are able to have for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

To find out more please visit [www.streetsmartaustralia.org](http://www.streetsmartaustralia.org)

**To discuss details of how you can partner with StreetSmart to scale impact please contact CEO/ Founder Adam Robinson on 0488 336419 or [adam@streetsmartaustralia.org](mailto:adam@streetsmartaustralia.org).**

Full acquittals for each Lead Grant project are available on request.