



StreetSmart Collective November 2017 Grants Impact Report

JANUARY 2019

STREETSMART

ACTION AGAINST HOMELESSNESS

In November 2017 StreetSmart Australia distributed \$285,500 to fund 156 Community projects.

Through a partnership between StreetSmart Australia, Australian Communities Foundation and the Merrin Foundation twelve Lead Projects were selected and co-funded. This report provides a summary of feedback provided by each Lead Grant recipient 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.

LEAD PROJECT SUMMARY

\$110,000 funding provided

12 Projects funded

Over 400 people impacted

PROJECTS FUNDED

Australian Alliance to End Homelessness Registry Week Activation Fund – Project ongoing and report pending	PIAC Homeless Person Legal Service Employment Pathways Project
Dandelion Network Helping Families in Need	South Port Community Housing 2018 Year of the Arts – Project ongoing and report pending
Family Access Network Life Skills Outreach	St Kilda Gatehouse Home Again
First Step Emergency Fund	Taldumande YS Intensive Family Support Program
Melbourne Homeless Collective (Melbourne Period Project) Plate Up Project	Women's Community Shelters Efforts to Outcomes Project Officer
Newtown NC Boarding House Outreach Service	YWCA Older Women Project

IMPACT SUMMARY

58 families in need assisted	1 person employed and trained
10 young people between 18-22 yo received support	Over 100 women assisted
8 women took part in the program	34 young people and their families assisted
16 highly-vulnerable people assisted to stay in treatment.	Change in practice and reporting benefiting all women accessing refuge service
18 people (all aged 60+) were engaged through this program, 5 new clients were engaged	41 older women assisted

Dandelion Support Network Inc

\$7,500 Helping families in need with essential baby items
– Completed

IMPACT 58 families in need in Greater Sydney assisted

“We have high demand for our service and often can’t meet demand for essential items for babies. The funding from StreetSmart has been an important step for us to clear a wait list and tackle some projects on our operational wish-list.”

Dandelion helps children who are in a vulnerable situation. All the families referred to us suffer financial hardship as well as a broad range of challenges including those escaping domestic violence, refugees, those facing mental health issues, parents and children with disabilities and more. 1 in every 4 referrals is for a family who is homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Everyday our volunteers accept donations of good quality preloved and new nursery furniture and items for babies and children for families in need. All items are processed by volunteers who follow high quality assurance standards so that the goods can be enjoyed by their new owner.

Dandelion never have enough preloved cots, bassinets and prams to meet demand, so the aim of the project was to enable Dandelion to purchase



a number of these items to help with a backlog of requests as well as funding operations and storage.

Dandelion Support Network partners with some amazing agencies and support services who work with some of the most vulnerable families in our communities.

Because of this grant 58 families and their children were directly impacted in the Greater Sydney area. All families were socially isolated, and lacked the support needed. 60% of these referrals were for Single Mums.

Family Access Network (FAN)

\$8,500 **LGBTI Homeless Youth Outreach Support**
– completed

IMPACT **10 young people between 18-22 yo received support. There were male, female, male trans and female trans.**

“FAN really appreciates the funding we received as we were able to provide an outreach program to young LGBTI people who are homeless. We do not have the funding to provide this service and through trialling the project and ideas, it has proved that it is much needed. We are endeavouring to find future funding so we can continue the great work that this project has commenced.”

FAN is the only agency in Victoria to offer a tailored response to young people who identify as LGBTI and are homeless. They are considered homeless as they live in transitional accommodation which is not stable accommodation. The funding enabled the delivery of an Life Skills outreach worker who visited the properties and ran programs such as healthy cooking, food hygiene, budgeting workshops and planting a veggie/herb garden. Workshops were based on key themes of health and wellbeing with the Life Skills worker facilitating young people’s active participation. Many of the young people identified social isolation as a major challenge in their lives therefore the group also provided social activities, with an emphasis on providing a safe and supportive environment.

All of the young people have significant mental health issues with some of these issues being so severe that the young people feel unable to leave the property for weeks at a time. These mental health issues reduce



their ability to work and socialise outside of the home and impact on their daily life. The aim was to reduce the social isolation they feel and also give them life skills for their move out of the properties.

We learnt that young people can feel extremely isolated when they leave or are first kicked out of home. In particular this cohort who don’t have the same social relationships as their peers and don’t have support at home. The importance of linking LGBTI young people together meant they started to form friendships and reduced the feelings of isolation.

Throughout the project we could see the young people making friends, reducing the level of social isolation and anxiety and saw their confidence grow with new peer relationships. Feedback from clients confirmed these observations.

First Step

\$5,000 Basic Essentials – completed

IMPACT 16 highly-vulnerable people assisted to stay in treatment

“StreetSmart demonstrates through its core grant making activities a strong belief that we should judge a society by how it treats its most vulnerable members. At First Step we believe that everybody deserves every chance to turn their lives around and StreetSmart have helped us many times to help others do exactly that.”

Many of First Step’s most vulnerable clients find themselves at critical stages in their medical rehabilitation, at the same time as having virtually no disposable income. The maximum Newstart allowance with maximum rent assistance for a single person is \$48.57 per day (that’s for food, accommodation, transport, clothing, everything!). An inability to pay for medications is a key factor in many people failing to comply with medication regimes. The \$5,000 received from StreetSmart has been used to fill that crucial income gap and keep people in treatment.

All of the 16 clients who benefitted would be considered at risk of homelessness, and 9 were actually rough sleeping or couch surfing at some

point during this grant program. The gender split was 9 men and 7 women. Most were in their 40s (with a couple in the 30s or 50s). They varied along other demographic lines, though most had a history of serious childhood physical, emotional and sexual abuse. Several had been homeless on and off since their teens. Most had spent some of their lives in prison.

The goal of this project was to keep people in treatment. The project supported clients financially, paying invoices from approved pharmacies upon receipt of an invoice. Arguably, all aspects of treatment towards physical, mental and psycho-social wellbeing of the client benefitted from this project and enabled them to stay compliant with treatment regimes essential to their recovery. In most cases, staying in treatment also had the immediate benefit of reducing their risk of harm from physical or mental illness, injury, intoxication or violence, also reducing the likelihood of hospital attendances and incarceration.

This project has proven that a sustainable funding stream, for exactly this need, would be greatly beneficial to First Step clients. The flexible funding allowed case workers to work with clients to overcome challenges and shortfalls in income at those important times in treatment.

Melbourne Homelessness Collective

\$10,000 Plate Up Project – completed
IMPACT 6 women completed the course,
4 entering part time work

“We would like to sincerely thank everyone at StreetSmart for the lead grant which seed funded our Plate Up Project, assisting 10 women experiencing homelessness. New projects often take a while to get noticed and gain support to operate. Thanks to StreetSmart we were able to implement Plate Up straight away and get to work helping people get back into work.”

Plate Up Project (PuP) supports women who have experienced family violence to re-enter the work force and gain financial independence through food, cooking and hospitality. PuP seeks to re skill and empower its participants and educate prospective employers as to the barriers people coming through the PuP programme might face.

Plate Up Round #1 was seed funded by the StreetSmart grant, with 6 women aged between 24 to 62 completing the project. Each woman attending was experiencing homelessness and residing in crisis accommodation at the commencement of the project. All participants had experienced prior family violence of some form previously. Round 2 is currently underway with 6 participants almost at completion of the course.

The project saw 6 participants complete the 12 week course with 4 of those participants entering part time work. All participants gained stable accommodation that they are currently still in. Personal outcomes

recorded included: increase in financial stability, increased confidence, increased positive connections with others, clearer pathways to suitable careers, increased focus on personal future outcomes, increased feelings of positive

wellbeing, reengagement in former hobbies such as art and singing.

The Plate Up Project has also been able to secure a grant from SunSuper and from City of Port Philip to run another PuP course thanks to a video we created funded by the StreetSmart Grant.

Watch this video about Plate Up:
www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=dhMZzYr6wVo&feature=youtu.be

The feedback for PuP was far more positive than we initially had hoped. Both participants and management were very impressed with the outcomes. Participants of Plate Up are describing being a part of the project as the first time they've ever felt as though they belonged and weren't judged. One participant is now completely off social security benefits as a direct result of Plate Up and the work she has found since completing the project.



Newtown Neighbourhood Centre

\$7,500 Boarding House Outreach Team - Social Inclusion
– still running

IMPACT 18 people (all aged 60+) were engaged through this program, 5 new clients were engaged

“This project has been really beneficial for our clients, in giving them a regular group that they can socialise with, and for the service in assisting to maintain client retention and deliver the support to those in need. Some of the clients have ended up arranging outings together without the support of staff including a day trip to Katoomba, which is an amazing outcome and one we would like to encourage further. StreetSmart have always been great supporters of our centre and the grants we have received have always helped get ideas and small impactful projects off the ground.”

In implementing this project the Boarding House Outreach Team had two main objectives 1. Provide a mechanism for older people living in boarding houses, who were socially isolated, to come together and take part in social outings with support from a worker and 2. To increase the number of vulnerable clients engaged with the support service as well as the length of time clients remain engaged in order to increase advocacy and assistance we can provide and the greater likelihood they will have a positive outcome in terms of their long term housing stability. A number of social outings and bus trips took place.

Both goals were achieved.

In terms of increasing the number of clients over the course of the project around 10 new clients have been engaged through the bus outings and have continued to engage with the support programme.

Since May 2018 a total of 5 new people have been further engaged.

During this time 8 clients have been moved into more secure accommodation with ongoing support and these are all clients that have been attending the monthly bus outings.

Due to some activities and trip costing less than budgeted we will be able to extend the project by a further 6-7 months.

The following are some direct quotes from those who benefited from the trips:

“I have not had sand between my toes since was 12 yrs old”

“I cannot believe how this all has been, as it has been a big change for me”

“I just love coming on the bus, because of all the laughs”

Due to the project we were able to increase our partnership with Anglicare Aged Care. This has led to a number of clients being moved into their supported housing properties in Leichardt and Katoomba. The service continues to provide social support for these individuals who are now in more secured housing but still socially isolated and will often run groups with a number of residents from these properties.

One of the major lessons learned was the budgeting and how much impact can be made on fairly cost-effective activities. We also learned that clients love to be involved in the planning and running of the events which has multiple benefits.

Public Interest Advocacy Centre - PIAC

\$7,500 Employment Pathways – completed
IMPACT 1 person assisted with training and internship
 leading to employment

“The Public Interest Advocacy Centre is very grateful to StreetSmart for supporting the inaugural HPLS Employment Pathways Program. I am delighted to report that the StreetSmart grant resulted in an outcome which exceeded our expectations! The program participant, Maddy, has since been employed in a part-time role within PIAC’s HPLS team and we have secured funding for this role until June 2019.”

In November 2017 we were awarded a StreetSmart grant to pilot an annual program in which PIAC employs a person with recent experience of homelessness (a member of StreetCare) as a temporary intern, one day per week for 3 months, to be supervised by the Managing Solicitor of the Homeless Persons’ Legal Service.

Our inaugural Employment Pathways Program participant was Maddy, a 26 year old female student and StreetCare member who has lived experience with homelessness. The aim of the project was to provide a supervised employment experience in the field of homelessness public policy advocacy for a member of StreetCare.

Maddy received mentoring and training to develop professional skills and increased confidence to take up further education or employment opportunities, especially in the field of public policy research, analysis and advocacy. She worked to identify, research, develop and communicate policy positions and projects in consultation with homeless consumers and other stakeholders to achieve positive social justice outcomes for people who experience homelessness and disadvantage.

The skills, training and workplace education provided through the employment pathways

program contributed to the participant’s appointment as the new **StreetCare Project Officer**. It allowed PIAC to design a new position that suited both the existing skills of the candidate and our organisational needs.

The appointment of a new Project Officer ensures that PIAC’s consumer advisory committee, StreetCare, will continue to be influential in its promotion of a human-rights approach to homelessness service delivery, including the promotion of those with a lived experience in contribution to homelessness policy.

The Employment Pathways Program has been a rich learning experience for the participant and for our organisation. We have increased the scope of the role to include additional activities, and have found that we have been able to produce significantly more work than originally anticipated.

“The opportunity to intern with PIAC has opened so many doors for me and has truly been a life changing experience. As a result of the skill development and work experience I was able to gain during the internship I have now gained part time employment with PIAC as their new Project Officer for StreetCare. Such a position is a massive opportunity for me professionally and personally; this position is directly in line with my career aspirations, and being employed on a part time basis meant that I could secure a rental property in the private market, something I have not accomplished since 2013.”

Maddy



St Kilda Gatehouse

\$15,000 Home Again – completed
IMPACT Over 100 women assisted

“We love StreetSmart!! The approach is so personal, straight forward, dignifying and understanding of the issues faced by small grassroots charities working at the coalface of social issues, such as homelessness.”

Mark Watt, St Kilda Gatehouse

In 2017 the number of individuals accessing the Gatehouse Drop In Centre, who are experiencing homelessness, increased by 60%. This put an enormous strain on the Drop In services as well those individuals facing homelessness. StreetSmart has enabled Gatehouse to provide crisis and emotional support and assist women to work towards accessing stable housing. The impact of this funding has been enormous.

The Home Again Project assisted women to move out of crisis caused by homelessness and then provided assistance so those women were able to address issues that were creating instability and an unwanted reliance on street sex work.

During the two afternoons per week funded by StreetSmart:

- Staff funded by StreetSmart had 1627 contacts with women at risk of homelessness or experiencing homelessness. Through these contacts crisis support was provided in the form of clothing, food, hygiene packs, a space to sleep and wash. Homeless swags were provided to those sleeping rough.
- 13 individuals were assisted to address a crisis issue that otherwise would have led to homelessness.

- 47 individuals were supported to source housing.
- 41 individuals during this period positively engaged in community building activities as a direct pathway towards exiting street sex work and drug addiction, which are factors exacerbated by homelessness.
- Women experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness had access to a ‘living room’ environment where they were able to rest, sleep, hydrate and access meals, counselling and bathroom facilities.
- Importantly women involved in street sex work had a point of contact and safety when experiencing the effects of homelessness and poverty. Clients were assisted to access medical, mental health, housing and violence support services Advocacy was provided on behalf of clients to prevent evacuation from property and/or loss of Centrelink payments.
- Clients were provided Drug and Alcohol counselling.

Some client feedback included:

“This is the best. Just sitting here eating a nice meal with you guys.”

“What would I do without you to talk to?”

“This is a special place.”

“Can I just sit here for a while? I feel safe here.”

“Thank God you guys are open. Us girls missed you.”

“Why do I feel so alone? I feel better when I come here.”

Having successfully lobbied State Government for funding we are hoping that additional staff and open hours will go some way to providing greater support for clients and the presenting issues.

Taldumande Youth Services

\$7,500 Financial Assistance for our Intensive Family Support Program – completed

IMPACT 34 young people and their families experiencing an extended period of crisis assisted

“Taldumande Youth Services was thrilled to have been awarded a Lead Grant in 2017 from StreetSmart which aided our work improving the quality of life for vulnerable young people. The funds were directed to assist our accommodated young people enabling them to have access to food, clothing, education and training, transport and other living related expenses. Ultimately, the project helped reduce youth homelessness. Thank you, StreetSmart.” Lisa Graham, CEO Taldumande Youth Services

Taldumande runs an Intensive Family Support Program; a self-funded program which provides specialist case management support to young people aged 12-15 years and their families during a family crisis or breakdown. The program aims to help preserve family relationships and offer intensive, flexible and practical support with the intention of reducing family breakdown and young people becoming homeless.

Whilst accommodating at our 24/7 refuge, our children and young people have limited financial resources. This grant helped provide our young people the financial means to improve their overall well-being, enabling them to achieve their personal development (mental, emotional, social and well-being), educational, employment and independent living goals.

Our Intensive Family Support Program worked intensively with 34 young people (12 to 15 years of age) and their families. These young people are often experiencing high-needs issues which derive from complex issues ranging from

mental health, social, drug and alcohol addictions, trauma from sexual, physical or emotional abuse and neglect. They may have also disengaged from school and/or be caught up in the criminal justice system. These young people are an extremely vulnerable group and require specialised responses from homelessness services.

Positive outcomes were achieved including the following: re-connected to family and wider support networks, reduced drug use, reduced or ceased involvement in juvenile crime, positively engaged with education, work or training, strengthened their family relationships and be restored to their families whenever it is safe to do so.

In the last financial year this program had an 81 per cent return to home success rate. The other 19 per cent could not return due to absent parents or the home was not a safe place to return to.



Women's Community Shelters

\$7,500 IMPACT Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) Officer – completed
Greater understanding of our impact for women in our services, revolutionised case management for our staff, and created a platform that has allowed synchronicity in case management throughout the network.

“WCS is extremely grateful to Street Smart Australia for the grant towards our Efforts to Outcomes Project Officer. This funding has allowed us to record the support we have provided to clients who have exited our shelters and record their progress in order to help prevent the return to homelessness.” Annabelle Daniel, CEO

In 2016, the great outcomes Women's Community Shelters (WCS) achieved were not readily available for governments and funders to 'see' as our data was not part of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) 'Specialist Homelessness Services' data collection. Only government funded services contribute to this national data collection. As an organisation committed to understanding and demonstrating our impact, WCS developed our own bespoke reporting system to clearly track not just the positive outcomes we achieve for our shelter residents, but also the community contributions in time and in-kind.

In 2017, WCS sought funding from Street Smart Australia to extend the role of the Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) Project Officer, to enable activation of the longitudinal follow-up of our client management system.

The development of the ETO system has not only allowed for a greater understanding of our impact for women in our services, but has also revolutionised case management for our staff, and created a platform that has allowed synchronicity in case management throughout the network.

As a result, all women and children using our shelter service benefit from the work undertaken by the ETO Officer, resulting in:

- Instigation of follow up for women and children leaving our shelters.
- Development of processes for 6 monthly follow-up.
- Measurement of the positive change that occurs for women leaving support services.
- Reconnection of women to services, who are identified as needing support.

As a result of implementing the ETO system, WCS is now able to more easily measure the outcomes achieved for the women and children transitioning through our shelters. WCS has demonstrated significant social impact and cost savings to government across a number of measures, the most critical being additional supported crisis beds in an overstretched sector.

Our current network of six shelters will provide up to 35,000 bed nights in the 2018 calendar year to the NSW crisis sector. This will be scalable to close to 60,000 by 2020 with the addition of up to four new shelters to our network, all linked together through technology.

Thanks to the ETO Officer, we are able to continue to strengthen the quality of data collected and have undergone a significant testing and review process to ensure we are mapping clear progress around client outcomes that include: Safety, housing, education and employment, self-efficacy, law and Justice, mental and physical wellbeing, parenting and social connection.

This is a significant achievement within the DV sector and will ensure all data capture by WCS is included in the AIHW Specialist Homelessness Services data collection.

\$15,000 Pathways to Independence – completed
IMPACT 41 women (Age range 50-77) helped into housing
(23 CALD)

Australia has seen a 44% rise in older women seeking homeless services since 2015. Women experience economic inequality as a result of wage, wealth and retirement income gaps. Only 10% of women cite their main source of income as superannuation, compared to 25% of men. 600,829 single women over the age of 45yrs, are on low-median incomes and not in outright home ownership.

The YWCA's Pathways to Independence (PTI) Program assists older women through holistic case management support, advocacy and referrals to services such as financial advisory, health, domestic violence services, life skill programs, employment, community and alternate housing services. For many older women, this is the first time they have experienced a housing crisis and their knowledge of homeless services and supports is often very limited.

Supports vary; from maintaining current housing, assisting with removalist's costs, subsidising bond or rent deposits to affordable housing, assisting with overdue household utility accounts in order to sustain current housing, vouchers to purchase food and other essential items. Advocating for all PTI clients for affordable housing options which includes YWCA housing. Other basic needs are provided including: hygiene products, personal body care products, welcome packs, assorted gift bags, underwear, clothes, food vouchers/staples.

The women supported in the PTI program were appreciative to be treated as an equal, given respect and actively listened too in a private space. Initially some women can find the idea of meeting with the PTI program daunting.

Client feedback has shown that older women often "felt stuck" and unable to make sense of "the system". The applicant's feedback was of how valuable the program was to them; assisting them through the homelessness support service system, connections to counsellors, mental health, dental services, medical services, cultural and social connections, financial, legal consultants, crisis, family and domestic violence services.

"... thank you, thank you, thank you for your assistance and help and your precious time this morning with me, very kind and enabling/empowering also!! I have felt terrible about my situation but you have taken some of the weight from my shoulders today, I appreciate the assistant greatly and you are an Angel in this difficult time." Mikah

YWCA Case Studies

Naomi – Mental Health support and resources & YWCA housed

Naomi and her daughter came in for a rooming house interview and it was disclosed that Naomi was involuntarily placed in a mental health unit after a psychotic episode in Queensland. Naomi was on an order in QLD and has now returned to her family in Carlton. Naomi was declining to take recommended medication and did not want to engage with Waratah mental health services, refusing to recognise her diagnosed illness. Naomi is now engaging with Waratah and is working towards being housed in YWCA Carlton or Brunswick close to her daughter's home. Naomi is now housed and 10 minutes away from her daughter, Naomi is still engaging and meeting her Waratah psychologist.

Freda – housed Lygon Street, welcome pack, \$150.00 vouchers

Freda lived in a private rental for many years in Reservoir with her friend. Her friend left the rental due to being made redundant, this left Freda with an unsustainable tenancy. Freda was couch surfing then towards the end of her homelessness in her car. Freda took the offer of a room at YWCA Lygon street. Freda claims when given vouchers "I cannot thank you enough - I am wearing knickers with holes I can now go and buy some knickers and towels, these vouchers are going to help me in a million ways."

Lynne – housed Footscray and vouchers

Lynne came from a long-term (37 year) DV relationship where her home was destroyed during a violent DV episode by her ex-partner. Lynne wanted to move to a safe and secure area away from her past links. PTI assisted Lynne with YWCA housing and set Lynne up with vouchers to purchase household essential items. Lynne "I am so happy and very comfortable in my new safe area, I did not expect to be housed and given vouchers thank you so much."