

STREETSMART

ACTION AGAINST HOMELESSNESS

**StreetSmart Collective
May 2017 Grants
Impact Report**

APRIL 2018

In May 2017 through a partnership between Australian Communities Foundation and StreetSmart Australia eight 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

\$105,500 funding provided

8 Projects Funded

IMPACT

5 people assisted with professional & personal development

All women & kids living in a refuge now have access to a playground

34 women now ready for work and supported on leaving prison

Over 400 women and children fleeing domestic violence, every year, are much safer

26 women & 46 children helped into housing

49 children & young people helped with education, housing and personal needs

312 young people given legal advice

35 women given access to wellness program

Council to Homeless Persons

\$15,000 Peer Education and Support Program Personal and Professional Development Project – 2017 completed (\$3539 remaining will be allocated to extra training for the new PESP team.)

IMPACT 5 PESP graduates were supported to improve their professional and personal lives

“This support has been instrumental in providing opportunities for PESP members to continue on their life journey and build on the experiences and learnings from their time as PESP team members.”

The Peer Education and Support Program (PESP) is a volunteer program of the Victorian Homelessness Peak Body, the Council to Homeless Persons (CHP). PESP provides people who have experienced homelessness with the opportunity to develop personally and professionally and improve the homelessness service system by informing government policy, working with services on improving outcomes for consumers and providing community education.

In 2014 CHP commissioned an evaluation of the PESP by an independent researcher. One of the findings of this evaluation stated: “The priority for future modifications to the PESP program should be given to enhancing the transition experience for Graduates at the end of the two year program to ensure that the significant benefits for individuals



and the sector continue once they have finished their term with the PESP.” As a result of this finding, an important focus of the PESP has been to enable investment in the transition experience for Graduates.

The StreetSmart Grant in 2017 provided us with the opportunity to significantly build on the PESP Professional and Personal Development project. The project aims to enhance the personal and professional development of the PESP members, build their skills and knowledge, build resilience, protect them from becoming homeless again and increase their opportunities for future employment.

CHP is extremely grateful for the wonderful support from StreetSmart Australia.

Case Studies – PESP Professional Development Program

Christine

Christine is a mother of a teenage girl and a qualified Art Therapist. She has not practiced her profession since she experienced homelessness, however identified this as a key personal and professional goal.

Through the program Christine was supported to purchase a car. Having a car that runs well means that Christine is now able to transport art materials to classes she runs as an Art Therapist. She is also able to run her daughter around to activities, see friends and go on outings, which is positive for their relationship. The funding also allowed Christine to pay for her daughter's school fees, a cost she always finds difficult to pay for, and a Bluetooth speaker.

“Without this extra funding I would not have been able to purchase a reliable, good working car. Music plays an important role in Art Therapy settings which I am registered and qualified as. I now have hope for my future, for my career and my relationship with my daughter. Thank you everyone.”

Trevor

Trevor is a student of filmmaking and digital media. He has pursued his education through his experience of homelessness and continued at university through his time with the PESP program. His goal is to become a filmmaker and produce content, including about homelessness.

With the support of the program Trevor purchased a laptop and public liability insurance which he needed for his work making films.

“Importantly this money paid for public liability insurance and equipment insurance for 2017/18. I also bought a new laptop, important for video production, which is what I now do. It allowed me to send in for corporate jobs, providing some income. This support allowed me to step forward into the audio/video industry making videos that many people have now seen. I am now a “producer of digital content”. Important is that I’m continuing to study a Bachelor of Screen Media. I am now running a YouTube channel with many people watching each weekly episode. StreetSmart funding is Awesome!”

Elizabeth Morgan House Aboriginal Women's Services Inc.

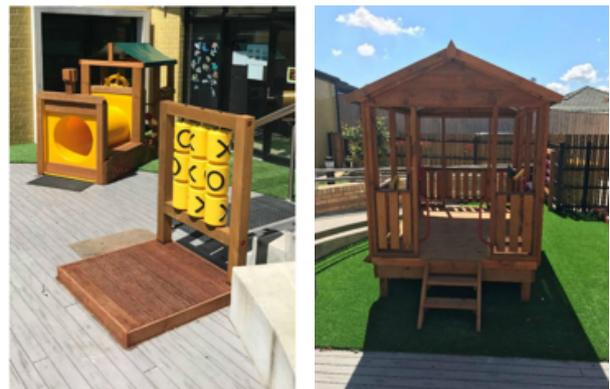
\$20,000 EMH New Playground – Completed
IMPACT All Women and Children residing at the refuge utilize this area and will for years to come

“The playground has not only given the children somewhere safe to hang out we have found that the mothers / carers use the space more and are getting together to support each other and are building relationships.”

Elizabeth Morgan House Aboriginal Women's Service Inc. (EMH) is the peak body for Aboriginal women in Victoria as well as being a peak body responding to Family Violence. EMH provide safe and secure accommodation as well as support and counselling services to Aboriginal women and their children.

Allowing children to play, especially through a traumatic period is essential to their short and long-term wellbeing. For some-time the team at EMH had wanted to update the refuge backyard into a safe play area, encouraging kids and mums to get outside, relax, smile, laugh, socialise and make friends.

Prior to the redevelopment EMH's outdoor space was just a BBQ area, a sandpit and a lot of cemented areas. The space wasn't utilized much.



With the support of StreetSmart and matched funders EMH were able to dream big and update the outdoor and children's play area to be safe and educational. We were also able to create a great working relationship with Aaron's Outdoor, when we told them why we were doing this project and that the new playground would be going at our family violence crisis accommodation centre, the owners offered us a better deal with the price.

“All families who have been through the centre find the space inviting and the kids enjoy being outside and enjoy being a kid again.”

Fitted for Work

\$15,000 Female Offenders Ready to Work Program
– Completed

**IMPACT 34 Women helped with employment training,
and support, prior to exiting prison**

“Since leaving prison I have worked my way up to having full time work as an office helper and warehouse manager. I am so grateful for having a second chance and to be able to work alongside wonderful people that understand my situation.”

The Female Offenders Ready to Work Program is designed to assist women exiting prison in Victoria to transition into sustainable employment.

38 women, within 6 months of their release date from the prison system in Victoria, participated in this program. These women are some of the most disadvantaged, vulnerable and marginalised individuals in our society. Research indicates that women exiting prison face multiple barriers in achieving a successful reintegration into the community, with high levels of homelessness. One of the most important factors determining success is financial independence through employment.

The program is delivered through intensive face to face sessions over 7-8 weeks, culminating in a job skills expo. This is followed by linkages to Fitted for Work’s existing suite of services and the continuation of resume, mock interview and outfitting support post release.

This program is multi-faceted with its primary focus being to help each woman gain the skills and confidence she needs to prepare for sustainable employment. Recidivism rates are reduced for those women that can secure employment and regain their place within their families and the community. Currently services that link pre and post release support options targeted at self-esteem, confidence building, wellbeing and employment readiness are lacking.

98% of participants who completed the program report increased self-confidence, job interview readiness, social inclusion and an awareness of further training and employment pathways available to them.

As a result of this grant we have been able to secure additional funding from Clayton Utz and an application is currently pending with the Melbourne Women’s Network. We have also been invited to talk with RE Ross Trust to review the last 2 years of The Prison Program and design a proposal for future funding. DPFC have since requested an additional 2 programs per year as a result of the consistently positive feedback from participants.

Case Studies – Fitted For Work

Kirsty

Kirsty enrolled to participate in our prison program. While she showed up on time for the first couple of classes, she often lacked focus and was disruptive in class. In a group discussion she shared that she had lost her partner and good friend in a car accident while she was in prison and as a result she had given up hope for a positive future. She felt she had nothing to live for. It became apparent to the facilitator that Kirsty's behaviour was due to an inability to process the pain and trauma the accident had caused her.

The following week Kirsty shared she also had a child. Kirsty was able to engage in a conversation about the role model she was providing for her child and expressed to the group that she did, more than anything, want to be a good role model in the future.

The group was very supportive and the next week Kirsty turned up with a completely different attitude wanting to set a good example for her daughter. As the program progressed she continued to be attentive and focused on thinking about her future. Kirsty completed the program and her sentence in August 2017.

Julie

Julie completed our Transition to Work program 6 weeks prior to exiting prison. After her release, Julie referred herself into our outfitting service and resume & mock interview hub. While at Fitted for Work she spoke about the difficulties she was having integrating back into the community. Her mother saw her criminal conviction as a black mark on the family name and forbade her to talk about it. This made explaining to family friends the reason behind her disappearance and leaving her children with her mother very difficult. This greatly added to the stress she was already feeling.

These words of thanks come directly from Julie and illustrate the difference a program like this can make in a woman's life.

“Since leaving prison I have worked my way up to having full time work as an office helper and warehouse manager. I am so grateful for having a second chance and to be able to work alongside wonderful people that understand my situation. I would like to say thank you to the people who have helped me through this program, for their generosity and care at a time when I was at rock bottom. I am so grateful for your help.” Love Julie

Safe Futures Foundation

\$14,500 Security for Women and Children – Completed
IMPACT Over 400 women and children fleeing domestic violence, each year, are much safer

“The CCTV and security upgrades have totally transformed our service. The generosity and humility of donors and their desire to change people lives for the good never ceases to amaze us.”

Safe Futures Foundation provides a range of services to women, children and young people who have experienced control abuse and violence from a family member. Our clients, both women and children come to us experiencing high levels of trauma. We can have an intake with a mum who is pregnant or have a new-born, we can house mums with toddlers, school age children and teenagers. We may have a mum with 7 children or a mum with 1 child. We have young mums, middle aged women and we can even have women that are ageing and are victims of elder abuse. They all have 4 things in common, they are homeless and have been either exposed to or have experienced family/domestic violence, and their levels of trauma are very high, and they need our help.

For a number of years we have had an antiquated security system that was costly to have monitored and it did not provide us with the security required for our family violence refuges. It failed to record

live feed and we could not retrieve footage when required. We simply did not have sufficient funds to have the system upgraded. Through this project Safe Futures upgraded to CCTV systems at 2 sites, replaced alarm systems at 2 sites, and replaced swipe access to 1 site.

Having the new system with the cameras, screens and alarms brings a great sense of security and comfort.

Just recently we had an issue at our refuge with some movement in the evening. Staff were not on site at that time. As soon as staff were made aware of the incident we called our monitoring company. They came quickly and back tracked and downloaded the footage that was required to address that incident.

Due to a lack of funding we had this project on hold for some time. We now realise that we were not as safe as we thought. Previously we did not have the capacity to go back over footage nor record live feed and we didn't have an 'eye' on the coming and goings of people onsite both our locations. There is a saying that you don't know what you're missing out on unless you've already tried or had it. That is so true for us.

WISHIN- Women's Information Support & Housing in the North

\$16,000 Making a House a Home Project
– ongoing for another 6 months

IMPACT To date – 26 women and 46 children have been assisted into housing (62% of women identified as being Culturally and Linguistically diverse)

“Thanks to the amazing support we really are able to help Make a House a Home for women and children who have been homeless. Every day through your generosity we see the difference that a safe and affordable home makes.”

WISHIN is a small social change organisation that supports single women and their children who are homeless, at risk of homelessness and/or experiencing family violence. The Making a House a Home Project, initially funded by StreetSmart in 2016 has been an integral component of success in supporting women and children transitioning to affordable housing. Through providing small, individualised funding packages women are assisted to establish new, safe and sustainable tenancies in situations where other funding options do not exist.

The project has provided furniture, removalist fees, bin hire, food vouchers, linen and other bedding, whitegoods and small electrical appliances, cooking and kitchen supplies and connection of utilities. With this funding in place women can accept offers of housing through support with bond, moving costs and utilities connection. They are able to establish new tenancies with the basic household goods they require and start their new tenancies without the burden of debt and the ongoing stress this creates.

The program has been in action since 2016 and we have been able to identify a number of longer-term outcomes of the project including;

- Ability to maintain secure, affordable, independent housing
- Increased resilience and sense of personal capacity
- Improved relationships between women and their children
- Reduction in financial hardship

Wombat Housing and Support Services

\$14,000 Project Opportunity – Ongoing
IMPACT To date - 49 children and young people assisted

“This grant enabled many of our young clients to access activities, experiences and educational tools they would not ordinarily have the opportunity to engage with. This financial assistance has already made a considerable impact on the lives of the children and young people who we support.”

Wombat Housing & Support Services work with people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in the inner western suburbs of Melbourne. We currently support 84 young people, aged 16- 24, as well as families with around 80-100 children at any one time. These clients include those leaving care, those exiting the youth justice system, those from a culturally and linguistically diverse background and many with a history of trauma and abuse.

The majority of our clients have limited income and support networks. The experience of homelessness can mean that their education is often disrupted, as well as their connection to the wider community. This grant enabled many of our young clients to access activities, experiences and educational tools they would not ordinarily have the opportunity to engage with. This financial assistance has already made a considerable impact on the lives of the children and young people that we support. Support has been directed to two areas of need:

Phones & Moving In packages (\$6,000) with the money going towards household goods to assist with establishing successful tenancies and phones



to enable engagement with workers and support networks. (\$3,499 spent to date).

Education and activities (\$8,000) encompassing school/education supplies and expenses, driving lessons and tests, recreation opportunities, steps towards independence etc. (\$4,022 spent to date).

So far, these funds have assisted 49 children and young people. As the new school year has just commenced, we expect that the remainder of the funding will predominantly be allocated to education costs. Feedback from one of our Youth Case Workers:

“I moved my client into her new transitional property from a youth refuge. Funds were used to do a big shop at the beginning of the tenancy. **Deanne** enjoys cooking very much and the funding allowed us to buy a lot of vegetables from the Footscray Market to get her started, as well as other household essentials like cleaning products. It’s important to give these young people a good start and set them up for success with their tenancy.”

“**Rania** did not have any identification which is an issue that causes a lot of difficulties for many disadvantaged young people. Funding has been used to help Rania obtain key pass identification which makes life much easier and enables access to services and support.”

Youth Law

\$17,000 Creating Positive Futures – to May 2018
IMPACT 312 young people assisted

“StreetSmart understands our work. We love that they support small organisations like ours. They are willing to fund our everyday work that is so vital, rather than requiring us to jump through hoops & come up with unique and new projects as do so many other funders... They are, we know, committed to improving the lives of struggling young people.”

The young people we assist are largely invisible to the community. They have usually dropped out of school, find it difficult to obtain & maintain employment & often turn in on themselves through drug addiction and self-harm. They have legal problems, often associated with being homeless this includes fines, debts and low level criminal offending. They have often been victims of abuse at home and are very vulnerable on the streets.

Not dealing with their legal issues impacts on their mental health and can burden them with lifelong debt, a criminal record & continued mistreatment. They don't know where to get help and rarely deal with their legal issues. All young people assisted were already screened by Frontyard Youth services as being highly vulnerable.

The Project provided funding for 2 afternoon legal clinics for 12 months. These clinics took place at Frontyard Youth Services in the Melbourne CBD. From 18 April 2017 to 23rd February 2018 we assisted 624 young people under 25, attending our frontline clinics. The grant effectively allowed us to assist 312 of these young people.

This grant also contributed to our capacity to embark on a new court based service at Melbourne Magistrates Court which has high numbers of vulnerable young people attending for court. A model was developed for identifying & assisting young people between 18 and 24 who are homeless or highly vulnerable, allowing us to now take this to funders for support.

Youth Projects – Living Room

\$10,000 Women's Wellness Program

IMPACT 35 women have attended the group, Ages; 17-55, Housing Status; Homeless, boarding houses, crisis accommodation, housed - isolated

“This grant has enable Youth Projects to deliver a safe space for female clients to come regularly and engage in activities and be supported by other females. The program reconnects clients who are isolated or disenfranchised and provides glimpses of hope.”

The Living Room is part of Youth Projects and provides free healthcare and support to improve the physical, mental and social wellbeing of individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, disadvantaged or marginalised, with complex healthcare needs.

There are approximately 144 registered female clients at The Living Room, but these numbers are often not seen in terms of women actually coming in to the centre for support. This project was aimed at addressing this problem by providing some sessions that recognise the unique experiences of women who are experiencing homelessness and through this we have been better able to meet their needs and aid them in their recovery. Attendance has increased through the year with positive outcomes across the group.

Working in both an in-house and outreach capacity, the Women's Wellness Program included a monthly

women-only drop in clinic with female health specialists, food and peer support, as well as some groups and sessions, informed by what the women have said they would like. Some of the women we work with have been victimised or abused alongside experiencing homelessness and are experiencing trauma, some have found themselves involved in sex-work in order to survive, many have low confidence, and some do not feel safe when on the streets.

Unsurprisingly, some of the activities women have suggested included self-defence, exercise classes and yoga. Other suggestions have focused on health and beauty, creativity, and sessions that tap into the senses. Activities boosted self-esteem, provide access to health care and opportunities to develop themselves and their friendships.

The program provided female clients a safe space to explore new interests and make new connections. The program was mindful of working holistically to allow high risk, vulnerable women to empower them by offering female directed activities and options of additional support. Client numbers grew and client positive outcomes with housing and wellbeing were noted by staff.

The program also allowed staff to connect with other services specialists such as Co-Health and Ozanam Community Centre and was also an effective platform to invite private companies to support programs at Youth Projects eg Silent Arrow.

May 2017 Community Grants

These Lead Grants were part of a larger Community Grants program funding 60 projects.

StreetSmart grants went to support projects local to restaurants who participated in DineSmart 2016, funding a wide variety of responses to homelessness including **St Kilda Gatehouse** operations to support women in crisis, **The Social Studio** to buy new

equipment for their fashion social enterprise, **CareVan** in Albury to purchase vital winter supplies for their food van, **Guthrie House** to refurbish their client living area, **Big Issue Sydney** to provide a weekly vendor breakfast and **Essential4Women** to provide period packs to womens refugees.

State	No. of Grants	Grant Amount
VIC	37	\$ 225,100
NSW	13	\$ 47,500
QLD	6	\$ 13,905
SA	4	\$ 13,653
TOTAL	60	\$ 300,158

The StreetSmart Collective initiative is the most recent of a number of successful StreetSmart projects which together have now raised and distributed over \$5 million to support 554 local community organisations nationwide and 1584 of their projects. During 2017 StreetSmart, through our CafeSmart, DineSmart, StreetFunder and Collective initiatives empowered the community 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

To discuss details of how you can partner through the Collective, StreetFunder or our campaigns, please contact CEO/Founder Adam Robinson on 0488 336419 or adam@streetsmartaustralia.org.

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