

## From the CEO

In this update, we highlight the terrific projects recently approved for funding under the Grants to End Homelessness program and Social Justice Small Grants program. Each project has the potential to create lasting change for people facing disadvantage in communities across Australia. We also share some outstanding results from our current grant recipients.

Home in a Box turns ten this year and with your support, we have helped create a welcoming home for more than 500 families and individuals who have spent many months, sometimes years, without a home. Read more about this practical and greatly appreciated program on the back page.

Thank you for your continuing support of the Mercy Foundation. Your support not only provides us with much encouragement, it enables us to fund more projects to end homelessness and help more families and individuals restart their lives, after the devastating experience of homelessness.

*With much gratitude,  
Sue Mowbray*

## Share Housing for Older Women

In response to the difficulties encountered by women over 55 years in accessing affordable housing, a group called Action on Housing for Older Women (AHOW) was formed on the Central Coast NSW, to investigate housing options for this cohort. AHOW was awarded a Grant to End Homelessness to facilitate older women into safe, shared private rentals with other like-minded women.

The SHOW (Share Housing for Older Women) project team consulted with women over 55, community service organisations, real estate agencies, the housing sector, women's groups and other stakeholders. From these consultations, SHOW developed a model for share housing and a resource kit.

The SHOW team recommended that a Managed Share House Living Model be adopted by Specialist Housing Services to manage the entire process and provide follow up support. The Resource Kit provides information about share house arrangements, the pros and cons of tenancy options, ground-rules for share house living, a template for a formal share house agreement and a list of support services.

The project offers great potential for women over 55 years in need of affordable housing. The project was launched in June and the details are available on our website: [www.mercyfoundation.com.au](http://www.mercyfoundation.com.au)



## Lighthouse Foundation: Young Women's Freedom Program

A Grant to End Homelessness was awarded to the Lighthouse Foundation for the Young Women's Freedom Program (YWFP) to support young women who are survivors of modern slavery.

Lighthouse's holistic approach recognises the complex trauma survivors face and works to build resilience and self-esteem. In addition to a home and access to education and employment, the YWFP program offers live-in therapeutic carers, counselling, legal assistance and medical services. By addressing immediate needs and overcoming barriers, the YWFP empowers survivors to escape exploitative situations.

Since its establishment in October 2018, YWFP has served 17 women aged 16-28, with diverse cultural backgrounds. Of these, nine have successfully exited the program, while eight are still receiving support.

*Mercy Foundation's grant funding has been instrumental in supporting Lighthouse Foundation's Young Women's Freedom Program and our mission to combat modern slavery and provide essential services to survivors.*

*Susan Barton AO - Founder, Lighthouse Foundation*





# Grants to End Homelessness

**The Mercy Foundation's Grants to End Homelessness program focuses on ending homelessness for women, women with children or individuals experiencing chronic homelessness.**

**We congratulate the recipients of the 2023 Grants to End Homelessness program:**

## **Tiny Homes Foundation Zero Cost Garden Flat Housing Initiative for women over 55 years**

Women over 55 years are at risk of experiencing homelessness if they are living on a low income and relying on the private rental market. A grant was awarded to Tiny Homes Foundation to pilot an innovative housing model designed to meet the housing needs of this particular group of women. If successful, this project will create a replicable model with an opportunity for expansion on the Central Coast of NSW.

## **Immigrant Women's SpeakOut Association NSW: New Horizons project**

Employment is key to alleviating poverty and in turn homelessness, with additional benefits of improved self-worth and wellbeing. This pilot project will enable migrant women, who are survivors of abuse or trauma, to break the cycle of poverty and become financially independent. The project will help women develop new skills through study opportunities, prepare and assist them in finding employment, help build supportive networks and connect them to support services in their communities.

## **Centre for Disability Studies: Developing an inclusive workforce**

Research shows that people with intellectual disability have difficulties exiting homelessness and that frontline staff in the homelessness and housing sectors could better respond to their needs. This project is aimed at strengthening the workforce capability of staff in these sectors in supporting people with intellectual disability out of homelessness.

The project will provide more effective and tailored supports that will help people with intellectual disability to exit homelessness and have the appropriate supports in place in their new home.

## **The Pregnancy and Homelessness Coalition: New Beginnings project**

The New Beginnings project will help transform the healthcare, social and housing support systems for pregnant women and their

infants who are experiencing homelessness. Evidence shows that unstable housing and homelessness undermines women's ability to access healthcare, particularly pregnancy care. This creates both immediate and long-lasting harm to women and their child's health and wellbeing.

Pregnancy offers a critical window of opportunity for early intervention to improve the outcomes for young women and their children, to lift them out of adversity and deprivation and ultimately given them the best possible start to family life.

## **Property Industry Foundation: Haven Shepparton**

Haven House Shepparton (The Nest) is a partnership between the Property Industry Foundation, Women's Property Initiatives and The Bridge Youth Services, to build three homes where young mums can live independently with their child or children.

This project will change the lives of young women and their children, providing a stable home and supportive place for them to begin parenthood and the children to start their lives.

## **Project Update: Safe Homes for women and children seeking asylum**

A Grant to End Homelessness was awarded to Bridge for Asylum Seekers for the Safe Homes Project. This project enables single women and women with children who are seeking asylum to enter into private rental agreements, often for the first time in Australia. This enables them to have safe housing while they await their visa decision.

The provision of bond assistance and 2-weeks rent in advance helps alleviate the burden of upfront rental costs and plays a critical role in supporting the housing needs of people seeking asylum, facilitating their integration, stability, and well-being in a new country.

Since the project started, 10 applicants, representing 24 individuals, have secured safe and stable housing as they start their lives in Australia.





# Social Justice Small Grants

**The Mercy Foundation is committed to social justice and structural change to create greater social equity and inclusion in Australia. The Social Justice Small Grants program provides seed funding for projects that are developed and implemented locally to bring about lasting change for disadvantaged and marginalized members in communities across Australia.**

## **Wombats Wish: Grief camp for children**

This project funds a weekend grief camp for children and young people after the domestic violence murder of a parent or carer. Specialised psychologists and social workers will facilitate the camp to fully support complex needs and support will continue to be available after the camp.

## **Prison Fellowship NSW: Community transition support for released female prisoners**

This project will assist women leaving prison to successfully transition back into the community and prevent re-offending. As many female prisoners are also victims of violence, access to services and community connections to protect them from violent situations will also be provided.

## **Strong Mothers: Healing of trauma for Aboriginal Mothers**

This new project provides support to pregnant Aboriginal women, Aboriginal mothers and their infants in the first years of life to heal past, intergenerational and present trauma. The project will be located in outlying areas of Sydney and rural areas. The program works with Aboriginal Health Workers, offers case work and nutritional support for young mothers and their infants.

## **Bidi Koorliny: Bidi Warkoolin Restorative Peer Process**

The Bidi Warkoolin (meaning “moving forward”) project aims to develop a community driven and owned restorative peer process. The culturally relevant restorative justice element aims to increase social equity and reduce poverty by challenging unjust systems, the most affected being women and children.

## **Women’s Resource Service: Women’s Support Circle**

The Women’s Resource Service is a specialist domestic and family violence service operating in Northern NSW. Floods, fires and the pandemic have doubled the number of referrals to the service. This project will provide face-to-face trauma informed support for women survivors of family and domestic violence.

## **Her Space: Well-being and mental health recovery program for women survivors of modern slavery**

This program involves holistic case management, psychoeducation, brief interventions and individual counselling tailored to the unique health needs of women survivors of modern slavery in Australia.

## **Eritrean Families Hume and North (Vic): The Jabana Project**

The Jabana project builds upon a deep-rooted tradition in the Eritrean culture, which is the coffee ceremony. The coffee ceremony encourages women to share stories and build supportive networks in an informal, traditional setting.

## **Gallipoli Turkish Cultural Foundation: Love without violence**

This program is designed to promote healthy relationships and prevent domestic and family violence with young CALD couples in Western Sydney.

## **Manufactured Home Owners Association Vic. Inc.**

This new initiative will promote, maintain and safeguard the rights of elderly residents experiencing abuse, living in manufactured home villages throughout Victoria.

## **YCW Victoria: Confronting violence in solidarity**

Youth Food Project is an interactive program for young people across the Brimbank area. The program offers a safe space for young women to discuss issues of discrimination, relationships and violence, employment, cost of living and education.

## **RACS: Refugee women at risk**

This project provides refugee women and girls, or those identifying as women, who are experiencing or fearing domestic, gender-based or family violence with access to free, confidential legal advice on visa related issues.





# Celebrating 10 years of Mercy Foundation's Home in a Box



Thanks to your support, this year the Mercy Foundation celebrates 10 years of providing Home in a Box, helping families and individuals to set up a home after a long experience of homelessness.

Home in a Box provides everyday items such as crockery, cutlery, sheets, towels, doonas, pillows, kitchen utensils, a saucepan and frypan, a toaster and a kettle.

Since inception, we have helped establish a warm and welcoming home for over 500 households. The success of this project is due to the dedication and commitment of the service workers, who help people who are chronically homeless find permanent homes and support them to address any challenges that may arise as they restart their lives.

The adjustment from homelessness to living in a home is much more difficult than we can imagine. Homelessness is a traumatising experience, particularly when it is experienced over a considerable period of time.

*Thank you for your support that has enabled us to meet the growing need, helping more families and individuals to settle into their home and restart their lives.*

*In the last four months, 50 Homes in Boxes have been provided to chronically homeless families and individuals. Recipients include:*

- A woman in her 60's who was homeless after leaving a relationship where she experienced domestic violence.
- A 40 year old Aboriginal man who was homeless for 2 years, who is now reunited with his teenage daughter.
- A young Aboriginal woman who was sleeping rough for 4 months.
- A single mother and her daughter who were homeless for 3 years.
- A man who has experienced homelessness since 2015, and sleeping rough for the past two years.
- A pregnant Aboriginal woman in her late 30's, who was homeless for most of her life.
- A 76 year old woman with mobility issues who was couch surfing for many months.

Thank you to our Home in a Box partners:



We are very grateful for your support of Home in a Box, which has helped provide a warm and welcoming home for mums with children and many individuals who have experienced the trauma of homelessness.



**Yes, I would like to help bring about an end to homelessness.**

**Donation Amount**  (donations over \$2 are tax deductible) A tax deductible receipt will be mailed to you.

Name:

Address:

(Please tick) Cheque ☐ Money Order ☐ Master Card ☐ Visa ☐

Card Number:                 Expiry Date:  /

Cardholder's Name:  Signature:

Post this form to Mercy Foundation, 40 Rocklands Road Crows Nest NSW 2065.

You can also donate by phone 02 9911 7390 or online via secure website [www.mercyfoundation.com.au](http://www.mercyfoundation.com.au) and click the Donations tab.

Thank you for your support, it is greatly appreciated.

