

From the CEO

Despite the challenges of the housing crisis and the increasing cost of living, there are good news stories to share. The Immigrant Women SpeakOut Association (SpeakOut) in Sydney is achieving remarkable results in ending homelessness. A Grant to End Homelessness was awarded to SpeakOut to support migrant women living in crisis accommodation who have experienced domestic violence, have no financial support and limited English skills, to become financially independent and break the cycle of poverty and homelessness.

With one-on-one, culturally specific support from a dedicated caseworker, SpeakOut helps women leaving abuse to address the trauma of their past. SpeakOut offers assistance with preparing resumes, job search, interview coaching, financial counselling, skills development, English language support, personal styling and more.

The Work Placement and Support Officer has developed relationships with potential employers and provides individualised support to these women. Collaborations with Dress for Success, TAFE, Macquarie Uni, Vinnies' and other organisations have created new opportunities and pathways.

So far, 19 women have been assisted, seven women have secured employment and one woman has set up her own business. Eight women have moved into long term housing.

Staff noted a marked increase in women's confidence and outlook on life as they start to envision a new future. We congratulate SpeakOut for their efforts in ending homelessness and the positive change they are bringing to women's lives.

Sue Mowbray



Inspiring brighter futures

A Social Justice Small Grant awarded to Inspiring Brighter Futures Foundation (IBFF) has helped female students develop self-esteem and self-belief, and reimagine a brighter future for themselves. The grant enabled IBFF to deliver a culturally responsive version of the 'Onwards and Upwards' wellbeing and mentoring program to groups of Year 8 culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) females in a Queensland High School.

A group of ten female students participated in the program, learning valuable skills to develop a mental tool kit to help them tackle their unique life challenges such as prejudice, discrimination, social disconnect and lacking a sense of belonging.

During the delivery of this project, it was noted that inequality and reduced access to education and job opportunities are social justice issues many young female CALD students face. The program aimed to support and empower students in building self-esteem and in the development of their identity, as well as mentoring and leadership skills to enable them to negotiate better outcomes in their lives.

Feedback from this transformational project was very positive, with participants rating the program as 'rewarding' or 'highly rewarding', and recommending the project to other young CALD women.

Thank you to the Mater Hospital Sydney and the Sisters of Mercy

Thank you to all our generous donors and supporters of the Mercy Foundation, especially to our major donors, the Mater Hospital Sydney and the Sisters of Mercy North Sydney. Your support gives us much encouragement and enables us to increase our impact to end and prevent homelessness and disadvantage across Australia.



L: Sunila Kotwal, Executive Officer R: Amelia Chadwick, Work Placement and Support Officer, Immigrant Women SpeakOut Association



Ending Homelessness

Mercy Foundation's Grants to End Homelessness program provides seed funding for community initiatives that will end and prevent homelessness, especially where women are concerned. We congratulate the recipients of the 2024 Grants to End Homelessness program.

WA Alliance to End Homelessness - Permanent & Supportive Housing Model Development will accelerate efforts to reduce chronic homelessness by developing a demand model and illustrate the cost benefit of providing housing and support for people experiencing chronic homelessness.

Prison Network - A Pathway from Prison to Permanent Housing will address the barriers women face when released from prison. Tailored support and assistance in moving into permanent housing will also create a successful model of housing post-incarceration.

Northern Community Legal Centre - Safe Steps to Legal Rights and Permanent Housing will establish a partnership with family violence crisis accommodation services to ensure swift access to legal assistance to prevent homelessness for women leaving a violent relationship.

Canberra Communities - Art Therapy program is an intensive therapeutic tool addressing the underlying complex mental health needs of people experiencing chronic homelessness and assist them to sustain a tenancy.

Lighthouse Foundation - Resettle Project will provide support and essential furnishings for a renovated home for young women escaping forced or early marriage in Victoria, where survivors can heal and move toward independent living.

Uniting WA - The Together Program supports pregnant women and young mothers who are homeless. Tailored support and secure housing will enhance the health and wellbeing of mother and baby, reduce the risk of child removal and significantly improve their long term outcomes.

Older Women's Network Blue Mountains NSW - The Homes for Older Women Project will help women over 55 years in the Blue Mountains who face housing insecurity and homelessness. The program will connect women with homeowners who have suitable, long term accommodation available for rent at an affordable price. *Update: Three women are now placed in homes with leases in place. After the project launch, the team received 30 EOIs from home providers offering homes to women.*

Sisters of Charity Foundation - Modern Slavery Transitional Housing Program provides survivors of modern slavery with accommodation and tailored support to assist them in their recovery and sustaining a tenancy.

House of Welcome - Women's Pathway Out Package directly addresses the barriers to housing faced by refugee women and women seeking asylum through the delivery of an intensive, wraparound model and safe and stable housing. The program includes mentorship, education and employment pathways.

The Right to Housing - Homelessness is a gross violation of human rights. In ratifying the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, all levels of government are obliged to respect, protect and fulfil the right AND use all possible resources to end homelessness. Everyone has the right to a safe, secure, affordable home, a place to live in peace, dignity and security.



Launch night of the Homes for Older Women Project in the Blue Mountains L – R: Heather Shepherd, HOW committee member, Trish Doyle, Member for Blue Mountains, Susan Templeman, Member for Macquarie, Christine Killinger, OWN member, Bronwen Johnston, Chair OWN Blue Mountains, and HOW committee member, Coralie Faye, Secretary OWN Blue Mountains.

Social Justice Small Grants

The Mercy Foundation is committed to social justice and structural change to create greater social equity and inclusion in Australia. Congratulations to the Social Justice Small Grants recipients for 2024.

Bidi Koorliny Aboriginal Corporation - Waangki Moorkar provides training for Elders and Respected Persons who will be involved in the Bidi Warkoolin Restorative Peer Service, to facilitate culturally appropriate restorative justice interventions. (WA)

Food is Free - Deadly Sprouts will engage First Nations children and families in gardening and nature play sessions, deeply connected to Country and culture, delivered by First Nations Women. (VIC)

(It's no) drama ltd - Dance of the Leaves is an inclusive art project in regional Victoria that brings together artists and participants from diverse and marginalised backgrounds to create a community performance, whilst building community relationships and connection to place. (VIC)

Lachlan and Western Regional Services - Beyond the Barriers provides transport, accommodation and other essentials for students to complete work experience outside of Condobolin, to help address the socio-economic and systemic disadvantage that young people living in geographical isolation experience. (NSW)
Funded by the Cath Leary Social Justice Foundation.

Lead Connect - iShine supporting disadvantaged women from CALD backgrounds who have overseas qualifications or experience but face barriers to entering the Australian workforce. (NSW)

Welfare Rights Centre - First Nations Domestic Violence and Centrelink Community Services Workshops. (NSW)

Australian Youth Climate Coalition - Darwin Youth Climate Justice Training Summit building the skills and confidence of young people to make a difference on climate change and prepare action plans. (NT)

Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project - Opportunities for respite for women asylum seekers. (VIC)

Lovewell Foundation - Seed2Succeed Initiative helps women who have established a small business to grow their business. Funding will set up a microloan system and the loan will be repaid without interest, enabling another woman to grow her business and build independence. (QLD)

Aboriginal Literacy Fund - ASPIRE Literacy Program for Aboriginal Girls. (VIC)

Agape Outreach - Counselling support for women with complex needs. (NSW)

Asylum Seekers Centre - Early intervention and care for mothers seeking asylum. (NSW)

Prison Fellowship Australia - Women's Safe Space, support for Aboriginal women with a partner in prison. (WA)

HerSpace - HerPathway providing ongoing outreach and support for survivors of modern slavery. (VIC)

Western Districts Netball Assoc. - Integrate Netball for young deaf netball players. (QLD)

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 families and individuals in communities across Australia.

Home in a Box - Broken Hill

In April the Salvation Army in Broken Hill contacted us about Home in a Box. There were six families living in a refuge, all due to move into their own home in the coming months. The only homewares they could afford were from the local second-hand store, where there was little to choose from. Thanks to St Vincent's Care Services, we were able to deliver Homes in Boxes to help each family and individual make their house a home.

The boxes also included backpacks, drink bottles, books, games and toiletries, thanks to Hockeys Real Estate, a local business who has supported the Mercy Foundation by running a Christmas Giving Tree over the past couple of years.

Over the last few years, the number of families and individuals assisted by this program has greatly increased. We have managed to meet the growing demand thanks to the generous support of the Sisters of Mercy North Sydney, the Mater Hospital Sydney, our many generous donors, suppliers and the dedication and commitment of service workers who work to house and support their clients. Thank you for your financial support that has enabled us to meet the growing need, helping more families and individuals to settle into their own home and restart their lives.



Justine Muller, Team Leader, Family Violence NSW/ACT, Salvation Army.



Home in a Box

With your generous assistance, Home in a Box has created a warm and welcoming home for more than 70 households this year!

Each box is bursting with high quality, brand new homewares to help create a home for families or individuals moving from homelessness into their own home.

Earlier this year, we received a number of hand crocheted and knitted rugs from the Knights of Malta Craft Group and a generous local resident. Their thoughtfully crafted creations have added a personal touch to each box.

Despite the housing crisis, housing workers continue to contact us with requests for previously homeless families and individuals moving into their own home. A snapshot of recent recipients include:

Recipients include:

- A woman in her 50's from a CALD background who experienced long term homelessness.
- A woman in her 40's who was homeless for 2 years, sleeping in her car.
- A family including three children with high needs, all aged under 6 years, homeless for 12 months.
- A man who has experienced homelessness since 2015, sleeping rough for the past two years.
- A pregnant Aboriginal woman in her late 30's, who was homeless for most of her life.



image from vecteezy.com



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 and click the Donations tab.

Thank you for your support, it is greatly appreciated.

