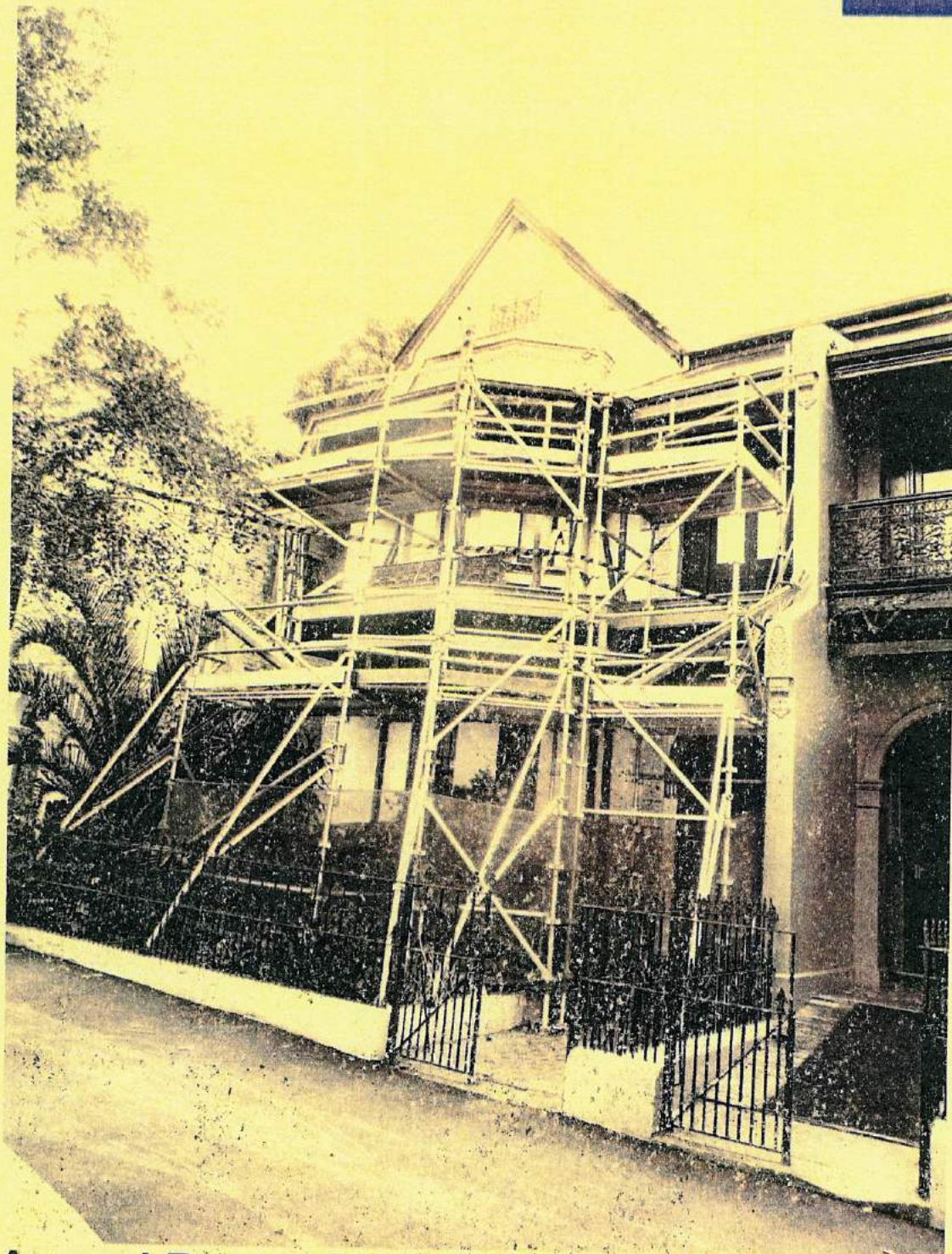


**Caretakers
Cottage Inc**



Annual Report 2009 - 2010

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Cover picture

Our building on Bondi Rd is now starting to benefit from some significant renovation.

CEO Report - Laurie Matthews

I am pleased to report that all of our funded programs are operating at full capacity having provided some 15,600 bed nights of accommodation during 2009 – 2010. The national homeless population remains at 105,000 of which 44,500 are aged under 21. This indicates that the incidence of homelessness has not diminished however, I can report that the issue of youth homelessness has remained high on the political agenda and continues to gain significant media coverage. The white paper on homelessness continues to be implemented with the roll out of the Commonwealth stimulus package and the development of the National Affordable Housing Agreement, which replaces the SAAP agreement. We have continued to work hard to develop our relationship with Minister Tanya Plibersek with a view to encouraging her department to broaden the funding of Reconnect programs, particularly in the Eastern Suburbs of Sydney.



Minister Tanya Plibersek at the launch of Homelessness Week at Bondi

As happens in the world of government our very supportive Minister Tanya Plibersek has moved portfolios subsequent to the August election, we wish her well and welcome Senator Mark Arbib who now holds the portfolios of youth and homelessness among others. We will be acquainting him with the need for more family support programs such as Reconnect and to ensure that the provision of adequate care for homeless young people is supported by appropriate casework support.

We will continue to promote a family reconciliation response as the most needed area of development in the field. At a State level we are pleased to see the expansion of Better Futures to include young adolescents up to 14 years.

All of our programs are particularly focused on building family ties and pleasingly this is becoming quite evident in the Out Of Home Care programs. Helping young people in our care to make the most of their often turbulent family relationships will hopefully pave the way for more manageable relationships in the future.

The organisation is currently going through a registration process to become a Community Housing Provider, this essentially means that we will be able to tender for Office of Community Housing properties in our own right whereas currently we

have to secure properties through the Capital Assistance Program, the private rental market or other Community Housing Organisations.



The Hon Tanya Plibersek, The Hon Paul Pearce The Hon Frank Terenzini, Stephen Lewis candidate for Wentworth At Bondi

We have been unsuccessful in our attempt to purchase new premises for the Entity program due to some administrative hurdles, the basis of our decision to purchase property has not changed as to date it has been necessary to pay commercial rent for a substandard property. Apart from needing more space than our rented house provides we will end up owning an asset when we get to purchase. This project will be reinitiated during 2010 – 2011.

As can be seen from the front cover of this report the Bondi Rd property has some long awaited renovations underway however, we have reached our maximum program capacity at this location and will need to secure additional premises should our programs expand.

Our accreditation to operate Out Of Home Care programs is now 5 years old so we are preparing to resubmit our credentials to the Office of the Children's Guardian for renewal. The OOHC field is currently subject to review as a crisis is looming due to there being 16,000 young people currently in care. This is an enormous challenge to government as the increasing demand must be met. I envisage a period of belt tightening in the OOHC sector though I continue to believe that this reactive response needs to become a more proactive preventative response.



The Hon Tanya Plibersek and The Hon David Borger Youth Homelessness Matters Day launch

Caretakers continues to be well represented in the wider community through participation on local government interagency, peak bodies and government advisory groups. It is important that we continue to develop these relationships as we have

experience and expertise that can inform our policy makers about the mechanisms that we have developed to positive effect for the young people and their families with whom we work.

Organisational development

My role as Executive Officer of the organisation and manager of Caretakers Cottage has been divided with a new position of Manager of the crisis refuge being created. This will enable for some better coordination of the services and more effective interaction in policy development in the wider field. Closer to home our systems for strategic planning and evaluation will be redeveloped with a view to building a strong organisation that is able to respond to the changing demands of our clients.



Launch of YOUR MOVE independent living book by counsellor Margret Woodsmith from Randwick Council

As we become a registered Community Housing Provide we will develop a property management capacity that can facilitate the expansion that our existing programs aspire. Currently we occupy some 11 properties.

An important step forward is the building of a website as this becomes the first point of contact for young people, their families, workers in the field and the wider community. We have a story to tell and information to impart that will be of value to those who wish to know what works well in our services and what services are available in the wider community.

Thanks

I am grateful to the team who took on the responsibility of management while I was hospitalised for a 6 weeks earlier in the year. Angie and Gay took on the much of the administration while Nick and Amanda provided a supportive steering role from Management. It was gratifying to return to work knowing that I could pick up where I had left off and to learn that many of the team were keen to take on additional responsibilities. We have a great organisation where a fantastic group of workers and supporters can come together for the good of the young people in our care.

Caretakers Cottage Report 2009 – 10

Caretakers Cottage is our short term crisis accommodation located in Bondi, the role of the service is to provide a safe place to stay whilst we assist through casework to address the issues that have lead to homelessness.

Young people

During the past year we have had a notable increase in the numbers of young people with significant behavioural concerns who are not connected to any other support services. It is all too common for parents to struggle through to adolescents and reach a point where they are too worn down to continue or just give up when they feel trapped, the subsequent rejection and alienation that can arise often leads to irreconcilable breakdown. This needs to be managed well with parents being offered planned respite and professional behaviour management support.

Similarly we are working with an increasing number of young people experiencing the emergence of major psychiatric conditions that indicate the need for appropriate long term supported care.

We have seen some great collaboration between Options Entity and Caretakers in providing transition for a number of young people to semi independent living. Joint holiday program activities and other events such as the launch of homelessness week, Youth Homelessness Matters Day and our combined Christmas dinner hosted by Johnson Executive have proved to be popular events.

The number of young people re-entering education and the workforce has grown during the past year, we have supported some young people to complete year 12. Our client group is becoming very much more multicultural with an increase of North African young people. One of the highlights of life at Caretakers is mealtime as a competitive air has developed between residents in this era of masterchef to prepare meals from their respective family backgrounds.

Under 16's and young people in the OOHC system continue to be accommodated at Caretakers however questions of who has parental responsibility continue to cause concern from simple issues such as signing permission slips for school excursions through to decision making on long term placements. This matter will continue to be aired this year through the Youth Accommodation Association, the Association of Child Welfare agencies and the Dept Community Services. It is hoped that a protocol between these agencies can be developed this year.

One of the consequences of the blurring of the lines between the refuge and Out Of Home Care sectors is that many of the medium and long term placements in Sydney are now congested with OOHC placements thus severely limiting the options for young people not in the OOHC system. Many of the caretakers crisis residents who are not in the care system lack the necessary skills to transition to independent housing and desperately need a supported living situation.

Aftercare

We need to develop our aftercare response as the demand for ongoing support from recent residents through to clients from 20 years ago continues to grow. It is gratifying on one level for clients to value their relationship with Caretakers sufficiently to seek us out however when we find that our clients are struggling with the pressures day to day life it is necessary to respond as a parent might when their independent children return for support and nurture. To this end we will be reviewing our procedure with a view to accommodating the demand for aftercare.

Great stories also emerge of young people who have gone on to great success including a young woman who struggled with drug addiction and abuse, who has gained a chef qualification and is now teaching hospitality on Palm Island.

Staffing

Our team has remained stable throughout the year enabling some great new developments. Paul has developed a relationship with Newtown Gym and regularly has to limit the number of young people participation on gym nights because it is so popular, Katherine is bravely taking residents off to the Trapeze School on Thursdays and Ben has assembled push bikes for supervised trail rides.

There is a renewed sense of enthusiasm in the team that has resulted in some great relationship growing between the team and young people. I think of our recent North African residents who had been very isolated prior to coming to Caretakers and now have a sense of belonging and a source of support that they trust and value.



Staff at a recent Australian Services Union meeting to discuss the implementation of a new award

Aspirations

Renovations to our building will make for a more comfortable environment in which to live and work, at this time plans have not been approved to complete our renovations so we will be working closely with the Office Of Community Housing to ensure a minimum of disruption and greater functionality of our building.

The number of parents and young people seeking counselling and other supports reinforces our belief that we need a Reconnect program in the Eastern Suburbs that can act before the breakup of families. Similarly a casework program through a program such as Better Futures or a completely new model of service to connect parents with the right support services to enable them to continue to care for their children.

Annual Report 2009-2010: Entity Out of Home Care Youth Service

Entity is a short to medium term service. However many of our clients become longer term due to a lack of services with the skills to manage our client base and a lack of funding/supports within the age bracket 12 -17yrs. Entity has the capacity to house up to four young people at a time. Child & Family Regional Unit Metro Central Intensive Support Services is still gate keeping all referrals that are sent to Entity. ISS usually remains involved through the process of the young persons stay. This will sometimes help minimise a young person's stay at Entity.

Client Overview:

- Entity received 19 referrals: 60% males and 40% female.
- Entity accommodated 9 young people through 2009 – 2010. All young people were successfully referred to NGO longer term placements.
- All young people residing at Entity had considerable mental health issues. Entity out sourced to mental health services and provided financial assistance when needed.
- A large percentage of young people residing at Entity had significant drug and alcohol issues. The majority of young people at Entity also presented with behavioural issues including highly aggressive behaviour.
- All young people received Full Medical, Dental & Eye Care and provided financial assistance when needed.
- Eight young people attend specialized schools or where supported through Distance Education.

Entity continues to offer outreach support to our young people after they leave Entity and well after they leave care with DoCS. Entity have had a significant role in creating & pushing for Leaving Care Plans to be developed for young people still in care, and some who have left care. Recently Entity has received calls from families of ex-residents requesting support and advice. Entity is not funded for outreach.

- Currently Entity is supporting eight young people in an outreach capacity.
- Three young people have requested support around leaving care plans.
- Four young people have requested support for obtaining housing. These young people have required support around obtaining leaving care plans from Community Services, financial support, referrals to accommodation services. This also included workers supporting the young people with doing research, making phone calls, completing and lodging forms.
- One young person experienced a mental health crisis, which required Entity staff to support her going to the mental health unit at St George Hospital for a week and a half. The young person then requested support when she returned home, which involved staff spending extra time with her and monitoring her wellbeing.
- Numerous young people ring up each week to check in with staff, inform us of what is happening for them in their lives and catch up.

Achievements:

Entity continues to operate at a level which has maintained and increased our good name in the community and government sectors, with feedback from several organizations that they are thrilled that we work with their clients. We have been congratulated for our nurturing work with difficult clients who develop social skills, behavioural management skills and living skills that they will be able to utilise throughout their lives.

Program Developments:

Entity is beginning the process of reaccreditation with the Office of Children's Guardian. Finalising this process will allow Entity to remain operating for the next 5 years in Out Of Home Care. The process will continue over the next three months with the OCG going through our files and Policy and Procedure Manual to ensure that we are operating within the Standards for Out of Home Care.

Future Aspirations:

Entity would like to develop an outreach program within the service that will work with ex-residents from both Entity and Horizon. We would like to develop a position for a caseworker who would be able to easily provide the outreach support that clients have been requesting over the last year.

Entity is hoping to purchase a house in which to run the service, as well as provide a base for the Horizon program. The purchase of property has been an ongoing aspiration in which we have come up against various obstacles hindering the process. We are hoping for approval from Community Services to retain the surplus funding from the past financial year to be used as a deposit for the house.

Partnerships, Thank You and Acknowledgements:

Entity would like to thank the following people and agencies for their continued support and work with us and our clients:

Hurstville Police Station, Youth Zone, Up Zone, Key College, Edgeware SSP, St George Youth Services, the ISS team, the Management Committee, and a big thanks to our CEO Laurie Mathews.

We would like to give a special thanks to our neighbours for their patience and understanding of our service.

Annual Report 2009-2010: Options Youth Housing

Options is a semi-independent, medium term accommodation and support program for young people aged 16-25 years. For the year 2008-2009 Options increased its capacity to accommodate 9 young people in the 2007-2008 period, to 16 young people in the 2008-2009 period with the acquisition of 2 new OCH properties and the opening of a 3rd bedroom in an existing property. Options allocated one of these properties to house a young family of 4. Options has also increased its outreach client load with 7 young people receiving outreach support after exiting from Options. Options houses young people for a period of 12 months -18 months.



Client Overview:

Options received 116 referrals: 53% male and 47% female.

Options accommodated 19 young people; with 10 young people exiting the program of which 4 returned to live with a family member and 3 moved into their own properties. In addition to this Options supported 7 young people in an outreach capacity, thereby supporting 26 young people in the 2008-2009 period.

Options assisted 5 young people who had significant mental health issues.

There was also an increase in the number of pregnancies experienced by our young people with 5 pregnancies, and 2 births.

Options also saw 6 young people who required legal support of which required assistance from external support agencies.

Options also saw a high proportion of young people engaged in full time study.

Options had 4 young people completing their secondary education, 1 university student, 1 granted a scholarship to a private college and 4 completing a Certificate/Diploma level education.

Achievements:

The most significant achievement this year has been the acquisition of 2 new properties and therefore allowing Options to double its support capacity to young people in need. Options has aimed to accommodate young people for a period of 12 months followed by a 6 month outreach support period; this has proved to be successful in assisting the transition into independent living from supported living to be less daunting for the young person.

Options has introduced a Holiday Program in partnership with Caretakers Cottage, this has proven to be popular with Options clients and has been well attended.

Options launched the 'Your Move' Booklet, a resource aimed at young people who are thinking of moving out of home, and generalist workers who support these young people. While the actual launch was relatively low key requests for the publication have been positive. Randwick Council, Waverley Council and YAA have also included it on their website for ease of access.

Program Developments:

Options has developed significantly as a program over the past year, particularly in terms of residential management. Options purchased a professional Tenant Management System database in which to record tenants' rents, this has assisted significantly in keeping track of the rents and rent arrears. This allows for monthly rent statements to be sent to young people which have assisted in keeping rent arrears to a minimum and repayment of rent arrears much easier to manage for young people and staff.

Options has also strengthened its residential support by introducing 3 month fixed term leases, requiring the young person to come into the office for a program review meeting to evaluate their placement with Options. This has assisted both case workers and young people in keeping the case plan on track, as well as keeping the young person motivated and committed to achieving goals as well as being accountable for their progress. We have found this system has also helped with transition into independent living and early identification of any issues.

Options sought legal advice from Minter Ellison in binding the Program Agreement with the Residential Tenancy Agreement; this makes it clearer for young people when their support period with Options ends.

Options also reviewed its intake procedures this year and sought to strengthen the amount and way in which information is collected from young people. The new intake has allowed for a more thorough background check, and gives workers a better idea of level of independent skills and gaps in living skills which is making it easier to place people with suitable housemates and balance out clients needs to provide the best support we can with the aim of providing more successful placements and transition into independent living.



Challenges:

A year is not complete without some challenges to overcome, this year the most significant challenge has been severe water damage caused to one of the new OCH properties which took 7 months repairs to be completed by OCH, this resulted in 2 clients having to be moved out of the property while repairs were done and a loss of 2 possible placements for this period. It also took a great amount of staff hours focussing on this property.

While Options has had a relatively stable part time case worker for 14 hours per week this period in comparison to the 2007-2008 period, there is still a challenge of staff hours in relation to the increase of work load. Staff work load has increased significantly with a doubling of client numbers as well as management of rents, property issues, more thorough intake procedures, client crises, training and induction of new staff as well as day to day running of the program. There has also been a noticeable observation in the high level of clients who require more intensive support and have low living/independence skills this year, requiring a great deal more practical assistance and crisis management than previous years.

**Finances:**

Financial outgoings have been significantly higher this year than previous years due to the additional 2 properties, there were large outgoings in furnishing the properties. There was also a significant increase in the number of whitegoods needing updating in the various properties which contributed to the large amount of non-typical outgoings for the year.

On a positive note the amount of income lost to rent arrears this year was down on previous years, Options was also successful in receiving a grant for \$2687.00 from Waverley Council to run a structured Living Skills Program which will take effect next year.

**Future Aspirations:**

In the year ahead Options will use the Waverley Council Grant to implement a 12 month structured Living Skills Program as a pilot program to evaluate the need and effectiveness of such a program.

Options hopes to increase staff hours, Options is currently running on 46 staff hours per week spread over 16 clients and daily running of the program, which is proving very difficult to manage whilst continuing to providing a consistent level of quality support to clients. This year Options utilised the support from external service to assist in providing co-case management responsibilities for young people to assist with the case load, and this is something which has proven to be extremely positive for both the young person and Options, this is something we would like to see continue and develop in the year ahead.

Options aims to apply, and be successful, in more external funding sources. This includes fundraisers, donations and grants. Our primary goal is to acquire funding for more staff hours and to cover 'extras' such as Outings, Christmas and celebrations and improving the appearance of the properties. We would also like to utilise volunteers to assist in beautifying the gardens at the properties.

Options is also aiming to be registered as a social housing provider with the Registrar in the new financial year which will mean significant changes and more structure and focus on residential management.

Partnerships, Thank yous and Acknowledgements:

Options could not run as smoothly and as successfully as it does if it were not for the extensive support for external agencies, individuals and businesses of which Options received a copious amount of this year and would like to thank:

Top Gun Appliances, Manhattan Superbowl Mascot, ACP Magazines
Twenty 10, The Come In Centre, Uplift Psychology, Caretakers Cottage, Bondi Community Health Centre, Bridge Housing, Mascot Police, Maroubra Police, Minter Ellison, Key College, Welfare Rights Centre, Shopfront Youth Legal Centre,

Waverley Council, Randwick Council, MAX Employment Maroubra, Office of
Community Housing
Rachel Owen, Shane Kershaw, Gabby Owen, Erin Vincent, Mary Rose, Chooi-Lin
Tang, Gay Barrie, Kate Stewart, Cnst Pete Buckley, Cnst Steve Monaghan, Cnst
Kurt Webb
And the neighbouring residents for their understanding, openness and support in
managing our properties.

Annual Report 2009-2010: Horizon Semi Independent Program

Horizon is a semi-independent, medium term accommodation and support program for up to four young people aged 16-18 years in out of home care. Horizon houses young people for a period of 12 months – 2 years. Referrals are received from Metro Central Child & Family Regional Unit, ISS team, who also do the gate keeping for the service. When there is a vacancy, constant contact is kept with the ISS team for referrals to be sent through. Once within the program, Case Management of the young person is transferred to Horizon.

Client Overview:

Horizon received 5 referrals: 40% male and 60% female.

Horizon accommodated 3 young people in the 2009-2010. All young people are still residing in the Horizon program.

All young people in the program have significant mental health issues, as well as considerable barriers to accessing education/employment.

Young people are also referred to external support services to assist in accessing education & employment, mental health professionals, and financial support.

Achievements:

Horizon opened as a service in 2009. Horizon has created policies and procedures, as well as case management forms and files for the appropriate running of the service.

Over the months, the program was developed to open its doors to residents in January 2010. The service has acquired 3 properties in the Hurstville area for residents, with the capacity for one more property upon acceptance of a referral.

Horizon negotiated a partnership with St George Community Housing, who manage the Horizon properties.

Program Developments:

Horizon has developed as a program since being granted funding in 2009. Horizon had its first resident move in during January 2010. Horizon has since taken in 2 other residents in the following months. During their stay with Horizon, the young people have successfully maintained their placements and developed their independent living skills through the program.

Challenges:

A gap was identified in the Out of Home Care sector, where there are minimal semi independent services for young people in out of home care, especially in the St George/Sutherland area. Horizon was created to help to fill this gap. Horizon has had to develop policies and procedures to guide the program, as well as forms for the successful running of the program. These have all had to be developed within the framework of the Out of Home Care Standards set out by the Children's Guardian. Horizon has formed partnerships and relationships with local youth services and other professionals to support the young people in the program.

Future Aspirations:

Horizon has the capacity to house one more young person in its current set up. Over time, we would like to expand the service to accommodate up to 8 young people.

Partnerships, Thank You and Acknowledgements:

Horizon would like to thank the following services and people:
St George Community Housing, Angela Remano, Metro Central ISS, MTC Work Solutions, Twenty10, the Management Committee.

Acknowledgements, donations and support

Many hundreds of people and organisations come together each year to support the work of Caretakers Cottage and without their help Caretakers could not continue to provide quality services for young people and their families

The Board – Nicholas Stewart, Amanda Williams, Russel Sykes, Marian Booler, Victoria Naum, Allison Maidment

Dept Community Services Supported Assistance Program
Department of Community Services Out Of Home Care Program
Office of Community Housing
The Bridge Community Housing
St George Community Housing

Moriah College Year 11 Enterprise day
Bartercard



Christmas dinner supported by Jonson Executives

Johnson Executives
Pilot Light



Oz Harvest team delivering food to Caretakers

Oz Harvest
Good fellows



Westpac team after a long day painting, gardening and assembling newly

donated beds

St George Bank Westpac



Polly's club donation of \$5000.00

- Polly's Club
- Minter Ellison
- Freehills
- Shopfront Legal service
- Newtown Gym
- Trapeze school
- Randwick Council
- Waverly Council
- AGL
- Youth Accommodation Association
- Association of Child Welfare Agencies
- Southern Youth and Family Services

Audit

Caretakers Cottage Incorporated

Statement Of Comprehensive Income

For the Year Ended 30 June 2010

	Note	2010 \$	2009 \$
Revenue	8	2,169,547	1,639,978
Employee benefits expense		(1,372,883)	(1,250,969)
Depreciation		(15,457)	(15,405)
Management fees		(37,315)	(15,706)
Rental expenses		(37,737)	(37,161)
Utility expenses		(32,878)	(29,288)
Insurance expenses		(50,590)	(45,074)
Food costs		(38,652)	(44,239)
Motor vehicle		(13,222)	(14,028)
Other expenses		(112,173)	(73,640)
Profit for the Year		458,640	114,868
Other Comprehensive Income		-	-
Total Comprehensive Income Attributable to Members of entity		458,640	114,468