



# CARETAKERS COTTAGE ANNUAL REPORT 2019

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# CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

As we arrive at the end of another busy financial year, it is my pleasure to present the Caretaker's Cottage 2018-19 Annual Report. I am pleased to report that in spite of significant uncertainty over the long term future of our Out of Home Care program Entity, we continue to meet organisational targets for the support, accommodation and living skills development for young people who access our services across its three programs. I am very proud of the way that our staff have worked tirelessly to create new pathways and opportunities for the young people who they work with, who often arrive in our services having experienced deep trauma and challenges from a very young age. It is a reflection of the strength and depth of our person-centred service delivery that we have been able to adapt to a frequently changing government policy agenda and in doing so ensured our young people continue to receive ongoing care and support as they move towards independent living.

One of our strengths as a specialist organisation is to build partnerships with community organisations who can support our clients on their journey to independent living, whatever that might look like. I'm particularly pleased to note through our service reports the local and community connections that staff have worked hard to establish and maintain through both formal agreements developing new referral routes and connections that will serve to support our mutual clients into the future. This is evidenced through successes such as the unique Family Therapy Outreach Model at the Caretakers Refuge.

We continue to plan and progress towards our second accreditation under the NSW government's Quality Assurance framework. This represents a huge body of work but I also believe highlights our successes and strengths as an organisation committed to improving the lives of the children and young people who we work with.

The government's emphasis on early intervention and supporting a return to family wherever possible is demonstrated through our work in the Entity aftercare and Caretakers outreach programs, as well as connections we have continue to build with the Department, housing providers, community organisations and the families and young people who we work with on a day-to-day basis. Recognising that stability in a young person's life is fundamental to their successful transition to adulthood we work collaboratively with a range of service providers to bring stability through a person-centred approach that reflects young people's choices and desires.

We support them on that journey by re-connecting them with education, offering employment options or referrals to specialist support services including mental health, health and drug and alcohol counselling as appropriate. Our Living Skills program is an example of this tailored approach to service delivery.

During the course of the year and following our Strategic planning session in early 2018, we have bought on board a number of new board members, and I wish to extend my thanks to them and our service managers for their continued commitment to supporting the organisation through the attendance of meetings, events and training. Thank you to all are hardworking staff who make the work that we do possible through their commitment and dedication, and particularly to Laurie, whose many years of service to the youth sector in general and to Caretaker's Cottage in particular was recognised earlier this year in a ceremony at Government House where he was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia.

**SARAH BARCLAY, BOARD CHAIR**

# CEO'S REPORT

We have had another productive year supporting young people and their families to make the best of their circumstances and supports so that they may move forward to live their best lives. To enable this, we constantly work at refining our practice and work to secure the resources necessary to have a positive impact. We are experiencing some shift in focus as demands on our programs increase as a result of government policy and shifting needs of the community. It is our desire to ensure access and opportunity to those resources remain for those in most need.

We are working in an unstable environment where government contracting and recommissioning is haphazard and often without clear intent. Caretakers lost our Out of Home Care tender in this past year though we have been asked to continue providing and growing our OOHC services until June 2020. It is our understanding that we will now be offered a new contract though no assurances have been formally provided to date. This is a precarious situation for the young people in our care, as well as our staff, as it is a difficult environment in which to plan beyond June 2020.

Similarly, we are moving into a new contract recommissioning phase for our Specialist Homelessness Services in Bondi in which a 12-month extension of the existing contract will be later enhanced with a 3 to 5 year offer of contract should we meet yet-to-be-defined conditions. We have not had a comprehensive evaluation of Going Home Staying Home since it was rolled out in 2014. Some attempts to repair shortcomings of that program have eventuated, including the HYAP program. A glaring shortcoming of GSHS was the elimination of medium term accommodation for those young people who could not return to family and do not have the skills to live independently. The consequence of this is that many young people end up staying much longer than is healthy in a crisis environment and the transitional programs are forced to take on more young people who are not yet ready to take on the responsibilities of independent living. Caretakers is raising these concerns at senior levels of the government and will continue to lobby for realistic program design.

## HOMELESS YOUTH ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (HYAP)

**HYAP** at Caretakers involves the provision of 1.5 caseworkers and up to 4 beds in the crisis refuge. This is far in excess of our funding however, it is a program worth subsidising as the early intervention aspect of the program is paying great dividends. We are constantly supporting 20 outreach clients and their families. Aliko has steered this program development very successfully with the support of Dimi and Zoe who are now sought after by schools, DCJ and Integrated Complex Case Coordination Panel (ICCCP) to provide early intervention services. Not all Districts provide accommodation for under 16's as the duty of care is considerably higher so Caretakers has a constant demand to accommodate young people from other regions. This is impractical as we cannot engage with family and support services from the far western suburbs and the young person becomes disconnected from school and those support services.

I am amazed by our team's well-developed and broad knowledge of who the young people are in our district that would gain from outreach support.



## CARETAKERS CRISIS REFUGE

The Bondi crisis refuge has had considerable success in securing long-term support for young people who cannot return to family care with the ever friendly services of St Laurence House and Lillian Howell Project, though we need more medium term accommodation for those young people who do not have the skills to live independently. This is particularly highlighted by the increasing number of young people who are waiting for NDIS approval (and when they do have NDIS approval no accommodation services are provided till they are 18).

Our team have responded with such care and compassion to the young people coming through our service and a highlight for me is attending staff meetings where the search for opportunities and ways to connect our clients effectively with support is inspiring. We continue to enjoy great support from local services including WAYS, WEAVE, The Shack, Early Narcosis team, Prince Of Wales Adolescent Unit, Headspace, Ted Noffs Foundation, St Laurence House, Lillian Howell's, the Addison and Bridge Housing.

We work closely with Eastern Sydney Community Services where the level of mutual respect is evident in the successful collaborations between our teams, particularly our involvement with Anthony as the adolescent caseworker. As we explore the demand for our residential service it is clear that district needs a specific Indigenous service staffed by Indigenous workers and directly engaged with the community. As the demand to continue to accommodate under 16's is not diminishing, a cost is that we need to discriminate in favour of these younger more vulnerable clients leaving older adolescents presenting with more troubling behaviour. We need to explore the potential to split the crisis refuge and set up a separate service for one of these cohorts. Obviously this would be a costly proposition and residential care is not government policy, so establishing a case for additional funding is a challenge we should present to government and strive to achieve.

## OPTIONS

**Options** transitional housing has gone through some major transformations following the departure of long-time manager Kate Witherdin and transition to the steady hands of Angus Megarrity, who has come to us from Youth Action. He has successfully expanded the team with a new casework position so now we have the capacity to present our own living skills program to our clients. Work is continuing on the provision of living skills resources to our clients. The office has been physically transformed with a coat of paint, carpet and workstations along with the tools to teach young people to be baristas or to ensure a good coffee when visiting.

The need for medium term accommodation to prepare young people for transitional housing is so evident with crisis services and other agencies being forced to refer young people well before they are ready. These young people are set up to fail as further rejection cannot prepare them for the responsibility of maintaining a tenancy. Hopefully our living skills program will get a few more young people over the line.

We have not had any opportunity to grow our housing stocks since 2014, though Bridge Housing have generously provided some short term properties that are awaiting redevelopment. I believe Housing NSW should earmark some properties allocated to Community Housing Providers to be made available to SHS transitional programs. The homeless population is growing and the

capacity of young people who are recipients of benefits to enter the private rental market is decreasing. At the same time, Yfoundations has been running an engagement program with the Real Estate Institute to train real estate agents around the viability of transitional clients who have had successful tenancies. We also continue to access Rent Choices subsidies for private rental housing from DCJ.

The complexity of clients' needs is increasing as we are responding to more young people with significant mental health concerns though being well linked in with local services is of some comfort to both clients and staff.

## ENTITY

Entity Out Of Home Care (OOHC) has had a roller coaster ride this year that started with our tender to transition to an independent accommodation program rejected in a process that saw the number of providers reduced from 33 to 9. Subsequently we have been asked to continue providing residential and independent living opportunities till June 2020. A consequence of the tender process is that there are now no proposed OOHC services in the South East Sydney District of DCJ so we have continued to offer Supported Independent Living Situations (SILS) as we tendered and it now appears that the department will accept our proposal to continue beyond 2020.

In preparation to continue as a SILS provider a new model has been developed that will see us accommodating 16 to 20 young people in independent accommodation primarily in properties secured through St George and Bridge Community Housing Providers. We have sought further allocations of property by Housing NSW to the Community Housing Providers to be earmarked for OOHC as well as SHS. This is being pursued at a high level to ensure the issue gets onto the right agendas.

We have been transitioning our team so that we have workers suitably qualified under the new regime. Our team is headed by Julie Booler as manager with 3 caseworkers, an aftercare worker and 3 youth workers. The youth work team will be directly providing living skills support in-house while the casework team will be responsible for intake case plan development and implementation.

We will retain the house in Sylvania with a capacity to accommodate up to 4 young people aspiring to live independently through living in a share house type arrangement. During this phase these young people will be assessed and provided with intensive living skills support while viable residential properties will be sought to match their needs.

The youth work team will be using our new truck to move young people and their new furniture into their new accommodation. Julie has prepared a comprehensive living skills program that is designed to give young people the ability to further move on from our care to market rental accommodation and out of the care system.

Some building alterations are needed to enable the council to approve our development application to use the ground floor for staff offices. Currently our consent does not allow the ground floor to be used without some alteration. Once consent is secured some building alterations will be carried out to make the building suitable for our new model.

Aftercare remains a highly valued aspect of our program as it sustains young people who graduate from living in care for many years, as is the role caring parents continue to play in their young adult children's lives. The team are positive and are to be congratulated for enduring to this point with such uncertainty as to the future of Entity.



We have a new Minister for Families, Communities and Disabilities in Gareth Ward MP who has already demonstrated his intention to engage our sector. It would be great to have similar enthusiasm from the Treasurer who appears to have different outcome measures to that of the DCJ and the NGO sector, though credit to the Treasurer who has increased our indexation payment from 1.75% to 2% we are not really celebrating as indexation should be 3 %, what does this mean, effectively our funding reduces by 1%. Similarly, our Equal Remuneration Order payments (a catch-up payment with respect to the SCHADS Award) is only paid on our SHS program and not our HYAP program so that program effectively goes backwards every year.

Caretakers Cottage is an Incorporated Association that has reached the limits of the budget size for an Incorporated Association so consideration will be given this year to transitioning to a company limited by guarantee.

In summing up I can confidently say that we have had a positive impact on the lives of many young people and their families with whom we have worked over the past year which is a testament to the dedication and commitment of our team and Board. Our working relationship with DCJ staff Robbie McInnes, Mark Spruhan, Tim Counter and Acting District Director Sharon Gudu has only been matched by the continued financial underpinning of our programs

Thank you to our supportive Board headed by Sarah Barclay who provides guidance and perspective and Tomas our Treasurer who always asks the hard questions, as is a treasurer's job. Our Board are going to be guiding the organisation through another accreditation process this year as well as overseeing the preparation for recontracting.

It continues to be a source of great pride that so many young people and their families are prepared to share their lives and work with us towards outcomes that they desire. I remain optimistic that between us we will rise above the barriers and achieve our aspirations.

**Laurie Matthews**

**CEO, Caretakers Cottage**

# CARETAKERS COTTAGE CRISIS REFUGE

## OVERVIEW

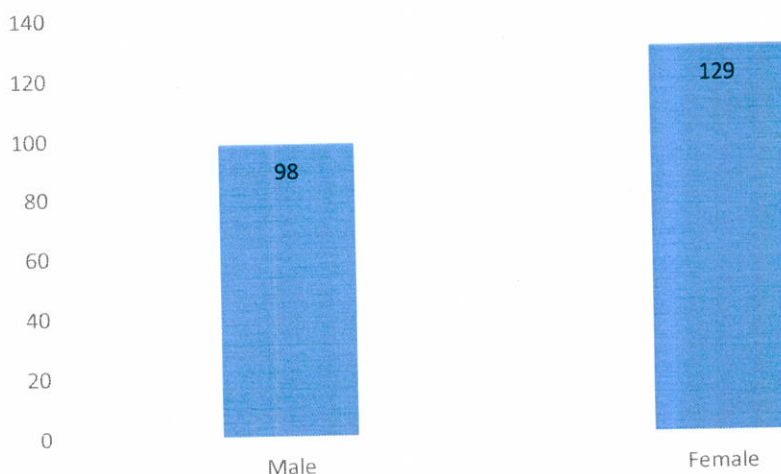
Caretakers Crisis Refuge strives to support young people aged 13 years and over who have already become homeless or whose families have reached crisis point/breakdowns and these teens are about to become homeless.

Our role is to support these young people and their families, and to develop comprehensive strategies to assist them to break the patterns contributing to their homelessness. For some of these clients, we provide a crisis bed, for others, intensive outreach support and or family therapy, or alternatively we provide short term respite breaks whilst we work on family dynamics.

Several factors stand out for Caretakers Crisis during the year which also dictated the flavour of both the Service and the client group. Firstly there has been an unusually high number of young teens throughout the year, making casework unpredictable because of age related and developmental limitations. Secondly, the Service shifted focus somewhat to ensure a substantial expansion of our outreach program.

In this financial year we provided support to **227** young people either through accommodation and/or outreach support: Of the total, 57% were female and 43% male. 20 of these young people required multiple supports over the year because of their high level of complexity.

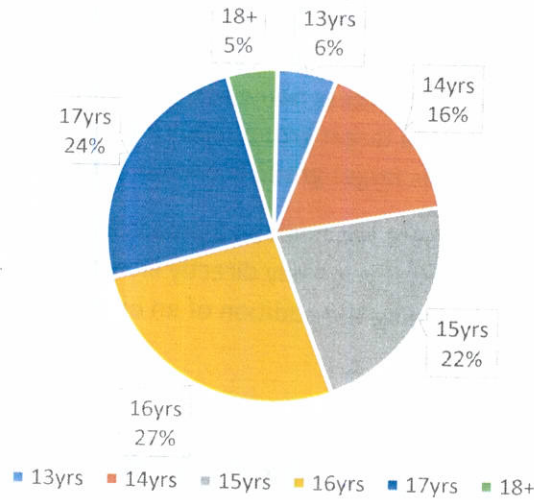
Clients by gender





Our clients are also getting younger. Almost a quarter (23%) of total homeless clients supported by Caretakers Crisis Refuge are at the very young end of the scale, specifically 12 -14 years olds.

Age Range of Total Clients



## ACCOMMODATION

Of the total of clients for the year, Caretakers Cottage Crisis provided crisis accommodation or respite care to **179** clients during the period for varying lengths of time. 46 young people were sleeping rough in the month before presenting, 71 in short-term or emergency accommodation in the month before presenting.

Of the residential clients, 33% were under the age of 16 years. This under 16 group also took up a quarter of all the bed nights at the Refuge over the year.

Many of these younger residents consisted of the District's most difficult and complex young clients and came to Caretakers via the District's Integrated Complex Case Coordination Panel (ICCCP). The high needs of this younger cohort is exemplified by the simple fact, that a small total of **16 residents (12-14 year olds) accounted for one fifth of the staff's time and casework effort with residents.**

Although this is certainly disproportionate when compared to the remaining casework allocated to the other 150 or so residents, this is a fairly accurate indication of the difficulties staff face in being able to effectively casework very young teens because of their age-related developmental limitations both onsite and as outreach.

The majority of clients we supported over the year were local clients from our catchment areas of South East Sydney or Sydney District LGAs.

## UNDER-16S

Our biggest growth area for the year has been young people under the age of 16, the number of which has **doubled** in this financial year as compared to previously. This year, a total of **111** young people supported were under the age of 16 years. Some of these clients required multiple supports because of their high complexity.

Including those highly complex clients requiring multiple assistance over the year, the under 16s olds make up a high 46% of all clients to whom we provided support. We are particularly pleased with the percentage of under 16s males accessing our service (40% of total under 16s clients) which has also increased from previous years. Historically, very little has been known about under-16 year old males because they primarily did not access homelessness services very well. Because of this, this group has always been considered a target group requiring particular attention. The fact that Caretakers is increasingly accessing this target group is encouraging.

This evidence suggests that there has been an increase in our ability to access and provide support to local under 16 year olds and this is likely directly linked to the expansion of our Refuge programs in the past 12 months, including the addition of an outreach family counsellor and additional high quality casework support.

## OUR PROGRAMS

### Onsite Bulk Billing Clinical Support for Young People

Caretakers Crisis has constantly tried to identify needs and gaps in the system and in our own Crisis Service. As a result the Refuge has consistently developed and piloted strategies to try and overcome these gaps to better address client needs and deliver better outcomes.

One of our successful initiatives has been initiating bulk billed counselling provided on-site. Caretakers Refuge is still likely unique in this aspect six years later. We developed this strategy because of the resistance and many misconceptions young people had about counselling as a soft approach of getting our clients connected with high quality counselling services. This strategy has continued to be a success to this day.

### Family Therapy Model

More recently we identified a further gap in the system, which concerned the adequate and intensive support of families particularly when they were in crisis. As a result, in the past 12 months we developed and implemented an experimental outreach Family Therapy Model which is largely based on intensive intervention with families within their own homes. The Family Therapy model is administered by our registered Family Therapist. Initial observations seem to show this program is proving successful, most likely because it is based on a user-needs model and is offered within the home. This makes it much easier for families to commit to intensive intervention for as long as they need it. The Model is further enhanced by the fact that because Caretakers is a 24 hour youth crisis accommodation service, these families can contact Refuge staff after hours for support or if in crisis.

The Department of Community and Justice (DCJ) have shown some interest in the Model and Caretakers was organised to do a webinar training session on the Model for DCJ staff earlier this



year. Some local schools have also shown recent interest in our Family Therapist Model, with a request to provide group work to some of their students on a variety of issues.

### HYAP Program (Under 16s)

The HYAP program has expanded significantly in the past 12 months and our figures show that the number of supports provided to HYAP young people doubled from previous years, and almost half our clients are now under the age of 16 years. There is no doubt that this has been the result of additional resourcing, such as the Family Therapist worker and additional HYAP Casework Support has been integral to this expansion. However, these new roles have also been better supported by additional changes to our Refuge Staff. Specifically, in the past 12 months there has been a more focused and specialized targeted outreach. For instance, our Indigenous outreach has been expanded, particularly with young Aboriginal girls, through ongoing home visits by our female Aboriginal Youth Worker. Another Youth Worker has focused on mentoring our young outreach HYAP male clients primarily through his informal boxing program. Again, he works closely with all other relevant staff to keep these young boys on the right track.

### Other Programs Over the Year

Caretakers Crisis has also continued providing various other programs over the year provided by volunteer groups or staff. Our volunteer weekly yoga program is in its 2<sup>nd</sup> year at the refuge and is going strong. Our volunteer cooking program has been intermittent in accordance with the age group of residents over the year. More recently we have started also offering the Sticky Stuff sexual health program to our residents, which has gone well but is still in its infancy.

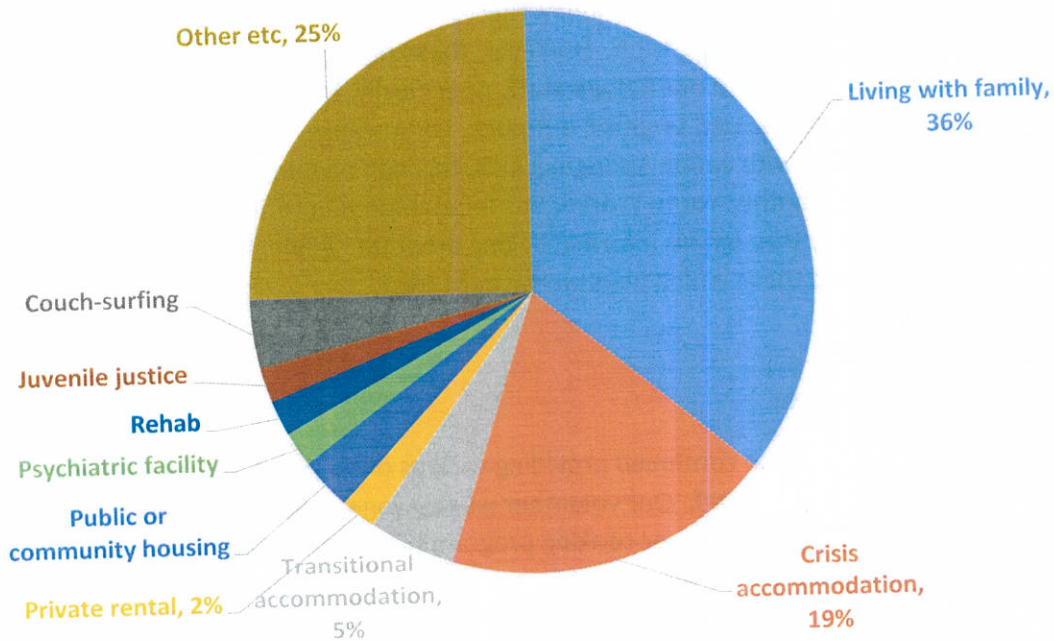
## STAFFING AND CHANGES IN RESOURCING

There have been massive changes over the past 12 months in staffing. Excellent ex-staff such as Matt Peterson, Henry Teofilio, Chrissy Gabor and Kate Howard, most of whom had been with Caretakers Crisis for several years, have moved on to bigger and better things. However, we have been lucky enough to fill their positions with a vibrant, new and highly competent group of professionals who have fit perfectly into the new team. As such, in the last 12 months, we have welcomed back Brent Doherty, as well as Charlotte Kennedy and James Kannis to the Youth Work team. Zoe Kalos, a psychologist, is now our extraordinary new HYAP caseworker and Dimi Lattas is our registered family therapist who has done an amazing job, not only with her clients, but by also undertaking a massive community development exercise to ensure that families, schools and services from our catchment area **all** know about Caretakers and the new services we now provide.

With Brent's return to Caretakers in collaboration with our long term staffer Freda Hammond, who we also nominated for Youth Worker of the Year award, we now again have 2 Indigenous workers on board and this increase in cultural appropriateness has become obvious by the expanded outreach that Freda has been able to provide with her young ATSI girls and their families.

# OUTCOMES

## LIVING SITUATION AFTER SUPPORT



Measurable outcomes are difficult to assess, especially within a crisis setting, however, I believe our statistics show that our intervention have been successful, as shown by the graph above.

**ALIKI FILIS**

**MANAGER, CARETAKERS COTTAGE YOUTH CRISIS REFUGE**





# OPTIONS

youth support

*A program of Caretakers Cottage*

Fig.1

## **OPTIONS YOUTH SUPPORT ANNUAL PROGRAM REPORT**

It has been a year of significant change for Options Youth Support. The year saw the departure of the long-standing Options Manager, Kate Witherdin, and the recruitment of new Options Manager, Angus Megarrity. This change has been significant for both the team and the service. Despite the many changes which have taken place as a result of this change, the team has continued to effectively support young people through the program and meaningfully managed relationships with key stakeholders. Thank you to everyone who played a role in the Options team during 2018/19.

Since Angus' arrival in January 2019, the Options team have worked rigorously in reviewing the program and its myriad facets. The team have been actively striving to streamline service delivery, refine resource allocations, maximise brand awareness, establish new stakeholder relationships, and to ensure that program design logically matches to the intended short, medium and long-term program outcomes.

While a lot of work has been crammed into what feels like a very short period with the new team, there is still much more to be done in the year ahead, and beyond. What is clearly evident is that the Options team are collectively committed to their continuous improvement and to the betterment of the services it offers supporting the young people Options is entrusted to assist.

# CLIENT DATA

The 2018/19 financial year saw Options accommodate 96 young people (see Fig. 2), up 17% from the 82 accommodated in the previous financial year.

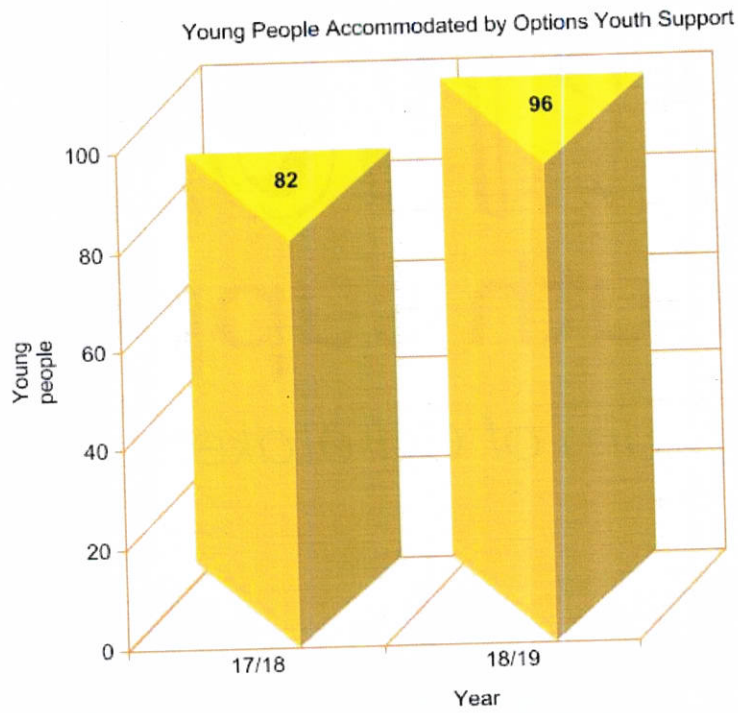
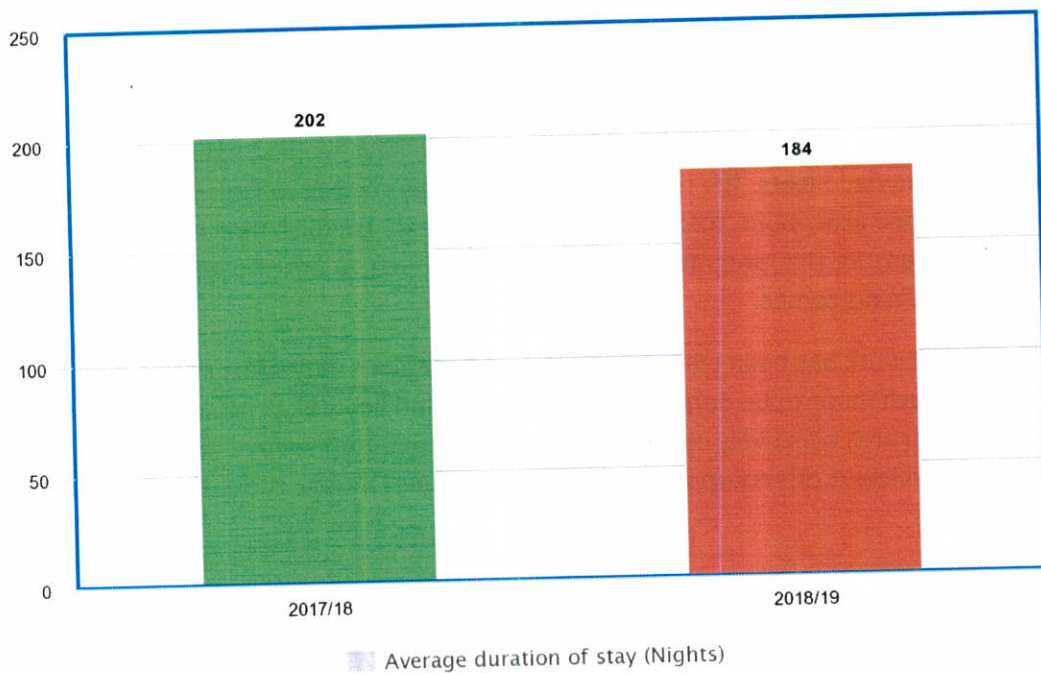


Fig.2

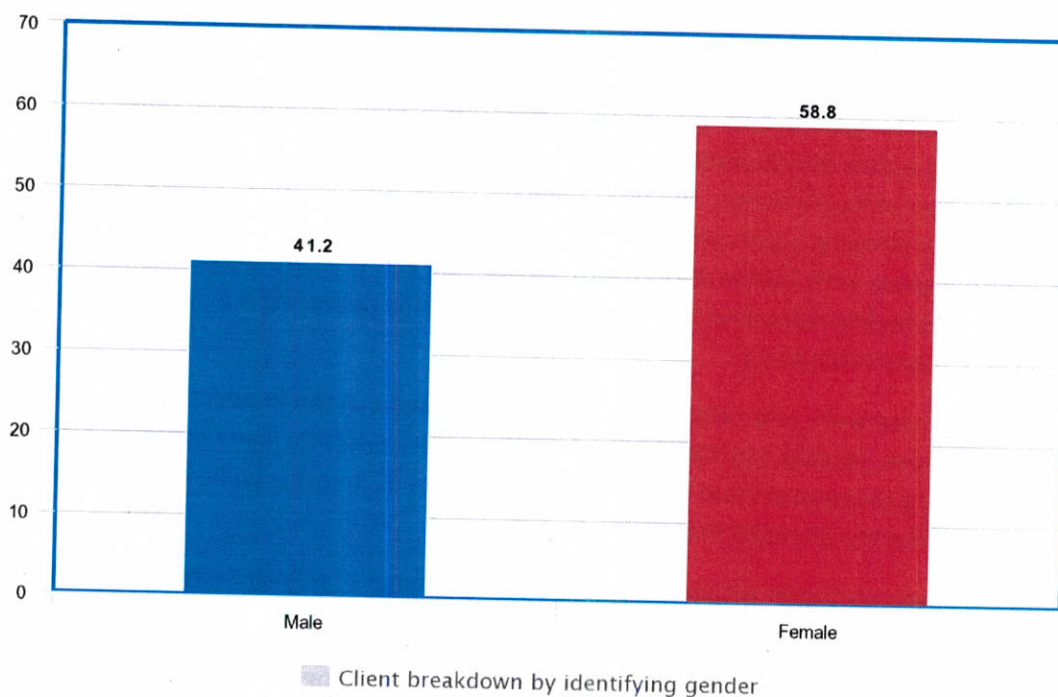
This increase is within a regularly-expected range, however does demonstrate a slight decrease in length of stay for clients, decreasing from an average stay of 202 nights to 184, a 9.4% decrease (see Fig.2)



meta-chart.com Fig. 3



There are numerous factors which may have contributed to this increased number, however, the work which has been done toward the end of the financial year and which is continuing, will position the service well to support protracted tenancies where young people can maximise the opportunities available to them through their up to 2 year tenancies.



meta-chart.com Fig. 4

Of the young people accommodated in 2018/19, 41.2% identified as male and 58.8% identified as female (Fig. 4).

## SUPPORTED LIVING SKILLS PROGRAM

In 2018, Mr. Brendan King generously donated \$40,000 toward the Options Living Skills Program. These funds have proven invaluable and have gone directly toward supports for young people in developing their competencies to maintain their home. Each of the 96 young people who resided in an Options property during 2018/19 were beneficiaries of this generous contribution. Mr King's gift ensured that many young people who entered the program lacking well developed independent living skills were supported to maintain their tenancies. Thank you, Brendan.

Growing further on the Living Skills Program, a small grant was received from NSW Health through its Yhunger program. This has facilitated the purchasing of 60 meal kits for young people entering Options housing. This facet of the program supports young people in developing their cooking and meal preparation skills and places food on the table for multiple days upon their entry to the program, a time when money can often be tight. Options will be seeking funding beyond 2020 to continue to deliver this invaluable aspect of the program and to examine other facets for inclusion into the program.

## STAFFING

2018 saw the departure of Kate Witherdin, Options Youth Support Manager. Kate managed the service for many years and the loss of her program familiarity was significant. It is abundantly clear to all and sundry that Kate performed a wonderful job over her many years at Options. Thank you, Kate.

Within every departure there are of course, opportunities. New Options Manager Angus Megarrity commenced in January 2019 bringing a new managerial lens and fresh set of eyes through which to identify areas for growth and refinement. Angus brings with him a diverse range of experiences including sector development and advocacy experience from his previous role as Sector Development Manager at Youth Action, the peak body for youth services. Angus also possesses over 10 years' experience managing youth services in local government and was previously in the transitional housing space with Taldumande Youth Services back at the commencement of his career. Angus reports feeling refreshed to be back at the coal face delivering supports directly to young people in demonstrable need.

The Options case work team also saw a number of changes in the financial year. Alexis Rabin went on maternity leave, replaced by Kirk Darby on a 12 month maternity leave contract. Kirk has done a solid job during his contract and will be offered a further 12 months while Alexis settles back into a part-time role for the 2019/20 financial year.

Matthew Spierings began within the team bringing a range of relevant experiences in supporting young people experiencing complex mental health.

Dafna Dar has continued to remain as a cornerstone of the program and has acted as an experienced sounding board on operational practice for the new manager.

The team at Options are all highly skilled and model high quality youth work practices within which young people are the primary concern. Through the amazing work of the Options team the change in management has happened with minimal disruptions to service and with no negative impacts on clients. Particular thanks to Dafna, Kirk and Matthew for their continued effort and passion.

## SECTOR DEVELOPMENT AND ADVOCACY

Continuing from previous years of engagement, the Options Manager has remained engaged with numerous sector development initiatives including the Youth Community of Practice (YCoP) assisting numerous peak bodies in developing training and professional development assets to enhance the youth accommodation sector's practice broadly.

Options has also remained connected as a member of the Inner City Rent Choice Youth Program Facilitation Group alongside a range of community partners, including the NSW Department of Communities and Justice. Rent Choice is a rental subsidy program through the NSW Department of Communities and Justice which seeks to assist young people to enter into the private rental market via a three year tapering rental subsidy. Young people need to be able to demonstrate their capacity to increase their income annually so as to be able to absorb the taper which makes Rent Choice Youth a challenging program to refer to, however, it holds value for a small subset of young people who demonstrate employment competence alongside the requisite skills to manage a tenancy in the private rental market.



# MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

## Options Youth Support, Theory of Change:

While myriad identifiable outcomes have been achieved with the young people supported by Options over its years of operation, no tangible logic model has existed to date. This has made it difficult to clearly illustrate the methodologies and their affiliated outcomes underpinning the resource allocations and activities undertaken in the program.

Over two days in May 2019, the Options team worked to develop a Theory of Change (Fig. 5) to underpin the work of the program which articulates the intended short, medium and long-term outcomes of the Options program. The model also highlighting the requisite inputs and preconditions required to support the achievement of the intended outcomes.

The theory of change is being utilised to ensure all potential service refinements are demonstrably linked to client outcomes and provides an effective anchor for continued service refinement.

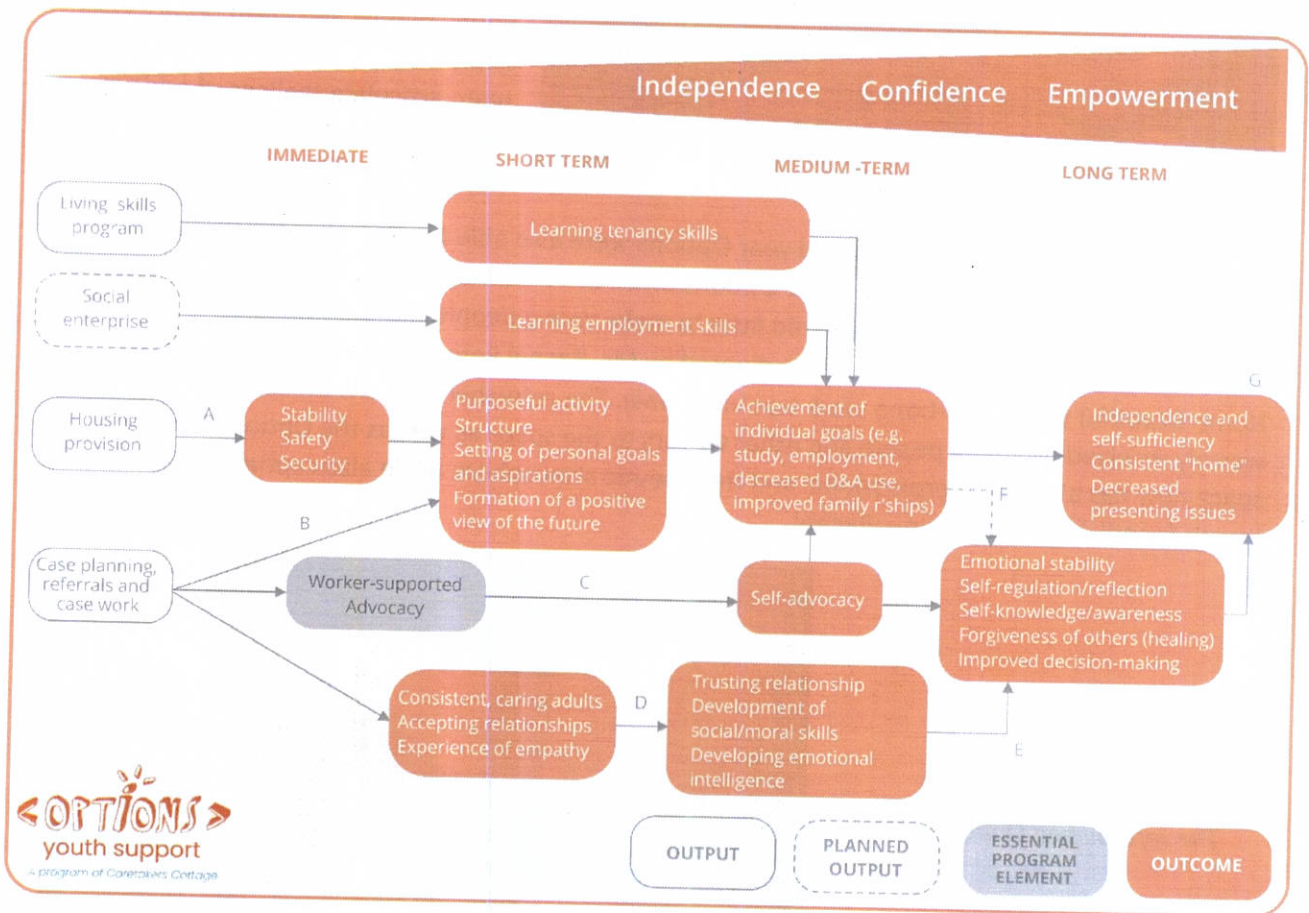
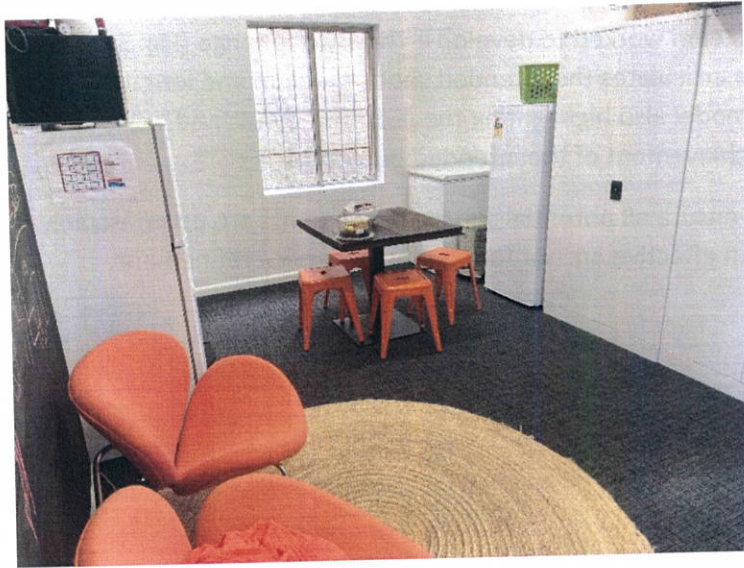


Fig. 5

### *Service rebrand and office fit out:*

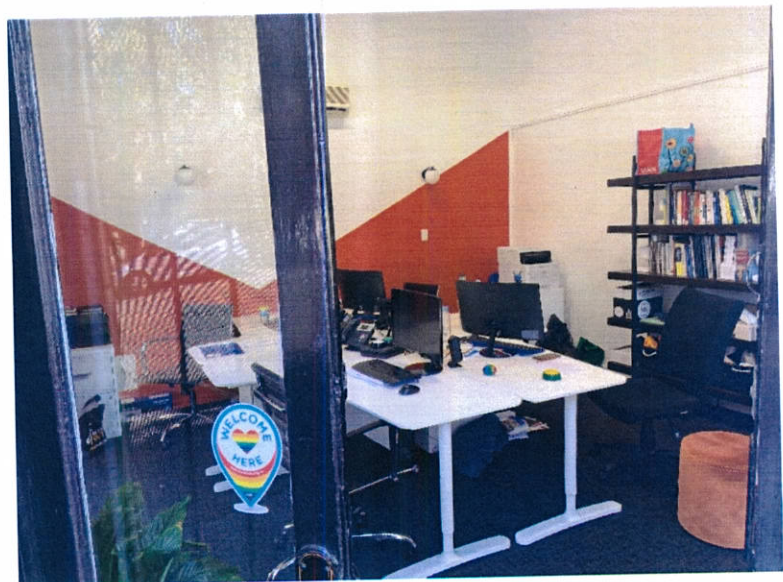
While Options has remained a well-known and well-regarded service within the local area, its branding and general presentation has been lacking. The Options team spent deliberate time discussing whether the historical branding and office space reflects the services current iteration and values. The team and the many young people consulted with collectively agreed, it did not.



Through the generosity of Ten Tenths Collective, Mr Patrick Skinner, created a new Options logo along with a suite of branding assets including a program flyer, business cards, letterhead, and an email marketing asset to aid in bringing attention to emails sent out by the service when promoting vacancies. Feedback on the rebranding from young people and allied services has been wholly positive and the Options team articulate feelings of pride in being affiliated with the 'new look' Options. Thank you, Patrick.

Toward the end of the financial year Options were also able to allocate some surplus operational funds toward a fit out of the Options office at 77 Newland St, Bondi Junction. The space was in a very run-down condition and did little to make young people feel welcomed or to recognise their inherent value. The fit-out was coordinated by Ms. Rachel Peters, former Senior Stylist for Home Beautiful whose pro-bono work was invaluable. The refreshed Options offices have been warmly received by young people and other visitors to the space as well as the Options team. The space now has a palpable professional and therapeutic atmosphere while also capturing a more 'youth friendly' feel. Thank you, Rachel.

*The refurbished Options office*





## CLIENT OUTCOMES

The 2018/19 year of service has seen an increasing number of young people transitioning from Options into the private rental market or, returning home. This is a wonderful outcome for these young people and the team aspire to grow these outcomes in the coming years. A core focus of the Options Theory of Change is the formation of feelings of security and stability, a requisite precondition highlighted in Maslow's hierarchy of needs. The housing facet of the Options program enables the individual to develop safe and caring relationships with caseworkers and other safe and caring adults and peers. Alongside these nurturing relationships young people are able to grow their skills and experiences, and to mature toward their larger life goals.

While many young people entering the Options program may not be ready to heal past traumas and to solidify their independence and confidence to the fullest degree, it is wonderful to see the maturation of the young people to their individual degrees of readiness. The Options team have taken ownership of the Theory of Change and believe deeply in it.

## WHAT'S AHEAD FOR 2019/20

The year ahead looks to be another busy one with the continued program review and refinement as well as the exploration of a number of new opportunities for Options.

Following from the office fit out, Options have explored the installation of a mural on the frontage of the office at 77 Newland St. The proposed mural will create a talk piece for the local community and will portray positive images of the diverse young people supported by Options. It is believed that while this will stimulate a community conversation, it will also facilitate the growth of new skills amongst a number of Options clients through their engagement working alongside experienced mural artist, Inovis. Waverley Council have expressed their in principle support of the project including potential funding through Council's small grants program. It is hoped that this project will take shape for delivery in Q4 of the 2019/20 financial year.



*Options new signage and site for proposed Council funded mural project*



however council has asked for more information before the application can be approved. All going well, the application to council will be approved and the builder can begin work quickly.



We have spent some time over the last year negotiating with St George Community Housing about us being able to access some properties for our young people. For a long time, these negotiations stalled because St George wanted to house over 18-year-old young people, which does not fit with our program. Recently, we have been able to come to an agreement with them for 6 placements. We have placed our first young person with them under this agreement this month.

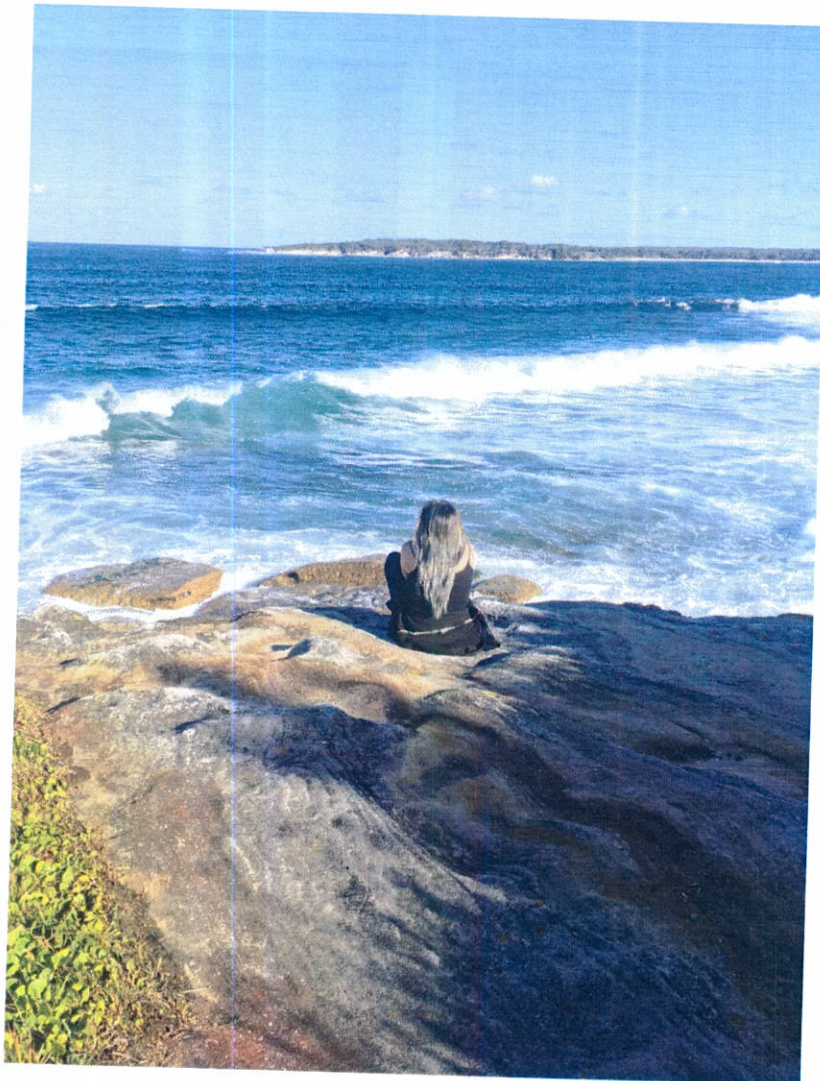
Over this year, we have had a few young people come in and a few young people transition out of the residential and semi-independent program. We have had 10 young people in the program throughout the year. We have had some young people flourishing in the semi-independent program and some young people requiring a bit more support and guidance to make their placement work. The flexibility we have within the two programs allows us to be able to tailor support to each individual young person. The Entity Sylvania house has remained a crisis residential model, with referrals coming in for crisis placements and also for young people that could transition to semi-independent living with some more guidance and living skills development. There have been times where the referrals to the Sylvania house have slowed down, and we have utilised the youth work staff during these quiet times to support the young people in the semi-independent living program where this has been needed.

Over the coming months, we will continue to run the Entity house as a crisis residential model and continue to meet the needs of the district. While doing this, we will continue to develop the semi-independent and preparation house model, including staffing, funding and other requirements that we know will need to be looked at. We will continue negotiating this model with the district, and at the end of our current contract, hopefully receive a funded contract for Semi-independent living under the new FaCS permanency support program.





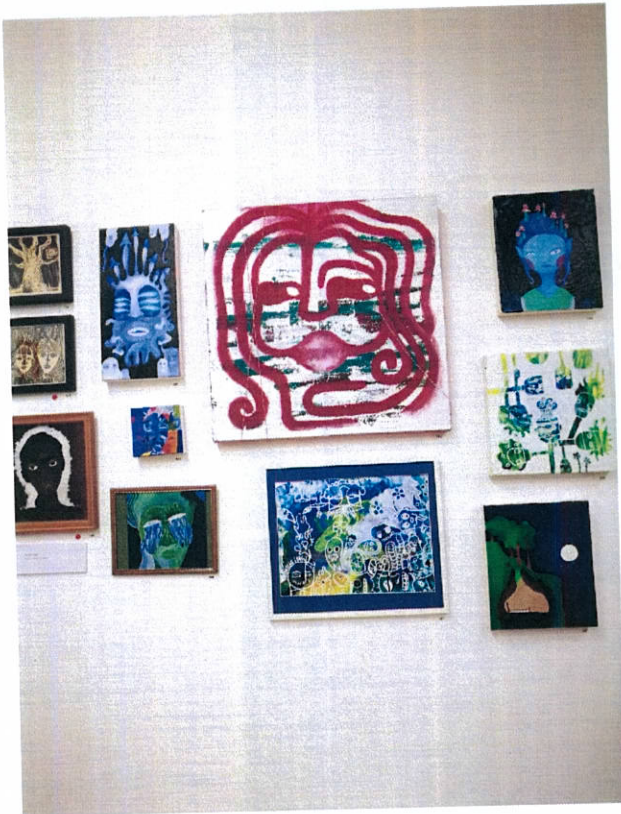
## PROFILE: CRYSTAL



Crystal is a young person who first came to Entity residential program at 14yrs old. She displayed some behavioural issues and smoked cannabis regularly. Crystal stayed at Entity residential until she was 17yrs old. Over this time, she experienced many ups and downs, maintaining her schooling, but beginning to fail several subjects. She continued to have a heavy reliance on cannabis and went through some periods of experimenting with other drugs and alcohol. We worked with Crystal around her personal safety, making good and safe choices and setting goals for herself.

At the start of year 11, it became clear that Crystal was falling behind in school and was very unhappy there. We worked closely together with the school to get Crystal enrolled in a nursing assistant course at TAFE. In this course, Crystal flourished. She was much more suited to the environment at TAFE, with the older classmates and the lessons focused on an area that she was interested in.

At 17, Crystal transitioned into our semi-independent program, and continued to complete her studies. She had some ups and downs moving into her own place, learning to navigate the realities of having people visit, cause issues and mess and leave.



After settling into her unit, Crystal spent some time working in child care, however was unhappy there and wanted to move into the healthcare field. We worked with her job provider to discuss her qualifications and goals of becoming a nurse and midwife in the future, and Crystal has now been offered a job in an aged care facility, which she is very excited about. This will give her the experience she wants and needs to advance her career in healthcare.

Crystal has travelled a long road with Entity to get where she is and she expresses her gratitude for all the help and support we give her to achieve her goals. We look forward to continuing to watch her grow into the beautiful young lady she is becoming.

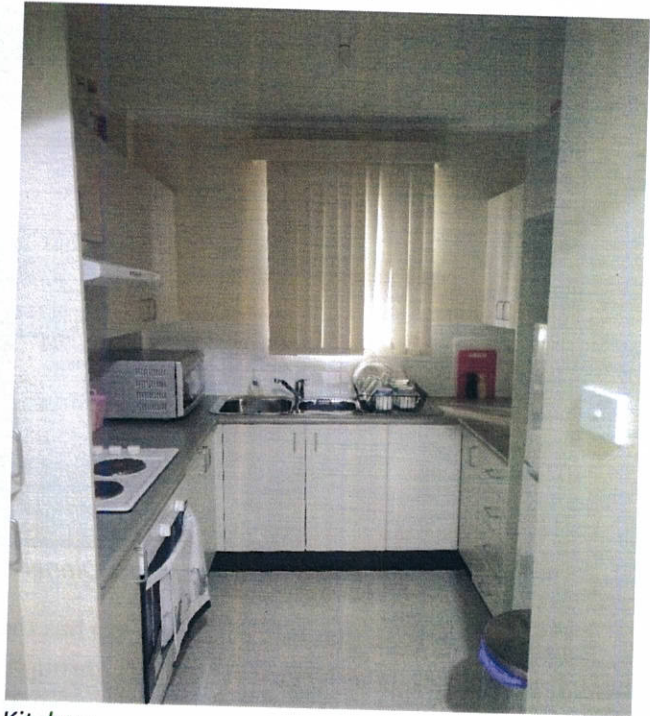


## CLIENT UPDATE - GOOD NEWS!

A recent young person has entered into the Entity Semi-Independent Living Program since June 2019. During this time this young person has transformed her unit into a home adding her own personal touches to the unit and has demonstrated the ability in maintaining a clean and tidy unit.



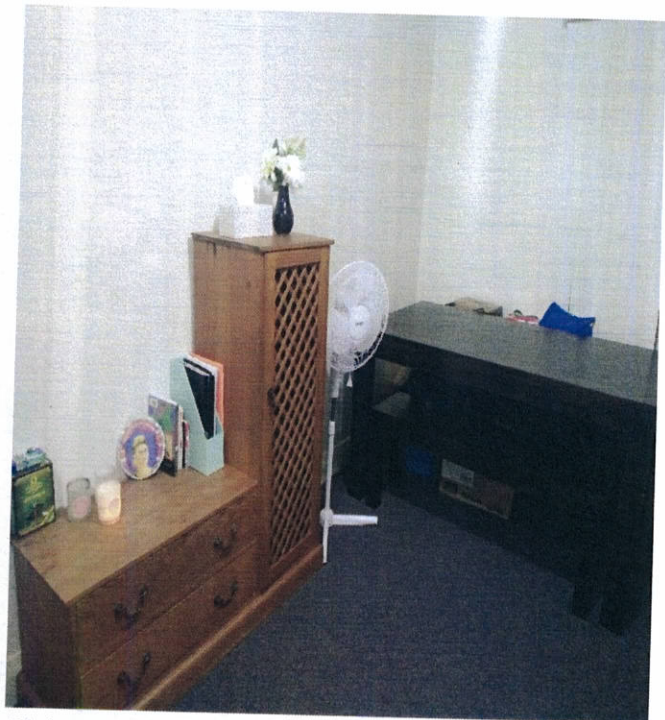
*Bathroom*



*Kitchen*



*Lounge Room*



*Dining Room*

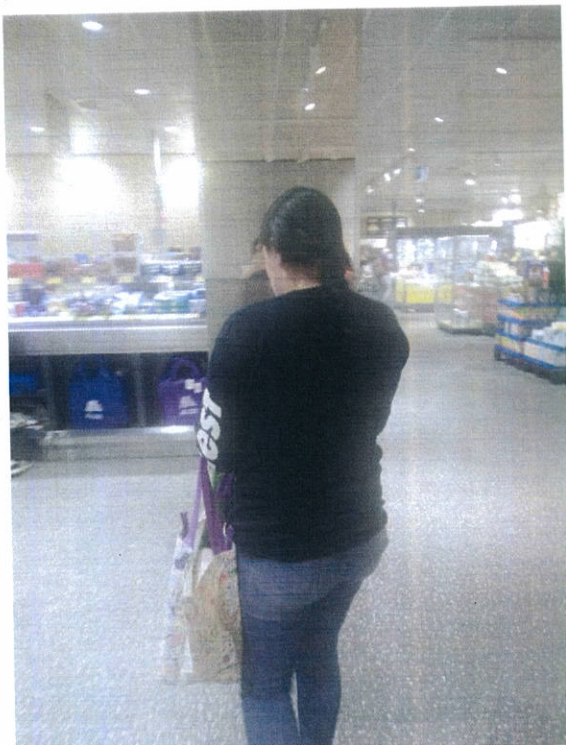


This young person has continued to maintain their school grades even when sick at home, the young person has continued to do their studies at home and hand in their school work. And has recently completed their year 11 exams obtaining grades of Bs, Cs and Ds, for that mile stone This young person had a celebratory dinner.



*Celebratory Dinner*

It can be seen that this young person has the proven ability to independently shop for herself and choose healthy groceries. Thus, through all of this young person's proven independent skills and has maintained the service agreement with Bridge Housing and with Entity, this young person was given a renewed lease agreement with Bridge Housing.



*Independent Shopper*

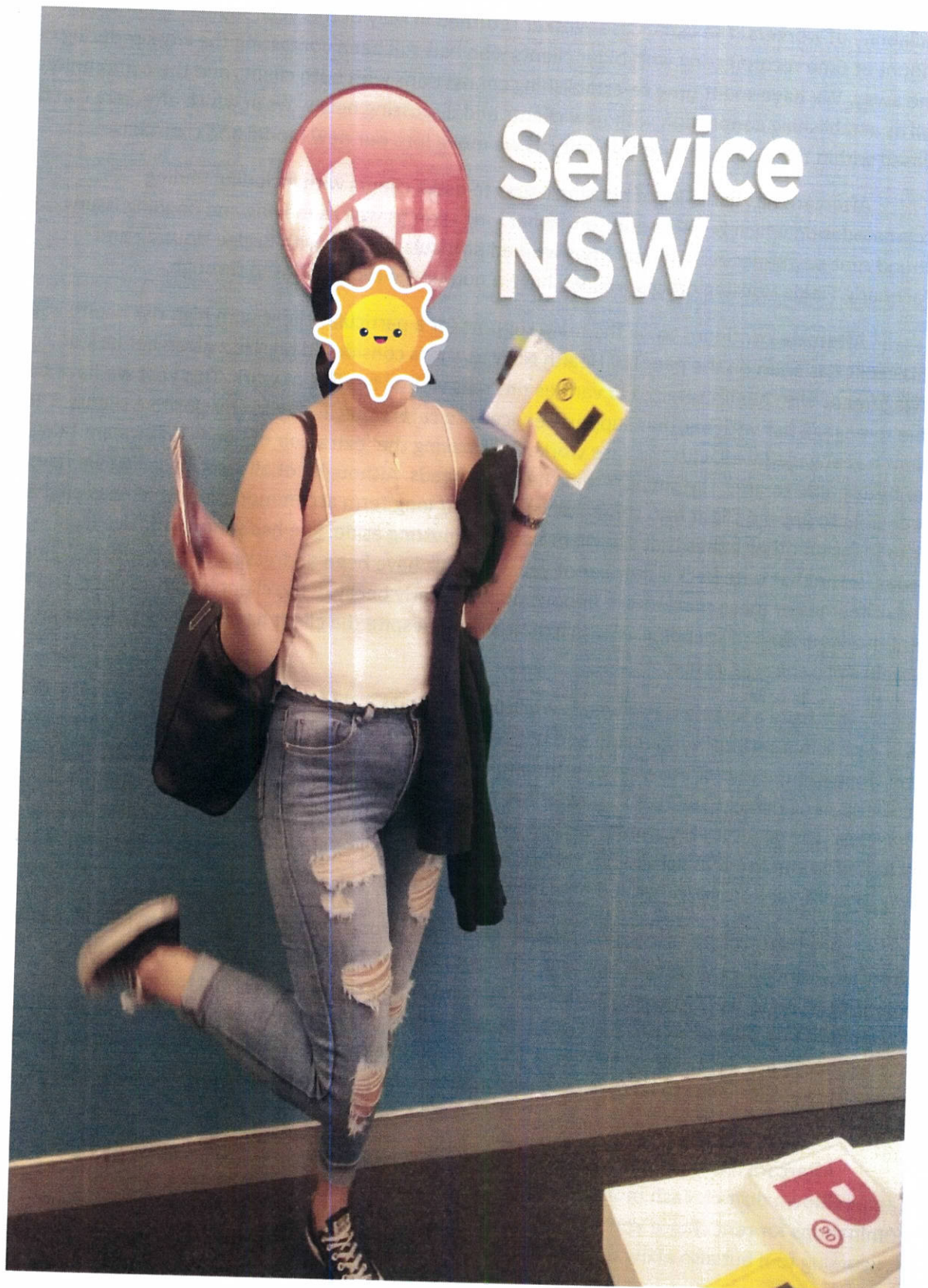


*Groceries*



Furthermore, this client has achieved a major mile stone in passing and obtaining their learners driver's license on their first attempt.

This young person, within the past few months has achieved some major mile stones





## ENTITY AFTERCARE

Aftercare Case Worker spent a considerable amount of time (5 months) off due to being injured. During this time contact with the aftercare clients was at a minimum due to a lack of availability of workers. The usual Case Worker returned in May of this year and has spent a large amount of time reconnecting with older clients who had still been contacting the worker during her time away. We have spent time re-establishing connections with both clients and the community as well as establishing connection with new clients and discussing new ways in which aftercare can be utilised within the new structures of Entity as we move into our new model and client base.

Aftercare has had a lot of housing issues to assist clients with including finding accommodation which is stable and somewhat long term as well as moving and ongoing issues around rent payments etc. Aftercare has worked particularly close with Bridge Housing and Macquarie Fields Housing offices who we have a number of clients housed through.

Aftercare continues to be the main support for a particular client with high risk health issues. This client has been on the panel of Health NSW as she is considered high risk given her lack of engagement with health services at various times as well as her line of work. This year we have been able to engage her with another support service who caters specifically to HIV positive clients. The client has engaged well with the case worker and having the 'extra pair of hands' has meant that we are better able to offer the support that the client needs. Although not all smooth sailing we have been able to get the client into some stable medium/ long term accommodation which has enabled us to focus on other issues that the client has been putting aside. She has some extensive legal issues, some that date back a number of years that we have been addressing and slowly rectifying. The outcomes of these matters are important particularly because the client is transgender. A jail sentence could mean spending time in a male prison despite the client having lived her life as a female since she was a child.

We have a female client who is working fulltime as a chef and living in a private rental on her own. She is in a serious relationship and talking marriage in the near future. She and her partner will visit Ghana at the end of this year to visit family and speak with them about this also. We have accessed her Leaving Care Plan to pay for her flights to Ghana as this was an entitlement in her financials. The client is very stable, despite some serious legal issues she faced in the last 2 years including a time spent in jail she has turned her life around and focused on moving forward from that. We are very proud of her and how far she has come!

Aftercare will be heavily focusing on building a strong process for our young people turning 18 and transitioning out of care and into aftercare. We will be meeting with different housing providers to really nut out what is available for our young people post care in terms of accommodation outside of referring onto other services. It is important for our clients to gain true independence and a key aspect of that is accommodation that is not necessarily linked to services where they are required to be case managed which obviously means more workers coming on board.

Aftercare has met with the team member who looks after rent choice youth in the Campbelltown district. Each month there is a board which meets to discuss referrals and nominations for rent choice youth. I will attend these meetings regularly which will be a great networking tool but also allow us a vote on nominations when we are putting them forward. I will be



contacting the workers who look after both the inner west and the shire to introduce myself and put myself forward to attend those meetings also.

Rent choice youth is available to clients 16 – 24 and are working or studying. Once approved we are able to find a property that housing will then take over. The client will pay 25% of their income and this will increase in small increments over a 3-year period to prepare the client for the private rental market. The client will be able to stay in that property thereafter should they be able to afford that full rent or look for a cheap option elsewhere. The client is eligible for \$2000 brokerage which is important for our clients when leaving care as generally the financial support available is just the Leaving Care Plan. A benefit to the service is that for every client in the rent choice youth program, our service is eligible for a \$9000 grant over a 2-year period. Aftercare will be really focusing on this as a priority option for our clients as it is a structured program aiming toward the reality of independence in the long term whilst still having support along the way.

Aftercare will spend the last 6 months of our client's time with us really working out what their needs are going to be moving forward and making sure we are putting things in place to ensure that their needs are met. This will include education, health, legal, financial and most importantly accommodation.

**JULIE BOOLER**

**MANAGER, ENTITY**

# AUDITED ACCOUNTS 2018-2019

## Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2019

### Current Assets

Cash on hand	2,688,797
Accounts receivables and other debtors	885
Other current assets	32,635
<b>Total current assets</b>	<b>2,722,316</b>

### Current Liabilities

Accounts payable and other payables	261,416
Employee provisions	310,667
Current tax liability	100,943
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>673,026</b>

### Revenue and other income

Grants	3,754,703
Donations	24,508
Management fees	524,993
Service fees	41,596
Rental income	69,996
Sundry income	7,417
Dividend	
Interest	26,867
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>4,450,637</b>

### Expenditure

Employee cost	1,969,675
Depreciation	52,507
Rental expenses	193,508
Sundry expenses	1,344,910
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>3,560,198</b>

A full set of accounts is available upon request from the Treasurer: Caretakers Cottage, 96 Bondi Rd Bondi NSW 2026.

Our external auditors are Jacoby Cameron & Co L4 255 Castlereagh St Sydney Who have provided an unqualified audit.



## Caretakers AGM Draft Minutes 17.10.18

A quorum was present and the meeting opened at 6:18pm.

<b>Present</b>	
Laurie Matthews	CEO
Kate Witherdin	Manager – Options
Jo Geiger	Caseworker - Entity
Tomas Rowlandson	Member (Treasurer)
Sarah Barclay	Member (Acting Chair)
Natalie Bradbury	Member
Christina Hough (via teleconference)	Member
Michelle Zeltzer	Nominee
Damiya Hayden (minutes)	Administration
<b>Apologies</b>	
Aliki Filis	Manager – Bondi Refuge
Catherine Brennan	Resigned
Julie Booler	Manager - Entity
<b>Absent</b>	
Christopher Hawker	Member

Laurie reported on departures from the Board – Catherine Brennan, Rebecca Abraham and Chris Hawker.

1. **Appointment of meeting Chair:** Laurie appointed chair.

### **AGM**

2. **Confirmation of 2017 AGM minutes** – held over
3. **Election of Board Members**

All positions spilled.

*Nominations:*

Chair: Sarah Barclay

Treasurer: Tomas Rowlandson

Ordinary members: Natalie Bradbury, Christina Hough, Michelle Zeltzer

All nominations accepted, all nominees elected.

4. **Acceptance of Annual Report**

Laurie, Kate and Jo spoke to reports. Natalie moved to accept program reports. Sarah seconds. Resolved.

Finance report accepted subject to circulation of audited report. Moved by Sarah, seconded Tomas. Resolved. Laurie to circulate report.

