OUR FUTURE STORY

Our People & Culture Strategy

2015 - 2018
Who We are, What We do

Housing Choices Australia (HCA) is a leading housing association committed to providing quality affordable housing in well-connected communities.

As a growing housing provider, we now own or manage more than 3,400 homes across Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia. We have ambitious plans for greater impact including increasing our reach and helping more people find quality, affordable housing across the country.

We recognise the need to adapt to changing social and economic challenges to be able to deliver and improve on the homes and services that we offer to our residents.

To position ourselves to meet these challenges, we are:

• building our capabilities to deliver improved quality housing;
• creating a sound financial base to operate and grow from;
• incorporating the use of sophisticated asset management systems;
• maximising our business and commercial acumen; and
• developing new housing models to ensure we remain at the forefront of affordable housing innovation and thought leadership.
Our Vision

All people affordably housed in neighbourhoods that support life opportunities.

Our Mission

To be a leading provider of affordable homes across Australia, working with partners to create resilient and inclusive neighbourhoods.

We provide long term solutions for people who:

* Are disadvantaged by housing markets;
* Have a disability and/or mental health illness;
* Are homeless or at risk of homelessness; and
* Are ageing and/or frail.

Our Guiding Principles

We put our customers first

Our customers are central to everything we do. We listen and respond with open and honest communication and a flexible approach.

We work together

We work collaboratively and in partnership to achieve our mission.

We trust and are trusted

We keep promises, are accountable and are transparent in our actions.

We learn and adapt

We aim to inform the policy environment, support our actions with evidence, encourage innovation and continually adapt to changing environment.
What We Believe In

We strongly believe in the importance and value of working in partnership with our residents, support partners, community organisations and staff to create resilient, inclusive neighbourhoods across Australia.

Partnership:

Partnerships are central to everything we do. Our first partnership is with our residents.

Stable and thriving tenancies:

We share the common goal with each of our residents of a stable and thriving tenancy. We believe this can be a foundation and a spring board for life opportunities.

Quality affordable housing:

We commit to providing and maintaining quality housing at affordable rent.

Well connected neighbourhoods:

We strive to ensure our properties and our residents are well connected to local communities.

Our People:

We have approximately 100 staff over eight locations in Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia across four teams of Housing, Property Development & Asset Management, Corporate Services, and Strategy & Engagement.
**BUDGET INCOME**
$36.9 million

**EMPLOYED STAFF**
100

**REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE CAPITAL**
$15.5 million

**REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE OPERATION**
$8.9 million

**OFFICES**
EIGHT LOCATIONS

**3500 PROPERTIES**

**OUR PEOPLE HIGHLIGHTS**

**4.7%**
TURNOVER RATE

Demographic

- 65% FEMALE
- 35% MALE

**7.2 days average**
ABSENCE DAYS PER EMPLOYEE PER YEAR
Our Future Story

Our People & Culture Strategy

Introduction
Our Managing Director’s Message

“Our Future Story - Our People and Culture Strategy is Housing Choices’ first People and Culture specific strategy.

A key aspect of developing Our People and Culture Strategy is achieving the goals set in our Business Strategy and Plans in ways which are consistent with our Vision, Mission and Principles with our people at its heart.

As a member of our staff, you have and will continue to shape our success. Working together we will realise our ambitions and face the challenges ahead to enhance our capability, our performance and ultimately to make a greater impact for our residents on a broader, national scale.

We genuinely want you to be the best you can possibly be, wherever you are in the organisation. I therefore urge each of you to take responsibility for your part in making our People and Culture strategy a success, forging an even better place to work.

I look forward to continuing to work with each of you and building a staff community with a deep sense of ownership of Housing Choices’ achievements, and who are truly proud to work at Housing Choices.”

Michael Lennon
Purpose

We* have an ambitious Business Strategy 2014 - 2017 which sets out how we will work together with people, partners and communities over the next three years and beyond to achieve greater impact nationally. Housing Service Standards are also under development to provide transparent, consistent and meaningful services which are accountable and in alignment with the National Regulatory System for Community Housing (NRSCH).

To do all these things successfully, we need to be an innovative, adaptable and flexible organisation.

Our People and Culture Strategy at Housing Choices is intended to underpin the objectives of our Business Strategy by recognising that our people are our most important asset, and their commitment and enthusiasm are key to achieving our goals in a way that is consistent with our vision, mission and values.

Seizing the opportunities and meeting the challenges inherent within our Business Strategy goals will depend on the combined talent, knowledge, skills, dedication, flexibility and motivation of our people.

Our Approach

Our People and Culture Strategy has been produced by and for our staff through communication and feedback from staff in a broad consultation process held by the HR Team over a 5 month period, March to July 2015.

At least 65 staff (76%) of the workforce took part in face to face workshops, provided written comments and/or attended further validations sessions held across all offices. A draft People Strategy was prepared and all staff invited to provide comment.

Throughout the consultation process undertaken, it was clearly evidenced that our People and Culture Strategy starts from a solid foundation with staff voicing both strong alignment with where Housing Choices is heading with its growth strategy to make a greater impact and also significant connection with HCA values and behaviours.

Our People and Culture Strategy aims to provide a framework which builds on this, further develops and provides clear direction in supporting our staff in achieving success.

*The words ‘we’, ‘us’, ‘our’, ‘our People’, ‘one Housing Choices team’, throughout this Strategy document are intended to include all members of HCA staff community.
Key Themes

A number of cross-cutting and consistent themes emerged to inform identifying key Strategic Goals for our People and Culture Strategy. These themes were:

**Follow Through:**
- Be accountable, transparent and consistent in our actions – we are all individually and collectively responsible.

**Retain and Foster the positive aspects of our current culture and keep our culture interconnected ("One Housing Choices Team"):**
- Work together well towards shared and connected goals and purpose.
- Be consistent about matching behaviours and values.

**Communication:**
- Engage in clear, honest, timely and consistent communications both internally and externally.

**Policies and Systems to support Growth:**
- Eliminate bureaucracy and system limitations to work effectively and efficiently.
- Have a clear framework with adaptability and scope for staff empowerment and autonomy in appropriate decision making.

**Learning, Development and Training:**
- Reinvigorate development opportunities with an emphasis on interconnectedness across teams and states.
- Effectively share knowledge and experience for best practice.

**Meaningful Flexibility:**
- Develop modern, smarter working practices – user friendly, adaptable.
- Flexible rewards and benefits.
- Variety of options for working flexibly – increase options for how, where and when staff work.

It should be noted here that the key themes of improving communications and systems are implicit in many of Our People and Culture Strategy Goals however these aspects are also already in progress or being directly incorporated by their respective Teams (Communications and Stakeholder Engagement, Information Systems) in their forthcoming strategic planning and development work.
Our Strategic Goals

The key themes have been articulated into four broad Strategic Goals, as follows:

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**Strategic Goal 1**

**Attracting & Engaging our People**

*To create a sense of belonging for committed, connected and inclusive teams and communities*

Ensure that we have skilled and value-driven talent in readiness for future growth and challenges. Our people will exhibit the values and behaviours expected by Housing Choices Australia, and embrace inclusive and purposeful work ethic.

Being part of the HCA community will be an experience that shapes the life and prospects of everyone who comes to work here. It will mean we are not only engaged with one another but also with our residents and each of us will be in tune with issues of importance across HCA. Underpinning this will be the flexibility in the workplace required to meet the changing needs of our business and our people.

**Key Objectives:**

- Review and refresh recruitment methods
- Revise and enhance on-boarding and induction processes
- Develop and implement internal engagement and communication framework
- Provide greater opportunity for our residents to participate in employment opportunities
- Enhance staff feedback and evaluation processes
- Further enhance a Values & Behaviour Based HCA Culture
Our Strategic Goals

Strategic Goal 2

Recognising & Developing our People

*To ensure we both equip our People with the skills for success and celebrate their contributions*

Enable managers to recognise outstanding performance through the provision of flexible reward mechanisms that motivate staff to perform at the highest level. It is critical that all staff feel recognised and acknowledge HCA as a remarkable place to work by offering a meaningful total rewards package.

HCA wants to maximise the potential of both new and existing staff to realise their ambitions and develop their talents, through succession planning, opportunities to work across HCA (and throughout the sector) and career and development activities. As an organisation we want our people to be happy, healthy and fulfilled in the work they do, and feel their work is making a difference in the community.

*Key Objectives:*

- Enhance career progression and professional development opportunities
- Design, develop and deliver a reward and recognition framework which is flexible, transparent and fair
- Develop and introduce transparent salary pay bands and salary progression/review mechanisms
Our Strategic Goals

Strategic Goal 3
Shaping a Flexible Workforce

To develop appropriate, adaptable working practices and offerings for our People that are change and growth ready

Flexibility is critical to respond to the changing needs of our organisation and the preferences of our employees. HCA will provide flexible arrangements in order to meet those needs and develop a culture where our people will be offered different arrangements on flexibility. HCA will support our people to make changes to when, where and how they will work to better meet individual and business needs.

Key Objectives:
- Develop and embed a culture of flexible working
- Review current HCA Benefits
- Review and update HCA policies and procedures
- Continue and promote our existing measures to support Our People’s Health, Safety and Well being
Our Strategic Goals

Strategic Goal 4
Supporting Best Performance & Service Delivery

To develop a positive culture of excellent performance and service delivery aligned with our Vision and Values

HCA does not hide from the fact it wants to be the best Housing Association in Australia. In order to achieve this HCA will develop our people to deliver the best service possible and reach a level of performance to ensure quality service is maintained consistently. HCA will develop the leadership potential of all of our people, invest in service standard development, deliver on all our commitments to our residents and most importantly, provide the best service delivery to our residents and stakeholders.

Key Objectives:

- Develop our leaders and potential leaders
- Develop and embed effective workforce planning across HCA to be equipped for growth and change
Translating Strategy into Practice: Implementation and Monitoring

To underpin this document, Implementation Plans have been created under the headings of each broad Strategic Goal with main objectives and corresponding key actions. Each objective/key action has indicative timing with an assigned lead responsibility, indicative measurements under the headings ‘how we will measure’ and ‘indicators of success’.

Many of the timings relate to the next one or two years on the basis it is intended that the Implementation Plans are dynamic and can be built upon, updated and refreshed as we develop or progress initiatives. Therefore for this purpose the Implementation Plans document will be available to all staff as a separate document so it can be refreshed regularly as needed.

The four Implementation Plan sections are themselves inter-related and a number of the objectives/actions also relate to more than one Strategic Goal.

In some instances, work is already underway or projects plans already exist. Others will be formulated for the more complex and significant areas of activity. These will identify specific timescales, milestones and involve key stakeholders.

Crucially, there is a commitment to timely and meaningful communication with our staff as appropriate in terms of implementing Our People and Culture Strategy. The HR team will consult regularly on progress and seek participation and feedback from our staff.

To successfully achieve these Strategic Goals, ownership and responsibility for delivering Our People and Culture Strategy is everyone’s job within Housing Choices whatever our role within the organisation. Although there will be lead responsibility for specific roles and/or teams, many pieces of work will require collaborative contributions in order to implement them effectively.

Our People and Culture Strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the HR Team to monitor progress. The Implementation Plans will be monitored and refreshed on a regular basis. Some of the ways we will monitor progress and seek feedback will be through:

• Stay Interviews: we’ll schedule regular individuals discussions with current staff;
• Check-ins at Staff Meetings;
• Annual Staff Surveys; and
• People and Culture Staff Forums; minimum 3 held annually.
Wrapping Up

We hope this document has given a feel for the way Housing Choices intends to support our People, what matters to us, what we believe in and the commitments we make to each member of staff.

We have included some real quotes from staff members about how they feel working for Housing Choices. We hope these resonate.

What Our People Say About Us:

*Having grown up in public housing, the importance of stable affordable housing was fundamental for me to achieve opportunities in my life. To work at HCA enables me to provide the same opportunities to others which is very satisfying. There is not a day that I get up and think I don’t want to go to work today.*

*Coming to work in a supportive work environment where staff are encouraged to contribute toward HCA’s continuing success and engagement with residents growth, is inspiring and makes for a great work day!*

*I am very proud of being part of an organisation which displays compassion, understanding, support and encouragement to our residents and staff. Our culture is a reflection of our leaders.*

*I love my job because every day we have the potential to help someone change their life experience and opportunities in significant ways. I see greater connectivity to their local community, increase in confidence along with increased stability in making their house their home.*

*Housing Choices Australia makes me feel proud because the company is always looking to improve the lives of people through housing. It also cares about me as a person and pushes me to be bigger and better than I was when I walked through the doors on the first day.*

These quotes above are from staff in our Housing, Property and Development teams.
The work we do here at HCA really speaks for itself. We have grown and changed so much over the years and have been able to help so many people in so many ways. I still love working here as much as when I first started.

As an organisation, we have a mission that everyone understands. To help HCA to accomplish it, the IT department is making a difference in lots of ways embracing the latest technologies. Working smarter and not harder is our paramount, and that is why HCA is a great place to work.

Although I do not deal with our residents in a “hands on” capacity, I believe HCA makes everyone feel like their input is making a difference in a positive way. I feel the management team we have in place is very enthusiastic, positive and invested in fulfilling HCA’s vision & mission.

The thing that drew me to come work at Housing Choices was the fact that we help people, sometimes very desperate people, get their lives back on track, simply by providing them with a stable place to live. Bricks and mortar, that’s what we do and we have a lot of very dedicated staff in this business working very hard to provide good, often life changing, outcomes for people. That’s what I love about working here – being surrounded by good people committed to helping people less fortunate than ourselves.

I am fortunate that every evening I have a safe and secure home to go to, many of those that we aim to assist do not. I hope that my work contributes to increasing our housing options so that others can experience a safe and secure home.

These quotes above are from staff in our Corporate Support teams – Corporate Services, Strategy & Engagement and Managing Director’s Office.