



MEDIA RELEASE
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GreenLight Plus Partnership - From Homeless to Home

Homelessness Week (August 1-7) in Melbourne CBD will be a little bit brighter this year, thanks to a historic initiative placing homeless people into secure and stable housing with support.

146 people experiencing homelessness in Melbourne before the COVID-19 pandemic are transitioning into long-term housing under the new **GreenLight Plus** program, a groundbreaking Victorian Government-funded **Homeless to Home (H2H)** initiative led by Sacred Heart Mission (SHM).

SHM has teamed with registered housing association Housing Choices Australia (Housing Choices) and The Salvation Army to provide pathways to stable housing, as well as brighter and more stable futures for people caught in a cycle of homelessness.

Australia's existing and long-term homelessness epidemic was significantly compounded by the impact of COVID-19. From April 2020, 1,845 Victorians living in a perilous state of homelessness were temporarily relocated to hotels and short stay emergency accommodation across Melbourne, an initiative which successfully minimised further harm.

Now the State Government's innovative \$150 million H2H program is providing these clients with access to housing and support packages, delivered through unique partnerships between housing and support service agencies – like **GreenLight Plus**.

Leading the **GreenLight Plus** consortium, SHM CEO Cathy Humphrey says SHM and The Salvation Army are providing support services through a dedicated case management program, while housing partner Housing Choices manages their accommodation needs through its Intensive Tenancy and Property Management Services arm.

"Our **GreenLight Plus** team is delivering packages of housing and support, including a specialist health response to 146 people who last year were sleeping rough across Melbourne," Ms Humphrey said.

Suitable dwellings have been procured from both Housing Choices and Department of Housing properties and through head-leases from the private rental market. Flexible support options will include financial assistance to maintain tenancies for those tenants waiting for long-term social housing. Out of the 146 people receiving support packages, 49 of them have families or partners that will be housed with them.

Cathy Humphrey said: “Many of the people we supported into hotel emergency accommodation last year have experienced long-term homelessness or disadvantage and have complex needs. The **GreenLight Plus** program is a vital investment that’s providing both affordable housing and the support they need to restore their health and wellbeing - and prevent a return to rough sleeping.

“Not only will they have a safe place to call home, managed and supported by an experienced housing provider, but because we know our clients and they develop trust in us, we can help stabilise any chronic health concerns and improve their community connection, as part of their long-term recovery journey.”

To date, nearly half of clients have been successfully allocated housing through **GreenLight Plus**. *One of those clients is Pat*, who settled into his permanent public housing property in May. Pat, who is in his late forties, moved to Australia with his adoptive family at the age of 12. Throughout his adult life Pat has mostly lived transiently, experiencing chronic homelessness and rough sleeping due to multiple complex factors including mental health diagnoses, cognitive impairment due to an acquired brain injury, alcohol and drug issues, extensive trauma and lack of ongoing social and professional supports.*

Pat first engaged with Sacred Heart Mission in 2020 while in emergency hotel accommodation due to the pandemic. His case manager supported him through three hotel changes before he was allocated a support package. A holistic, compassionate, flexible and trauma-informed case management approach was essential to prevent a return to rough sleeping until an appropriate long-term housing offer was realised.

*The wraparound support and ongoing care coordination provided by **GreenLight Plus** has given Pat the prospect of stability, health and a new quality of life. On what has helped him through the last 10 months, Pat says: "GreenLight has helped me heaps. Outreach has been good because it can be a lonely experience otherwise."*

Housing Choices General Manager of Housing Services, Melissa Palframan said the project provides a substantial opportunity to help eliminate homelessness in Victoria:

“The **GreenLight Plus** model is transformative because housing and homelessness services specialists are working together, in multidisciplinary teams.

“One of the unique elements of **GreenLight Plus** is that we engage directly with clients and ensure they are going to be located where they want to be and feel positive and comfortable with their new accommodation before they move in. It’s more than bricks and mortar – it has to be the right fit, to have longevity.

“By spending the extra time and care in placement and wrap-around services, **GreenLight Plus** will deliver long-term positive housing and quality of life outcomes for some of the most vulnerable members of our community.”

Cathy Humphrey said: “The State Government is working collaboratively with us to end homelessness as well as build on its \$5.3 billion pledge to deliver 12,000 social housing homes throughout Melbourne and regional areas – so even the most vulnerable can have a safe home.”

The **GreenLight Plus** consortium will monitor, collect evidence and evaluate outcomes as the Project continues.

CONTACT

Holly Cooper
Communication and Advocacy Manager – Sacred Heart Mission
hcooper@sacredheartmission.org
Mob: 0424 137 763

Emma Duncan
General Manager – Strategic Communications – Housing Choices Australia
www.housingchoicesaustralia.org.au
emma.duncan@hcau.org.au
Mob: 0412 181 991