



St Vincent de Paul Society
good works



Supporting homeless men in Tasmania

Bethlehem
House



Annual
Report
2019-20

More than a bed for the night...



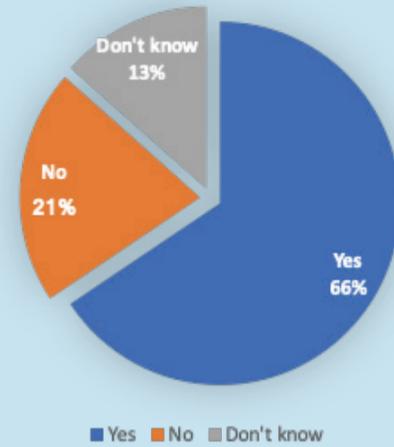
"If I didn't have help from Bethlehem House I don't know where I'd be. There have been several circumstances in my life that has led to me being homeless time and time again, but Bethlehem House has always been there to pick up the pieces no matter what I was facing.

I have been able to access a variety of services here including, drug and alcohol counselling and mental health services, which have all led to my recovery."

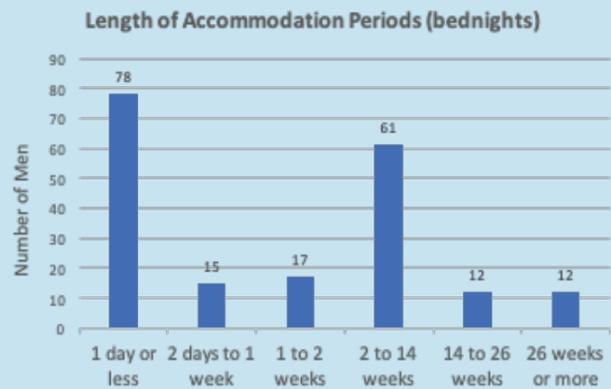
100%
crisis beds full


27118
meals served

Client has previously been diagnosed with a mental health condition by a health professional



A special thank you to Bunnings who came and helped clean the courtyard and create a garden area with the residents.




9832
room nights



Builders were busy on site creating 18 new self-contained living pods for our residents to transition out to once they have been in the main residence for a certain period of time. These pods have allowed residents to have their own space and are the next step in helping them to move on to a place of their own.

Our TCF funded 'Improving Skills: Improving lives of homeless men' project, is in its second year.

The project aims are:

1. To enable men recovering from homelessness and related drug addiction, alcohol abuse and social issues to engage in positive life experiences
2. To engage homeless men in daily practical focussed workshops teaching essential skills
3. To teach homeless men essential skills which they can use to improve their wellbeing and to assist them to reintegrate into a stable community life:
 - Literacy
 - Digital Literacy
 - Household skills (Finances/Cooking)
 - Mental Wellbeing, Social and Relationship skills
4. To better equip them to return to the community with improved community connections.



Clockwise from top - Community participation at The Men's Shed; A desk made by a participant; Enjoying time together in their lounge room.


92
emergency bed nights


37
men into permanent housing

Bethlehem House is an NDIS provider and in the 2019-20 financial year we had two residents under Supported Independent Living (SIL).

Having these SIL's allows these residents to live in their own house with support from our staff to help them with everyday living. Everything from cooking and cleaning, to budgeting for essential shopping and extra-curricular activities.

One of these activities that they attended each week is shown in these photos at The Men's Shed in New Town where our resident was able create a desk and a bookshelf made from pallets for his room.



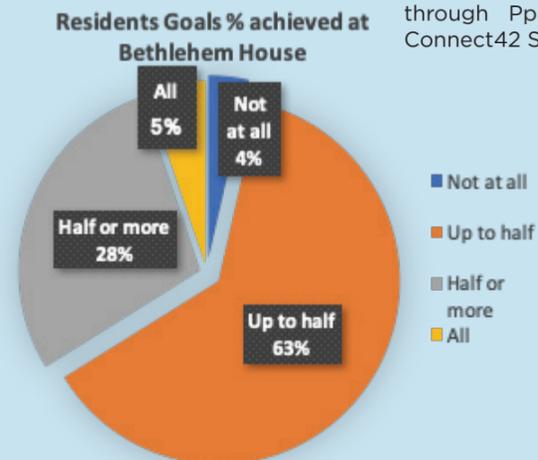
Buddy the resident cat kept our men company during lockdown.

Covid-19 had a major impact on our residents and staff. We had to close our doors to any non-residents and move our residents into single occupancy rooms with their own bathroom. During lockdown we were unable to take in new residents so there was a significant reduction in numbers. The residents were encouraged to only go to communal areas if need be so many of them felt secluded with the loss of community living.



81%
bed occupancy levels (reduced capacity due to COVID-19)


42
participants in the Skills For Living Program



President's Report

Bethlehem House's capacity to support homeless men increased this year, thanks to a Tasmanian Government initiative which has placed 18 independent 'Living Pods' as temporary dwellings at our site. We are grateful to our neighbours who have generously made land available for this use and to the wider community who have been supportive of this additional resource. Our community friends and donors have come forward with wonderful fundraising ideas, gifts, and messages of support which I am pleased to acknowledge and thank them for their contribution.

I would like to thank the staff who continue to maintain our support service for homeless men throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. All of us this year, have been concerned about the potential for the spread of the virus through our state and very concerned for the health and well-being of the homeless. Maintaining a safe home for our residents, many of whom have underlying health complications, has been paramount. Our front-line staff have assisted men with increasingly complex mental health support needs and assisted around 1/3 into sustainable long-term accommodation. For others, the cycle of homelessness, poor mental health and drug and alcohol dependency is hard to break. We continue to work with all these men and with colleagues in external services to offer respite and assistance to set and work towards achievable life goals.

The Management Committee members continue to apply their extensive skills and knowledge to the task of governance and assistance with tasks as varied as marketing, business development and legal assistance. Their guidance and support make it possible to grow and develop our services to homeless men. I am extremely grateful for their dedication and commitment.

Over the coming year we will doubtless face further obstacles to overcome but we have a strong team and without doubt, we will maintain our sound financial position and continue from strength to strength. We remain on track towards the development of a new Bethlehem House facility in 2023.

My sincere thanks to our CEO Stephanie for her untiring and enthusiastic work. Her willingness to look for potential to enhance our service and to provide sound advice to the Management Committee make for a bright future.



Adriana Taylor

CEO's Report

What a year it has been for Bethlehem House and for all in the Community Sector. I began with a huge community voice calling for more support for the homeless which has led to increased capacity. Our new Living Pods have a bedroom, bathroom with shower, a fridge, TV, A/C unit and in some cases a fantastic view across Hobart to the Mountain.

Before the Pods could be commissioned, we were all struck by the pandemic and ensuing social distancing restrictions. Due to this our capacity fell as we stopped providing shared bedrooms and bathrooms and attempted to maintain strict hygiene regimes. We have decided that we will now keep each of our rooms for single occupancy only, in keeping with modern housing standards.

We had to make the hard decision during the pandemic, to no longer provide access inside the house to non-residents. It was not an easy choice to make but was necessary to keep the remaining vulnerable residents safe during Covid and we were able to give out the donations we received of clothing, blankets, sleeping bags and toiletries etc, through partners in the community.

Throughout the year, thanks to Communities Tasmania, we operated 12 crisis accommodation beds plus one unit for dads with children. In May our new Living Pods were opened and quickly filled. Residents are now certainly enjoying the peace and sense of privacy of their own unit.

This year, as last year, in addition to our main support services, we delivered NDIS support services in a neighbouring property, for homeless men in need of Supported Independent Living. The property has been set aside for men with mental health and cognitive disabilities and we have a dedicated support team available for this 24/7 service.

There has been a sharp increase in the recognition of the numbers of clients with a psychosocial disability, as reflected in the number of clients who now have an NDIS support package. To meet this demand our NDIS team has grown substantially and we are much better able to help men work towards their goals.

Finally, the Tasmanian Government Communities Tasmania, 'Affordable Housing Action Plan' has set the timetable for our long-awaited and much needed move to a purpose-built facility in 2023. We expect an even busier year ahead as, together with our colleagues in the community and public sectors, we prepare to meet the extremely complex support needs of homeless men.

Stephanie K Meikle



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