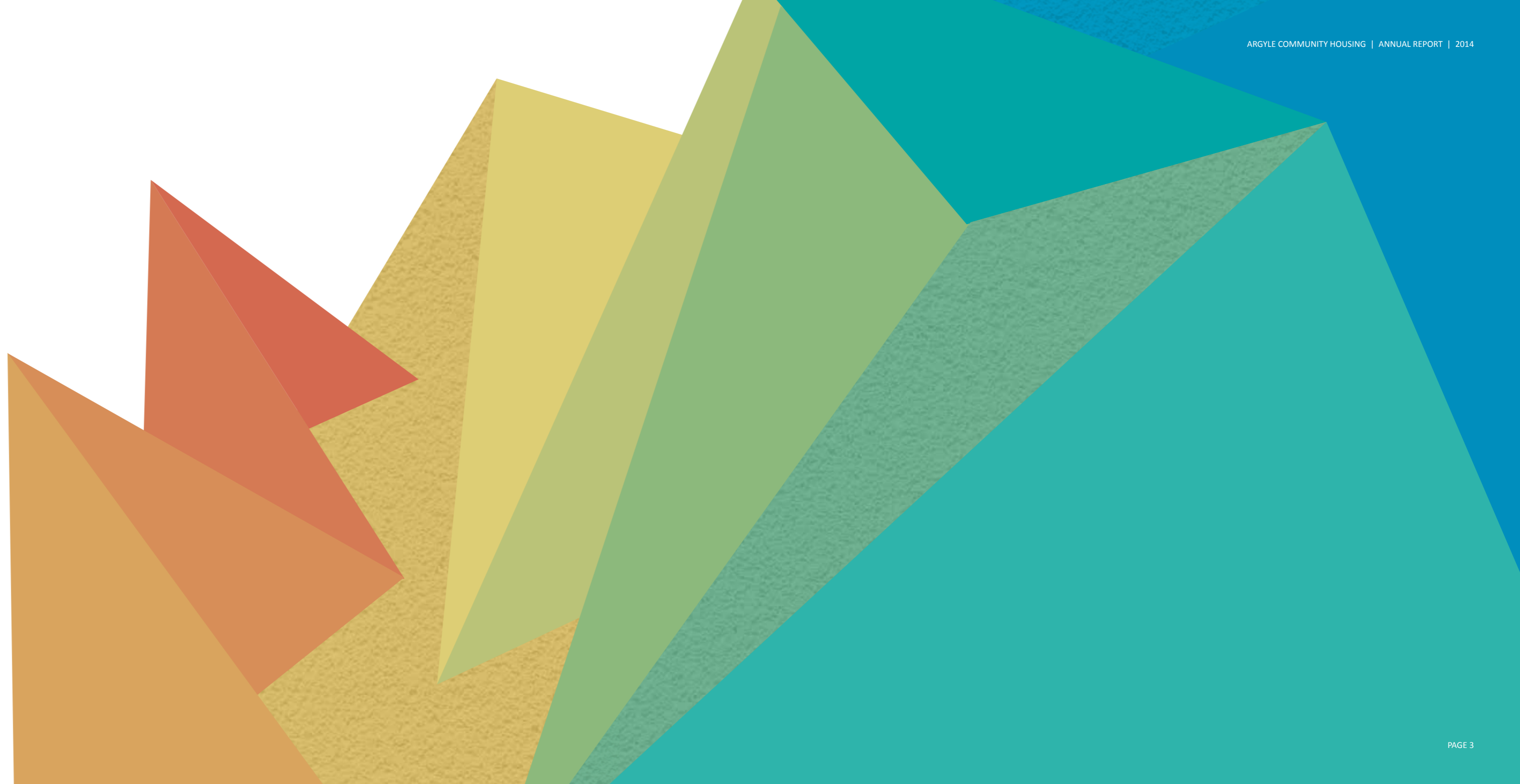


# ANNUAL REPORT 2014





## Acknowledgement to Country

Argyle Community Housing Ltd wishes to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land and pay our respects to the elders - past, present and future, for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of Aboriginal Australia. We must always remember that under the concrete and asphalt, this land is, was and always will be traditional Aboriginal land.

# WELCOME

**At Argyle Community Housing our aim is to enhance our tenants' living experience. With this in mind we challenged ourselves in this Annual Report to bring our tenants' stories to life. The answer was found in using some clever technology...**

Therefore, in addition to providing the standard, printed annual report, we also have an application

that can be used by smart phone or tablet users to turn the printed image beside each story into a short video!

On the right you will see step by step how easy it is to download the free Aurasma application onto your iPhone, iPad or Android device. Then following the instructions you hold the device above the image on the page and a video will begin to play! Magic!

So not only will you be able to read the stories from our Chairman and tenants, you can watch

them come to life and feel as if you're in the room with them, hearing and seeing what they have to say.

We are delighted that through our work and with our supporters help, we are able to make a real difference in our tenants living experience, now and into the future.

## VIEWING THE VIDEOS



1.

Download the free Aurasma app on your iPhone, iPad or Android device.



2.

Launch Aurasma, open the menu and search for Argyle Community Housing



3.

Click Follow on our channel



4.

Tap this icon on your screen



5.

Hover your phone over any page where you see this symbol



6.

Watch what happens!

# THANK YOU

The team at Argyle would sincerely like to thank our tenants for their continued loyalty and support. We would also like to express our appreciation to our stakeholders, including:

- Local Governments
- State Government agencies including Family and Community Services and The Land and Housing Corporation
- Social Services - Federal Government
- ACT Community Services and Economic Development Directorates

In addition we also would like to thank our many corporate and community partners without whose support sustainable tenancies could not be achieved.

These partners provide our tenants with services like mental health support, nutrition and healthy eating information, drug and alcohol rehabilitation, financial education, and help in dealing with family violence.

To all the real estate agents, contractors and suppliers who work with us, we are grateful for your ongoing support, service and dedication. Without your help we couldn't provide the depth and quality of services and housing to our tenants.



# HOW WE'VE HELPED

- Our housing solutions are designed for people on low to moderate incomes. In the past 12 months we've housed 404 homeless people.
- We have 46 Affordable Housing properties.
- The total number of properties we have is 2,220, which house 2,387 tenants. Of those, there are 358 sole parents; 1,164 are children aged 16 and under; and 593 are people over 55.
- We have 208 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tenants. We have formed a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) working group and staff have participated in National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC week.
- We ensure that those with special needs are given equal opportunity to achieve a better future. We house 655 people with a disability.
- Argyle have empowered tenants through education, training and employment initiatives that include Rent It Keep It courses, and job service agencies.
- Tenant feedback is important to us and we respond by listening and improving our

- services. Every year we conduct a tenant survey. Last year 87% of respondents were happy with their housing services; and 85% were satisfied with the upgrades completed on their homes.
- We also carry out weekly telephone maintenance audits on a sample of repairs to ensure that tenants are happy with the work completed.
- This year our staff travelled 314,000kms around 17 different local government areas across NSW & ACT to meet the needs of our tenants.
- With the help of our 226 support partners we are able to link people to services to create sustainable tenancies for people who struggle in the private rental market.

\*These points are based on key Argyle statistics as at 30 June 2014.





# FEATURE FILM





# EVERY BIT COUNTS

## TENANT SURVEY RESULTS

**41%** The largest grouping for age of respondents was 65+ which accounted for 41%

**63%** 63% of respondents were female, and 38% male, a ratio of approximately 3:2 female: male respondents.

**87%** The key overall combined satisfaction with housing services was an impressive 87%.

**85%** 85% of respondents satisfied with their support service

**84%** The combined satisfaction with repairs and maintenance was 84%.

**88%** 88% satisfaction with upgrades

**86%** 86% satisfaction with neighbourhood

**88%** 88% satisfaction with communication

**81%** 81% satisfaction with tenant engagement.

**65%** 65% of recent tenants waited less than one year to be housed, compared to 59% in 2012;

**16%** 16% waited between one and two years, compared to 21% in 2012

**9%** 9% waited 3-5 years, compared to 12% in 2012.

**“** On the whole I find Argyle a great organisation. They have caring people. I always find them to be very responsive to my questions and give advice when needed.”

There were very high levels of combined satisfaction for the different aspects of the repairs and maintenance service. This shows overall satisfaction with the repairs and maintenance service and compares Argyle (84%) to the Federation benchmark average (77%)

Repairs and maintenance was by far the most important priority for tenants, with 68% of respondents selecting it among their top three

**“** I have always found Argyle to be kind and helpful as my health declines, for which I am thankful. It is nice to know people are there to help and to understand all life's ups and downs. ”

## TENANT STORIES

# COURTNEY SMITH

I am 17 and completing Year 12 at Mount Austin High School, Wagga Wagga. I want to get the most out of life. When I finish school I'd like to be a Paramedic and a nurse. Last year I enrolled at TAFE Riverina Campus to complete my Certificate 3 Assistant Nursing, which gives me knowledge before going to University. I'm also going to trek the Kokoda Trail in a few weeks!

I've always grown up in housing. I have a younger brother Jordan who is 15. When I was about 10 my Mum got sick and Dad was in gaol for six years. Our old home was near a reserve and we had a snake slither down the fridge! Mum hates snakes, and Argyle came to the rescue and moved us into a new home.

It had carpet and had been painted, and was closer to our school and shops. It was a nice clean start. The staff at Argyle put a lot of effort into helping us find a house. Having Argyle there gives you a sense of security, knowing that people are looking out for you. Mum is still living there and is very happy. Coming from a low socio-economic background is difficult. Stress is there. Mum and I used to fight about things like school and money. So I got a part time job at KFC, and worked for 3.5 years with full time school and TAFE. I've always felt obligated to help, a sisterly instinct I suppose, to help Jordy and Mum. I moved out of home 18 months ago and lived with friends and teachers. Last week I went

**"It doesn't matter what upbringing you have, if you want to succeed you will if you try."**

back to my Dad's. I am very independent and like to do things on my own.

School has always been the constant in my life. If you want to reach your goals the teachers will help. More students should utilize their teachers, they are always there to help. I had it drilled into me at a very young age by my grandparents, parents and teachers how important school is.

Teachers helped me with public speaking. We did a project on sustainability and built models, I did a presentation to Wagga Council, and at our school assembly. This gave me confidence. My teachers pushed me with the academic side of school. I love learning!

My association with Argyle continued when it was Reconciliation Week in Wagga Wagga. I was the Aboriginal captain of the Leadership Group and I gave a talk about how Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal members of the school can work together to achieve a common goal. Argyle was there and wanted to help with

fundraising for the Rotary exchange program that sends student overseas for a year to complete Year 12 in another country. I was one of six who were accepted. Belgium was my first choice and I got it – now I have to learn to speak French! I'm the first student to go without my family being able to provide for it, and the fundraising will help me get there.

In the past few months we've had activities like raffles, and hosting a formal dinner at the Country Club, and Argyle are putting on a BBQ. Without these fundraising efforts I wouldn't be going as an exchange student. I am so grateful for people's time and effort and willingness to help. Amy from Argyle has been fantastic and helps me when I need support. When I return from Belgium I hope to have some work experience in one of Argyle's offices. And then after that I'll be going to University.

One of my goals for the future is to have permanent stability in having my own home. A secure future is about working and achieving goals within yourself. Security is both a physical thing and a feeling inside. I value those who have been there for me, and for my education. I am incredibly grateful for both of these, and this makes me feel optimistic about the future.





## TENANT STORIES

# JOHN COLLINSON

I was 32 and homeless, living in my car in bushland around Sydney. Unforeseen circumstances forced me out of home. I had my car, clothes and laptop and that was it.

A woman offered me a place to stay in Perth until I was back on my feet. I ran through my options and decided to make the three-day journey to Perth. Things didn't go so well there, so after two weeks I packed up and returned to Canberra. A month later I was homeless again, living in my car in bushland, washing in the river, cooking on gas campsites, with barely enough food or money. I felt like I had no options.

I spoke to Centrelink who referred me to FirstPoint, an organisation that helps Canberra people who are homeless or at risk of being homeless, and to the Department of Housing. Centrelink also provided a free meal guide. At my wits end I was offered a room at Samaritan House, which helped to get things started again.

Samaritan House referred me to the Family Relationship Centre, Legal Aid, and CanFaCS to assist me with gaining visitation rights to my daughter. They also put me in touch with St Vincent De Paul, and the Blue Door Drop in Centre for clothes, petrol, free meals, Big W vouchers for basic electrical appliances, and furniture from Vinnies.

The next step after staying at Samaritan House was to apply for a room at Ainslie Village, Campbell. Ainslie is community housing with 172 tenants, eight to a house, communal kitchen, bathrooms and toilets. The staff at Argyle have been a great help. Terri Stiller, Operations Manager ACT, helped me through the process of applying, and then Emma did the tenant transfer. Over the 18 months I've been living at Ainslie they have eased my worries and made things a lot easier.

I was a Gyprocker for 18 years, had my daughter and quit work to take care of her. I miss working and being active, and always having something to do.

Things have been looking up since I acquired a position through Argyle as a part time Maintenance Assistant at Ainslie Village. I help Jim who is the Maintenance Officer. I enjoy it as it occupies my time and my mind. I feel useful as fixing things is what I do.

**"The difference Argyle has made is that I've been able to get a restart on life, eat decent food and have a roof over my head."**

It has put money in my pocket and kept me sane, allowing me to buy things I need and to eat properly. Now I am fairly self-sufficient, whereas before it was a struggle. I feel like a normal person again, instead of feeling stuck and put aside. Life's simple values like having a hot shower and a decent feed I hold in high regard.

Doors are opening up for me day by day. Things are much more positive than six months ago. Step by step, I am mentally stronger by doing it on my own. The difference Argyle has made is that I've been able to get a restart on life, eat decent food and have a roof over my head. I can now make arrangements to get on with my life. If it wasn't for Argyle I'd still be living in my car at different campsites around Canberra.

Now others in the Village come looking to me for help! We talk and I help them realise their options to be able to make informed choices, so they don't feel like they are stuck.

My goal for the immediate future is to have access to my 6 year-old daughter and gain priority housing so she can have visits in a suitable environment. My next goal is to gain employment and full custody.







TENANT STORIES

GRACE LAWRENCE

I live in Mittagong in a lovely villa in Oxford Street, across from the railway line. I have four children their partners and eight grandchildren living nearby. I bake for my grandkids, and they particularly like my banana bread made with lots of bananas! I came back to the Southern Highlands eight years ago when my marriage broke up and I lost my home and most of my share of the house money with the GFC.

We were living on the coast, it was a very, very difficult time. My ex-husband was verbally abusive and threatening. I was Office Manager for a Doctor. After a number of years my health deteriorated, I collapsed and had to leave work because of stress. I didn't tell anyone about my abusive husband. He wouldn't go to anger management counselling, and then I found out he was seeing another lady. Finally I told my Doctor about 7 years before I left my husband. It was the first time I'd spoken about it, even though it had been about 3 years of abuse by then.

On my birthday my family came to spend the day with me, his behaviour was extremely odd. My daughter lived on a property and was staying with us for the weekend. He went ballistic, waving his arms and threatening me at the top of his voice. I told her he was often like that. He was jealous of the family and had alienated my friends.

My sons came and removed me that night, we left at about 10pm, he was off on a rage somewhere. I lived with my son and his wife in Mittagong for six months, sleeping in the playroom. I was still working part-time for an Osteopath.

When I came back to live in Bowral I felt as if I didn't know who I was, I was concerned about the future, and didn't want to live with my family. When you have someone who is abusive for years you lose your identity, it is very hard to struggle back from that. Counselling through Catholic Care helped me to regain my equilibrium. My faith, my family and the nuns at Hartzler Park also helped me.

I first heard of Argyle Community Housing from a newspaper article. Bernadette was on the desk at Argyle and treated me with great respect and courtesy, as has everyone. Eight months later I received a renovated cottage on lots of land at New Berrima. I felt safe and secure because Argyle looked after me so well.

Now I am at Mittagong in a 2-bedroom spacious villa, with robes and a walk in shower – not one over a bath, which is good. And it has a garden! The house is perfect for me, it is warm as I hate the cold and it is close to my family and friends. Once I had an Argyle home I regained my independence. I was no longer dependent on my



family, I felt very much my own person. I am much healthier than I've ever been, I think I would be dead had I stayed with my husband. I am very thankful to everyone at Argyle, they have all been very, very kind. I have no concerns as Argyle has looked after me for 6 years.

I'm on Argyle's Tenants Action Committee and we help Bernadette to organise functions, like the senior's concert, Christmas in July, and the garden competition. We regularly fold 600 brochures for the mailings to tenants, and I type the minutes from the meetings. I like to give back to Argyle. I also volunteer teaching scripture at Berrima Primary School. It's important to feel useful as you get older. I no longer feel useless.

Recently I had my 70th birthday, it was fantastic, like a new chapter in my life. Since Argyle began managing my accommodation and given me the villa in town, my life has changed for the better. I feel very confident and secure. Finally I know who I am!

**"Recently I had my 70th birthday, it was fantastic, like a new chapter in my life. I feel very confident and secure!"**





## BUILDING PROJECTS

# COMMON GROUND ACT

### **ACT Government, with the assistance of the Commonwealth Government, has commenced building a 40 unit complex known as Common Ground Canberra in Gungahlin ACT.**

The complex will house up to 20 homeless people and 20 low-income earners, in appropriate and affordable accommodation. A community based and voluntary Common Ground Board will lead this development.

The building is located close to transport and amenities. Construction commenced in December 2013 and will be operational by March 2015.

Argyle will provide tenancy and property management, using a flexible approach that will meet the needs of the tenants. An ACT experienced service provider, Northside Community Services, will provide onsite intensive support to sustain tenancies, address health and welfare concerns, and assist in tenants becoming job ready and integrated into the wider community.

Common Ground is an intervention model addressing homelessness by providing safe, secure, supported accommodation for people who have experienced homelessness. It is designed to help

the chronically homeless to stabilise their lives through assertive supportive housing services.

The Common Ground program offers a specifically built or modified accommodation complex that mixes people who have experienced homelessness with low income working tenants who pay affordable rent.

The key theme of Common Ground Canberra is to assist tenants to connect to the local and extended community to address their needs, and the program also has a focus on social interaction for its tenants.

The Common Ground model began in New York, USA and is now developed throughout the world including Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Hobart.





## BUILDING PROJECTS

# 1-3 McCLEERY AVE MOSS VALE

### Work is underway at 1-3 McCleery Avenue, Moss Vale, for the construction of 9 x 2 and 2 x 1 bedroom units to be completed and ready for tenants in March 2015.

These large, architecturally designed units have ceramic tiled open-plan living, build-ins in all bedrooms, landscaped gardens, and some with a universal design which means that they can be modified to meet the specific needs of tenants.

This development is the first of its kind in the Wingecarribee and we look forward to assisting those who may like to downsize, or are just after affordable rental housing. Affordable Housing is not the same as social housing and is appropriate for the needs of a range of low to moderate income households.

You do not have to be eligible for social housing to apply for affordable housing. However, people who are eligible for social housing may also be eligible for affordable housing properties. The rent payable will be 80% of the determined market rent, and will be competitive to the rental paid in Moss Vale. The project is likely to attract people who work locally in industry, health care or our schools.

We are offering stable and secure tenancies for singles and couples, which are available to people on moderate incomes of \$45,000 and above.

This soon to be completed development will assist its residents in the rental market and hopefully allow them to use the money they save on rent as a platform to move into home ownership.



# CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

DR. TERRY SPENCER

It has been a successful and productive 12 months as we solidify our property business and provide more housing solutions for low-to-moderate income earners struggling in the rental market.

Thank you to Chris Bratchford, our previous CEO, who left in January, and Nigel Milan who stepped in as acting CEO for five months. Wendy Middleton who has recently been appointed as the new CEO has over 30 years experience working in Community Services and not-for-profit sectors in New South Wales and Victoria. Wendy has already achieved many wins in her previous role with us as General Manager Business Development and Renewal, and more recently as Chief Operating Officer.

I stepped up from Vice-Chairman to Chairman of Argyle Community Housing Ltd on 31 March 2014 due to the illness of our founding Chairman, Chris Benton. I look forward to continuing to work with Argyle's senior management team to alleviate stress around housing.

I would like to acknowledge the strong support I have received from the Board over the past

months in managing important internal issues. They continue to apply their specific skills and knowledge to ensuring that Argyle remains a preeminent national community housing provider. Working with Nigel Milan, the Board agreed to move the focus of the business back to our tenants and how we can enhance their living experience. Hence, among other initiatives, we have reduced the size of the senior management team and reinvested funds into the maintenance of property stock.

We were very proud to achieve national registration as a Tier 1 provider on 1 May 2014 and we are currently working towards renewal of our third party accreditation as a community housing provider; we will know the outcome of our efforts in September 2014.

You will read the stories of three of our tenants, Courtney Smith, John Collinson and Grace Lawrence in this report. They tell us how Argyle has made a positive difference in their lives, with some very touching results.

Our organisation remains financially strong with

*"We want to put roofs over people's heads. We know it's a foundation for them to move forward"*

total revenue for the year at \$28.6m. The majority of our discretionary spending was concerned with property investments (\$2.6m) and maintenance, including upgrades, of our properties (\$4.6m). Cash surplus generated during the year was \$3.7m.

A number of housing projects were undertaken this year. We already have plans in motion to create additional properties in the Bowral/Moss Vale area, with other regions to follow. Details can be found elsewhere in this Report.

In the next financial year we are committed to spending \$1.5m on planned maintenance; \$300,000 on community regeneration; and \$2.2m on responsive maintenance. All of this work will be funded from surpluses and cash reserves.

Argyle is investing in a new company IT system from Kypera, a UK based software supplier that focuses on using state-of-the-art technology to deliver clear business benefits. This system is integral to our current and future reporting roles to government stakeholders, and to improving our business performance.

We continue to be an active participant in relevant industry bodies, and enthusiastically promote a strong community housing sector. Argyle has a positive relationship with the ACT government and is assisting in the development of the community housing sector. We work in partnership with the NSW government to find solutions for the under-supply and over-demand of housing, particularly to alleviate homelessness.

At Argyle we believe in the ongoing investment in our people, the lifeblood of any organisation. Last year 10 staff completed the Certificate IV in Community Housing. This year we will create a Tenant Action Workers group to work with our tenants and assist in the connection to their communities. Needless to say, the Board is very supportive of the staff as evidenced by the decision to continue our rolling program of regional Board meetings.

Given conservative governments at both state and federal levels, we think it is likely that there will be a continued transfer of social and welfare responsibilities to the private and not-for-profit sectors. Our renewed commitment and energy towards enhancing the Tenant experience, along with our strong financial base, will assist in meeting the housing needs of our current and future tenants.







# FINANCIALS

Revenue \$28.6m	<b>\$28.6m</b>
Operating Profit \$5.6m	<b>\$5.6m</b>
Surplus \$18.9m	<b>\$18.9m</b>
Net Assets \$68.3m	<b>\$68.3m</b>
Maintenance Expenditure \$3.3m	<b>\$3.3m</b>
Property Upgrade Expenditure \$1.4m	<b>\$1.4m</b>

# OUR VISION

By providing housing as the foundation, assist our clients and their communities to achieve a better future

# OUR VALUES

## DIVERSITY

We respect the diversity of our clients

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## PARTNERSHIP

We value partnerships

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## COLLABORATION

We collaborate with members of our community to achieve positive outcomes

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## OPPORTUNITY

We create opportunities for a better 'tomorrow' for our clients and our communities

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## SUPPORT

We value a constructive and supportive work environment







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