



ANNUAL REPORT 2021



Stable One
more than a place to stay

More than a place to stay

Our mission is to support the Church as it works together to share the love of God by providing accommodation to those in need. To journey with each person towards stability, offering physical and spiritual care.



Our Story

"When I had no place to stay, you invited me in." Matt 25:35 (TPT)

Stable One was born out of the prayers of God's people. Inspired by Jesus' words in Matthew 25:35, local Christians gathered to ask what they could do to serve some of the most vulnerable members of their community – people experiencing homelessness.

Since running a local Winter Shelter pilot in 2017, Stable One has gone on to demonstrate the power of bringing together churches from a range of denominations to work together in providing safe, supportive accommodation to those in need. The Winter Shelter Network now includes seven shelters, in areas ranging from the eastern suburbs of Melbourne to Toowoomba in Queensland. While the experience looks different in each context, the common thread is the Church engaging with the wider community to use its resources (people, property, finances) to meet the physical and spiritual needs of people without a stable home.

COVID-19 resulted in many challenges, but also opportunities. A new supported accommodation program – The Lodge – was established as a trial in the Yarra Valley. Our incredibly supportive volunteer and donor base enabled many lives to be impacted throughout this season, and provided much valuable learning for the organisation along the way.

Having demonstrated the capability and capacity to empower the Church to love their neighbours, Stable One continues to explore new frontiers.

Board Members



JENNY WILLETTS
Chair / Managing Director



ANN FRASER
Board Director (Vice Chair)



REV PHILIP KING
Board Director (Treasurer)



LYNDELL FRASER
Board Director (Secretary)



BARRY BORNEMAN
Board Director



KERRY PELL
Board Director

CONSULTANT



IAN BUNSTON
Board Director



DAVID WELLS
Board Director



DR DAVID WILSON



Message from the Vice-Chair

In a continued climate of challenge and change, the need for stable housing and a framework of care is as fundamental to human wellbeing as it has ever been. It continues to be the goal and vision of the Stable One Board to support the Church in any way we can to provide shelter and care for those with none.

The Yarra Valley continues to face significant shortages of affordable housing and has never had any crisis accommodation. As the Board has sought to respond to the needs of those without a stable home and navigate the obstacles of virus and regulation, a willingness to change has been our constant. In 2021 our Lodge project was an opportunity to 'learn while doing'. We employed a team of people to assist with this, partnered with local churches, and could not have continued without our volunteers who so generously gave time and energy to it all. The Board extends its grateful thanks to all of you who have supported Stable One through prayer, finance, volunteering and myriad acts of kindness.

Over the past year the Board has continued to meet online to ensure continuity of oversight. In the hardest days of lockdown, we have been energised by Jenny's vision and her ability to inspire others. I want to thank Jenny for her passion, tenacity and faith. As Jenny shared stories of connection and renewed hope, we could see that Stable One was actively helping to rewrite the stories of trauma and disconnection for our lodgers.

Much consideration and prayer is given to the direction taken by Stable One and as a Board we seek to learn, grow and change in order to remain true to our purpose. I would like to thank each member of the Board for their continued commitment, wisdom and experience. As we look ahead to so many possibilities and opportunities, the collective experience they provide is invaluable. We remain with our eyes firmly fixed on the horizon for the God who led the Israelites by fire and cloud, to show us the next step in offering a place of welcome to those needing shelter for their bodies and spirits.

– ANN FRASER, VICE-CHAIR

By day the Lord went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night. – Exodus 13:21



Message from the MD

As I reflect on our journey so far, there is much to be thankful for:

- > 110 people from my neighbourhood, the Yarra Valley, have been supported by the Church working together to provide them accommodation. Each person unique and made in the image of God – different ages, personalities, challenges and stories. They stayed varying lengths of time but often left saying similar things, mostly about the food they've eaten, the care they've been shown and the different, but good, environment they have experienced.

Our lives as staff and volunteers are also richer for the time we have spent together. This same story is being repeated in other neighbourhoods around Australia as the Church comes together to show God's love in a practical way, using what they already have in their hands.

- > As COVID-19 brought about many more risks associated with running a Winter Shelter, we were able to take the opportunity to trial a new supported accommodation program in a rented conference centre in the valley. This was certainly not easy, particularly through the challenge of long lockdowns, but there were significant positive outcomes for those who stayed with us.
- > Incredible volunteers who selflessly serve others, often going the extra mile, sacrificing their time week after week to build relationships, clean, cook meals, make beds, drive a minibus, accompany someone to an appointment, or just encourage them to get out for a walk.
- > In 2021 we were able to employ a great team of staff to support our work at the Lodge – live-in chaplains, a social worker, a maintenance manager and a bookkeeper. All of them volunteered some of their time in addition to their paid work and were a wonderful team.
- > Incredibly, our income has continued to keep pace with increased outgoings. Last year, grants (including a substantial federal government grant), individual donors, churches, local business and the fundraising efforts of many people walking, riding or running as part of our 'Warby Trail April Challenge' meant that we could balance the books.
- > Stable One has a very committed and experienced board who continue to spend many hours behind the scenes helping to navigate challenges and make wise, prayerful and appropriate decisions. Dr David Wilson has also made a significant contribution to the organisation in his role as consultant.

Finally, but most importantly, I am thankful for answered prayer. God is faithful. When I step back and look at the Church in action, I smile. I think God does too.

– JENNY



Coby – our regular volunteer cook at The Lodge.

“I am so relieved they finally have a safe, caring, respectful place to live. You are all such beautiful people. A huge weight has been lifted off our shoulders.”

– Parent of a lodger

It is easy to forget that the families of people experiencing homelessness are also impacted. They may feel helpless, hopeless, exhausted, inadequate, frustrated and a whole range of other emotions. We often receive messages like this one and it is good to know we make a difference in some of their lives too.



At the start of 2021, a Board fundraising sub-committee was established and in the gap between pandemic restrictions we were able to resume fundraising activities. A new program of one-to-one sponsorships gave us an increase in regular income. Our benefactors continued to be very generous with donations and we were fortunate to be awarded some substantial grants.

Stable One has a financial objective of break-even. The program of supported accommodation at the Lodge involved a major commitment to pay rent and wages, as professional paid staff augmented and supported the work of volunteers. Our volunteers provided thousands of unpaid hours with value-in-kind of about \$100,000.

– REV PHILIP KING, TREASURER

With thanks ...

Stable One is supported by many different individuals, churches and organisations who give of their time, goods and services or finances. We are grateful for every gift, large or small. The following organisations are recognised for their significant contributions in 2021:

- › Barnabas Connexion Inc.
- › Canterbury Council of Churches
- › CareWorks
- › Church of Christ Montrose
- › Community (Bendigo) Bank Mount Evelyn
- › Department of Social Services
- › Discovery Church
- › Eastern Volunteers
- › Glory City Church
- › Goudswaard Family Foundation
- › Kew Baptist Church
- › Kilsyth South Baptist Church
- › Life Ministry Church
- › Lilydale Baptist Church
- › Lilydale Uniting Church
- › Lions Club of Lilydale
- › Mount Evelyn Christian Reformed Church
- › Rotary Club of Wandin
- › St Paul's Anglican Church Boronia
- › South Croydon Anglican Church
- › St Andrew's Foundation
- › St Patrick's Church, Lilydale
- › The Foothills Foundation
- › The Mustard Tree
- › The Storehouse Roastery and Café
- › Trinity Grammar School
- › Wanallock CWA
- › Wandin Baptist Church
- › Wandin, Seville and Mount Evelyn Anglican Churches

Finances

Stable One Ltd
Income and Expenditure
Year Ended 31 Dec 2021

Income

Donations	\$ 88,396
Fundraising	\$ 15,448
Grants	\$ 167,260
Other Income	\$ 34,862

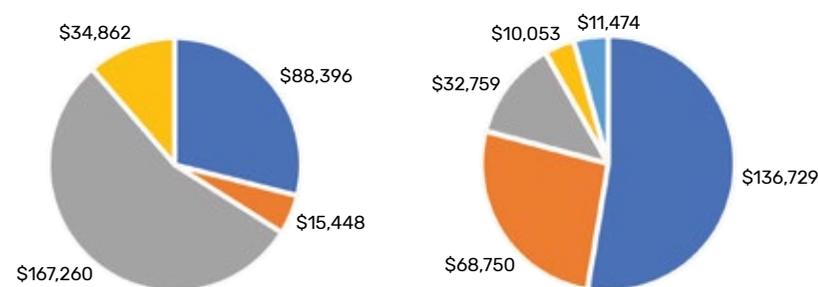
Total Income \$305,966

Expenditure

Labour costs	\$ 136,729
Rent	\$ 68,750
Power, heating & property costs	\$ 32,759
Food, transport & lodger costs	\$ 10,053
Insurance, admin & other costs	\$ 11,474

Total Expenditure \$259,766

Net Surplus \$ 46,201



- Donations
- Fundraising
- Grants
- Other income

- Labour Costs
- Rent
- Power, heating & property costs
- Food, transport & lodger costs
- Insurance, admin & other costs

The Lodge

A community that cares, connects and empowers people experiencing homelessness

In the winter months of 2020 Stable One rented a conference centre in the Yarra Valley to trial a supported accommodation model that would provide another step on the pathway out of homelessness. The Lodge recommenced in April 2021 with the intention of remaining open all year-round. Up to twelve lodgers (six male, six female) could be accommodated, each with their own private bedroom, and shared facilities and living spaces.

A small team of staff included live-in Chaplains whose role it was to build community and provide pastoral care, and a Case Manager to provide intensive support for lodgers. 62 volunteers, mostly from local churches, provided additional support. They cooked, cleaned, drove, listened, facilitated activities and, most importantly, helped to give lodgers a sense of belonging.

Lodger referrals came from local housing and welfare agencies and a partnership with Eastern Volunteers provided a cost-neutral hire of a minibus.

- › **Nine lodgers** accessed a total of **86 weeks of accommodation** at The Lodge between April and October 2021.
- › Others who were referred but deemed unsuitable for the program, were **supported to access mental health in-patient services** and **two were found longer term accommodation**.
- › **Three** of the nine lodgers have moved into **long-term accommodation**.
- › **Two** lodgers (one from 2020) also had their **new accommodation furnished** through the generosity of volunteers and other partners.

‘People really care about me.’

– Lodger



Outcomes were evaluated in weekly team meetings through the evaluation method of 'Most Significant Change' and through lodger and volunteer feedback.

- > **Care:** Lodgers experienced care from volunteers and staff and at times, each other. They were loved, despite their challenges and witnessed the caring and compassionate way others were treated. Conflict resolution was demonstrated and taught. Lodgers reported feeling safe (physically and emotionally) and accepted and often expressed thankfulness to volunteers for the time they gave. Family members of lodgers also reported gratitude for the care being shown. Practical care was given to lodgers who had surgery during their stay and in the organisation of visits to administer COVID vaccinations.
- > **Connect:** Opportunities were created for internal and external community connections and individual social capital was built - these included connections with volunteers, Alongsiders ('buddies') and external networks including churches, social clubs, libraries, medical services and other professional supports. From an organisational perspective, new connections were also made with churches and groups in addition to referral agencies.
- > **Empower:** Empowerment came through mastering new skills (eg. cooking, cleaning), collective decision-making, responsibility for tasks, taking initiative, and being given agency in goal setting. One previous lodger returned as a volunteer, and another participated in one of our fundraising initiatives.

"As we know, God does open new opportunities and one can never underestimate the past two years, not only for those who enjoyed your hospitality at The Lodge, but also the groundwork that has now been put in place for opportunities in the future when this kind of housing and support can be offered."

– Rev Matthew Connolly, St John The Baptist Anglican Church, Lilydale

The re-emergence of Covid lockdowns in 2021 had a significant impact on The Lodge and was the primary reason behind the Board's decision to close at the end of the year. The number of lodger referrals diminished as government-funded motel accommodation was made freely available to people experiencing homelessness. Some existing lodgers struggled with mandated restrictions and because of risks to the community, had to be moved on. There were also restrictions on volunteers, impacting the ability to run activities, in addition to significant COVID-safe requirements. The cost of rent and utilities as well as The Lodge's location, shared facilities, and several other factors were also considered.

The last two years have allowed for 'action research' – engaging, evaluating and adjusting with the ever-changing and challenging COVID times. Numerous resources have been developed and an enormous amount of data gathered. This valuable learning can now be used and shared with others in our network and places Stable One in a position of readiness for the next chapter in our story.

"I want to recognise the value and good work 'The Lodge' has provided to Wellways participants, and the broader population of people experiencing homelessness in the Eastern region."

– Rosie Frankish, Housing Programs Coordinator, Wellways Australia

Reuben's Story

How do you support a man whose feet have been prone to wander over the past 13 years? By providing him 'more than a place to stay'. Since April 2021, Stable One's ministry at The Lodge has done just that. Here is the story of Reuben*, one of our lodgers whose journey from the streets to security is just one of the many stories that could be told.

'In 2008 I was 50 years old. I was living in a unit in the Southeast suburbs of Melbourne when things became complicated. In addition to the hardship of my mum passing and allowing negative influences in my life, an uninvited companion started living with me. This companion didn't stay in my unit but resided inside my head. I started hearing voices and developed a mental illness. These voices told me to run – and run I did. I became nomadic and lived on the streets, in boarding houses, in psychiatric units or motels in Cairns, Brisbane, Sydney, Adelaide, Perth, Melbourne, Hobart, and numerous cities in-between. I've been without shoes, warmth, water, and shelter. I've been hungry, robbed, assaulted, incarcerated, almost died, and felt alone. I was never without the voices. They provided paranoia, anxiety, control, and instilled an ever-present sense of flight.

Throughout my journeys, wherever the voices carried my feet, there were churches and church organisations that helped me when I needed it most. They provided meals, accommodation, and the people stayed by my side when I had multiple physical illnesses. Places like the Salvation Army, Wesley Mission, and numerous churches were so instrumental in my life, and I am so grateful for their care for me. The church has saved me many times. It was through a referral by the Salvation Army that I became connected with Stable One.

I stayed at The Lodge for six months in 2021. Living in this supportive accommodation allowed me to find the many things that I once had lost or abandoned. For instance, I now have the strength to go forward and not turn back to the way it once was in my life. The bad habits I once held onto are no longer there. Outreach support from professionals and the right medication has my mental health back on track. I feel good and healthy – both physically and mentally. From the food to the way I was supported by the caring volunteers and staff – everything was tremendous. The faith that I had once known in my youth has been restored. The conversations in our weekly God Spots and Bible studies, combined with attending a local church, has made me want to live my life for God and Jesus. The Bible makes sense to me now. Financially, staying at The Lodge



Taking part in a ceramics activity at the Lodge.



The finished product!

has allowed me to save money and build up savings for my future. I have learned new skills and gained confidence to continue learning. I feel like I am a new person.

Finally, the thing I lost in 2008, I have back again – my own unit! Stable One has been a steppingstone for this. (The unit wasn't given to me; I had to work hard and knuckle down.) I can honestly say that staying at The Lodge has given me some of the greatest experiences of my life. It has been the best place. I'm 63 now, but not old. I've lived a lot and have grown up a lot. My life is ahead of me, and my past is behind me. What the streets took away, I was able to reclaim through staying at Stable One. I thank God for this. Now, for the first time in a long time, I can give my feet a break. I have a home again.'

**Name changed for privacy reasons.*

"Stable One is truly marvellous, and their work highlights the ongoing need for safe and stable accommodation options locally and across Victoria as a pathway out of homelessness."

– Bridget Vallence MP, excerpt from Statement to Parliament 12 Oct 2021

Spiritual Care at The Lodge: A Chaplain's Reflection

The essence of spiritual care for those staying and volunteering with Stable One at The Lodge can be summed up with two words: God's presence. Allowing the lodgers and volunteers to experience God's unmistakable and powerful presence guided our actions as ambassadors of Jesus – especially as we lived out the command to "love our neighbours." (It must be noted that caring for people spiritually cannot be done without first ensuring their basic needs are met and that they are valued as wonderfully and created people made in the image of our God.)

It was undeniable that the physical setting of The Lodge contributed to this awareness. Nestled in the Yarra Valley, the skyline ranges, surrounded by an abundance of nature, both flora and fauna, testified daily that they were in the presence of God's creation. Especially during a lockdown, having space to clear one's head, go for a walk, and be still, added to what many expressed to be a "place of peace."

Inside The Lodge, God's presence was demonstrated by our willingness to be involved in the lives of all who came through the doors. We provided opportunities to explore faith in our weekly God Spots, Bible studies and general conversations held at all hours of the day and night. At our evening mealtimes, we paused and acknowledged the benevolence and generosity of God in our lives. When requested, we prayed with our lodgers – allowing them to turn to God and seek His will.

Overall, we demonstrated to them what God does with us. He takes us as we are and shows us love, compassion, mercy, and grace. We rejoiced in their victories and wept in their tragedies. In the end, the lodgers felt loved, cared for, listened to, and valued. And that is exactly what it is like to be in the presence of God.

– MICHAEL DRENNAN

'I'm not used to being around good people.'

– Lodger



Chaplains, Michael and Christy, preparing for 'Christmas in July' at The Lodge.

"These programs with a long-term vision are so necessary for supporting people with complex trauma and complex needs."

– Barbara Laug, Community Outreach Officer, Yarra Ranges Council

Winter Shelter Network

Stable One equips and empowers local churches in a community to work together to provide accommodation to people experiencing homelessness. They utilise their buildings as venues and engage their members and others as volunteers. The Winter Shelter Network now includes seven affiliates – Whitehorse Churches Care, Wang Night Shelter, Greater Shepparton Winter Shelter, Sunbury Winter Shelter, Glen Eira Winter Shelter, Toowoomba Winter Shelter and most recently, Frankston who are planning their first Shelter in 2022.

The Network forms a 'community of practice'. Members come together annually for a conference, meet virtually at other times in the year as well as engaging through an online forum. It is a rich environment for collaboration, learning and mutual support and encouragement.

2021 was another tough year with many different and changing COVID rules to navigate. Some shelters were able to operate all winter, others for just a week or two. Project Coordinators and hundreds of volunteers were remarkably flexible and creative and provided all kinds of support including meals delivered to motels, food hampers and phonecalls. Others even bunkered down and isolated with shelter guests. The Network Conference at the end of the year was incredibly inspiring as we heard story after story of the Church rising up in the face of a pandemic and blessing their neighbours.



In 2018 the Housing Hub Toowoomba first opened its doors to people in the community who were sleeping rough. It was a day-time space offering respite from the cold. At the end of each day, staff often had to ask people to leave the Hub and head back outside – but to where? Most had nowhere to go.

This troubling situation led to growing concern and an incredible story of action and persistence.

A small group of Hub staff took time to consult with those who were rough-sleeping to ask, in the absence of an immediate long-term housing outcome, how they could help. Overwhelmingly, the response was a plea for somewhere warm, dry and safe to stay during the night.

The Hub came across Stable One's Winter Shelter model. With the assistance of Lifeline Darling Downs, The Hub reached out to local churches to explore interest in the concept, and Winter Shelter Toowoomba was initiated. Due to COVID-19 delays, the Shelter had its first winter of operation in 2021 and the stories that have come out of Toowoomba's experience are ones worth celebrating.



“It’s restored my faith and trust that I’d lost in others, and given me confidence and encouragement to go forward in life... I wouldn’t have survived if it wasn’t for the winter shelter.”

“Winter Shelter replaced a frown with a smile, and a park bench with a bed. It showed me kindness and compassion. It’s helped restore happiness and the little faith I had left... You save lives.”

“Thank you for letting me in.”

“If it wasn’t for the churches, I would have gone to jail.”

– Feedback from guests

Anna, a worker from the Housing Hub, says that after the first night of Winter Shelter Toowoomba she knew it was going to play a pivotal role in the lives of their guests. She describes seeing a tangible shift in the openness of clients. Guests who had been closed off and holding their life stories close to their chest, began to talk more freely about their struggles and hopes for the future. Speaking to the volunteers involved at the conclusion of the 2021 Shelter, she says “Never in my wildest dreams did I think we would achieve these outcomes. You have changed lives”.

Similarly, another housing worker saw immense changes in the Hub’s clients after the Winter Shelter had opened its doors. She noticed how a good night’s sleep and a solid healthy meal led to more positive interactions within the Hub. This helped staff get to know their clients better. She describes the Winter Shelter as “a huge success”.

Of the 22 registered guests, 11 guests left Toowoomba Winter Shelter with stable housing outcomes – a mixture of social housing and private rental arrangements. Five of these homes were fully furnished through generous partner donations.

What incredible stories of answered needs, lives transformed, and futures brightened.

Get Involved

For more information visit our webpage, stableone.org or email info@stableone.org.

To support Stable One financially, direct deposit can be made to:

Stable One Ltd

BSB: 633 000

Account Number: 159 282 987

or go to: stableone.org/donate

Donations \$2 and above are tax deductible.



Stable One Ltd
PO Box 204
Mount Evelyn
VIC 3796
ABN 83 616 398 442



Cover photo

Joshua 4 tells how the children of Israel followed behind the very presence of God and saw him at work. They built an altar to mark out the place where God had done a great thing. "In the future your children will ask, 'What do these stones mean?' ... This was so that everybody on earth would recognise how strong God's rescuing hand is and so that you would hold God in solemn reverence always."

As an organisation we follow God. In 2020, at the height of a global pandemic, we were led to The Lodge for a season. As we moved our last lodger into long term accommodation at the end of 2021, we spent an evening remembering, being thankful and praying for each person by name. Our rocks represent God's great love and care for each of the 17 people who in 2020 and 2021 found 'more than a place to stay' with us.