



**Stable One**  
more than a place to stay

# ANNUAL REPORT 2023



## Our Mission

Inspired by Jesus Christ, our mission is to support the Church as it provides accommodation to people in need and journeys with each person, offering physical, social, emotional and spiritual care as an expression of God's love.

## Our Vision

More than a place to stay.

## Our Values

### Integrity

- > In honouring God we honour people
- > We are transparent and accountable
- > We treat all people with respect and dignity

### Community

- > Each person matters
- > We prioritise connection and inclusion
- > We journey with people towards stability

### Unity

- > We work together as the Church
- > We collaborate with others

## A history of providing accommodation and journeying with people in need

Stable One has demonstrated a consistent commitment to helping the Church work together to use their resources to provide safe, supportive crisis accommodation through the **Winter Shelter** model and the supportive housing program which operated at **The Lodge** during 2020/21. Stable One's vision has always been to have long-term, stable housing where connection and belonging are fostered. 2023 has advanced the progression of that vision, which is now becoming a reality through **The Village** project.



## Stable One Board of Directors



DAVID WELLS  
Chair



ANN FRASER  
Vice Chair



REV PHILIP KING  
Treasurer



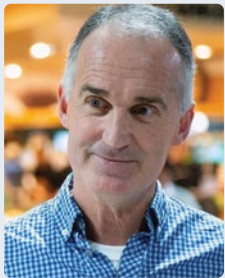
LYNDELL FRASER  
Secretary



KERRY PELL



BARRY BORNEMAN



IAN BUNSTON



JENNY WILLETTS



DR DAVID WILSON  
Consultant



## Message from the Chair

Whenever we look at healthy, sustainable organisations, we observe some common traits including: **vision, willingness to embrace change, unified leadership and good governance, calibration of programs and strategy against purpose.** Reflecting on the operation of Stable One in 2023, those traits were quite evident.

By 2023, Stable One was six years old. The board undertook a wholesale review of the constitution and recommended changes to clarify the purpose statement (ie. why Stable One exists) and to the qualifications for directors. Other changes were proposed to streamline operational processes and remove some anomalies in the old constitution. The proposed changes were approved by members at the AGM in 2023.

In May, the board farewelled Barry Borneman after more than four years as a director. At a board level, it was a joy to observe Barry's countenance when he moved into vision casting mode. His natural optimism regularly inspired us and usually, the challenges he proposed for consideration proved to be achievable.

Apart from supporting the Winter Shelters in the Network and providing effective leadership for the Yarra Valley Winter Shelter, the highlight of the year was the signing of the Heads of Agreement (HoA) for The Village project on 22 December. The HoA was the culmination of an enormous amount of work by Jenny Willetts (Managing Director) and her amazing team, David Wilson and Katherine Kirkwood. It sets out the agreement in principle between Stable One, Emmaus Christian Community Ltd, Habitat for Humanity Victoria and Servants Community Housing Ltd for the development of an affordable housing village in Bayswater North. Ten homes will provide long term affordable rentals with another for 'Placemakers' whose role is to nurture an intentional community amongst tenants with diverse needs.

There is still an enormous amount of work to be done to get to the stage of council planning approval. The Stable One Board believes, however, that this is God's vision and we are so thrilled to have the role of driving The Village project forward.

– DAVID WELLS



## Message from the Managing Director

Many of us are fortunate enough to say that we have lived blessed and sheltered lives. The confronting images of poverty, conflict and desperation that we see on news reports are so far removed from our experience that sometimes it's hard to understand the reality of misery and hopelessness that others are experiencing.

Whilst it is important not to become overwhelmed, it is equally important for us to be moved into action. Jesus regularly demonstrated his love for the poor and the marginalised and he calls us to do the same. Love is more a verb than a noun.

***Beloved children, our love can't be an abstract theory we only talk about, but a way of life demonstrated through our loving deeds. (1 Jn 3:18 TPT)***

During the year, we revised our mission statement slightly to include Stable One's 'why'. We are inspired by Jesus and we do what we do as an expression of God's love.

Reflecting on 2023, I am encouraged by the willingness of the Church to unite around Winter Shelter programs and demonstrate love in action. This has resulted in genuine hospitality and welcome being offered to many people experiencing homelessness. My thanks go to the clergy and hundreds of volunteers who have set aside their own needs to make love a verb.

Special thanks to:

- > Project Coordinators and their teams, who work tirelessly to pull together significant Winter Shelter programs each year.
- > Homelessness services, who refer and support Shelter guests, particularly Anchor Inc. who partnered with our local Yarra Valley Winter Shelter to assess and refer guests.
- > Stable One Board Directors who bring great governance and support to the organisation with their different skills and experience. They work hard on policy development, strategy, fundraising, advocacy and often have their boots on the ground, volunteering at the Shelter.
- > Dr David Wilson (Consultant) and Katherine Kirkwood (Accounts and Administration), who are key members of the Stable One team.
- > Pastor Marty Lees (Montrose Church of Christ) for his consultant support for the introduction of volunteer management software (Better Impact), which has transformed recruitment and rostering processes for Shelters.
- > Financial supporters who generously give regular or one-off donations.
- > St Andrew's Foundation and a number of professional consultants who have supported the progression of The Village project. It has been a journey of persistence and patience as we have developed partnerships and plans.

– JENNY WILLETTS



**“From the moment I had \$2 noodles for tea at the fundraiser, I knew I had to do more. Now I am retired, there is no excuse.”**

– Volunteer

Jenny was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the King's Birthday 2023 Honours List for her service to the community through social welfare organisations. We congratulate Jenny on this well-deserved recognition of her work.

## 2021 Census Homelessness Data:

Homelessness in **Victoria** is at alarming levels -

**30,660 people**

on census night were without a place to call home, up 24%.

Nationally,

**122,494 people**

experienced homelessness, up 5.2%.

### Males

still make up the majority of those experiencing homelessness, with 68,000 or 55 in every 10,000 males, less than 2% increase.

Meanwhile, the number of

### Females

experiencing homelessness increased by around 10% to almost 54,000, or 42 in every 10,000 females.

**23%**

of all people experiencing homelessness were aged from 12 to 24 years.



**During Homelessness Week 2023, we asked Guests of the Winter Shelter what they would like others to know about their experience of homelessness:**

**What have you found the greatest challenge of homelessness?**

*"Being utterly ignorant of the system"*

*"The housing crisis and affordability"*

*"The stigma"*

**What about the support and resources available for people experiencing homelessness?**

*"I didn't know where to start"*

*"Difficult to navigate, especially if you have mental health issues"*

*"There's a gap in support for men"*

*"The Yarra Valley Winter Shelter was the only thing available for me"*

**What would you like people to know about homelessness?**

*"I'd like to see you try to survive on a Centrelink payment when you are homeless"*

*"There's an absolute loss of pride and humanity"*

*"The terrible way people look at you and the judgement they have"*

*"The expectation that everyone has a phone, credit and data"*

*"We're all vulnerable - it doesn't take much to put you in a difficult situation"*

*"If you don't already have mental health issues, you will end up with them"*



# Yarra Valley Winter Shelter

## Reflections from Dr David Wilson:

Winter Shelter is more than a place to stay. It offers a bed and good food every night of Winter, but it is more than that. It is churches of many 'brands' learning to work together in harmony and unity to express the unfailing love of God to the Yarra Valley's most vulnerable people... and to each other. It provides lived experience for people in the church to get to know firsthand people who are doing it tough, and to understand a lot better what it's all about. And that learning goes both ways, as our guests learn more about the 'straight life' of our volunteers.

I wonder if the best part of what Winter Shelter does is in what could be called a 'humanisation experience'. One of the biggest problems for many of our guests is the devaluing they have experienced, sometimes for all their life, and the way they have learned to devalue themselves in the process. They are people first - people with feelings and thoughts, ambitions and talents. They are just as valuable as people as any of us and deserve to be treated with respect and dignity.

When we ask our guests to evaluate their time at the Winter Shelter, nearly always we get comments that affirm the humanising experience... **'I felt like people genuinely cared'**, and **'the volunteers treated me as though I mattered and I don't remember being treated like that before'**, and **'they really listened to me, like they wanted to get to know me as a person, not just another needy client'**, and **'I feel stronger'**.

It doesn't get any better than that! It's for these reasons that I'm so pleased to be involved with the Yarra Valley Winter Shelter. It offers so much more than a place to stay.



*Pastors praying for volunteers at Commissioning Service*



## Joe's\* Story

Joe's homelessness began when his mother, whom he was caring for, passed away in 2022. Joe, then 51, was unable to afford the house, and started couch surfing. He ended up with close relatives, but financial tensions strained the relationship, and Joe found himself friendless, unemployed and on the street with nowhere to go.

Fear of being alone at night, and the unceasing cold and hunger, drove Joe to Anchor, the local housing and homelessness service. Anchor partners with Stable One to assess and refer guests to the Yarra Valley Winter Shelter program. Joe was encouraged to participate.

He arrived silent, anguished and withdrawn, expecting to bed down alongside potentially dangerous strangers, and to have to shoulder the judgments of people. Instead, he found the church shelter comfortable, the meals hot, and the volunteers compassionate and respectful.

The experience, Joe said, changed his life. He found people more than willing to give him their time. Having absorbed countless criticisms from loved ones and strangers alike about his circumstances, he hungered for discussions that didn't revolve around money and survival. The easy conversations the volunteers offered, often over shared mealtimes, nourished him.

**“They showed me there was no shame in my situation and that I had a lot more in me than I thought.”**

Joe began to feel more comfortable around volunteers as the weeks passed and started to socialise more often with them outside shelter hours. Through one of these friendships, Joe made a connection that led him to be offered a place in a share house. Joe continues to stay connected to volunteers and hopes to have the opportunity to give-back at the Shelter in 2024.

He is optimistic about the future and though 'not religious', Joe said the compassion and fellowship he received changed how he felt about himself, restored his trust in others, and made him aware of a bigger picture.

*(Adapted from a story on the Yarra Valley Winter Shelter published by The Melbourne Anglican)*

**“I have had strange little things happen, and there seem to be signs,” he said. “It’s almost like God saying ‘I’m here, I’m real. Just open your eyes and look!’”**



*\*Name has been changed*





## The Village

### Building safe, stable, affordable homes and a generous, supportive community

The Village is an exciting project that will provide self-contained homes using the supportive housing model, with placemaking as a strategic element. It is being developed in partnership with three organisations who share a similar vision and mission to Stable One, on land adjacent to South Croydon Anglican Church, 203-205 Bayswater Road, Bayswater North, Victoria.

### Roles:

- > Stable One - Project Coordination, Fundraising, Placemakers, Property Management
- > Emmaus Christian Community - Landlord, Pastoral Care, Funding
- > Servants Community Housing - Tenant Referrals and Tenancy Management
- > Habitat for Humanity Victoria - Construction and Property Maintenance

**EMMAUS**   
Christian Community Ltd

**Servants**  
COMMUNITY HOUSING

 **Habitat**  
for Humanity®  
Victoria



**Supportive Housing** aims to assist tenants with diverse needs, addressing challenges such as loneliness, physical and mental health issues, disconnection and relational difficulties. It encompasses not only housing but access to a variety of services offered on site or in the local community. A partnership between The Village and service providers is essential for the success of the Stable One Village Model.

**Placemaking** is an integral aspect of the Stable One Village Model. Placemakers are community members residing in The Village with a specific role in facilitating the transition from debilitating life issues to wellbeing. Their role involves building an intentional community, fostering connections, and providing referrals to services. Working within a community development framework, the Placemaker also encourages residents of The Village to engage in an inclusive community, taking responsibility for one another as good neighbours.



## Who will live in The Village?

Tenants will be a diverse, mixed community of people at different ages and stages of life. We expect that there will be a variety of singles, couples, and parents with children, all who are ready and able to live independently but who need a little extra support to do that well.

## What are we building?

We will build five one-bedroom (single storey) and six two-bedroom (double storey) homes. Ten homes will be for long-term, affordable rentals, and the remaining home will house the Placemakers. 'Affordable' means that the rent will be at least 25% below market value.

## Winter Shelter Network

Stable One continues to support a network of shelters both in Victoria and interstate. During the winter of 2023, five shelters were operational – Yarra Valley, Sunbury, Wangaratta and Frankston in Victoria, and Toowoomba in Queensland. We regularly receive enquiries from others who have heard about the program and are considering starting up a new shelter in their area. In the past twelve months, this has included requests from both Tasmania and Adelaide, with whom discussions are ongoing. The Network continues to come together for mutual support and learning. It is always good to hear about local creative responses in different settings.

### Wangaratta's Warming Centres

Wang Night Shelter (WNS) were unable to operate their usual model in 2023 due to a drop in volunteers. Undeterred, however, they decided to open 'Warming

Centres' two nights each week from June-September. They provided spaces of safety, provision and connection where guests enjoyed ham and cheese toasties, hot drinks and a safe and warm place to be through the night.

WNS has seen individuals, businesses, community groups and schools working together to improve the lives of those in their midst who are in the desperate struggle of having no place to call home.



### Frankston Winter Shelter

Frankston is Stable One's newest Network Affiliate, and this year marked their second Winter Shelter. Initially offering accommodation for four nights per week, the Shelter was at capacity within one week of opening, showing just how urgent the need is for programs such as this. By August, permits were secured for the use of another church building, thus enabling a fifth night to be offered to their guests.

144 volunteers from a range of local churches and community organisations worked together. They cared for a total of 35 guests who were in need of the Shelter for a variety of reasons – increasing rental and living costs and a lack of affordable housing, family or relationship breakdowns, job loss, domestic violence and mental health issues.

### Annual Network Conference

This conference always provides a rich environment for Affiliates to come together. Held at the Wycliffe National Centre in Kangaroo Ground, VIC, the day was given to hearing reports, mutual encouragement, and professional development. Dr Ferghal Armstrong and Dr Paul MacCartney, experts in the field of addiction medicine, shared their knowledge and insights and affirmed Winter Shelters as programs which effectively support recovery due to the connections and relationships that are formed:

*"In terms of people's recovery [from mental illness, substance use and the social isolation that goes with homelessness]... connection with people who are stable and who are providing care is always the first step back. Always... That connection and interest in them is by far the most therapeutic thing... and that's something you don't need a medical degree to do. Your organisation existing at all, and the people volunteering to be involved, that is fantastic. It makes all the difference..."*

***That connection, the 'being there', the idea that there's anyone in society who might care for me is incredibly powerful."***



## Finances

Stable One continues to be supported by very generous donations and grants while fundraising efforts in 2023 were successful and brought in more benefactors. We employed professional paid staff to augment and support the work of our volunteers who provided thousands of unpaid hours with value-in-kind of well over \$100,000.

With a financial objective of break-even, we were able to invest in some preliminary work to establish the feasibility of The Village project. There is a small surplus for the year to carry forward to 2024.

– REV PHILIP KING, TREASURER

Stable One Ltd  
**Income and Expenditure**  
 Year Ended 31 Dec 2023

### Income

Donations	\$ 83,908
Fundraising	\$ 11,525
Grants	\$ 40,000
Other Income	\$ 7,511
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 142,944</b>

### Expenditure

Labour	\$ 89,586
Consultants	\$ 24,356
Rent	\$ 4,940
Insurance & Legal	\$ 5,897
Operations	\$ 10,991
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>\$ 135,771</b>
<b>Net Surplus</b>	<b>\$ 7,174</b>

