

DEAR NEIGHBOUR,

My name is Liz Yeo and I'm the CEO at Newtown Neighbourhood Centre (NNC) and a proud long-term resident of Newtown. I wanted to share with you some of what our Centre has been doing in 2019 and to thank you for the part you've played in keeping Newtown the inclusive, caring and fun place we love.

Here at the Centre, we provide assistance to people who are the most vulnerable, with a particular focus on those at risk of social isolation, homelessness and domestic violence. We aim to be a welcoming place for everyone, and we take local action on the issues our community cares about.

This year for example, thanks to our community's generous support, we were able to employ Karen as our new Homelessness Services Coordinator. We were also able to continue our volunteer based homeless outreach which started in 2018. Every week we have volunteer teams going out supporting people who are sleeping rough and connecting them with the services at our Centre.

This year, Karen, along with professional and volunteer outreach teams, has secured housing for 20 people who were sleeping on our local streets. These numbers represent real people in our community each with their own unique story.

One of the guys said to me recently *"I still hang out in Newtown during the day...this is still my community after being on the street here for so long...but at the end of the day I get to say I'm going home now, and that feels good"*.

Another new initiative in 2019 was the Boarding House Community Linkers program.

We recruited and trained a small group of local Boarding House residents to mentor and support others who are currently living in boarding houses and/or at risk of homelessness.

One of the key program participants was Carlos. Carlos had previously turned to Newtown Neighbourhood Centre for professional support when he was feeling helpless and isolated after a period of homelessness. Battling with poor mental health, his life had fallen apart and he had lost everything important to him.

His involvement in the project was a pivotal moment in Carlos' journey back to independence and gave him the motivation to relook at his life and the strength and determination to rebuild it. The program helped him reconnect with his past as a designer and he even put on a music event as a fundraiser for the Centre.

Carlos is now studying a Diploma of Community Services, and just last week I employed him part time to co-ordinate our next new initiative – a volunteer homeless outreach project in the Sydney CBD.

Carlos recently reflected that *"My experience with NNC and the program has been incredibly positive and had a profound impact on my life. It's inspired me and my creativity and the future feels so positive."*

As I look to the year ahead, we remain committed to ending homelessness, domestic violence and social isolation in Sydney's Inner West, and to changing individual lives.

This is a massive goal and is not something we can achieve on our own. From time to time we have to reach out to people like you in our local area to ask for your support.

If you are interested in potential volunteering opportunities or can offer pro bono skills, or even a financial gift towards our work, we would love to hear from you!

Please email georgia@newtowncentre.org or feel free to contact me anytime at liz@newtowncentre.org if you have any feedback or questions about what we do.

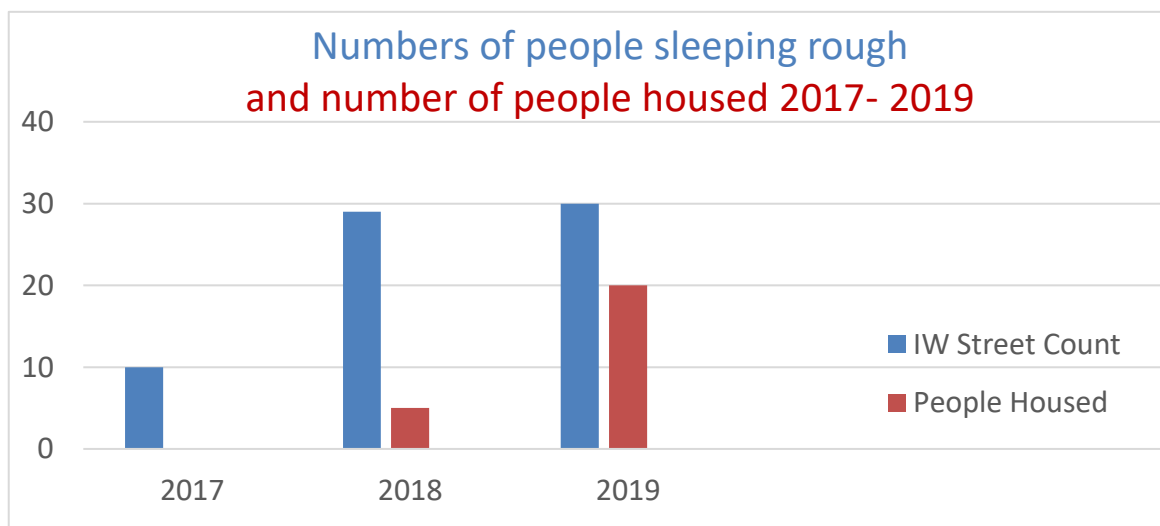
Together we can continue to build a stronger, more connected, more caring community.

I wish you and your family a fantastic time over the holidays and all the best for the year ahead!

Thank you for the part you play in helping to create our own little Newtopia!

Kind regards

Liz Yeo
CEO – Newtown Neighbourhood Centre



Carlos pictured here with members of the NNC team at the 2019 Newtopian Sleepout

