

THE PATH TO A BETTER LIFE

It's amazing the difference a year can make. Single mum Marina and her daughter Sam started 2017 on a bleak note. After the breakup of Marina's marriage, the pair were living in a cramped studio in Newtown with shared facilities and almost no cooking amenities. By contrast, they finished the year in a large two-bedroom social housing unit in Eastlakes with a full kitchen and bathroom and the future looking much brighter.

The pair (pictured below) credit NNC with playing a large role in helping them turn around their lives.

"Our new home is huge and it's close to my brother, so it's great to have family nearby," says Marina. "I was beside myself when I found out. I jumped for joy and cried lots of happy tears."

Marina and Sam's journey to more appropriate accommodation began when a friend at Newtown restaurant 'Lentil as Anything' heard about their plight and directed them to NNC's multi-agency One-Stop Shop on Thursdays. There, they received

help including advocacy support to go on the priority social housing waiting list.

Just nine months later, the pair was able to move into their new digs and get on with their new lives.

Sam, who just turned 19 and will be commencing a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy at Notre Dame University in 2018, is thrilled with the new permanent living arrangement. The stability of their new apartment also

means Marina can get on with her plans to begin a business.

NNC CEO Liz Yeo says Marina and Sam's experience shows the Centre is recognised in the local community. *"Sometimes in people's lives, something happens and they find themselves homeless and unsure how to deal with that," she says. "We provide them with a place they can come to, and people who can help them to get the best possible result."*



Photo: Karin Daker

YOU HAVE THE POWER TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Newtown Neighbourhood Centre is focused on reducing homelessness and social isolation in Sydney's inner west. We are striving for a more connected community in which everyone has a safe place to live.

We have set ourselves the major challenge of ensuring that no individual has to sleep rough in Newtown.

We also want to ensure that everyone with whom we interact with ends up on a pathway to

appropriate housing.

But we can't do that alone. One organisation, one program or one worker is not enough. We need to bring together other services, and involve community members. We need to address the causes of homelessness.

Your generous support provides us with the best possible chance of achieving our goals.

The more money we raise, the more resources we have to provide

direct services for people in crisis and to advocate for changes that will address the causes of homelessness.

We need your support to do this.

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THANK YOU

We would like to thank the following people and organisations for their generous support.

Government and community

Commonwealth Department of Health
Commonwealth Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development
Council of the City of Sydney
Inner West Council
Jenny Leong MP
Leichhardt Marrickville Community Transport Group
Multicultural Health Service - Marrickville
NSW Department of Family and Community Services - Ageing, Disability and Home Care
NSW Department of Family and Community Services - Community Services
NSW Department of Family and Community Services - Department of Premier and Cabinet
Roads & Maritime Services
Sydney Local Health District
Tanya Plibersek MP

Partners

Community Restorative Centre
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Photo: Diana Shypula

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Newtown Social Club
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Reverse Garbage
Sassy Treats
Sydney Airport
Sydney Posters
Sydney Water
The Music
Urbane
Websters

Design: Henry Blazhevskyi



Photo: Diana Shypula

NEWTOWN
Neighbourhood Centre

GRATITUDE REPORT 2017
Home is where the heart is

FROM THE CEO

With help from the community, NNC is working hard to reduce social isolation and homelessness, says Liz Yeo, CEO of NNC.

At Newtown Neighbourhood Centre, we have a vision for 'a just community that includes and acts'. We also know that our best chance of achieving this vision is to work closely with you – the incredible people that make up the inner west community. We believe in the potential of every individual to make change in their own lives, and also in the potential of our unique community to make change in the world. This is a community that shares our values of justice, inclusion, action and fun.

And together with you, we're getting things done!

Thousands of you signed our petition to the Greater Sydney Commission asking for higher affordable housing targets for Sydney. Tens of thousands of you attended Newtown Festival, donated at the gates, and celebrated the unique spirit of acceptance and creativity that defines the Newtown community. And, as they do every year, dozens of artists generously donated their time and talent to support our work by performing for free at the Festival.

We were excited in 2016/17 to launch a new visual identity for both Newtown Neighbourhood Centre and Newtown Festival, and we hope the new look makes it easier for you to recognise the link between the two. This connection is increasingly important as we are working to make Newtown Festival the 'biggest and best event for social change in Australia' and to generate significant funds to support our work with society's most vulnerable people.

While our work with people at risk of homelessness grew and was strengthened over the last 12 months, changes in government funding models forced us to discontinue our disability programs. Over the coming year, we will also

be examining the impacts that changes to aged care funding will have on our programs.

This constantly changing environment does not deter us from our vision. Based on your feedback about priorities, we have set clear and measurable goals around reducing homelessness and social isolation in our area.

We will continue to work hard to deliver the highest quality programs and services and to support people doing it tough in the inner west. We know the best communities are those that support the most vulnerable.

And we are so grateful that we live and work in a community that cares.



Photo: Karin Darker

TOWARDS BETTER BOARDING HOUSES

Humberto De Andrade calls it his "Saturday morning ritual". At the beginning of every weekend, he heads over to the four boarding houses he owns in Petersham and Stanmore and, armed with a paintbrush and toolbox, begins carrying out repairs and refurbishments.

Doing much of the maintenance work himself means Humberto can keep down costs – and importantly the price of rent for his 47 tenants, who pay as little as \$110 a week for a room.

"I'm not going to tell you the boarding houses are the Ritz Carlton or anything," he says. "But I paint them when they need it and repair things when they break. I could turn them into five-star accommodation, but then the rents wouldn't be so cheap."

Humberto's hands-on approach is one of the reasons staff at NNC's Boarding House Outreach Service regard him as one of the better boarding house operators in Sydney's inner west. His registered boarding houses are home to everyone from older people and shift workers to commuters, with many facing social, economic and health challenges. While many of the residents have their quirks, Humberto says he never judges a book by its cover. *"We have some that are hoarders and if you went in their rooms you would have a heart attack, but I don't dictate how people live as long as the common areas are tidy. If I didn't take them they would be out on the streets because no one would take them. They are human beings."*

Humberto says a good relationship with NNC is a part of his success as an operator. *"If we have vacancies, I let them know. If they have someone who needs a room, they might call me up. They are very caring towards the residents in terms of mental and physical health. If we have a problem with a resident who they look after, I let them know and usually they can resolve it."*



AFFORDABLE HOUSING CAMPAIGN

Sydney is growing at an extraordinary rate, with 2.1 million more people expected to call the city home over the next 20 years. With the Greater Sydney Commission (GSC) planning for this expansion, NNC has joined with other community organisations in calling for increased levels of affordable rental housing.

While the GSC has proposed a target of 5-10 percent of affordable housing in new developments, the Centre is pushing for a level of 15-30 percent. *"As well as helping the homeless, we want to solve issues that cause homelessness,"* says NNC CEO Liz Yeo. *"Providing adequate affordable housing is a massive priority in achieving this."*

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

NNC's Boarding House Outreach Service (BHOS) regularly surveys the boarding house residents it assists to ensure it is achieving measurable results and providing a high standard of care. The 2016/17 results were an affirmation of the service's hard work and showed:

75% of clients reported that their housing situation had improved

96% of clients reported feeling respected by staff

A YEAR OF CHANGE

Just like the vibrant community around it, NNC is constantly changing and evolving. During 2016/17, we said some sad goodbyes, but we also hit new milestones in terms of our finances, our working environment and the care we deliver.

FINANCES

We have worked hard to achieve a stronger financial position and, despite an initial deficit budget, we closed 2016/17 with a budget surplus of over \$39,000 – a great springboard for the future. Much of the savings came from finding administrative efficiencies.

WORK, HEALTH AND SAFETY (WHS)

Ensuring the safety of staff is a top priority. We continued to roll out a three-year WHS strategy with goals including reducing the risk of occupational violence for our staff, who often work in potentially risky environments. Over 70 percent of staff received training in this area.

CLP CLOSURE AND ACCREDITATION

Changes due to the National Disability Insurance Scheme meant that our Community Linking Project (CLP) helping people in assisted boarding houses was no longer viable. The decision to close the program meant saying a sad goodbye to CLP staff members and the residents they had cared for, in some cases up to 17 years. The end of the scheme was no reflection of the care provided by NNC. In 2016/17, we received high praise in being accredited by NSW Disability Services Standards and the Australian Aged Care Quality Agency.

BUILDING REFURBISHMENT

A healthy and vibrant working environment benefits staff, clients, visitors and room hirers alike. We successfully applied for local, state and federal government grants that allowed us to repaint the Centre, install air conditioning, and upgrade

our audio-visual equipment to include a data projector and drop-down screen. An additional grant through IKEA allowed us to upgrade furnishings in meeting rooms and the front foyer.

BOARDING HOUSE ROUND TABLE

We initiated a Boarding House Round Table to improve communication between operators, tenants, the government and care organisations. Two well-attended meetings were held in 2016/17, with a great exchange of ideas and strategies around the priority areas we identified for the sector.

NEWTOWN VIBE ROUND TABLE

We continued to play an active role in the Newtown Vibe Round Table, aimed at preserving the character of the suburb in the face of increased late-night foot

traffic. Another well-attended community meeting was held. A positive outcome has been assault levels remaining static despite the huge influx of people coming into Newtown.

NEWTOWN FESTIVAL

Newtown Festival (pictured below) was again a major success. We were proud to announce the appointment of prominent musician and inner west resident Sarah Blasko as Festival Ambassador in 2016/17.

MARKETING AWARD

The Centre was a finalist in the Australian Multicultural Marketing Awards. We enjoyed a fruitful collaboration on the Multicultural Dementia Awareness Project which aimed to inform, educate and demystify dementia within our targeted culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

