

Our Vision:

To strengthen our community by providing more people in need with safe and secure homes.

Our Mission:

To reduce social and economic disadvantage for people in need by:

- ✓ Providing housing which is affordable and fit for purpose.
- ✓ Empowering our tenants to participate in and engage with their local communities.
- ✓ Providing a stable platform to allow tenants to make positive choices and enhance their opportunities.
- ✓ Working collaboratively with other housing providers and community support services to help us achieve these aims.
- ✓ Actively engaging in activities which support the social housing sector and the broader objective of improving access to safe, affordable housing for all.
- ✓ Valuing and including people of all backgrounds, genders, sexualities, cultures and abilities.

Our Values:

As an organisation Metro seeks to be:

- ✓ Professional – Committed, accountable and transparent in all dealings with our tenants and other stakeholders
- ✓ Informed – to keep abreast of current developments in the housing and community services sector and use knowledge to inform decision making.
- ✓ Service Oriented – to keep tenants at the heart of our decision making.

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- ✓ Responsive – by trying to better understand the needs of our tenants and to be responsive to those needs.
- ✓ Fair – to consider only relevant information when making decisions and to be open, honest and appropriate in our communications and interactions with tenants and the general public.
- ✓ Socially and fiscally responsible – to operate in a financially prudent and efficient manner and to reinvest our resources to benefit current and future tenants.
- ✓ Ensure good governance and management – to meet our compliance, reporting and operational responsibilities in a timely and effective manner in the best interests of tenants.
- ✓ Value Feedback – we will seek and value our tenant's and other stakeholders input and involvement.
- ✓ Innovative – by using technology and innovation to improve our tenants experience and enhance their ability to communicate with us.
- ✓ To engage with and empower our staff to perform their functions effectively and with pride.
- ✓ To celebrate and share our achievements.

A Snapshot of our Organisation

Metro Community Housing is one of 30 registered Community Housing providers that receives funding from the NSW Department of Communities and Justice NSW.

In common with many of our peer organisations, Metro was established in 1983 under the auspices of the *Community Tenancy Scheme* to provide subsidised housing to people living in the Marrickville Local Government area.

From inception until January 2007, we were called Marrickville Area Community Housing. The name was changed to Metro Community Housing following a merger with Resamen Men's Housing.

What do we do?

Our primary purpose is to provide long term, subsidized accommodation to people on low incomes who meet Housing Pathways (NSW Housing Register) eligibility. This requires applicants for social housing in NSW to be either Australian Citizens, permanent residents or have protected visa status; to reside in NSW; and to meet income eligibility requirements.

We provide property and tenancy management for 105 properties owned by the NSW Land and Housing Corporation and manage an average of 270 properties head leased from the private rental market through the DCJ funded Community Housing Leasing Program. We also manage 5 properties on a fee for service basis for two community based organisations.

Who do we house?

Metro is a generalist housing association, but we have a long term commitment to house high need tenants nominated by support providers with whom we have a formal partnership as set out in a Service Level Agreement.

Transitional tenancies assist clients who require short to medium term assistance to prevent homelessness when exiting in-patient psychiatric services, crisis refuges, drug and alcohol programs, or the criminal justice system.

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Since 2018 Metro has housed people with a severe psychiatric disability exiting RPA or Concord Hospitals who require intensive psycho-social and clinical support through a partnership with Sydney Local Health District and Flourish Australia to provide medium term supported housing with on-site residential staff.

Metro also has had extensive involvement in specialist programs which aim to provide long term supported housing using a “housing first” approach to assist people to exist primary or secondary homelessness.

Previous programs have included *Platform 70* and *Connect 100*; and in August 2018 in collaboration with (lead agency) Bridge Housing, the Women’s Housing company and NEAMI National, we were successful applicants for the STEP to Home program tender.

In June 2020 we were funded through the *Together Home* program to acquire a further 20 leasehold properties and contract wrap around support services to provide term housing to people who had been street sleeping but moved into temporary accommodation due to the COVID 19 situation.

Where do we operate?

The majority of our properties are located in the Inner West metropolitan area, including the former Ashfield, Marrickville and Leichhardt local government areas (now Inner West LGA); City of Sydney and Canterbury-Bankstown LGAs. We have a very small number of properties across 12 other local government areas.

How are we accountable?

Metro is registered as a Tier 2 Community Housing provider under the National Regulatory Scheme for Community Housing (NRSCH). This requires us to undertake a Compliance Assessment process conducted annually by the independent Registrar of Community Housing. Retaining registration under the NRSCH is a requirement for ongoing funding.

How are we governed?

Metro is incorporated as a not-for-profit, co-operative of members with Public Benevolent Status. Membership of the co-operative is made up of persons with an interest in community housing or the provision of housing to low income earners. All Metro tenants are entitled to membership of the co-operative and all members must meet the “active member” provisions as set out in our Constitution.

The Board of Directors are elected at the Annual General Meeting held each year. Directors are elected for a 2 year term meaning that half of the board stands down and nominates for re-election at the AGM. Their role is to ensure the good governance and financial viability of the organisation.

Within the framework of our Constitution, and regulatory and contractual requirements, the Metro directors are responsible for setting and monitoring strategic direction and for ensuring we meet our fiduciary and regulatory responsibilities to the public, our funders and our tenants.

The day to day management of the organization is the responsibility of the CEO who delegates authority to other staff.

About the Board of Directors

Our Constitution allows Metro to have a board of between 6-10 directors. As at 30 June 2020 there were 8 directors elected or appointed to the Metro Board of Directors with a diverse range of qualifications and experience in Law, Accounting, Financial and Strategic Management, Property and Asset Management, Human Resources, Disability Advocacy and Evaluation and Community Support.

The Board meets every month to monitor the implementation of the Strategic, Business, and Risk Management Plans which provide the framework for our operations.

Our Partners

Metro is committed to working effectively with our community based support partners to provide appropriate assistance to high need clients. Metro has a particular focus on providing supported accommodation to:

- People with a chronic and enduring psychiatric disability
- People exiting from long term primary homelessness (street sleepers)
- Young people exiting care or crisis services
- Women and their children escaping domestic violence
- Young indigenous families
- People exiting the criminal justice system and alcohol/other drug rehabilitation programs

At Metro we believe strongly that our transitional housing programs complement and support a “Housing First” approach by providing affordable, stable housing to people experiencing short term situational crisis or those who need to demonstrate their ability to sustain a tenancy pending an offer of permanent social housing.

Transitional housing terms of between 6-24 months allows individuals to access appropriate supports to address the factors that led to their becoming homeless in the first instance, and provides these tenants with an opportunity to develop independent living skills which will improve their capacity to gain and sustain a positive tenancy history.

Many of the people who we house in transitional programs would otherwise have experienced a worsening of their health, social connectedness and capacity to engage in education or employment whilst waiting for permanent housing.

This is particularly important given that waiting times for the allocation of long term social housing, even for priority approved social housing applicants continue to increase.

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The majority of people we house in our transitional programs will require long term or permanent social housing but for those who have the capacity to move towards greater independence through educational opportunities and workforce participation we will support them by:

- Providing stable and affordable accommodation beyond the maximum two year transitional term for young people and single parents who are in full time vocational or tertiary education and able to provide proof of course completion/achievement.
- Extending the term of transitional tenancies for single parents with dependent children who are completing Year 12 of high school or undertaking full time vocational/tertiary studies to provide stability and security for those young people
- Providing our tenants with access to scholarships to assist them to pay course fees and related costs.
- Providing “affordable rent” subsidies for up to 12 months beyond the end of their transitional term, for young people (under 25) and single parents (under 30) who have gained employment and have a realistic expectation of increasing their income/job security through permanent appointment, gaining additional hours of employment, or career progression.

As at 30 June 2020 we provided accommodation for 120 transitional tenants who are nominated by, and provided with ongoing support by 20 separate specialist support providers. We currently have formal Service Level Agreements in place with:

- The Aboriginal Women and Children’s Crisis Service
- Stride Mental Health Association (formerly the Aftercare Association) - Biala and Mulwarra programs
- The Department of Justice Compulsory Drug Treatment Program (in association with Cana Community)
- Glebe House
- Guthrie House

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- Launchpad Youth Community
- Lillian's Place
- NEAMI National
- Rainbow Lodge
- Salvation Army Homelessness Services Network
- St John of God
- St Vincent De Paul Homelessness Services
- Sydney Local Health District Mental Health Services including Camperdown, Canterbury, Croydon, and Marrickville Community Mental health teams, the Mobile Assertive Treatment Team and Concord and Royal Prince Alfred hospital psychiatric units.
- The Gender Centre
- Uniting Care (Supported Living Program, Mental Health Program)
- We Help Ourselves
- Wesley Mission Ashfield Program for Young People
- YWCA - Young Women's Support Program and Rapid Rehousing Program
- Women and Girls Emergency Centre (WAGEC)

We want to acknowledge our partner agencies for their valuable contribution in supporting our shared clients, and for providing ongoing education and information to Metro staff to assist us to work more effectively.

We also acknowledge the assistance received from the NSW Department of Communities and Justice, in particular the Community, Homes and Place Division who provide the majority of our funding and we thank them for their ongoing support.