



**HOUSING  
CHOICES  
AUSTRALIA**

## OUR SPOKESPEOPLE

We have expert spokespeople who can talk about a range of topics within housing and the sector more broadly. Please contact the General Manager, Strategic Communications, Emma Duncan.

## OUR RESIDENTS

To request an interview or for more information, please contact our Communications Team [communications@hcau.org.au](mailto:communications@hcau.org.au)

You can also access our library of case studies [here](#).

**2023/24  
MEDIA KIT**

# ABOUT HOUSING CHOICES

Housing Choices Australia is an independent, national, not-for-profit housing provider that develops and manages high quality, accessible and affordable housing for people on lower incomes and people with disability.

We secure homes and better futures for thousands of Australians who would otherwise struggle to find affordable, safe and secure accommodation.

Housing Choices manages about 7400 social and affordable properties that are home to more than 12,352 people in Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, New South Wales and Tasmania.

Our housing portfolio is valued at more than \$1.2 billion, generating an annual revenue of \$100 million. We are also an Australian leader in the provision of Specialist Disability Accommodation and manage Catherine House, South Australia's only accommodation and support service specifically for women experiencing homelessness.

We work with residents, government agencies, support service partners and community organisations to create resilient, inclusive communities. We link residents to a range of support services and programs that create opportunities for work, education, mental and physical health as well as engagement with their local community.

## OUR VISION AND MISSION

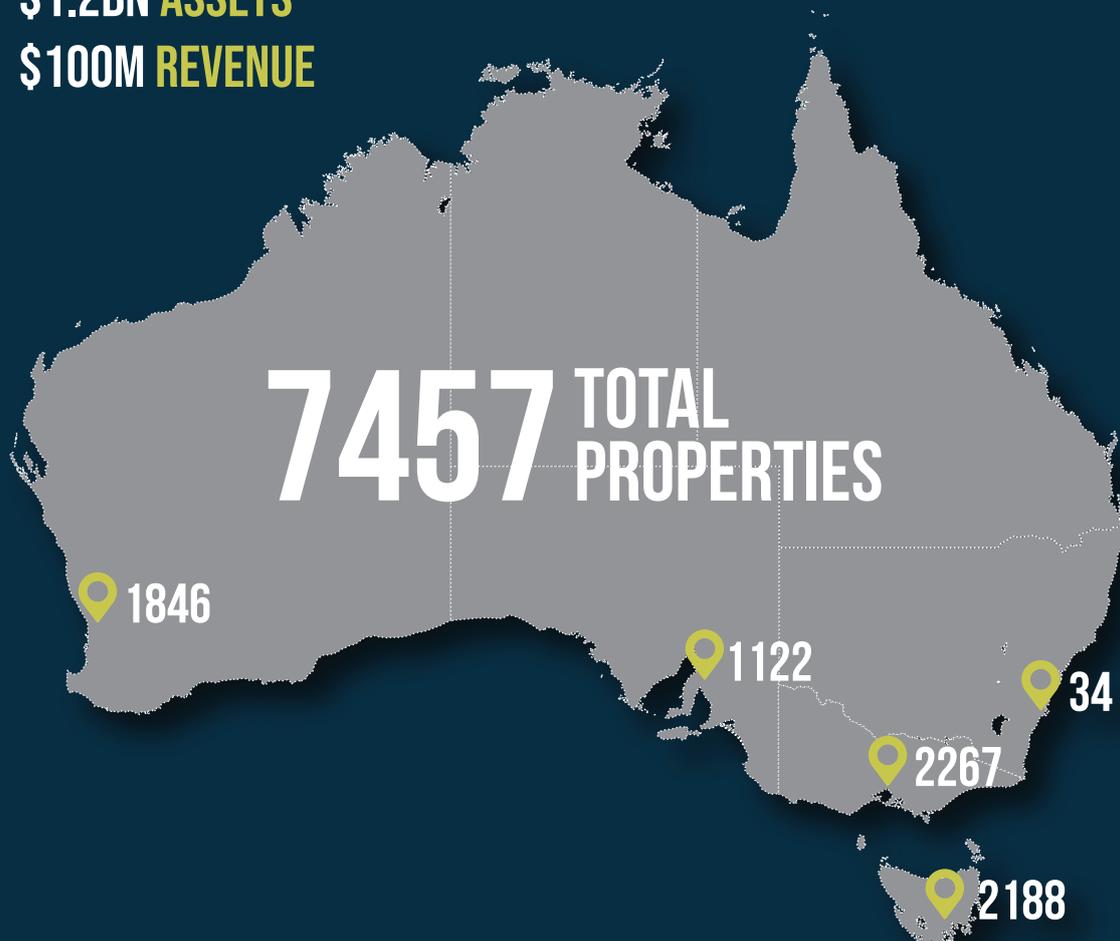
Australia's private rental market presents challenges for a significant portion of the community, particularly people on low incomes and those living with disability.

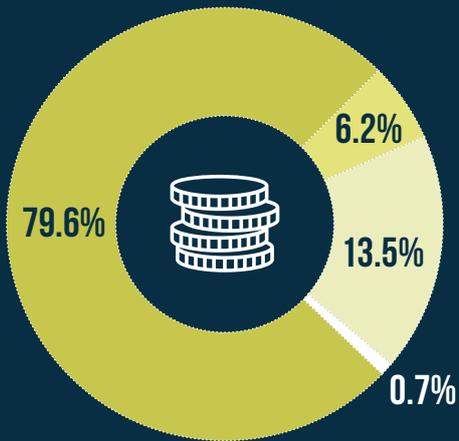
It is **our vision** that all people are affordably housed in neighbourhoods that support life opportunities.

It is **our mission** to provide affordable homes across Australia, working with partners to create resilient and inclusive neighborhoods.

 **\$1.2BN ASSETS**

 **\$100M REVENUE**





## RESIDENT INCOME BY TYPE



**79.6%** STATUTORY INCOME



**13.5%** COMBINATION OF INCOME TYPES



**6.2%** SALARY ONLY



**0.7%** OTHER INCOME



## HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION



**63.1%**  
SINGLE PERSON



**14.1%**  
SINGLE PARENT  
FAMILY



**13.1%**  
COUPLE WITH  
CHILDREN



**6.4%**  
COUPLE ONLY



**3.3%**  
NOT STATED



## DAVID FISHER

### CEO, HOUSING CHOICES AUSTRALIA GROUP

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David Fisher was appointed Chief Executive Officer of Housing Choices Australia in June 2023.

David's housing career began as a volunteer in a homelessness men's refuge in his hometown Edinburgh, Scotland. Working in disadvantaged communities in the UK and Australia, David is passionate about the importance of housing and has sought throughout his career to improve housing supply, standards of housing and service delivery.

David was drawn to the CEO position at Housing Choices because of the organisation's track record of growth, innovation and leadership in the Australian community housing sector and the opportunity to help lead the organisation through its next significant stage of growth and development.

David is a successful CEO whose leadership experience spans over 20 years as CEO and senior Executive Director positions in England and Australia. He has consistently worked for organisations seeking to increase their social impact through growth and expansion into new markets, improvements in operational effectiveness and developing responsive, customer-driven models of service.

During his tenure as CEO of Housing Plus NSW from 2016 to 2023, assets in ownership increased from \$70M to \$250M and Housing Plus became one of the largest recipients of funding for emergency accommodation for victims of domestic abuse in NSW.

Under David's leadership, Housing Plus increased their community service programs fivefold, to include homelessness, domestic family violence services, provision of disability accommodation and services, recidivism services as well as employment and training programs available to 15-17,000 customers annually.

David's deep experience in social housing spans the delivery of growth strategies; property development and construction, acquisitions including management of transferred government housing and a significant number of stock transfers.

As Managing Director of the Home Group UK (2002-2009), David led a major expansion program, including a complex housing stock transfer, growing its portfolio from 6,500 to 11,000 homes.

He delivered similarly successful growth and transition as CEO of Equity Housing Group Ltd (2009-2016), where he transformed the group from a traditional affordable housing company into a commercial business operation offering housing for sale, shared ownership housing, a market rent property portfolio and a successful estate agency.

He holds a Master of Business Administration from Manchester Metropolitan University, a Bachelor in Urban Geography from the University of Greenwich (London) and a post-graduate Diploma in Housing, Housing and Human Environments from the University of Glasgow.

# OUR HISTORY

2008

**Housing Choices Australia is born and expands.** Supported Housing Ltd (SHL), merges with Melbourne Affordable Housing to become Housing Choices Australia (HCA). HCA embarks on leveraging assets to pursue development. Merger brings an extra 300 affordable housing properties for people with a disability.

2009

**Nation Building development in Victoria.** HCA builds 442 homes in Victoria over the next two years to the value of \$155 million with Nation Building funds, donated land, philanthropic grants and private debt.

2010

**Housing Choices Tasmania is created and grows.** HCA establishes Housing Choices Tasmania. The Tasmanian Government transfers 191 Nation Building properties to HCT for management. HCT leverages its assets and uses its surplus to build 45 homes in Hobart and Launceston.

2011

**HCA secures Commonwealth funding for disability housing.** Housing Choices Australia secures \$2.5 million for disability housing under the Commonwealth Supported Accommodation Innovation Fund.

2013

**Redevelopment venture begins with Victorian government.** The Victorian Government uses National Building funds to redevelop a public housing estate in Chetwynd St, North Melbourne to create 100 new affordable homes under HCA management.

2021

**Catherine House Joins the Housing Choices Group of Companies.** Catherine House is an Adelaide CBD based homelessness service in operation since 1988. Housing Choices and Catherine House have come together with the aim of building greater capacity to help the growing number of women in experiencing homelessness to access safe, quality, affordable long-term housing.

2020

**Growth into Western Australia with Access Housing.** Community Housing Provider, Access Housing, merges with HCA, making the Group one of the largest Community Housing Providers in Australia with over 7,000 properties under management and over \$1 billion in assets.

2018

**Housing Choices NSW commences management of Specialist Disability Housing in NSW.** Housing Choices NSW is contracted to deliver Specialist Disability Accommodation on behalf of the Department of Family & Community Services. Life without Barriers is contracted as the Supported Independent Living Provider.

2017

**Housing Choices SA wins management of public housing in South Australia.** HCSA wins South Australian Government Tender to manage over 800 properties in Adelaide as part of the Renewing our Suburbs and Streets reforms.

2016

**Urban Choices Property Launches in Victoria.** Housing Choices' subsidiary Urban Choices Property (UCP) is established to provide affordable housing options in the private rental market, with a portfolio of 340 properties.

2015

**Growth into South Australia with Common Ground Adelaide.** Homelessness housing provider Common Ground Adelaide merges with HCA to form Housing Choices South Australia.

2014

**Housing Choices Tasmania wins management of Tasmania public housing.** HCT wins Tasmanian Government tender to manage northwest portfolio under Better Housing Futures. 1,174 properties and tenants are transferred to HCT for management.

# HOW WE WORK

## OUR RESIDENTS AND COMMUNITIES

We provide long-term, secure housing for people on very low to moderate incomes, who for one reason or another, find it hard to secure affordable accommodation in the current rental marketplace.

Our housing is affordable because rents are based on a maximum of 30% of our residents and their household member's income or at a discounted market rent. Many of our residents simply need access to well-located, secure, affordable housing.

Other residents require a landlord that understands both their housing and other support needs, who can work with them, so they can sustain their tenancies and access important life opportunities.



## OUR RESIDENTS

To be eligible for our social and affordable housing, applicants must meet the income eligibility criteria set by the Government.

Some of our residents are registered participants with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and require specialist housing solutions, called Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA). This is housing specifically designed for people living with disability where both their housing and support needs can be met, enabling them to live independently.

## RESIDENT ALLOCATION PROCESS

The allocation process is extremely important at Housing Choices. When a vacancy occurs in our portfolio, we undertake housing needs assessments to understand an applicant's housing aspirations, their previous housing experience and what, if any, support they may need to succeed in their new tenancy.

At Housing Choices, good communities are places where neighbours know each other, are inclusive, and develop collective responsibility for their shared environment.

All tenants are visited within six weeks of the tenancy commencing. This establishes supportive ongoing relationships which may detect any unforeseen vulnerabilities. Identified risks are mitigated by the development or adjustment of an individualised Housing Support Plan.





## TENANCY MANAGEMENT

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Housing Choices always place our residents at the centre of our services. Our residents are treated with dignity and respect. We place immense importance on the shared rights and responsibilities of our residents and of Housing Choices as a Landlord.

We ensure our staff, neighbours and residents are fully informed about how our services are delivered using clearly defined, fair, compliant and contemporary policies that are communicated through readily accessible formats.

We facilitate and encourage multiple opportunities for residents and stakeholders such as our neighbours, to provide feedback.

Our tenancy management model includes a dedicated Housing Officer and Property Officer to ensure our tenancies and properties are managed to the highest standard. Our staff have a breadth of experience from social work, real estate, community development and asset and maintenance management.

Tenancies are successful if services are tailored to the needs of individual tenants and to the nature and diversity of the communities in which the tenants live.

Our residents benefit significantly with access to the right opportunities to improve health, wellbeing, skills and engagement with the community around them. A good life starts with a good home, but a good home-life is something much more profound and enduring.

## OUR SPECIALIST DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION

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Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) is allocated to National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) participants living with disabilities that have extreme functional impairments or very high support needs.

SDA refers to the actual physical accommodation itself and an example of high physical support SDA housing is a home with ceiling hoists, video/intercom systems, emergency power systems, wide door openings, laminated glass, soundproofing, high impact fittings and fixtures.

The purpose of SDA is to provide individuals with an NDIS plan with choice and control over who they live with and preferred living arrangements. SDA is becoming increasingly important as thousands of young Australians with a disability are being placed into residential aged care due to a lack of funding and living options.

We provide SDA in collaboration with NDIS registered support agencies who support participants wanting to live independently. A property is leased to the support agency so workers can deliver overnight care.

Along with our support agencies, SDA enables people with disabilities to:

- live independently
- learn and develop everyday skills
- be part of a community
- make friends
- receive support in personal care

# FAQs

## ON COMMUNITY HOUSING

### WHAT IS COMMUNITY HOUSING?

**Community housing** refers to housing owned or managed by a diverse range of non-government housing providers that have not for profit and social objectives.

The peak association for the community sector is the Community Housing Industry Association.

**Social housing** is a generic term to cover all forms of housing which is owned and or run by government or community agencies on a not-for-profit basis.

**Public housing** is the name of housing owned and run by government.

Community housing providers (CHPs) like **Housing Choices Australia** are not-for-profit organisations that exist to build and manage safe, secure and affordable homes for renters.

Renters pay no more than 30% of income; community housing is funded by a combination of state, federal and local government contributions, private loans and partnerships .

Housing is often framed as either being something private developers do for a profit, or government delivers as a service. Community housing offers a different approach, where people are considered over profit.

Housing Choices re-invests any surplus revenue into new housing, better services or improving our properties. We deliver support and services to help renters experiencing disadvantage and we are deeply committed to the communities in which our buildings and residents sit.

Our model is to invest alongside government, manage and maintain properties and support people into the broader community. Beyond an economic transaction, we see housing as social infrastructure.

### WHY DO WE NEED IT?

Private market housing cannot provide housing to lower income households if the market price or rent is greater than their housing budget. In addition, the amount of public housing built by Government in Australia over the last decade has fallen dramatically.

**With 13 per cent of the Australian population living in poverty**, the need greatly exceeds the supply (3-4 per cent of all housing stock is social housing).

The Netherlands, which is as affluent as Australia, has 32 per cent of all housing as social housing. We have 4 per cent.

### WHO LIVES IN IT?

People living in community housing come from all walks of life and circumstances. The one thing they all have in common is they can't afford to buy a home or pay market rent.

Community housing gives renters the opportunity to plan for the future; it prevents people slipping through the cracks and into homelessness.





## ARE THESE HOMES REALLY AFFORDABLE?

Generally, **renters in not-for-profit community housing pay no more than 25-30 per cent of their household income** plus any Commonwealth Rent Assistance to which they're entitled for their home.

## HOW DOES ALLOCATION WORK?

There are 118,000 Australian households living in community housing. Most renters who live in homes managed by not-for-profit community housing have been allocated by registering on State Government waiting lists.

Other ways for people to access community housing is through real estate listings for certain programs targeting low to moderate income households and support service providers, that often combine housing and support.

## WHERE IS COMMUNITY HOUSING?

There are thousands of social homes across Australia, many managed by not-for-profit community housing organisations.

They come in many forms, from free-standing homes and townhouses, duplexes, apartments and villas in existing developments to shared accommodation and more.

Not-for-profit community housing organisations build and manage high-quality buildings. Many are architecturally designed, and new properties are built to the highest possible environmental standards. They look like any other building in the street.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION, RESEARCH AND DATA:

[www.communityhousing.com.au](http://www.communityhousing.com.au)  
[www.ahuri.edu.au](http://www.ahuri.edu.au)

IT IS **OUR VISION** THAT ALL PEOPLE ARE AFFORDABLY HOUSED  
IN NEIGHBOURHOODS THAT SUPPORT LIFE OPPORTUNITIES.

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Housing Choices Australia Group Limited  
ABN 23 385 731 870

1300 312 747  
[housingchoices.org.au](http://housingchoices.org.au)

**Media Contact:**  
Emma Duncan  
General Manager, Strategic Communications

0412 181 991  
[emma.duncan@hcau.org.au](mailto:emma.duncan@hcau.org.au)