CENTRAL AUSTRALIAN AFFORDABLE HOUSING

2016/2017

Annual Report 16/17
We create place
We nourish strengthen the fabric of communities
We work with the complexities
We search for workable options even if they are outside the typical program requirements
Housing is fundamental to good health and positive community and social outcomes. We follow principles that will grow and develop better housing options for Aboriginal people.
OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

• Do no harm to the fabric of communities
• Provide highly relational services
• Uphold the practices of ‘housing first’, social mix and ‘wrap around support’ for success
• Make decisions based on evidence
• Let the community inform operations
• Ensure all programs are fully funded and financially successful

OUR BELIEFS

• We can make a difference, with guidance and engagement from the community
• The governance, management and operations of CAAHC draws upon individuals and community leaders to make sure we get it right
• There is no one way of providing housing to meet the needs of the Aboriginal community
• We will work toward offering a range of housing options and services for our diverse community

Status

CENTRAL AUSTRALIAN AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMPANY is a NOT-FOR-PROFIT special purpose community housing development and management company incorporated as a COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE and registered as a TAX CONCESSION CHARITY with PUBLIC BENEVOLENT INSTITUTION status.
In the first paragraph of my report last year I regretted the loss of the tenancy management contract for the town camps in Alice Springs. We are all very pleased that true to its founding mission this year the company won back the contract for tenancy management on the town camps. As a result of the new contract there was a significant expansion of staff numbers over a short space of time, and I congratulate our small management team on their efforts in handling the transition so well.

The strategic decisions made after loss of the contract and the resilience of our staff, sometimes down to just two people in the office, enabled the company to get through the temporary set-back in its development. Our company is still a modest sized enterprise but I have to acknowledge I am more confident of its future now than I may have been 12 months ago.

Our aim is to achieve the growth of the company to a long-term sustainable scale of operations. That goal requires that we constantly review opportunities for expansion consistent with our goals. Such growth will be more easily achieved with the support of our stakeholders, and that in turn is also dependent on the company maintaining a reputation for sound management, including financial reporting and controls. I think the directors have been kept very well informed this year particularly with regular detailed financial reports, and the work of our management team and accountants is appreciated.

Although I will single out Sally Langton, our CEO, again for our appreciation of her complete and highly effective dedication to the company this year, I do not overlook the work and commitment of all our staff. We are an affordable housing company. That means our business engages with people who may be in some form of housing or social stress, and this requires special qualities in our people to deliver our service and assist the people whose accommodation we manage. So I thank all of the people who worked with the company during the year. Thank you all.

Lastly, and perhaps it is not productive to look back at past events, but I will do so anyway. CAAHC expressed its concern about an aspect of the administration of the previous (2015) town camp tender procedure. In my view it was important that we did so. The government engaged Merit Partners to inquire into and report concerning matters to do with the tender procedures. The report disclosed certain shortcomings in the administration of the tender procedures. Addressing those matters, internal to the government agency, can only result in improvements all round, for agency staff and for tenderers.

Again I thank my fellow directors for giving up time from their busy schedules to support the company and attend to its business at directors meetings and committees.

David Avery
Twelve months ago, CAAH was reeling from the loss of the Town Camp contract and re-grouping to sustain the organisation. CAAH moved from a staff of fifteen to just two people and our future was very uncertain. We had 40 properties under management and were sustaining ourselves via the project management of our Renal housing development.

However, CAAH, its Board and supporters refused to give up. We had a fundamental belief that one day we would return to the business of Tenancy Management on the Town Camps and worked hard to grow and strengthen our organisational base while we waited for that opportunity. Many good things have happened this financial year and I am proud to report the following:

We now have thirteen staff; 75% of whom are Aboriginal. The bulk of our new staff form the Town Camp Team. That brings me to the good news that CAAH won back the Town Camp Tenancy Management contract when it was re-tendered in early 2017.

However, while waiting for the Town Camp contract to return, CAAH embarked on strategic activity to grow its footprint in Alice Springs and make its mark as a growing source of housing for low-income Aboriginal people.

Aside from the successful completion of ten properties under the $6million Renal Project, CAAH increased its services to other NGO’s through providing a tenancy management function for the Mental Health Association of Central Australia. CAAH also won a two-year grant to provide a subsidised private rental and private rental advocacy service for low income homeless people in Alice Springs; working in partnership with other NGO’s in the Region.

In early 2017, CAAH secured funding to provide a consultancy service for the South Australian Government in remote homeland communities in SA. We have been able to share our experiences of community housing with these groups and assist them toward successful self-management. We have also continued to support the people of the Iwupataka Lands Trust in their quest for funding for water infrastructure on their communities. CAAH has demonstrated its flexibility and resourcefulness in securing contracts, which support its operational base and add to the value of housing for Aboriginal people.

In addition to achieving Tier Two Registration and Accreditation under the National Community Housing Standards, CAAH has completed its first ten-year Asset Management Plan. Thanks to the generosity of Housing Choices Australia, we now have a plan that can prepare us for the future.

It has been good to develop stronger partnerships with other agencies and Government over the last year. CAAH also continues to work with national Aboriginal housing organisations through participation in Master Classes, national workshops and conferences. We are working to promote Indigenous housing as a sector of influence and critical relevance in the future of housing supply, service delivery and innovation.

I wish to thank the CAAH Board for its support during the year. They have committed to an undying belief in the organisation in spite of recent challenges and have been able to celebrate many successes with me and our Team this year.

Our Staff Team has grown in number but also in strength, purpose and capacity. I am so proud of the way we work together and support one another. We couldn’t achieve what we have without our Team.

Housing Choices Australia needs to be thanked once again for their amazing support for our Asset Management Plan and we want to put out a special note of thanks to Tangentyere Design for their commitment to CAAH and the brilliant work they did on design and contract management for the Renal Project. Thanks must also go to MPH, our builders on the project who did a superb job and remained flexible and dedicated until the end. We are so proud of this work and look forward to many more similar ventures and opportunities in 2017/2018

Sally Langton
**DAVID AVERY (CHAIRPERSON)**

David is long term resident of Alice Springs since 1986. He has been practising as a Barrister & Solicitor since 1971 in the Northern Territory. After a short period at the Bar, David joined the Central Land Council as Manager of its Legal Services in 1986. David was involved in the development of CLC policies and responses to proposed legislative initiatives. Currently David is working for the Northern Land Council.

**SHIRLEEN CAMPBELL**

Shirleen works with the Tangentyere Women’s safety group and is a mother of five children managing a very busy household and coordinating the many sporting activities of her children. She is a resident of Hoppy’s Town Camp in Alice Springs and serves as President of the Housing Association. Shirleen also works for the Tangentyere Council where she is a member of the Executive and the Women’s Executive.

**PAUL CASE**

Paul is an accountant and business advisor who joined accountancy practice MLCS Corporate in 1995. He became a Director of the MLCS in 1999 and spends much of his professional life advising Indigenous business initiatives in the Northern Territory, South Australia and Western Australia. Paul has a Bachelor of Economics from the University of Adelaide and is an Associate of the Institute of Chartered Accountants, a registered Company Auditor and an authorised representative of Count Financial (Financial Planning).
**DAVID DONALD**

David is an architect working in a private practice based in Newcastle NSW. He formerly managed the Housing Division of Tangentyere Council prior to it being transformed into CAAH. David works with Healthabitat and NSW Health managing ‘Housing for Health’ programs for Local Aboriginal Land Councils across NSW. David is currently the Program Manager for Healthabitat OS, managing housing, water and sanitation projects in Nepal and South Africa.

**EILEEN HOOSAN**

Eileen is a long term resident of Mt Nancy Town Camp in Alice Springs. She is a member of the Executive of the Tangentyere Council and has been a member of the Tangentyere Women’s Council for many years.

**ROZ MARDEN**

Roz worked at the Tangentyere Council for 23 years as accountant and Chief Financial Officer. Prior to that Roz gained experience in a number of bookkeeping roles and teaching in business management. In addition to her Commerce degree, Roz has qualifications in Education and Business Systems Design and Management. Roz is now enjoying her retirement in Queensland.

**PATRICK MCDONALD**

Patrick is an accountant who trained at the University of Adelaide where he completed a Bachelor of Economics with Honours and a Bachelor of Commerce. He has spent the last 15 years working for Tangentyere Council in senior positions including two years as Chief Financial Officer and four years as Chief Operating Officer. Patrick is Chartered Practicing Accountant (CPA) and a Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Patrick joined the Board following the retirement of Roz Marden as one of the Tangentyere nominated Directors of the Company.
OVERVIEW

2016/2017 has been a big year for CAAH. In addition to growing the organisations community housing portfolio through the Renal Project and the My Place program, CAAH has been successful in winning back the Town Camp Tenancy Management contract.

During the period, CAAH continued to increase their property management portfolio to the management of 80 properties under agreements with MHACA, The NT Anglican Diocese, and the Northern Territory Government, as well as the properties we own under the NRAS Scheme. Additionally during this period, the Renal Housing Project was 95% complete. In September 2016, CAAH was assessed under the National Regulatory System for Community Housing and now is a registered Tier Two Provider. We note that CAAH is the first and only community-housing provider to have undergone Registration in the Northern Territory. In addition, CAAH also received five-year re-accreditation under the National Community Housing Standards.

Property and Tenancy Management Services

Property Management Services and tenancy management are CAAH’s core business for both social housing and affordable housing tenants. Since the establishment of CAAH in 2011, we have actively managed property on behalf of NT Housing whilst growing Alice Springs first community housing portfolio offering a mix of both social housing and affordable housing options.

We deliver the Property Management Services under CAAH’s current structure and in line with the National Community Housing Standards.

CAAH currently provides management services to 80 community-housing properties for different clients and 270 town camps properties for The Department of Housing and Community Development. We have a senior Community Housing Officer who attends to: rent, arrears, inspections, ordering responsive maintenance, allocations, leases, processing organisational payments, vacancies and the RTA.

We have a highly relational and person centred approach to tenants and stakeholders. We have significant experience in the service delivery to customers with complex needs, some of which relate to:
• Aging and disability
• Drug and alcohol abuse
• Physical and mental health issues
• Financial difficulties
• Family violence and/or breakdown
• Renal failure
PEOPLE OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

CAAH would not be able to achieve what it has this year without our dedicated team who work hard to achieve the goals of the organisation. Thank you;


FAREWELL JOHN MCBRIDE

Staff member John McBride came to CAAH in early 2015 as the Operations Manager. John is always a delight to work with and anyone who knows him knows how hard he works but also how he can make a hard day hilarious. His contribution to CAAH and the Town Camps tenancy contract has been invaluable. We wish him all the best in his new role at the Central Land Council which he took up in September 2016.

HOUSING CHOICES ASSESS MANAGEMENT PLANNING

In early 2017, National Community Housing provider, Housing Choices Australia assisted CAAH in developing a ten-year asset management plan that will aid the organisation in future planning around its housing. Ordinarily, these plans can be extremely costly to organisations in money and resources. Thank you to Housing Choices staff for their time and effort in assisting us with this important resource to plan our preventative maintenance and essential housing upgrades.
In early June 2017, CAAH was awarded through public tender the contract for the provision of tenancy management services to the Alice Springs town camps. Through this contract, we have been able to employ a team consisting of a Program Manager, four Community Housing Officers, one Maintenance Coordinator and .5 position Receptionist. The team provide tenancy management, take maintenance requests and work with other service providers in town to link people up with the appropriate services.

The bulk of the services offered under this contract involve managing the waitlist and allocation process with Housing Reference Groups, rent and income calculations and data entry into the tenancy management system, quarterly housing inspections, rebates, lease renewals and sign ups and a first point of contact for maintenance reporting and follow up with Tangentyere Constructions (the housing maintenance provider) and the Department of Housing and Community Development (the trades works panel provider).

We are looking forward to delivering services to the town camps residents throughout 2017/2018, delivering on the company’s mission and founding values of improving service delivery to town camps residents.

CAAH has been successful in applying for an innovative new program in the NT to prevent and alleviate homelessness in Alice Springs. Sadly, Alice Springs and its surrounding region has the fifth highest homelessness rate in Australia. CAAH’s My Place program has been awarded a $980,000 grant to support people to move into private rentals and provide ongoing support. Through this program, CAAH has been able to employ a Program Manager and Program Mentor. My Place has been working with people experiencing mental health or complex issues, or escaping domestic violence to move into a place they can call home. My Place is working towards preventing people ending up (back) on the street with two initiatives:

- **Subsidised private rental program** – will provide a rental subsidy to support people in need to secure a private rental and intensive wrap around support to ensure tenants maintain stable housing. This program focuses on assisting people experiencing mental health issues or escaping domestic violence.

- **Private rental liaison program** – will assist people to secure private tenancies, who are on low to moderate incomes but are facing challenges to secure a lease.

My Place also provides ongoing support for 12 months to ensure tenants maintain stable housing. People will be referred to My Place by the Alice Springs Women’s Shelter and the Mental Health Association of Central Australia, who will continue to support people.
We are pleased to announce the completion of the renal project of the purchase of ex public housing stock and refurbishment of 10 fit for purpose homes for renal patients.

The objective of the project was to increase affordable housing for Indigenous Central Australian end-stage renal patients required to relocate from remote communities with their families and/or carers to receive ongoing clinical treatment in Tennant Creek and Alice Springs. CAAH purchased existing social housing assets and is managing the refurbishment and redevelopment of the properties. CAAH are now providing property and tenancy management services for a minimum 10 year period to the eligible tenants.

CAAH wishes to thank Andrew Broffman and his team at Tangentyere design for their hard work in developing the design and the ongoing project management of the project, MPH Carpentry and Construction for their high quality work and flexibility throughout the project.

Upon launching the completed project, federal minister Ken Wyatt said “The recent Central Australia Renal Study identified accommodation as the greatest challenge to indigenous kidney patients moving to towns for dialysis,” Minister Wyatt said.

“After relocating, these patients and family members often ended up homeless, socially and culturally isolated, and in many instances having to live in town camps.”

“We acted promptly, prioritising housing to help solve these challenges for families already under immense financial and emotional pressure from this debilitating disease.”

“Now patients will be comfortably housed, within easy reach of clinical treatment.”

THE PURPLE HOUSE

As part of the proposal process CAAH consulted with Purple House (Western Desert Dialysis) to determine the most appropriate facilities required for the end users of the refurbished homes. These important details have been incorporated in the proposal and the final design. CAAH has examined extensive reports to gain familiarity with the symptoms and co morbidities associated with end stage renal failure.

Purple House has furnished us with literature illustrating best practice in ‘at home’ patient care and successful models of accommodation built around Australia. This information has been used to inform the proposal for both phases of the project.
Taking on the management of the St Mary’s site just south of the Gap was CAAH’s first venture into community housing within Alice Springs. This project has provided us with an opportunity to show case the community housing management model and demonstrate its benefits. It has also allowed us to establish key aspects of our community housing management systems.

**HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR HAVE INCLUDED:**

- Continued provision of 12 affordable housing dwellings at 75% of market rent to low income workers and households reliant on statutory payments. Our tenants are predominantly indigenous families.

- Negotiating two commercial leases over the three non-residential buildings on site.

- Negotiating a lease on one of the larger dwellings with Life Without Barriers which enables several people with disabilities to live in a residential community setting.

- The continued positive working relationship with the Anglican Diocese of NT (which is the owner of the site), thus providing greater certainty to tenants.

- Asset management planning with Housing Choices Australia

With St Mary’s still fully occupied and a new lease in place for the next 12 months (to June 2018) we look forward to continued partnership with the Anglican Diocese of NT. CAAH values the positive relationship with the Diocesan Registrar and the Parish Vicar, who have formed a local St Mary’s Building Committee charged with the responsibility to develop a plan for the future. We look forward to assisting them explore the opportunities for future use and/or development of the site.
COMMUNITY HOUSING PORTFOLIO

6 BLOOMFIELD STREET, GILLEN

After 12 months of market research, feasibility studies and contract negotiation CAAH purchased the 4,600sqm site at 6 Bloomfield Street, Gillen – very close to the heart of the city centre. Following planning approval, we subsequently contracted local construction company, Morelli Plumbing & Building Contractors to construct 11 one and two bedroom dwellings on the site. These were finished in 2015 and have been successfully tenanted for 2 years.

The dwellings have now been rented for two years to low income workers and rents are set at 75% of the market rent. The dwellings have been designed to minimise utility costs to enhance affordability. They are also built to the adaptable design standards meaning all dwellings are accessible and six dwellings have been built to accommodate people with a disability.

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING HEAD-LEASE PROGRAM – ELLIOT STREET AND DIXON ROAD

Since 2015, CAAH has been the tenancy and property manager for the Elliot Street and the Wauchope Flats Dixon Road complexes through Leases and Property Service Management contracts with the Department of Housing. CAAH has demonstrated the benefits of community housing management through impeccable rent management, streamlined and efficient allocations and extensive community engagement and consultation.

MHACA TENANCY MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT

MHACA (Mental Health Association of Central Australia) own seven properties in Alice Springs. Support for people with a mental illness is MHACA’s core business and their Board decided to contract out their tenancy management services. CAAH is pleased to welcome this new business and importantly our new social housing tenants in this programme.
NEW PROJECTS AWARDED

ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY HOUSING ORGANISATIONS (ACHO) CONSULTANCY

The South Australian Government released tenders to appoint a provider to deliver mentoring and developmental support to 14 designated Aboriginal Community Housing Providers in regional and remote areas of South Australia.

CAAH will be working with the ACHO’s to develop rent models, asset and maintenance plans, guidance in relation to tenancy management practices, resource materials and guidance with Governance specific to the needs of each ACHO.

CAAH has engaged Mandy Taylor Solutions to assist in the consultancy project throughout 2017 and 2018, and accompany CEO to conduct three visits to each community over 12 months.

CAAH will submit a final report to the South Australian Government in 2018 about the process and results.

POEPPEL GARDENS AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The Department of Housing sought submissions from the community housing sector and non-government organisations to lease one or more of three houses on Poeppel Gardens, Gillen, Alice Springs for the purpose of providing tenancy management and property maintenance services to people eligible for community housing.

CAAH has been successful in its proposal to manage the properties at an affordable rent to working Aboriginal families. The properties will be refurbished and tenanted by the end of 2017.

IWUPATAKA WATER INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT STAGE 1

CAAH has been working towards assisting the Iwupataka Aboriginal Corporation to secure funding to upgrade its dilapidated water infrastructure on the land trust. To begin the project, CAAH applied to the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet to get an initial grant to undertake the Quantity Surveying estimates, engineer’s review of the proposed CAT design and a project plan going forward. We look forward to working with the Iwupataka Land owners and the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet through the Aboriginal Benefit Account.
ADVOCACY & SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

CAAH is committed to utilising local talent to deliver its services and we have a strong record of Indigenous employment. This is demonstrated by the 2016/2017 team, which includes 70% staff that identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

We are active members of NT Shelter which is the peak NT non-government housing and homelessness advocacy body in the Northern Territory. Our CEO is a member of the Board. The CEO also represents the housing needs of Aboriginal Territorians through Aboriginal Housing NT Working Groups and other consultancy mechanisms for Government. Additionally CAAH is working with the National Aboriginal Housing Group and the Australasian Housing Institute.

Relationships are at the core of CAAH’s mission. We believe that to deliver services to our customers successfully, we need to have strong relationships. This is demonstrated through our extensive networks and regular engagement with key stakeholders such as tenants, service providers and advocacy/action groups.

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

CAAH is committed to utilising local talent to deliver its services and we have a strong record of Indigenous employment. This is demonstrated by the 2016/2017 team, which includes 70% staff that identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

CAAH employs the services of over 20 Alice Springs small businesses for a range of services such as property maintenance, information technology, office supplies and more.

SOME EXAMPLES OF THIS INCLUDE:

- The Mental Health Inter Agency Group
- The Alice Springs Women’s Shelter
- Attendance at the fortnightly police patrollers meetings
- Regular engagement with key service delivery partners such as Tangentyere Council, Anglicare, Mission Australia and MHACA, the Purple House and representative peaks such as NTCOSS and NT Shelter.
- The Alice Springs Accommodation Action Group
- Ongoing engagement with our current tenants through block BBQ’s, afternoon teas casual on site interactions

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TENANT SURVEYS

CAAH conducted a customer satisfaction survey in late 2016, which were collected over a two-month period from tenants in properties at St Mary’s, Dixon Road, and Elliot St and Bloomfield St complexes. Surveys were voluntary and no names were used to identify tenants.

Surveys such as these help us improve service delivery and tenant satisfaction to sustain successful tenancies and ultimately improvement in quality of life. Results assist CAAH management to develop its policy and procedures to align with best practice in community housing standards in a tailored community consultative approach.

We thank the tenants for positively enabling CAAH to conduct this research on their homes. Thank you also to Kylie who works hard to deliver services to households she manages.

KEY FINDINGS

Overall satisfaction with CAAH’s services was overwhelmingly positive with over 90% of participants reporting that they were either happy or very happy with CAAH’s services and staff. 100% of participants reported that they were either happy or very happy with the maintenance CAAH provides.

100% of participants reported that the rent was affordable however; a small percentage reported that they did not know what to do if they were behind in rent.

MAINTENANCE

CAAH’s maintenance procedures are set up in SDM to issue work orders based on urgency. One tenant said, “Whenever I have rung about any issues, staff have always helped me”.

Overall CAAH are happy with its current contractors but will continue to revise its procedures to continue fast response times and develop quality management procedures. In addition, CAAH is looking at its long term planned maintenance for the future, which will help reduce responsive maintenance incidents.

RENT

100% of participants reported that the rent was affordable however; a small percentage reported that they did not know what to do if they were behind in rent. CAAH will look at distributing information to tenants to encourage tenants to contact CAAH, and that we are willing and available to negotiate payment plans for tenants struggling with rent arrears. This is an area that we will strive to improve through strengthened communication.
TENANT SURVEYS

Satisfaction with the staff when tenants ring or come into the CAAH office?

Satisfaction with the maintenance that CAAH provides?
Central Australian Affordable Housing Company LTD

ABN: 82 136 070 829

is registered as a community housing provider under the

National Regulatory System for Community Housing

Registration Number: R52661/0224
Category of Registration: Ter 2

subject to compliance with the National Law,
National Regulatory Code and Conditions of Registration
or equivalent jurisdictional legislation

Registrar of Community Housing Northern Territory

26 May 2017
Certificate of Accreditation

Central Australian Affordable Housing Company Ltd

has been awarded accreditation against the

National Community Housing Standards - 3rd Edition - May 2010

Date of Certification: 28/03/2017
Date of Expiry of Certification: 15/06/2020
Client ID: 101557

Address:
3/21 Gregory Terrace Alice Springs 0870 NT Australia


This certification remains valid until the above mentioned expiry date and subject to the organization’s continued compliance with the certification standards and Global-Mark’s Terms and Conditions.

This Certificate of Approval remains the property of Global-Mark Pty Ltd, Company Number: ACN 100 007 674

John Mason, Council Chair