# CONTENTS

## The Housing Registrar
- Our mission 1
- Our vision 1
- Four key objectives 1
- Message from the Registrar 2
- The year in review 3
- Our team 12

## The registered sector 14
- The registered sector as at 30 June 2014 15
- Snapshot of the sector 16
- Financial data 17
- Summary financial statements 19
- Spotlight on a newly registered agency 21
- Innovation in the sector 22

## Housing 24
- Spotlight on housing developments 25

## The future 30

## With thanks/acknowledgements 33
THE HOUSING REGISTRAR

OUR MISSION

To protect social housing assets and ensure quality services to tenants by regulating well governed, well managed and financially viable rental housing agencies.

OUR VISION

A robust, vibrant regulated housing sector that grows affordable housing for the Victorian community.

FOUR KEY OBJECTIVES

> ensure that all housing agencies are viable, well governed and properly managed;

> protect and ensure accountable use of government assets managed by the affordable housing sector;

> build confidence in the private sector to invest in and grow affordable housing; and

> ensure quality and continuous improvement in service delivery and outcomes for tenants.

The regulatory framework supports and promotes best practice while identifying and addressing poor performance.
This is our seventh annual report which once again highlights the achievements, success and performance of housing associations and housing providers.

We have reduced the overall format of this report and replaced the very detailed Sector Performance report with two much simpler summaries that focus on service delivery and financial performance. This makes it easier for people to understand the statistics we use to measure the sector. We are also planning to publish more detailed statistics on Data.Vic - a government website that holds a wide variety of data. Our regular newsletter, EQUIP will be used to keep everyone informed about more up to date events in the sector and how our work as a regulator is delivered throughout the year.

Once again we have seen some modest growth in the sector which now owns and manages 19,245 homes worth over $2.5 billion and employs 1,303 people.

Our involvement in the National Regulatory System for Community Housing (NRSCH) continued during the year and I am very grateful to Housing Choices Australia, HomeGround Services and St Kilda Community Housing for participating in the national registration pilot.

Towards the end of December 2013 the Victorian Government decided it would not participate in the NRSCH at this stage but would instead make cost effective administrative changes to align our performance assessment and reporting requirements with the National Regulatory Code. In practice this means we have a new set of Performance Standards which incorporate the code and we have reduced the regulatory burden by removing some key performance measures (KPMs) and associated data collection. We still have an active role in the overall system by providing advice and guidance.

Our approach to regulation has improved with the introduction of a risk-based engagement tool which allows us to better target our resources where they are most needed and we have carried out our first data validation reviews. We also conducted our second inspection of an agency.

I would like to thank the Housing Registrar team for their support, hard work and dedication throughout the year and the members of the Registrar’s Advisory Panel (RAP) whose independent advice is important. We have also worked closely with colleagues in the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) in particular at our invaluable monthly protocol meetings.

While the sector has been fairly static over the last few years, we are seeing a new trend of mergers in the sector. North East Housing Services (NEHS) has successfully merged with Loddon Mallee Housing Services. Hanover Welfare Services announced it is in the progress of merging with HomeGround Services, while BAYSA Ltd will merge with both Glastonbury Community Services and Time for Youth. Such rationalisation should only strengthen the sector for the future.

Our agencies continue to make an enormous contribution to people’s lives. In this report we showcase three significant new developments and feature how one provider is helping more people into private rental. I was also pleased to be invited to a wonderful display of tenants artwork organised by St Kilda Community Housing. The standard of the work was very impressive and I bought a fantastic portrait of Vincent Price. This now hangs in my living room and is a continuing reminder of the great work the sector does. Well done.

Yours sincerely

Anthony Hardy
REFINING REGULATION

Better regulation, less burden

We completed a two year program of work collectively termed Better regulation, less burden in June 2014. The program commenced in May 2012 with an aim to identify and implement refinements to our regulatory approach. It was made up of several projects focusing on new elements (and modifications where appropriate) including business regulation, risk engagement, data validation, reportable events, and streamlined annual review reports.

Business regulation

The Housing Registrar mission statement sets out a key goal for all registered agencies to be well governed, well managed and financially viable. These are all strong indicators of organisational health.

The refined business regulation approach emphasises that while agencies vary in business structure, activities, risk appetite and a number of other ways, agencies are expected to operate, and be assessed, as social businesses.

The approach also focuses ongoing monitoring of organisation health at an engagement level consistent with our assessment of the agency’s risk profile.

Regulatory engagement combines this ongoing monitoring with snapshot and targeted checks of agency compliance and/or performance, and receipt and analysis of agency qualitative and quantitative information via reporting requirements in place for agencies.

Risk-based regulation – introduction of the Regulatory Engagement Tool

The regulatory engagement tool (RET) introduced this year was developed in conjunction with Ernst and Young to objectively assess an agency’s level of regulatory risk. It is an internal desktop exercise which places each agency into one of four categories – very high, high, medium and low. Each agency is assessed annually as part of the annual review process, but assessment can occur more frequently if significant events occur in relation to an agency or in the broader external housing and economic environment.

The outcome of the assessment determines the indicative level of regulatory contact with an agency. Very high means monthly contact, high means quarterly, medium means twice yearly, and low means annually. This ensures our limited resources are dedicated primarily to larger agencies or those with significant compliance and/or performance issues.

Horizon scanning – emerging risks

To ensure the RET remains current in the elements forming part of the assessment, any material emerging risks to the sector are evaluated and adjustments made where required to the RET. No adjustments were made during the RET’s first year of operation.
Data validation

One of the targeted checks of an agency’s performance introduced this year was data validation. We identified a number of agencies which had experienced issues in completing the annual asset reconciliation process; finalising key performance measures (KPMs), or with complaints data for 2012-13.

The inaugural data validation process was conducted with four agencies (Centacare Housing Services, Housing Choices Australia, Loddon Mallee Housing Services and Yarra Community Housing) over May to June 2014.

Final reports with findings and recommendations were issued in August 2014, and each agency was required to develop an action plan to address all recommendations. Common issues communicated to the sector in December 2014 included multiple systems being used for the one type of data (for example property assets), missing data fields required for reporting, reliance on one staff member’s knowledge and expertise, lack of written instructions or guidelines, and many manual calculations with little or no records of these kept.

This work has led to real improvements in data quality and accuracy.

Streamlined annual review reports

A streamlined annual regulatory report was initiated this year. The new reporting format comprises a one-page compliance and performance assessment, together with a list of KPMs and financial metrics comparing the agency results with its previous year results, and with its peer agencies.

Where an agency is assessed as not meeting a Performance Standard or a legislative requirement an explanation of the reasons for the judgement is included as an attachment.

The new format simplifies feedback to agencies and provides a clear picture of our assessment of the agency for an agency’s management and board without these parties needing to read through a several page document as required previously. Registered agencies have supported this move.

Reportable events

It is important for us to be kept well informed about any significant events or newly emerging issues within registered agencies. Published guidance on reportable events can be found on the Registrar’s website to clarify expectations and to outline the reporting process. There were 10 reportable event notifications during the year. In response to agency feedback we will be reviewing our guidance in 2015 to provide additional clarification on what is classified as a reportable event.
A significant part of our ongoing work each year is direct engagement with the 42 registered housing agencies. This engagement aims to ensure agencies are complying with Performance Standards and other legislative requirements, as well as demonstrating continuous improvement in their operations and performance. Where this is not the case we work closely with agencies to rectify any issues and have considerable powers to intervene if required.

**Annual regulatory reviews**

There have been 41 annual reviews completed, and one newly registered agency not required to be involved in its first year.

Each agency initially received a draft report for comment, before the final report was issued. The final version is required to be tabled at an agency’s board meeting.

Reviews are comprehensive and require the lead and financial regulator to examine:

> annual reporting received from the agencies;

> progress against improvement objectives determined from the previous year’s review;

> evidence of compliance which agencies have uploaded in our business application REGIS – such as policies, procedures, and reports on outcomes of projects or improvement initiatives undertaken;

> feedback from the DHHS on agency performance against leases held with the Director of Housing and/or on progress of capital development projects in which the Director has an interest; and

> our non-routine contact with the agency in the past year following up complaints, issues and other matters of concern, and the outcomes of these.

Agencies must submit two groups of reporting to the Housing Registrar after the end of a financial year:

> the first at the end of August including data showing results against KPMs, data on complaints, the agency’s self-assessment of achievements against last year’s business plan, and the new annual business plan; and

> the second within 28 days of the Annual General Meeting (AGM) being conducted. These reports include a self-assessment of performance against Performance Standards, declarations, audited financial statements, and actual and forecast financial data for specified time periods. The eight housing associations are required for example to provide five years of historical data and 15 years of forecast data.

With the second group of reporting submitted in the last quarter of a calendar year, annual review reports are generally finalised in the first quarter of the next calendar year.
Attending agency AGMs

We remain committed to attending AGMs where these are open to non-members of the agency. They are a great opportunity to hear first-hand about agency achievements and be influenced by individual tenant stories, as well as meet staff, board members, tenants and other stakeholders. Two particularly entertaining AGMs featured an African drumming activity (Prahran/Malvern Community Housing) and a comedian MC (Victorian Women’s Housing Association).

Registering agencies

Organisations seeking registration are encouraged to approach the Housing Registrar to understand what is required. Meeting our constitutional requirements and Performance Standards is demanding.

The 44th registration, Baptcare Affordable Housing, took place in November 2013. A more detailed description of this agency is included in a later section of the report ‘Spotlight on a newly registered agency’.

Enquiries about registration continue to be received. However at year end there were no new agencies actively preparing an application for registration.

Deregistration of an agency

The Registrar of Housing Agencies approved the deregistration of YMCA Community Housing on 26 March 2014. The agency board decided to relinquish its registration status in March 2013 and advised the Registrar at that time.

Engagement continued with the agency to March 2014 to clarify its intent in regards to trading as an entity after de-registration, to obtain a signed audited set of accounts up to the date of deregistration, and to ensure residual funds were directed to the principal purpose of the agency as specified in its constitution.
Regulatory forums

Biannual regulatory forums were conducted in November 2013 and May 2014. Each were attended by more than 50 representatives from the registered sector.

The November forum included:

> a presentation by the Registrar, and representatives from Common Equity Housing Limited and the Community Housing Federation of Victoria, about the National Housing Conference in October 2013; and

> discussion of the draft information sheets we had developed for affordable housing enquiries and complaints handling for the three stakeholders types (tenants/prospective tenants, neighbours, and members of co-operatives).

The May forum featured a wide range of topics, including:

> the Victorian Government decision to align with, rather than participate in, the National Regulatory System for Community Housing (NRSCH) and the initial steps being taken to achieve this, including changes to the Victorian Performance Standards, Evidence Guidelines and KPMs;

> social housing policy update from a DHHS senior manager; and

> feedback on sector performance results for 2012-13 which were highlighted in the annual Sector Performance report.

Newsletter

The EQUIP newsletter was published in July and October 2013, and in March and June 2014. EQUIP combines news articles from both the Housing Registrar and registered housing agencies. Copies of past editions are available on the Registrar’s website.
National Regulatory System for Community Housing

During 2013 the Housing Registrar continued to play an active role in the development of the National Regulatory System for Community Housing (NRSCH).

Three Victorian agencies participated in a pilot of the proposed NRSCH registration process at the invitation of the Housing Registrar. HomeGround Services, Housing Choices Australia and St Kilda Community Housing made full applications for registration and their staff took part in the national evaluation of the pilot.

Despite it being peak reporting time, the agencies provided insightful feedback which assisted the development of the NRSCH and provided support to other states piloting registration of community housing agencies for the first time.

Decision not to adopt

In December 2013 after careful consideration, the Victorian Government decided it would not currently participate in the NRSCH but instead make cost effective administrative changes to align performance assessments and reporting requirements with the National Regulatory Code (NRC). A sector forum was held in February 2014 to explain the background to this decision and a written briefing was sent to all agencies. Victoria is open to possible participation at a later date however our existing protections for over $2.5 billion of community housing assets cannot be weakened.

The alignment decision was seen as a way to lower the barriers for Victorian providers who wish to operate interstate and interstate providers who wish to operate in Victoria while maintaining the legislative protections of the Victorian system.

New Performance Standards and evidence guidelines

The first step towards alignment was the gazettal of a new set of Performance Standards which came into force on 1 July 2014. This new version contains all of the NRC plus some additional Victorian requirements from the previous Performance Standards. Hard copies of the new standards are available by contacting the Housing Registrar.

The new standards have led to a review of our existing evidence guidelines for agencies to demonstrate compliance as well as the substantial reduction in the number of KPMs used as indicators of performance against the standards. Following consultation with the sector, updated evidence guidelines were published on our website in December 2014. A revised KPM data collection template will be used for 2013-14 reporting from August 2015.

We have also been exploring potential alignment with the IT system being used in the NRSCH named CHRIS. This system has been built on a Salesforce software platform.
BUILDING INTERNAL CAPABILITY

Our staff
A public sector graduate trainee Kapil Teckchandani spent time with the Housing Registrar from December 2013 to January 2014. Caroline Prodan (formerly Neske) was welcomed back in April 2014 following maternity leave.

In mid-April 2014, Paul Jason joined us as a contractor to work on the alignment of Victoria’s performance assessment and reporting requirements with the National Regulatory Code - an important component of the NRSCH. Paul capably performed this role until leaving in August 2014 to take up a position in the private sector. He was replaced by Katrina Pantazopoulos who returned after two and a half years with Housing Choices Australia.

Our systems and processes
DTF’s internal auditors KPMG reviewed the Housing Registrar’s internal processes in 2013. The final report in November 2013 found ‘no reportable findings’ for three of five areas examined. It did however identify opportunities for improvement in monitoring compliance with relevant regulatory requirements and governance over key relationships between the Registrar, relevant Ministers and DHHS.

The opportunities for improvement have subsequently been addressed.

Our business system REGIS was transferred in July 2013 to a new host, EyeMedia, after several years of service provision through Fujitsu and DHHS. We worked with EyeMedia to develop robust backup and disaster recovery arrangements.

Registrar’s Advisory Panel
Members met four times (September and October 2013, and February and March 2014) to discuss a range of regulatory matters and make recommendations to the Registrar for action.

Publications
The Housing Registrar published the 2012-13 Housing Registrar and Sector Performance annual reports, plus the new Performance Standards.

In addition we developed four information sheets and made them available on the website in March 2014 to assist responses to the number of telephone and email enquiries received during the year. One information sheet focuses on affordable housing enquiries, while the other three focus on complaints from three stakeholder types – tenants/prospective tenants, neighbours, and members of co-operatives.

Training and development
Tony McLynskey, a senior manager with Community Sector Banking, gave a presentation to us in October 2013 on the approach of the bank in assessing new loan applications. The presentation highlighted the similarities in the interests of the banking sector and the Housing Registrar.

Some staff attended the Victorian Managed Insurance Authority’s two day risk conference in Melbourne in October 2013. The event looked at the main risks facing the public sector as well as offering insights into risk analysis methods and risk interpretation tools.
COMMUNICATION WITH OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Ministers and DHHS

Two of the Housing Registrar’s key stakeholders are Government Ministers and the Director of Housing based in DHHS.

Protocols established with both the Director of Housing and the Director Performance, Regulation and Reporting (DPRR) within DHHS continued to operate. We attended monthly protocol meetings with the Director of Housing and his staff from August 2013, and met with DPRR staff twice to discuss matters of common interest. The Memorandum of Understanding with the DHHS Complaints unit around dealing with complaints about registered agencies continued to guide our joint role with complaints.

Tenants, neighbours and the general public

The Housing Registrar’s central phone received approximately 260 enquiries from a variety of callers including tenants, people searching for affordable housing, neighbours of social housing properties and members of the general public seeking assistance.

The generic email address housingregistrar@dtf.vic.gov.au received enquiries from more than 130 different people. The complaints email address housingregistrarcomplaints@dtf.vic.gov.au continued to receive emails from complainants seeking review of issues they have been unable to resolve with a registered agency.
COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT

Under the Housing Act 1983, the Registrar of Housing Agencies has a role in investigating complaints by tenants or prospective tenants if they have not been satisfactorily resolved by a registered housing agency.

This role is an important point of contact for Housing Registrar staff with tenants and prospective tenants of registered housing agencies. It enables us to be better informed about issues arising in the landlord-tenant relationship, and more broadly in social housing properties.

The role also provides a qualitative perspective of how well each agency is managing its complaints, complementing the quantitative view gained from complaints data submitted annually to us by agencies.

64 complaints were directed to the Housing Registrar, compared with 77 in 2012-13 and 42 in the prior year. Once again a significant proportion of complaints were reviewed and found to still be subject to the agency’s process, and were referred back to the relevant agency. Only one complaint became the subject of a formal investigation.

The summary of complaints is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Complaint</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tenant complaint still subject to agency’s process – referred back to agency</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prospective tenant complaint still subject to agency’s process – referred back to agency</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal review – under Registrar’s jurisdiction but not requiring formal investigation</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbour complaint – outside of Registrar’s jurisdiction – referred back to agency</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-operative membership complaint – outside of Registrar’s jurisdiction – referred back to agency</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal investigation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside Registrar’s jurisdiction (for example public housing or private rental market tenant)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall the total number of complaints has fallen by 15 per cent and complaints from tenants/prospective tenants rose by only 6 per cent. Given that there are over 19,000 tenancies in the sector, the number of complaints from tenants/prospective tenants is very low at just under 2 per cent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2013-14</th>
<th>2012-13</th>
<th>2011-12</th>
<th>2010-11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of complaints</td>
<td>811</td>
<td>957</td>
<td>930</td>
<td>661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number from tenants / prospective tenants</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenant / prospective tenant complaints resolved within 30 days (percentage)</td>
<td>87.3</td>
<td>86.1</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>82.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE HOUSING REGISTRAR TEAM

Anthony Hardy
Olga Anisimova
Susan Bell
Emma Iacobaccio
Niraj Pau
THE REGISTERED SECTOR
### The Registered Sector as at 30 June 2014

#### Housing Associations
- Common Equity Housing Ltd
- Community Housing (Vic) Ltd
- Housing Choices Australia Ltd
- Loddon Mallee Housing Services Ltd (trading as Haven; Home, Safe)
- Port Phillip Housing Association Ltd
- Rural Housing Network Ltd
- Wintringham Housing Ltd
- Yarra Community Housing Ltd

#### Housing Providers
- Aboriginal Housing Victoria Ltd
- Active Community Housing Ltd
- Baptcare Affordable Housing Ltd
- BAYSA Ltd (trading as Barwon Youth)
- Centacare Housing Services Inc
- Eastcoast Housing Association
- Eastern Access Community Health (EACH) Housing Ltd
- Eastern Suburbs Rental Housing Cooperative Ltd
- Hanover Welfare Services
- The Haven Foundation Ltd
- HomeGround Services
- Inner East Social Housing Group Inc
- Mallee Accommodation and Support Program
- Mission Australia Housing (Victoria)
- Northcote Rental Housing Cooperative Ltd
- North East Housing Service Ltd
- Northern Geelong Rental Housing Cooperative
- Prahran/Malvern Community Housing Inc
- Servants Community Housing
- Social Housing Victoria
- SouthEast Housing Co-operative Ltd

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#### Other Providers
- South Port Community Housing Group Inc
- St Kilda Community Housing Ltd
- Sunshine/St Albans Rental Housing Co-operative Ltd
- The Salvation Army Red Shield Housing (Victoria)
- United Housing Co-operative Ltd
- UnitingCare Housing Victoria Ltd (trading as Uniting Housing Victoria)
- Urban Communities Limited
- Victorian Women’s Housing Association Ltd (trading as Women’s Property Initiatives)
- VincentCare Community Housing
- WAYSS Ltd
- West Turk Housing and Elderly Services Co-operative Ltd
- Williamstown Rental Housing Cooperative Ltd
- Women’s Housing Ltd
SNAPSHOT OF THE SECTOR

PROFILE OF TENANCIES 2013-14

Long term housing (including rooming house)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Housing associations</th>
<th>Housing providers</th>
<th>Total sector</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tenancies as at 1 July 2013</td>
<td>9 205</td>
<td>4 832</td>
<td>14 037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exits</td>
<td>1 306</td>
<td>923</td>
<td>2 229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacancies</td>
<td>1 699</td>
<td>1 212</td>
<td>2 911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per cent of tenancies maintained over entire 12 months (excluding rooming house)</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per cent of tenancies maintained over entire 12 months (for rooming house)</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New tenancies (excluding transfers)</td>
<td>1 551</td>
<td>1 066</td>
<td>2 617</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenancies as at 30 June 2014</td>
<td>9 412</td>
<td>5 094</td>
<td>14 506</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Transitional housing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Housing associations</th>
<th>Housing providers</th>
<th>Total sector</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tenancies as at 1 July 2013*</td>
<td>1 174</td>
<td>2 147</td>
<td>3 321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exits</td>
<td>1 039</td>
<td>2 358</td>
<td>3 397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacancies</td>
<td>1 166</td>
<td>2 510</td>
<td>3 676</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New tenancies*</td>
<td>1 043</td>
<td>2 374</td>
<td>2 995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenancies as at 30 June 2014</td>
<td>1 178</td>
<td>2 163</td>
<td>3 341</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These figures were reported by registered agencies in the 2013–14 KPM data collection (figures were reviewed, and updated as necessary, during this reporting period).

*This data is no longer reported by agencies and has been arrived at from calculations of the data supplied by agencies.
FINANCIAL DATA

Total assets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FY 2013</th>
<th>FY 2014</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HAs</td>
<td>2,330.8</td>
<td>2,355.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HPs</td>
<td>209.2</td>
<td>218.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector</td>
<td>2,540</td>
<td>2,574.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total capital grants received

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FY 2013</th>
<th>FY 2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HAs</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HPs</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Incremental growth in housing assets of housing associations

- **FY 2006**: $112 Mn
- **FY 2007**: $86 Mn
- **FY 2008**: $206 Mn
- **FY 2009**: $180 Mn
- **FY 2010**: $431 Mn
- **FY 2011**: $510 Mn
- **FY 2012**: $160 Mn
- **FY 2013**: $67 Mn
- **FY 2014**: $35 Mn

### Operating revenue breakdown

- **FY 2013 HA**: Rent revenue $18.5 Mn, Operating grants $113.9 Mn, Other revenue $75.7 Mn
- **FY 2013 SECTOR**: Rent revenue $19.7 Mn, Operating grants $81.9 Mn
- **FY 2014 HA**: Rent revenue $17.9 Mn, Operating grants $87.6 Mn, Other revenue $121.9 Mn

### Operating revenue

- **FY 2013**: $115.3 Mn
- **FY 2014**: $122.8 Mn

### Asset growth through acquisition/development and Asset transfer

- **FY 2006** to **FY 2014**: $1,120 Mn (acquisition/development), $35 Mn (asset transfer)
### SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rent revenue</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>63.2</td>
<td>75.7</td>
<td>82.0</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>74.3</td>
<td>98.4</td>
<td>113.9</td>
<td>121.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating grants</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>59.1</td>
<td>59.7</td>
<td>62.2</td>
<td>66.9</td>
<td>75.4</td>
<td>77.4</td>
<td>81.9</td>
<td>87.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other revenue</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>33.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total operating revenue</strong></td>
<td>76.0</td>
<td>115.4</td>
<td>113.9</td>
<td>120.6</td>
<td>98.7</td>
<td>107.6</td>
<td>115.3</td>
<td>122.8</td>
<td>174.7</td>
<td>223.0</td>
<td>229.2</td>
<td>243.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admin &amp; Property expenses</td>
<td>55.4</td>
<td>83.2</td>
<td>73.7</td>
<td>78.3</td>
<td>89.6</td>
<td>96.4</td>
<td>100.3</td>
<td>105.7</td>
<td>145.0</td>
<td>179.6</td>
<td>174.0</td>
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<td>1,940.8</td>
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BAPTCARE AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Baptcare Affordable Housing Ltd (BAH) was registered by the Registrar of Housing Agencies on 1 November 2013. BAH is a subsidiary of Baptcare Ltd and was established in 2012 to assist achieve mission objectives for those most disadvantaged in the community.

BAH provides a range of innovative accommodation and, in partnership with its parent company, care and welfare programs for the frail aged, families, children, people with disabilities and asylum seekers across Victoria. Its affordable housing units provide the bases from which financially disadvantaged people can access a range of services including education, training and employment.

BAH manages 15 housing units in Wangaratta and Boronia owned by Baptcare. It is currently building an additional 16 units in Wangaratta and hopes to commence another 52 in Geelong in 2014-15. Units are available to financially disadvantaged older people and people who meet the low income and assets test.
**HOMEGROUND REAL ESTATE – A SOCIAL ENTERPRISE AIMING TO INCREASE AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

HomeGround Services was faced with the dilemma of how to respond to increasing numbers of people coming to its service because they are homeless or are at risk of becoming homeless at a time when affordable housing is at an all-time low.

Its solution was to establish a not-for-profit real estate branch, HomeGround Real Estate, which aims to increase affordable housing stock and generate income to boost the capacity of the organisation more broadly. HomeGround Services was the first community housing organisation to implement this idea in the competitive real estate market.

With 15 years’ experience in tenancy and property management, starting a social enterprise that could make a difference for people priced out of the private rental market seemed to be an appropriate step, with the potential for an additional supply of affordable housing as a major incentive.

The response from the public has been very encouraging. Since launching HomeGround Real Estate in March 2014, the enterprise has signed up over 140 properties and a further 40 properties are under negotiation. Landlords and tenants are responding to the project with great enthusiasm.

**Rental options offered**

Properties can be leased and managed at market rent just like any other real estate agency, or property owners/investors can choose to list a property with HomeGround Real Estate at below market rent to make it affordable to people on lower incomes.

Some owners need a market return to meet their mortgage repayments while others are in a financial position to offer their properties at below market rent; allowing low income families and individuals the opportunity to access private rental.

In Melbourne social and public housing account for around three per cent of stock, while private rental covers around 30 per cent of the housing market. While HomeGround Services is keen for all levels of government to maintain and extend social and public housing, it recognises the need to increase the supply of more affordable housing in the private rental market.

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*HomeGround Real Estate Agency Manager Andrea Levey and HomeGround CEO Heathier Holst*
Service delivery

Owners listing properties with HomeGround Real Estate will receive a professional, expert service from an agency that specialises in rentals. The property management team aims to provide a dedicated service that meets the owner’s individual needs.

Potential tenants are assessed for properties against industry standard criteria for market rent properties. Where a property is rented at a discounted market rent HomeGround Real Estate matches the most appropriate tenant to a property and also applies an income test criteria.

Property management fees paid to HomeGround Real Estate help sustain and grow this initiative and ultimately help HomeGround Services achieve its mission of ending homelessness in Melbourne.

Philip Endersbee has listed a block of four apartments in East Kew with HomeGround Real Estate under the Affordable Housing Initiative.

“It’s an opportunity for those fortunate enough to be property owners to be part of something bigger. Something which can change lives and have a lasting impact,” Mr Endersbee said.

“I have been fortunate enough to acquire some investment properties and I am encouraged by the work HomeGround does in working to prevent homelessness. I had the capacity to forego a percentage of rental income in order to help a family in need and would strongly urge others who are in this position to do the same.”

To find out more, visit the website at http://www.homegroundrealestate.com.au or contact the HomeGround Real Estate team on 03 9288 9600.
Registered housing agencies, particularly housing associations, have been involved in a range of developments this year to create new affordable housing. Below are some examples of these developments.

**Wattlewood, Carrum Downs – Haven; Home, Safe**

After almost six years, Wattlewood remains Haven; Home, Safe’s (HHS) biggest and most ambitious property development project to date.

Construction of Stage 1 of the more than $80 million subdivision in Carrum Downs, which includes $30 million in social housing, was completed last June.

Purchased from the Brotherhood of St Laurence (BSL) in mid-2009, the 17.4ha infill site, formerly known as the GK Tucker Estate, housed more than 80 elderly tenants living in an assortment of run-down units, mostly built during the 1950s, 60s, and 70s.

The GK Tucker Estate was one of the first deliberate social housing developments in Australia, established back in the 1930s by the founder of BSL, Gerard Kennedy Tucker. HHS’s development aims to reflect the site’s history in its master plan and to develop a cutting edge suburban social housing example where the social housing is invisibly meshed within the master plan throughout the estate.

HHS is using the profits from private land sales at Wattlewood to fund the development and construction of 100 social housing properties throughout the new estate to re-house the elderly tenants and others as part of this integrated master-planned community.

The first 21 elderly tenants moved into their new homes in July.

Tenant, Lorraine Sage, said it was worth the wait.

The 72-year-old, who for the past 10 years had been living in a rundown unit in the older part of the estate, was thrilled to move into her new home with her 19-year-old cat, Sam.

Would she ever go back to her old unit?

“Never! I love it here. It’s more private and secure with a fence around my house and I have got the backyard garden just how I like it,” Lorraine said.

She also feels more independent and connected to the broader community of Carrum Downs and enjoys the friendship of the young family living next door.

“There were little kids trick or treating on Halloween and it reminded me that I’m not just living with the ‘oldies’ any more. It’s really marvellous.”

Lorraine’s sentiments are shared by the other tenants who have been relocated, according to Community Engagement Officer Rochelle Stanton.

“They can’t get over the amount of natural sunlight in their homes,” she said.

“And they’re extremely house proud, too. One lady has bought all new furniture.”

Many of these tenants are also reconnecting with their families because they now have the space and facilities to entertain and a spare room for sleepovers.

The remainder of the tenants will be relocated over another four stages with the project scheduled to be completed by 2017.

Lorraine Sage is all smiles after receiving the keys to her new home at Wattlewood.
Sidney Myer Haven, Flora Hill – Haven; Home, Safe

Haven; Home, Safe (HHS) views the construction and development of its more than $7 million Sidney Myer Haven in Bendigo as a great example of its strategic positioning as a fully integrated housing and homelessness agency.

The Sidney Myer Haven is innovative in every sense. Funding for the project has come from a number of sources. The State Government through the Victorian Property Fund has provided $4 million, with the remainder coming from the Myer Family’s various trusts, plus several other large philanthropic institutions and community grants.

The development comprises 23 units plus an Education Centre, which will facilitate the delivery of a comprehensive social curriculum. The curriculum is designed to enhance the lives of residents by providing the skills and habits necessary to source and live independently in long term housing.

Securing a planned and permitted site gave HHS the opportunity to move to construction relatively quickly. The adaption of the original permit to be fit-for-purpose and some unforeseen complexities during the civil stage of construction did however present a series of challenges.

The first of the units were at lock-up prior to Christmas 2014 with the project scheduled for completion in July 2015.

HHS Executive Director Program Development Kerry Ashley said many homeless or at risk clients truly wanted the chance to make a difference in their lives or that of their families. They needed guidance and assistance however to navigate a world where they find themselves so far behind the eight ball.

“Despite their own personal experiences of poverty, lack of education, lack of role models, peers that are not necessarily supportive, and most importantly someone in their lives that can show encouragement or belief in them to succeed, they still envision a hope for a future that will be different than what they or their parents have experienced,” she said.

Sidney Myer Haven will focus on providing homeless individuals or families under the age of 35 years the opportunity to begin that journey.

“It won’t be for everyone, but if they are ready to put in the hard yards and challenge themselves, they will have our full support and that of our community partners to meet their aspirations,” Kerry said.

Construction is well advanced on the Sidney Myer Haven site in Bendigo
One of the Sidney Myer Haven units under construction

Kitchen fit-out
St Mary’s, Geelong – Common Equity Housing Limited

Common Equity Housing Limited (CEHL) purchased the St Mary’s School site in 2008 to develop a significant precinct within the central Geelong area comprising cooperative housing, public open space and retail. The agency also aimed to create key partnerships with suitable community organisations for them to establish a presence on the site.

The site is a 10,000 square metre block on the south eastern fringe of Geelong’s CBD across from Barwon Hospital. It was formerly owned by the St Mary’s Parish and operated as their primary school from its construction around 1890. The school operated continuously until around 2005 when it was relocated to a more suitable site nearby.

Planning for the development spanned several years. As a result of extensive community consultation and collaboration, two key partnerships were formed with Barwon Health and Volunteering Geelong. These partnerships form the basis of the final development proposal.

The final project includes a mixed use development of 193 individual apartments, a renovation of the existing school building for office space and of the existing heritage listed St Mary’s Hall for an open learning centre, further office space and a cafe to be owned and managed by Barwon Health. The entire Geelong community will benefit from the project through the provision of additional affordable housing, restoration of a significant local landmark and in their enjoyment of the open space and cafe facilities.

Stage 1 of the project is now underway with construction commenced on the St Mary’s Hall, school building and the first residential component of 59 apartments. The appointed contractor Becon Constructions has completed the demolition and excavation of the site, and commenced on the structural components of the main apartment building. Completion of the heritage hall is expected in the second half of 2015 and the initial apartment building is expected to be completed in early 2016.

There have been several significant challenges to overcome for construction to commence, such as some contaminated material found on the site and the heritage status of the hall building that required a separate approval process through Heritage Victoria.

Becon Constructions have successfully completed two other key projects for CEHL at Harmony Village Dandenong and 205 Gipps Street Abbotsford. Both of these projects won awards for Best Affordable Housing Project at the Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA) Awards in 2011 and 2013.

Some of the Stage 1 apartments will be retained by CEHL and are planned to be utilised by existing CEHL tenant members wishing to downsize from larger homes in the Geelong area to smaller apartments in proximity to the CBD. The rationale for this is that the larger family homes can then be targeted to younger families with children who require the larger dwellings. There is currently strong demand in the area from this target group.
Stage 2 of the overall project comprises a further residential component of 134 apartments and is not due to commence construction for at least 12 months.

The remainder of the apartments will be purchased by Barwon Health and will be used as short stay accommodation for visiting healthcare professionals, who will also utilise the open learning centre and other facilities within the St Mary’s Hall.

The original school building will be used as CEHL’s regional Geelong office and will also house the offices of Volunteering Geelong, a local community organisation that works with people to facilitate opportunities for volunteering, and assists other organisations to develop and manage volunteering.
THE FUTURE
Sector consolidation / mergers

The Housing Registrar will continue to be involved with the two mergers announced in 2014 involving registered agencies - Hanover Welfare Services and HomeGround Services are merging to form a new agency, and BAYSA Ltd will be merging with two other non-registered child/youth and family services agencies – Glastonbury Community Services and Time for Youth.

Whilst North East Housing Services (NEHS) and Loddon Mallee Housing Services (LMHS) have successfully completed a merger, we need to finalise the deregistration process for NEHS. LMHS will remain as the registered housing entity whilst NEHS will deregister once all requirements have been met.

Addressing emerging issues

A number of issues have emerged over the past financial year and will be addressed this year:

> **Corporate group structures** – The Housing Registrar is developing guidance for housing agencies wanting to operate both in Victoria and in other states. The Victorian regulatory framework and NRSCH suggest that two entities in a group structure would be required to operate in the two jurisdictions. We are concerned about how to ensure independence of governance and decision making for the Victorian entity.

> **Transition from Housing Provider to Housing Association registration status** – The Housing Registrar is revising its current guidance on transition in registration status. Several agencies currently registered as housing providers have expressed intentions of upgrading their status to housing association. This upgrade is commonly viewed by agencies as creating greater opportunities for attracting any future government investment in social housing and holding greater priority for any future stock transfers of government owned assets to the registered sector.

> **Assets and complaints jurisdiction** – The Housing Registrar is developing guidance on housing assets required to be listed within the agency register and those tenants and prospective tenants whose complaints may be referred to the Registrar. Registered agencies have considerably expanded the range and geographic spread of rental housing properties under their management since Housing Act 1983 amendments in 2005 introduced the regulatory framework. Clarification is required as the Act does not specifically deal with the range and geographic spread of properties under the Registrar’s jurisdiction.

> **Asset management** – The Housing Registrar is developing guidance/a good practice guide on expectations of asset management being conducted by agencies. With greater responsibility for property maintenance and upgrades being taken on by agencies through their ownership of properties and in leases with the Director of Housing, it is time to review and clarify expectations of agencies.
Sharing data

For the past six years the Housing Registrar has shared data on sector assets, staffing and board members, and performance in two annual publications, including this report. In most cases the data has been presented in a sector aggregate form, although in the Sector Performance report we have presented performance data for de-identified individual housing associations.

We now plan to publish data on the Victorian Government’s data directory website Data.Vic from 2015.

The uploaded data will form an alternative source of sector performance data and will include property, KPM, complaints and financial data. It will cover several financial years, with explanatory notes included.

Monitoring the Registrar’s performance

The Housing Registrar will undertake a project to identify and implement key performance indicators for its work unit with the intention of measuring performance against these from 1 July 2015.

We also plan to investigate whether an annual survey of registered agencies on regulatory approach and engagement would be beneficial. In the past, feedback has been ad hoc in most instances, although supplemented by special projects undertaken such as Better regulation, less burden where sector input has been sought.

Implementing regulatory framework changes as greater alignment with the NRSCH proceeds

The Housing Registrar will be working closely with agencies to facilitate their transition to the revised Performance Standards. While similar to the previous standards, there has been a new standard of Community Engagement incorporated to achieve the alignment with the National Regulatory Code which agencies have not had to specifically address previously.

We will ensure the new evidence guidelines are fully understood and where required that agencies are developing new documentation and/or processes to meet the requirements in the guidelines.

The potential for a new IT system which aligns with the national system, CHRIS, is being evaluated. We will work closely with agencies assuming it goes ahead.
SPECIAL THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING ORGANISATIONS THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE REPORT
Baptcare Affordable Housing Ltd
HomeGround Services
Common Equity Housing Ltd
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