



# SISTERS OF CHARITY FOUNDATION

## ANNUAL REVIEW

2018-2019

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# WHAT WE DO

In 1838, the Sisters of Charity landed in Australia. Their mission: to devote themselves to helping the poor and marginalised through compassion, care and practical assistance.

180 years later, the Sisters of Charity Foundation carries on their legacy.

Every year we're able to make a difference to thousands of people across the country with funds generously donated by compassionate Australians. We support initiatives that benefit the disadvantaged, marginalised and socially isolated people in our community, no matter their gender, ethnicity, age or ability.

We support community projects across Australia that receive little or no funding from other sources. We currently:

- Fund dozens of community projects every year that help those experiencing disadvantage or social isolation. The Foundation has provided more than \$8,000,000 to 850+ projects since 2000.

- Offer scholarships at nine universities and TAFE campuses for young people who have lived in out-of-home care, an ever-increasing group estimated at more than 47,000 young people nationally.
- Work in partnership with the Asylum Seekers Centre. The Foundation has invested in the purchase and renovation of a residential building that provides safe emergency housing to refugees and asylum seekers; while the Asylum Seekers Centre provides food, basic health care, English lessons and help finding work.

Join us in forging a society where anyone who experiences disadvantage or social isolation can count on swift, practical and compassionate assistance.



## FROM OUR PATRON



I am delighted to serve as Patron of the Sisters of Charity Foundation. From funding community projects to providing scholarships, supporting refugees and much more, the Foundation, its members and supporters provide very real and meaningful assistance to poor and marginalised people. Your work typifies the richness of spirit to which all Australians should aspire.

I was most impressed to hear that seven new scholarships were awarded to students during the 2018/19 period – a remarkable achievement. Because of this program our country will gain a new doctor, a nurse, an engineer and a social worker, among others, who will go on to enrich our community while pursuing their chosen careers.

I'd also like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to four impressive young women – Terri, Serra, Hope and Jasmine – who graduated from their respective degrees and courses this past year. Committing to a period of intense study and excelling is challenging at the best of times, but to do so without parental support is even more impressive. We have much to learn from the dedication of these new graduates.

As we approach the 20th anniversary year, Linda and I look forward to supporting the Sisters of Charity Foundation, celebrating your contributions and highlighting the importance of your mission.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'D Hurley'.

His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd)  
Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia

## FROM THE TRUSTEES



Mary Aikenhead grew up with a father who always encouraged her to reach out to the poor, to the needy, to the marginalised. When she founded the Congregation of the Religious Sisters of Charity in 1815, she always involved what we today would call co-workers. She had this great gift of gathering people around her who would continue the mission: service of the poor and the marginalised, respect and dignity given and shared with everyone.

In the same spirit, when we established the Sisters of Charity Foundation, we knew we needed to embrace women and men who would work in partnership with us, in looking at the needs of today and how to meet them. We recognised the importance of partnerships, the importance of working with others, the importance of reading the signs of the time in Australia and being called to live out the Gospel values today with joy.

And now? Every vital community project that receives funding, every disadvantaged student who has an opportunity for higher education, and every asylum seeker who finds a safe place to rest their head brings our Congregation more joy than you could possibly imagine. We see real outcomes, life-changing transformations happening every day, and we know without a doubt that our decision to establish this Foundation was worthy and would have made Mary Aikenhead proud.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'Clare Nolan rsc'.

Sr Clare Nolan rsc  
Congregational Leader



# OUR HISTORY

Moved by the plight of the needy in Ireland, in 1815 Mary Aikenhead founded the Sisters of Charity to serve those living in poverty.

A request was sent from Bishop Polding in Australia to Mary Aikenhead, asking her to send Sisters to the most neglected portion of the Catholic world. She responded by appointing five volunteer Sisters to Australia.

In 1838 these heroic and courageous women began their ministry in Australia by assisting the convict women in the female factory at Parramatta. From these humble beginnings the Sisters of Charity have continued to answer the call to ministry in hospitals, schools, prisons and social welfare activities.

## A Foundation that supports the community

In order to promote in perpetuity the mission of the Australian Sisters of Charity, specifically to the service of the poor, the Congregational Leader and Council established the Sisters of Charity Foundation in 2000.

The Sisters knew that while there were plenty of government-funded initiatives and large charity organisations that helped many in our society, countless others were overlooked. The Foundation's first initiative, the Community Grants Program, was aimed at helping groups who already make a big difference to those in need, so they can have an even greater impact.

## A scholarship that transforms lives

Only 3% of young people who grew up in foster care, group homes or other out-of-home-care arrangements have the opportunity to attend university, compared to approximately 40% of other young people. Something had to be done to help close the gap.

In 2012 the Foundation launched a Tertiary Scholarship Program to empower dedicated students from out-of-home-care backgrounds to transform their lives through education.

The Foundation expanded the program in 2018 to include TAFE campuses, allowing young people who choose a vocational career path to also find support.

## A home for asylum seekers

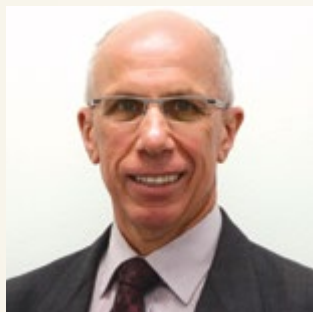
In 2014, the Sisters of Charity celebrated 175 years in Australia – and what better way to mark the occasion than to help another group of people in desperate need?

More than 70% of asylum seekers in Australia receive no government support, leaving them vulnerable – often without a safe place to call home. The Foundation's response was the Asylum Seekers Housing Program, which provides emergency housing to asylum seekers at risk of homelessness.

A residential apartment building in Sydney's Inner West was purchased and renovated by the Foundation, and has provided safe and welcoming accommodation to dozens of Asylum Seekers Centre clients over the past five years.



# CHAIRMAN'S REPORT



As our 20th anniversary approaches in February 2020 it's useful to reflect on what we've achieved so far, as well as the opportunities the future holds for the Foundation's activities.

Although our mission remains constant, it's our responsibility to continue to grow the good works of the Sisters of Charity, which began when they first came to Australia.

We are looking forward to growing our impact – by increasing the number of small community organisations we help and extending our scholarship program so that it covers a wider range of activities that students want to pursue. The Foundation will always seek to find new programs that will meet the needs of those less fortunate than ourselves.

From a practical viewpoint, we'll strive to innovate, raise public awareness about our work and inspire new supporters to join us in our mission. In particular, we want to increase our engagement with corporate partners that have a strong commitment to social justice and values that align with our own.

As an organisation we are fortunate to be backed by a Congregation of Sisters who are truly inspiring. The Sisters have always been quick to react to changes in the community and we seek to emulate this approach by making sure that the work we began 20 years ago is still relevant today.

The Sisters have always been integral to our activities and achievements and we value their guidance in our decision making. Every step we take is influenced by their remarkable history and charisma. As we look to the future, we will continue to focus on responding to the urgent needs of individuals, families and local communities, knowing there is still much work to be done.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Richard M Haddock'.

Richard Haddock AO  
Chairman

# CEO'S REPORT



For the past 180 years in Australia, the Sisters of Charity earned respect and admiration for their healthcare, education and social justice services, somehow finding a way to help everyone who needed their assistance. In 2000 they established the Foundation with a clear vision that this organisation would be a vehicle to expand upon and continue their social justice works well into the future.

This past March we saw the Sisters' vision in action, as one of our treasured community partners achieved a major goal. Fighting Chance Australia, an organisation that believes people with disability should be fully included in our society, opened Avenue Parramatta, a social enterprise/ co-working space that enables people of all abilities to participate in the workforce.

To see what has been achieved makes all our support over the years worthwhile. When we embarked upon our relationship it was a small organisation with only 10 participants – now it assists around 500 people living with disabilities in Sydney, and is poised to launch in Brisbane.

Like all the small not-for-profits we grant funding to, Fighting Chance has a unique way of tackling a problem in society, dedicated people leading the charge, and a proven track record of achieving results. Our partnership has allowed them to amplify their services and help a greater number of people – the mission at the very core of our Community Grants Program.

Since 2000 we've given out more than \$8 million in grants; this year alone we gave \$614,500 to 58 recipient organisations. I cannot wait to see what each one achieves.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Reba Meagher'.

Hon. Reba Meagher  
CEO

**OUR MISSION: FOR A SOCIETY WHERE ANYONE WHO EXPERIENCES DISADVANTAGE OR SOCIAL ISOLATION CAN COUNT ON SWIFT, PRACTICAL AND COMPASSIONATE ASSISTANCE.**



**4 STUDENTS GRADUATED**

with university degrees or TAFE diplomas

58 Community Grant Program organisations received a total of  
**\$614,564** in funding this year



**37 individuals** found safe and stable accommodation at Providence House



**\$552,131**

invested in the Tertiary Scholarship Program since 2012

More than **\$8m** given to 850+ community projects since 2000

**40%**

of grant funding given to organisations tackling poverty and disadvantage



7 students awarded new scholarships for university and TAFE courses



14 individual cases/family units successfully transitioned out of **Providence House** into the private rental market

# OUR YEAR AT A GLANCE...

# COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM

The Sisters of Charity launched the Foundation in 2000 with the Community Grants Program, an initiative to help small charities have an even bigger impact. Now, every year, the Foundation provides individual grants of up to \$15,000 to a range of innovative community projects that break down social isolation and alleviate the impact of poverty on individuals and families.

## 2018/19 Program overview

This financial year we made some changes to our Community Grants Program which have been well received by grant recipients. In March 2019 we implemented new grant application software that streamlined the application and review process while simplifying and enhancing user experience.

Of greater significance was our decision to increase the maximum grant allowance from \$10K to \$15K per organisation, which will help the wonderful initiatives we support to have an even greater impact.

During the 2018/19 financial year we:

- Saw a total of 192 organisations apply for funding, 80 in the September 2018 grant round and 112 in March 2019.
- Awarded community grants to 58 organisations across every state and territory in Australia.
- Provided a total of \$614,500 to our Community Grant Program recipients.



## Tommy's transformation

Single grandmother Joan had been caring for her 10-year-old grandson Tommy for several years due to traumatic family events. Tommy is unable to attend regular school as he suffers from ODD, OCD and high functioning Asperger's – so his all-around amazing grandmother homeschools him too.

**Aunties and Uncles Queensland** found Tommy the perfect mentor in Kim, who had professional experience in children's behavioural issues. She spent time with him every fortnight, giving him attention, care and guidance – while Joan had some precious time to herself. This was huge, as previously Tommy's anxiety and fear kept him glued to Joan's side. It didn't take long for Kim to form a special bond with Tommy.

Today Tommy is much calmer, thanks to the time spent with his mentor. He has lots of opportunities to connect, learn and grow – and he particularly loves playing with Kim's new puppy!

Aunties and Uncles is a mentoring program for vulnerable and socially isolated children. A Foundation Community Grant allowed lots of kids like Tommy to access one-on-one mentoring, reach their potential and establish their future.

**1** A mentor offered much-needed support to Tommy and Joan. *Photo: Getty Images.*



## Avenue: Giving people a Fighting Chance

The Foundation has supported **Fighting Chance Australia** since 2012. This year we were honoured to celebrate the opening of Avenue Parramatta in March 2019. CEO Laura O'Reilly told us:

*"Avenue is designed for people with profound and severe disability who traditionally finish school and are told, 'There are no work opportunities available for you.' This was very much the lived experience of my brother Shane, who had cerebral palsy. He left school, he wanted to work, he was very interested in IT and computers – but he was told because of the severity of his disability that work was not for him."*

*"At Avenue we say: 'That's rubbish!' All people, without exception, should be included in the economy. It's in the interests of our society as a whole that we make use of the abilities and talents of every single person."*

Avenue currently assists 350 people with disability to work via unique microenterprises, or in the sharing economy, within its flyering service or co-working spaces.

## Volunteers off to a great start

**Home-Start National Inc** matches trained volunteers to families with young children to offer help and support. Parents may be isolated or suffering mental health issues, dealing with disabilities or living in poverty, overwhelmed with multiple young children or have escaped a domestic violence situation. Volunteers offer regular support, friendship and practical help to young families in their own homes, helping to prevent family crisis and breakdown.

Thanks to a Foundation Community Grant, Home-Start was able to train a new batch of volunteers to send out into the community. Val at Home-Start had this to say:

*"It's been pretty hectic getting all the volunteers matched up and happily visiting families. Finally they are all doing well and the families they are supporting are very happy and grateful to have their friendship and help every week. Their impact will continue on and be lifelong for the children, and some of the volunteers will continue to visit other families for years to come. Once we've trained and supported a volunteer, some remain with Home-Start for over 10 years!"*



2 Fighting Chance CEO Laura O'Reilly at Avenue Parramatta.

3 The latest group of Home-Start volunteers at their graduation – congratulations!





# COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM



## Feeling at home

**The Bower Reuse & Repair Centre** diverts usable items from landfill by accepting donations of furniture, whitegoods, bikes, building materials and more. The items are repaired and sold at low prices, or given to refugees and disadvantaged people as part of the House to Home program, which is supported by a Foundation Community Grant.

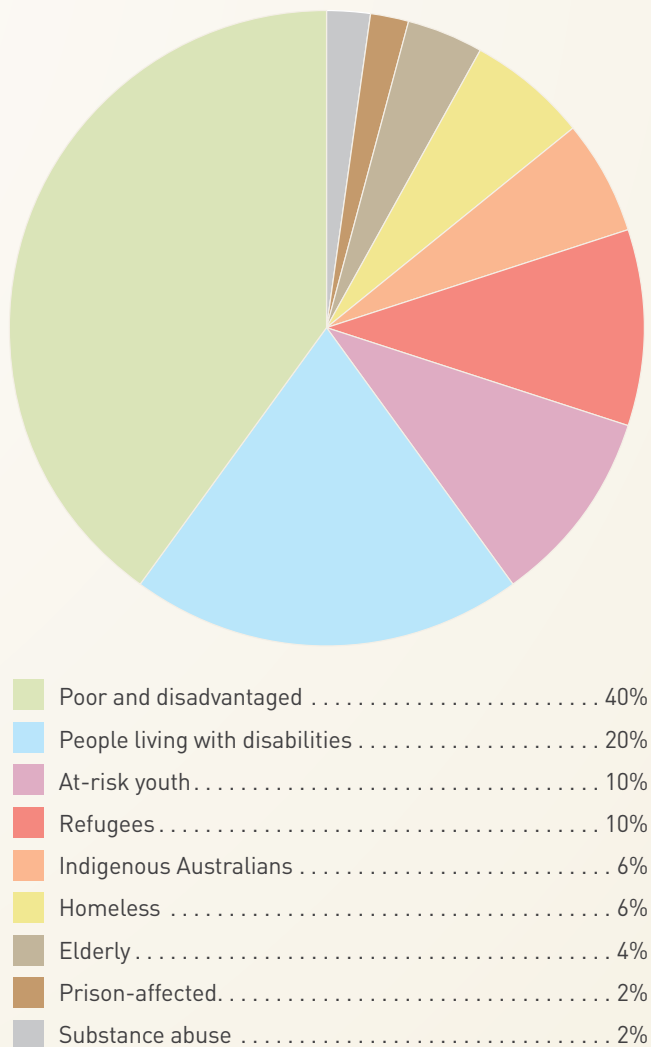
A caseworker who referred clients to The Bower said:

*"Refugees are in a very vulnerable situation, they often do not have access to the same support that permanent residents and citizens have. Many don't have anywhere else to go for basic items that we take for granted."*

*"Two of the key standouts in this program are clients' ability to feel some control and independence when they visit The Bower and see what's available to them. As well as the option for delivery – many do not have the capacity to transport these much-needed items themselves."*

- 4 A furniture delivery service helps vulnerable people create a home.

## Grant allocation by sector 2018/19



## Community Grant Program recipients 2018/19

ORGANISATION	STATE	ORGANISATION	STATE
A Better Life for Foster Kids Inc.	Vic	Lolly Jar Circus Inc	SA
Abbeyfield North West Melbourne	Vic	Make a Difference Dingley Village Inc	Vic
All Saints Catholic Primary School	NSW	Mama Lana's Community Foundation	NSW
Aunties and Uncles Queensland	Qld	Mary Immaculate Parish Primary	NSW
Aus DoCC	Vic	Moving Forward DFV	NSW
Australian Dental Outreach Foundation	SA	Nature Foundation SA	SA
Australian Refugee Volunteers	NSW	NCJWA Victoria	Vic
Autism West Support Inc.	WA	Prison Network Ministries	Vic
Boroondara Cares	Vic	Prosper (Project Australia)	NSW
Bridge for Asylum Seekers Foundation	NSW	Reach Homeless Services	NSW
C Care Inc	Vic	Refugee Migrant Children Centre	Vic
CareWorks Sun Ranges Inc	Vic	Restoring Hope Inc	Vic
Catholic Development Fund	NSW	Rowville Baptist Care	Vic
CatholicCare NT	NT	Sisters of Charity – Catholic Visitors Program	NSW
Community Accommodation Support Agency	Qld	Snag Island Community Garden	WA
Community Life Batemans Bay	NSW	Southern Cross Kids Camps	Vic
Conscious Creative Ltd	Vic	St Johns High Nowra	NSW
Cystic Fibrosis Association ACT Inc	ACT	St Kilda Mums	Vic
Eternity Aid	NSW	Survivors R Us	NSW
FareShare	Vic	Sydney Story Factory	NSW
Fighting Chance Australia	NSW	Syndrome Without a Name	Vic
Geelong Food Relief Centre	Vic	Teen Challenge Tasmania Inc.	Tas
Grandparents for Grandchildren SA	SA	The Babes Project	Vic
Grow Hope Foundation	Vic	The Bower Reuse & Repair Centre	NSW
Home-Start National Inc.	NSW	The Eve Project	NSW
I Give a Buck Foundation	Qld	The Kogarah Store House	NSW
Iris Foundation	NSW	The Sanctuary Women's and Children's Refuge	Qld
Jesuit Refugee Service Australia	NSW	Top Blokes Foundation	NSW
Kilkivan Men's Shed	Qld	West Welcome Wagon	Vic



# TERTIARY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Sadly, only 3% of young people who were unable to grow up at home safely with their birth parents pursue education after high school, compared to 40% of other young people.

In 2012 the Foundation launched a Tertiary Scholarship Program to empower dedicated students from out-of-home-care backgrounds to transform their lives through education.

Financial support helps our scholarship recipients afford study expenses such as course fees and textbooks, as well as the cost of living on their own with no parental support. It means they can focus on their studies without needing to hold down multiple jobs at the same time.

## 2018/19 Program overview

The program has gone from strength to strength since it began. Seven students were awarded new scholarships for university and TAFE courses during 2018/19:

- Baneen Alrubayi, Doctor of Medicine, Western Sydney University
- Josephine Anderson, VCAL + Certificate III in Patisserie, TAFE The Gordon
- Renee Baca, Bachelor of Nursing, Western Sydney University
- Ryan Cornwell, Diploma of Community Services, TAFE The Gordon
- Dina Hinna, Bachelor of Engineering Advanced (Honours), Western Sydney University

- Favour Obuga, Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care + Diploma in Early Childhood Education and Care, TAFE Petersham
- Hope Quealey, Certificate III in Vocational & Study Pathways, TAFE Eora Centre

We wish our new scholarship students the best of luck in their studies, and are looking forward to following their progress over the next few years.

We were so proud to have four students graduate during 2018/19:

- Terri Carberry, Bachelor of Nursing, Australian Catholic University
- Serra Jurin, Diploma of Nursing, TAFE Randwick
- Hope Quealey, Certificate III in Vocational & Study Pathways, TAFE Eora Centre
- Jasmine Tran Yee, Bachelor of Social Sciences (Criminology), Macquarie University

Completing a degree or certificate is no easy undertaking, but even more so if you don't have supportive parents to provide guidance and encouragement. These four students have taken a solid step towards securing their futures, and we're honoured to have helped them achieve their goals. We know they will go on to achieve great things in the future.

During 2018/19 we had a total of 14 scholarship students enrolled in university or TAFE courses. The Foundation invested a total of \$87,250 in the last financial year, bringing our total investment in the program to \$552,131 since it launched in 2012.

Two of our scholarship recipients, Terri and Serra, have graduated with nursing qualifications in the past year. Here are their stories.

## In Terri's words...

I'm a Wiradjuri woman from Griffith, raised by my grandmother with two of my six siblings – I'm the eldest. I've always loved looking after kids. I realised with nursing I could do pediatrics and be around them.

I applied for a Bachelor of Nursing at Australian Catholic University but then deferred for two years because I didn't have any money. I worked for two years, then came to Sydney and applied for the scholarship. When told I was one of the finalists, I didn't believe it! When I finally got the call I was very excited, I'd never really won anything.

I lived on campus for the first year. I had saved quite a bit of money working, but in that first year most of it was gone with rent, food, textbooks... I was very grateful for the scholarship. If I didn't have that money I don't know what I would have done.



# NURSES MAKING A DIFFERENCE

I graduated in May 2019. It was really good, exciting, scary to walk on that stage in front of everyone.

I started a Transition to Professional Practice program for new grads at Griffith Base Hospital. For the first 6 months I was up on medical ward, which was fun but very hectic. Now I'm in the children's ward which I'm really loving, it's very rewarding. I remember a sick little boy who was flat on the bed not moving much. A couple of days later you wouldn't recognise him, he was so happy on his dad's shoulders, singing, dancing. I just love that feeling.

- 1 CEO Reba Meagher, Terri's sister Tina, Chairman Richard Haddock and Terri Carberry.
- 2 Terri Carberry on her graduation day.
- 3 Diploma of Nursing graduate Serra Jurin.
- 4 Serra (left) and her colleagues at work.



## Serra takes the stage

I couchsurf'd for many years until I got my own place when I was 16. Growing up without support was hard, not receiving the love that you need as a child – but it's also made me really strong, it's allowed me to gain independence and the drive to succeed in life.

I was so excited to receive the scholarship because I never thought that I deserved this kind of opportunity. I used the funds to pay for a Diploma of Nursing at TAFE Randwick.

I found studying quite challenging because the study load was very big, we had many assignments, many exams, and it was very fast-paced. Work experience was challenging as it was confronting being in a hospital environment, caring for sick people and getting exposed to a clinical environment.

I was shocked when I came to the end of the course because I really doubted myself. Now that I've had time to process it, it feels so amazing and surreal.



I'm working at a medical centre, mainly vaccinating babies and adults and giving wound care to patients and it's so rewarding. I recently worked a shift all by myself. I remember I was so nervous, but everything was okay. The doctors were so friendly and I had time to figure things out and it was so nice to know that I could care for these patients by myself, and that they were in safe hands.

I do love all areas of nursing but what I'm most passionate about is working with children. It appeals to me because I find it very important for children to grow up in a nurturing home environment, so if they don't have that opportunity then I'd love to impact their life and nurture them.



# ASYLUM SEEKERS HOUSING PROGRAM

More than 70% of asylum seekers receive no government support, often leaving them at risk of homelessness.

The Foundation formed a partnership with the Asylum Seekers Centre to provide safe accommodation and welfare services to dozens of displaced people every year.

In 2014 the Foundation invested \$2,360,000 in the purchase of a residential building, Providence House, in Sydney's Inner West. This residence has been renovated and now provides emergency housing to refugees and asylum seekers. The Foundation has been responsible for its ongoing maintenance since then.

## People helped by Providence House

Providence House primarily accommodates single women, and families with single or both parents. Some residents have recently arrived in Australia and are in desperate need of immediate support. Others have been in the country much longer, but circumstances such as domestic and family violence, or other unexpected changes, have rendered it impossible for them to stay in their previous home. Many have experienced traumatic events in their country of origin, and women in particular may have been subjected to sexual and gender-based violence.

The safety and stability of Providence House helps residents begin to address some of the myriad challenges they face.

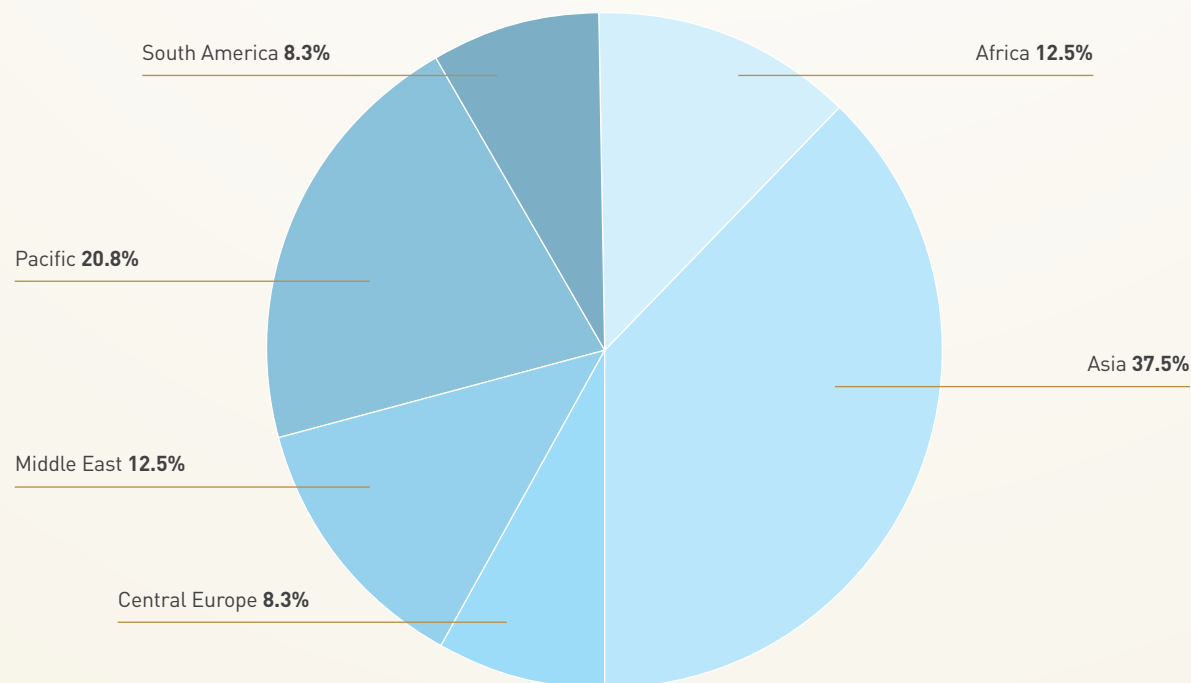
Providence House continues to provide a home to people from diverse cultural backgrounds, from many regions of the world.

## Providence House 2018/19 residents

Families	5
Children under 18	13
Couples	1
Single adult women	15
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>37 individuals (21 cases)</b>



## People accommodated by region of origin





## Transitioning into the community

One of the key objectives of the Asylum Seekers Housing Program is to prevent the re-occurrence of homelessness, by building the capacity of individuals to manage their own income.

Safe and stable housing allows people the opportunity to focus on supporting themselves in the longer term – via further study or training, or help with the job searching process.

In the 2018/19 financial year, a total of 14 cases of individual / family units successfully transitioned out of Providence House into the private rental market.

“Having the ability to provide safe and stable accommodation to a highly marginalised group of people made vulnerable by their migration status continues to be critically important... All staff, volunteers and Asylum Seekers Centre supporters recognise the Sisters of Charity Foundation’s generosity and commitment to offer safe and stable accommodation to the people we work with.”

– Asylum Seekers Centre

## Tina’s story

Tina is a single mother from Eastern Europe, with two children aged 13 and 5. The family was staying in a hostel, had exhausted all their finances and was at risk of homelessness. Tina arrived at the Asylum Seekers Centre with her bags and, although she spoke no English, managed to convey she needed help seeking protection as well as support for her family.

She was immediately assessed for financial assistance and accommodation support, as well as being seen by the health team. Fortunately there was a vacancy at Providence House, and the family was able to move straight in.

Since finding a safe place to stay, one child has enrolled in high school and the younger in pre-school. Tina has started language classes and can now speak and understand some English. Through the ASC she has met asylum seekers from her home country and has also made friends with other women living at Providence House, who are a great source of support.

We wish Tina and her family all the best for the future.

**1** The future is looking brighter for Tina and her family.  
Photo: Getty Images.



**1**

## Sisters of Charity Foundation

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