

Annual Report 2018



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Front cover: Roli performing at our 'Thank you' event for all who voted for us to win an IKEA makeover

Right: A private audience at a Richmond training session thanks to Josh Frydenberg



On behalf of the board

The year in review marks Servants' first year as a company limited by guarantee and Amanda's first full year as CEO.

While in many ways we are more connected to the Hawthorn West Baptist Church community that established Servants 32 years ago, in others we have become larger and more professional, so that we operate more independently than ever. Our board and staff come from more places than ever before, with specialist staff in place and professional support to ensure that our front-line staff are better supported than ever.

We have delivered a sizeable project, by finally bringing to fruition the women's house we have dreamed of over many years. This project has been successful only because of our partnerships with local service groups, members of parliament (Federal and State), and generous and caring individuals.

We are inspired by an itinerant preacher who said of himself that "he had nowhere to lay his head" (Matthew 8:20). He was homeless. Like him, our residents are inherently valuable, and deserving of dignity and respect. We believe that people are inherently relational, finding life

and sustenance in relationship and community, so we operate a model that emphasises these in balance with the need for independence and self-determination.

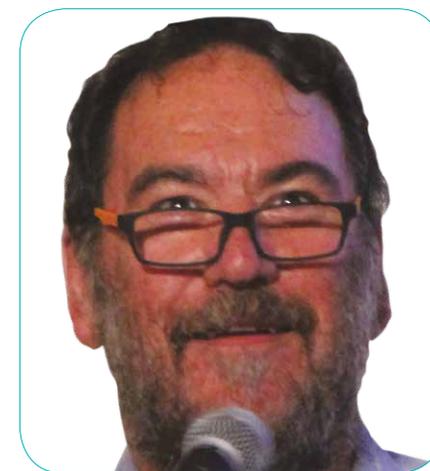
That can be costly: in staffing, because we prioritise the provision of safe and secure housing above all else; and because we are highly selective in the grants and projects that we choose to take on.

We are prepared, both financially and organisationally, to grasp opportunities such as the women's house when they appear. New opportunities undoubtedly exist. Although many feel big and audacious for a small provider such as Servants, we are confident that we have the governance and advisors in place to pursue them successfully.

Finally, we want to thank Amanda and her team for the excellent work they have done over the past year, which reflects their ongoing commitment to serve our residents well.

Warren Clark, Chair

On behalf of the board of directors



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From the CEO



Servants has always been a small organisation doing powerful things and this year has been no exception. Guided by our Strategic Plan and empowered by a capable board, dedicated staff and a supportive local community, we have made substantial headway in implementing our strategic goals.

Extension

Our most exciting development was securing a fourth property to renovate and lease which has become our first 'women's only' house. This was truly a community effort made possible with the assistance of Josh Frydenberg's office, the Department of Infrastructure, Hawthorn West Baptist Church, the Boroondara Cares Foundation and numerous other individual donors. This is a small, intimate house that will provide support and respite for women needing a place to recover from past trauma.

With a 10 year lease, women will have stability and a safe place to establish a new direction for their life and we look forward to providing a supportive community for them to flourish.

Community Engagement

Mental health continues to be the biggest barrier to community engagement with our current residents. Despite this challenge, participation in internal and external community activities continues to grow. In July 2017, 12 residents and some of our supporters participated in a 5km walk in the Run Melbourne event. It was an early morning team building event that was an achievement for all.

We continue to support resident led programs and willingly help with BBQs, card games, gardening projects and outings. Various community groups and churches have continued their monthly Saturday evening commitment, to provide BBQ's at the houses. Some of the friendships developed during these evenings have continued long after the resident has moved on from Servants and is testament to the value of a seemingly insignificant activity.

We have developed an ongoing relationship with the 'Street Barber' volunteer, who visits regularly with a team of barbers and sets up shop in the carpark of one of our houses. With the stereo pumping and sausages on the BBQ, having a hair cut has turned into a social event.

Residents are gaining confidence in public speaking as they give presentations to community groups about homelessness, mental health and life at Servants. Their life stories are tremendously powerful and very well received by audiences, giving such a morale boost that residents can't wait to be asked to present again.

Operational Excellence

We continued to provide accommodation to those in greatest need: 100% of our residents receive a disability pension or unemployment payment when they move in with us. We all do a little victory dance when one of our residents finds some employment, either voluntary or paid, because for so many of our residents, employment is an impossible dream.

Our relationships with our landlords remains positive and we are able to work with them to keep the quality of the accommodation at a high level. Carrical is the oldest property and the beginning of extensive maintenance work has begun. One of the public bathrooms and one of the flats have been refurbished with more to come. We have started replacing old light fittings with LED fittings to reduce costs and keep our housing affordable.

Servants financial performance has continued to be solid. Reserves are building to a level that can support the extra financial commitments of the Director of Housing owned Carrical House when we transition to a General Lease with full maintenance responsibilities, as well as supporting plans for growth in the next 5 years.

Importantly, all these activities were underpinned by a skilled and dedicated board and staff. My special thanks to our Chair, Warren Clark, for his hard work and support in building a stronger organisation that remains committed to serving a local community. I have confidence this will continue into 2018 – 2019.

Amanda Donohoe, CEO



Our most exciting development was to secure a fourth property to lease and renovate to become our first women's only house.

Events, projects and support



1. Connecting with our community at the Glenferrie Festival
2. Extraordinary gala dinner at Romana, kindly provided by Damn Fine Foods
3. Proud Peter with his medallion at Run Melbourne
4. Christmas Carols at Carrical
5. The Street Barber and his friends providing free haircuts and conversation
6. A formerly sterile dining room at Hamer transformed with an IKEA makeover





1. Renovating an old house for use as a women's house
2. Current and past residents supporting resident's Eve and Phil at the opening of their first art exhibition
3. Rachel in her new flat at Carrical
4. Phil wowing the crowd with his story at a Servant's presentation
5. Decisions, decisions! Volunteers Jo and Melissa at IKEA selecting furnishings to decorate the women's house
6. Oona reaching the top of the wait list and moving into her own flat

How are we doing?



60,000+

Meals served to residents



72

Community and school led
BBQs were hosted at houses



4

Community dinners were
attended by 90 guests



44

Team members, including
12 residents, participated in
Run Melbourne 2017



12

Public talks on mental
health and homelessness,
to a total of 400 people



1,000

Copies of our publications
'Narrative' and 'Anthology'
were distributed

What residents think:

88%

Feel safe and secure

96%

Are satisfied with the service they receive

87%

Are satisfied with the value for money they receive

100%

Feel supported by their house community

90%

Of residents do not think alcohol or drugs
are a problem in the houses

Our finances

Comprehensive income	2017 \$	2018 \$
Rooming houses	1,207,395	1,240,663
Other	206,123	166,024
Total income	1,413,518	1,406,687
Operating costs	819,370	933,223
Overheads	390,744	374,834
Total expenditure	1,210,114	1,308,057
Surplus	203,404	98,630

Financial position	2017 \$	2018 \$
Current assets	916,786	949,939
Non-current assets	258,097	332,765
Total assets	1,174,883	1,282,704
Total liabilities	118,028	127,219
Net assets	1,056,855	1,155,485

Strategic ends

Operational excellence

- » We provide safe, affordable, high quality, long-term accommodation for at-risk individuals
- » Servants' houses are caring communities that foster residents to be attentive to others' needs and their contribution to community life
- » Our operations are managed for the long term, financially viable and within our risk appetite

Extension

- » We have a well-documented, in-depth, business model that provides appropriate flexibility to allow growth
- » Servants is prepared structurally, organisationally and financially to support growth
- » A fourth facility in the local area is operated by Servants

Community engagement

- » Servants and its model are recognised as a viable and effective means of long term accommodation for at-risk individuals
- » We have active partnerships broadly across the community to enhance the work of Servants and the quality of life for residents
- » Our fundraising and publicity activities are focused and effective

Dean's story

When Dean White first moved into room 33 at Carrical he would walk with his head bowed, barely looked up and spoke only to answer yes or no to the type of vegetables he wanted on his plate at an evening meal.

This was not his natural state, he had been a 'creative' running his own design business, creating artwork for events, exhibition and product launches. All that changed in 2014 at the age of 64 when in a complete state of apathy, he was diagnosed with severe depression and anxiety. Dean was admitted to hospital, five months and 29 rounds of ECT later, he was discharged.

Months later, Dean met up with his estranged daughter (at his ex-Mother-in-laws funeral) who mentioned Music Therapy. Strangely, one week later, Dean's Mental Health case manager told him about a new initiative that he had enrolled him in... yes, you guessed it, it was Music Therapy.

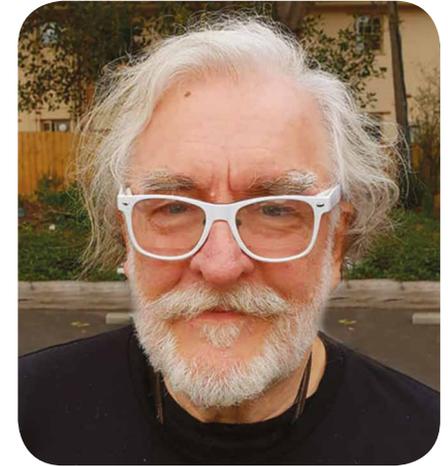
Simply put, Music Therapy is where you play an instrument, listen to the playback, then draw your emotional response. Dean completed three, twelve week semesters. By the middle of the first semester, he was drawing intuitively every other day... that soon ramped up to twice a day.

Since then, Dean has powered on. He is no longer the withdrawn, introverted, anguished soul that moved in to a Servants home. He is a vibrant, active artist selling his artwork which is on display at local cafes and through his website 'the arty farty alkhemyst'.

Dean says 'It was addictive – drawing every day. I found my artistic self, my creative self-expression, my internal well as a 'resource'... Pandora's box had the lid blown off its hinges... as I found my creative essence within.

I am an artist. Finally. My heart is filled with joy... to finally arrive.'

At Carrical, Dean has become a nurturer and a leader, running art classes and organising daily group meditation sessions. Servants cannot claim credit for creating an artist but as Dean says, 'Servants gave me a safe place to recover and find myself.



We encourage you to check Dean's website and be uplifted. theartyfartyalkhemyst.com

He is a vibrant, active artist selling his artwork which is on display at local cafes and through his website

Oona's story



Oona is a gentle, quietly spoken lady in her early 50s, who lives in a neat, comfortable unit with a beautiful rose bush in a pot out the front.

She gets on well with her neighbours and enjoys the sounds of children playing at the primary school down the street. She is studying to be a counsellor and seems very at peace. 'I always wanted to help vulnerable people become their best selves,' she says. But just over two years ago, when Oona first came to Servants, she was in a very vulnerable place herself: physically, mentally and emotionally drained by her circumstances, she had lost her sense of self, and purpose in life.

Oona was once an Officer with the Salvation Army in QLD and NSW. She enjoyed the pastoral work, but left to raise a family and later moved to Melbourne. They were financially secure and owned a 4-bedroom house in the leafy outer suburbs. However, about 5 years ago, Oona's marriage broke down and she returned to Queensland to be with her mother and sisters.

Six months later she was diagnosed with breast cancer and underwent surgery, followed by a year of chemotherapy and biological treatments. The treatment turned out to be incredibly traumatic, as Oona's body reacted so strongly that her oncologist later said she was lucky to have survived. It turned out that an earlier bout of cancer as a young woman had damaged her pituitary and thyroid glands, leaving her body unable to cope with trauma and stress.

This explained the years of exhaustion and inability to return to paid work she had suffered.

After treatment, Oona responded to her husband's invitation to return to Melbourne to try and rebuild the marriage. However, when she arrived, her husband no longer wanted to reconcile and Oona was left without a home. For months she moved from bed and breakfast to house-sitting to boarding with friends. In the process she reconnected with her faith and church, but the stress of housing instability and her fragile health left her at the end of herself.

During this time she began seeing a counsellor who supported her through beginning to heal mentally and emotionally. The counsellor, Wendy, was a friend of Servants and took Oona to visit one of the houses. On that very day, one of the four rooms in the women's wing became vacant and Oona received the first offer to move in. She was delighted to have a place of her own!

With Servants Oona found stability and independence. She describes Romana House as like a city, with safe, private rooms like little houses, corridors like streets and the dining area like a town square where the residents meet to eat and socialise.

She formed a strong and continuing friendship with the lady 'next door', as well as getting on well with the male residents. 'I grew up with older brothers, so I was fine with men around,' she said and commented on how residents as well as management looked after each other when mental health crises arose.

Servants gives people a chance, she says, and people respond with good behaviour out of gratitude and an understanding of the infrastructure Servants has set up to support and protect them.

Oona's life has come together: she is now feeling healthy and whole. New medications have stabilised her physical and mental health, she is on amicable terms with her ex-husband and reconnecting with her children, and she has begun studying counselling again, for her own growth and to support others.

Her experiences with Servants and her own difficulties have given her new insights and ease in interacting with people at the margins. After two years with Servants, Oona was ready to take the next step into a new home of her own.



**Servants
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Thank you

We would like to recognise and thank the following organisations for their support and encouragement:

AEMO	Leadership Victoria
Allens Linklaters	Patchworkers and Quilters Guild of Victoria
Bar Ristretto	Playing Our Part
Ben The Butcher	Red Rocks Flame Grill, Hawthorn
Bunnings Warehouse	Rotary Club of Balwyn
Bicycle Network	Rotary Club of Camberwell
Boroondara Cares Foundation	Rotary Club of Camberwell
Boroondara Community Outreach Ministry	Rotary Club of Canterbury
Boroondara Council	Rotary Club of Glenferrie
Centerbury Baptist Church	Rotary Club of Hawthorn
Canterbury Council of Churches	Rotary Club of North Balwyn
Christ Church Hawthorn	Rotary Club of Yarra Bend
Country Women's Association of Victoria, Fraser and Kew groups	St Dunstons Anglican Church Camberwell
Cyberhound	St Hilary's Anglican Church Kew
Damn Fine Foods	St Stephens Presbyterian Church Surry Hills
Department of Health and Human Services, Victoria	Sing Australia (Hawthorn)
FareShare	Slovenian Catholic Mission, Kew
Forest Hill Uniting Church	Social Glutton Café
Genesis Digital	The Cleaning Shop, Kew
Glenferrie Traders Association	The Housing Registrar, Victoria
Hawthorn Community Chest	The Office of John Pesutto, MP
Hawthorn West Baptist	The Office of the Hon. Josh Frydenberg, MP
Holy Trinity Doncaster Anglican Church	The Opalgate Foundation
IKEA	Trinity Grammar School, Kew
Jenkins Foundation	Visions Gym
Kew Baptist Church	W&K Williams Pty Ltd
	Xavier College, Kew

A photograph of a man with a beard and a dark shirt sitting in a room. The room has a brick fireplace with a large arched opening. To the left, there is a green wall with horizontal lines. The man is looking towards the camera with a slight smile. The overall lighting is warm and yellowish.

**Finally,
thanks to
all of the
individuals
who have
supported
the work
of Servants
this year!**

