

# THE MEANING OF HOME

State of the Family Report 2017







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'*The Meaning of Home*' is Anglicare Australia's 17th State of the Family report, first published November 2017.

It features reflections and portraits from Anglicare network members across the country and shows how the concept of home captures many important themes such as 'care' and 'belonging' that are shared across different areas of service provision.

This and previous reports are available on the Anglicare Australia website  
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Anglicare Australia is a national network of locally grown, governed and managed, faith-based social service agencies. We are in it for the long term: committed to advocacy based on experience and to working in partnership with local communities and individuals, parishes and other agencies.

The 36 Anglicare Australia member agencies have a combined annual expenditure of over a billion dollars. They provide assistance to families, young people, the aged, the unemployed, and to vulnerable and homeless Australians and work with Indigenous Australians to overcome disadvantage.

Anglicare Australia: local presence; national togetherness

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Anglicare Australia Inc  
1st Floor  
11 Edgar St  
Ainslie ACT 2602

PO Box 4093  
Ainslie ACT 2602  
Tel: (02) 6230 1775  
Fax: (02) 6230 1704

Email: [anglicare@anglicare.asn.au](mailto:anglicare@anglicare.asn.au)  
Web: [www.anglicare.asn.au](http://www.anglicare.asn.au)

ASSN: A0034627W  
ARBN: 110 532 431  
ABN: 95 834 198 262

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# FOREWORD

This is Anglicare Australia's 17th State of the Family report.

This year's report is a collection of essays and portraits that explore the meanings we attach to the concept of home. It's clear that when Australians speak of home, it's far more than physical shelter. Home is closely linked with our identity, feelings of security, and sense of belonging.

Having a solid 'home base' supports other key aspects of our lives – things like completing school, looking after our health, caring for our family members, finding and maintaining employment, and connection with the wider community.

This report offers examples of initiatives from across the Anglicare network, each showing how affordable, stable, caring homes can be life-changing. We are committed to seeing that every Australian has a place to call home.

*May the Meaning of Home* inform your practice and inspire your advocacy.

Rt. Rev Dr Chris Jones  
Chair  
Anglicare Australia Council



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# INTRODUCTION: THE MEANING OF HOME

This year's State of the Family report explores the importance of home, or particular qualities of home, to the people the Anglicare network works with and in the services it provides.

It features articles from Anglicare network members that explore the significance of home in the nature and design of a range of services – from aged care to community mental health – from all across the country, and for people of different ages and backgrounds.

We have also included a series of stories or 'portraits' where people who use our network's services tell us, in their own words, what home means to them.

The experiences and the insights shared in this report provide a strong sense of what people want from their lives and underscore the importance of working with people to design and provide the services they need.





These photographs are taken from a photo essay submitted by AnglicareSA. The photographs depict Allan's experience of home (see page 53) and show the relationship between home and belonging, comfort and family.



# GRAND DESIGNS

by Zoe Coombe

As Policy and Research Officer with Anglicare Australia, Zoe supports the development of policy, research and advocacy in a diverse range of areas such as housing, employment, out-of-home care, mental health and welfare. Her academic background is in anthropology and history.

**T**he human services our society delivers are a measure of what we value. They are an agreement –however contested – about the kind of life that we believe people should have available to them. More than a social safety net to catch those who are at risk of falling through the cracks, human services are those structures that help to build the kind of society we want. In this sense, they represent the home we think everyone should have: a place where we can feel safe, secure and cared for; a place where we are recognised and respected for who we are; and a place where we have the support and the opportunities we need to thrive.

*The Meaning of Home* is Anglicare Australia's 17th State of the Family report. It is a collection of articles and portraits on the different dimensions of home, contributed by people from right across the Anglicare network. The individual essays reveal what people want and need in their lives, and offer – between them – a blueprint for the care and support we should provide as a society.

Many stories in this collection describe a struggle for home: children who have been exposed to family violence in their home and are dealing with deeply conflicted emotions, new parents who are working out how to create a nurturing home for their children, people who

are trying to find a sense of home after moving into residential care, or young people struggling with the tension between their need for support and their need for independence. It is important to recognise that structural inequalities are a significant factor in peoples' experiences of safety or security in their homes. People who are poor, young, Indigenous, LGBTQIA, have a disability, are stateless, or otherwise marginalised in our society are more at risk of experiencing insecurity in their homes or being denied access to a safe home altogether (AIHW, 2016; McNair et al., 2017; Flatau et al., 2015).

## FIRST AND LAST HOMES

**"Understanding what home means to people helps us to understand their struggle, and to provide the support they need"**

Our experiences of home are closely tied to our passage through different stages of life and the events that mark this process of transformation

(Taylor, 2015: 54). This was a major theme that people engaged with in the public survey on the meaning of home that Anglicare Australia ran earlier this year. When asked to think about what home would look like for them in the future, many respondents described the process

of growing older, transitioning to new life stages, and the changes this would bring to their home lives. One person described home as a “base” from which they would be “building on what already is”, seeing “change, the kids spreading their wings”. For a younger person, who had moved into student accommodation, home had a “dual meaning”, as she still felt strongly connected to the house she grew up in, but imagined that in the future, as she established herself in a home of her own, her sense of home would become “tied more to [this] place, and less to my family home”. Understanding what home means to people helps us to understand their struggle, and to provide the support they need at that time in their lives.

The earliest experiences of home described in this report draw on the idea of the home as the “social and emotional centre” of life for young children, where they develop an understanding of themselves and others, forge relationships and learn. “Home holds memories that will never be forgotten,” said one survey participant. “It is where you learned how to walk and talk.” The essays on this topic speak to the importance of supporting families to create nurturing environments in which children can feel safe, accepted and have the resources to grow. In her essay on the Brotherhood of St Laurence’s home-based early learning program, HIPPY, Marian Pettit describes the importance of helping parents and carers to become confident teachers and make the home a place of learning. Pettit’s article underscores how a nurturing home environment can encourage a child’s curiosity and creativity and maximise their ability to learn. Helping parents to provide this positive home environment supports more equitable social and educational outcomes for their children and the generations that follow. Shae Garwood’s essay describes the challenge of helping children to heal

and re-establish a sense of safety and comfort in their lives, when they have experienced complicated or traumatic experiences at home. Drawing on work from Anglicare WA’s counselling and support programs for children and parents, Garwood provides insight into the intense and conflicting emotions that people can have about home and, within the context of this conflict, how it can also be a place for people to learn to change how they communicate and to re-establish healthy relationships with each other. Pettit and Garwood’s essays demonstrate both the power and complexity of our early experiences with home, underscoring not only the value, but the fundamental importance of ensuring that people can make safe and nurturing homes for their children.

As children grow into teens and young adults, they often are searching for a sense of belonging, both spatial and relational – in social groups, communities of interest, and in a home they can call their own. Anglicare Australia network members provide a range of supported accommodation services for young people aged 16 to 25 who are at risk of homelessness; a cohort who all too often fall between the gaps (Robinson, 2017). Essays from Belinda Jones and Irina Stojcevska explore the challenges faced by young people who haven’t always had access to caring homes, and discuss the supports that can help them navigate their journeys into adulthood. Both these essays demonstrate how having proximity to a place and people they can go to for help and encouragement is particularly beneficial for young people. This gives them the space they need to work through things themselves, but with the security of knowing there is support there if and when they need it.



Stojcevska's essay focuses on the experiences of young people in out-of-home care. In Australia, the state terminates services for children under its statutory responsibility at the age of 18, whether or not the young person is ready to leave out-of-home care and move on. Irina argues that the expectation that young care leavers support themselves once they turn 18 sits in stark contrast with community expectations around young people's need for ongoing support from parents and family. There is clear evidence from overseas practices that extending care services can improve short and longer-term outcomes for people who have spent time in state care. These overseas examples show that the continued presence of supportive relationships in the young person's life, past the age of 18, is one of the defining factors in improving their circumstances as they move into adulthood. Drawing on this evidence, Irina argues that Australia should follow suit and offer options for ongoing support to young people leaving out-of-home care.

Jones' essay explores what young people need from a home, drawing on contributions made by residents of Trinity Hill in Hobart, to a large-scale artwork in the middle of the facility. Trinity Hill is a home for young people who have been homeless or at risk of homelessness, and many of the resident's contributions to this artwork express their need for a place of safety, shelter and security. Their contributions also express a need for a place where they have the freedom and the support they need to develop confidence, explore their interests and aspirations and build their futures. Jones' essay shows the transformative nature of a home where young people are "supported to grow and have the freedom to dream": a perspective that is important for human services to keep at the heart of their policy and service development.

Two essays in this report focus on the experiences of older people living in residential aged care. Both essays engage with the inherent tensions of making a home in institutional settings; something that is relevant for all residential services, not just aged care. As Catherine Joyce discusses, residential care facilities are often contrasted with 'home' – they are a place to live when you can no longer live in the community. Her essay describes how Benetas has sought to "dismantle the traditional artefacts" of the nursing home "which act as a constant reminder of institutionalisation and disablement" and create a more home-like environment for residents. This involves thoughtful design of private and shared spaces, eliminating the long corridors and dining halls of traditional nursing homes. It has also involved implementing an approach to care that focuses on supporting strong relationships between carers and residents.

**"At a basic level this comes down to respecting and valuing ageing; ensuring that older people can feel at home in society and where they live"**

Shirley Essex's essay on AnglicareSA Brompton, a residential care facility for people aged 50–80 who have in many cases been prematurely aged through drug and

alcohol dependency, also addresses the tensions in making a home in institutional settings. A major focus of this essay is in the idea of risk and risk management. A risk-averse approach to care, which historically has been typical of the sector, can have the effect of curtailing the resident's freedom to choose how they live and the nature of the support they receive.



Essex's essay explores how AnglicareSA Brompton has moved away from this to embrace a "dignity of risk" approach to care, which respects each individual's autonomy and self-determination in making choices, even if those choices entail risks. In exploring older people's experiences of negotiating home in residential aged care, these essays demonstrate how providers need an absolute willingness to engage with people, their personal experiences, preferences and needs, for residential care to feel more like home. At a really basic level this comes down to respecting and valuing ageing; ensuring that older people can feel at home in society as well as in their places of residence.

## FINDING SANCTUARY AT HOME

When we ask people about the meaning of home, they speak about complex experiences involving their navigation of self, their engagement with processes of change, and places where they have and haven't found belonging.

They express nuanced and at times contradictory feelings about themselves, their families, and their lives. Home is a place that can support people to manage the challenges they are facing in their lives:

*Home is a place where I manage the ups and downs of life, relationships, health and work, wellbeing etc. There are times I am on my own and times I am connecting with others. Home is a retreat but it is also a resource to go out into the world and be a contributor. When my world is shakey [shaky] it is greatly comforting to know I am safe and secure. When my relationships are rocky it is time to anchor myself and hold to my values.*

People need space to process complicated or challenging experiences and trauma. Essays and portraits in this collection address the therapeutic nature and effect of places where people can have a sense of control but also strong and diverse supports; where they can express themselves freely and are free to feel emotions; and where they can be in the company of others but where they also have the space to be alone with themselves.

Jeremy Halcrow's essay on Rainbow House, a residential care unit for young women in country NSW, explores the notion of home as a place of healing:

*These young people cannot tell us with words why they do these things, though they do tell us if you know how to listen. They tell us through these behaviours that they have needs that have not been met in the past; they tell us that they are scared and need security. They need love and they need to be nurtured. They need a home.*

Halcrow's essay describes how the therapeutic art sessions run at the home help the residents "escape into a quiet space within themselves where they are safe to explore and express their deepest innermost thoughts and feelings". Halcrow's reflections on creating spaces for healing provide important insights into how we envisage the work of residential care – and in human services more generally – demonstrating that sanctuary is a fundamentally important dimension of shelter and care.

For people who have had to leave their homes behind to seek protection and sanctuary in another country, the process of rebuilding a home can be long and difficult. Janine Jones' essay describes the challenges refugees face as they settle in a

new country, including the difficulties of learning a new language, understanding differences in culture and society, living on low incomes and having limited social connections. Jones discusses the diverse needs of newly arrived refugees and reflects on the need to “meet them where they’re at”; developing strong relationships in which people can comfortably express what they need, rather than offering programs that assume we know what they want. Homes cannot be built from a kit; and rebuilding a home requires re-establishing security in many other aspects of life. The portraits in this collection of Hoji from Afghanistan, Tiebe from Eritrea and Za Thang from Burma describe how their homes are coming together as they establish new relationships in their community, become more financially independent, build on their language skills, and find a safe place to live.

## CREATING CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

The concept of home as it is uncovered in this report validates the power of a relational, rather than transactional, approach to care, and the power of working with communities, not just individuals. The difference that community can make to a person’s sense of home and belonging is explored in Damian Le Goullon’s essay on Anglicare Southern Queensland’s community-based mental health service A Place to Belong. Le Goullon shares the stories of three participants who have found the support they need in reconnecting with their communities. Le Goullon’s essay explores how belonging to a community can extend a person’s sense of home to a wider area and network of connections, where they can receive the care and support that we would expect from a family home.

The quality of the relationship we have to places, as well as people, is important to creating networks of support. This essay demonstrates how these relationships not only contribute to the wellbeing of the individual, but also to the strength of the community. It serves as an important reminder that good community services build on community or social connections and create value that extends beyond the individual.

Amy Lanham’s essay focuses on a young woman who was experiencing homelessness and accessed assistance from Anglicare NSW South, West and ACT’s Canberra-based youth centre – Club 12/25. Club 12/25 offers a range of services, including health checks, counselling and mental health support, material and financial aid, as well as being a safe and welcoming place where young people can go and spend time with their friends, play pool, listen to music, have a meal, or participate in organised activities. Lanham’s essay highlights the importance of embedding support in the community through places such as drop-in centres, where people can go at any time for both specific services and to access the support that comes from simply knowing there is somewhere they can go to feel a sense of connection and safety.

Ashley Perez’s essay explores how our society can provide the opportunities for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to negotiate their own rightful place, or home, at the heart of our communities. In highlighting the exclusion faced by young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in Darwin, Perez’s essay highlights a fundamental issue in all of this which is that inclusive communities are necessary for people to feel at home where they live. Our obligation to provide everyone with a home is not simply about providing services to support people who

**"Providing everyone with a home isn't simply about providing services to support people who are struggling to build one; it's about the work that needs to happen in the community itself"**

underscores the fundamental importance of working with people to design and provide the services they need.

The depth, the richness and the multifaceted nature of home makes it a powerful concept that speaks to what people want from their lives, what they want for the people they love and care for, and what they want in and for their communities.

That is why it has proved so fitting for exploration in this report: it engages deeply with the lived experience of the people that the Anglicare family works with and supports a conversation about the kind of society we want to live in. •

are struggling to build one; it is about the work that needs to happen in the community itself, work that we all need to take responsibility for. Understanding how people navigate complex experiences of home

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# PART I

## FAMILY





# PORTRAITS

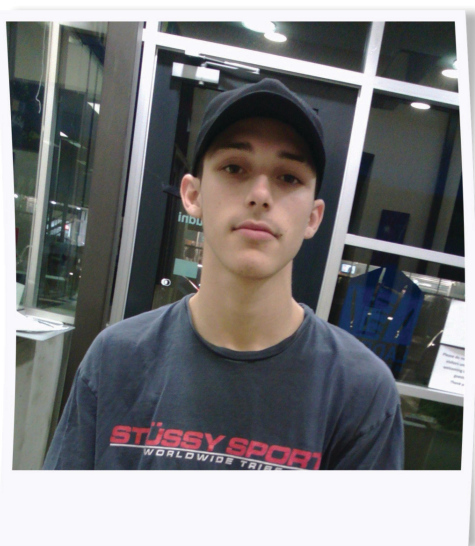


Connor and Hayley's portrait was provided by St John's Youth Services

**H**ome means a safe, relaxed, stress free environment where our friends and family can come and be comfortable, spend time with good friends and just enjoy each other's company.

It also means a safe, warm and loving home for us and our family, where we can be happy, hopeful and see what the future holds.

**- Connor and Hayley**



Jarom's portrait was provided by St John's Youth Services

**F**or me, home is a place where family is. A place where people are loving, caring and share a close bond.

That's Queensland for me, where my Dad lives with all my family. I have my own bedroom there; it's been there ever since I was little.

The walls are covered in dot paintings, one is of a gecko: my totem. There's geckos everywhere in Queensland.

**- Jarom**





**T**o me, home means being who I want to be. Loud music - or hearing my sister and mum talk so loud - makes me feel warm and happy.

Coming home and going straight to the kitchen to see what mum has cooked. The feeling of excitement I get when I reach home and can't wait to hear how everyone's day went.

And of course, my mum's jokes at dinner. That's what home means to me.

**- Stacey**

# LEARNING TOGETHER AT HOME

by Marian Pettit

Marian Pettit, National Manager of HIPPY Australia, looks at the home as a child's first learning environment and discusses the importance of supporting parents to have the confidence to be the child's first teacher. She also considers life-long benefits in addressing educational disadvantage in the early years.

We take it for granted that the 'home' is a place of love and nurturing, where children are safe to explore the world around them and express themselves freely. TS Eliot said, "Home is where one starts from" - it's a place where a baby embarks upon a lifelong journey of learning, listening, watching and communicating - but home is not the same for everyone. For some parents, the ability to provide a nurturing environment - which is critical to the curious mind of a child - is hampered by the parents' own struggles. These difficulties may arise from their trauma, living conditions or social, educational or financial disadvantage.

We learn from the world around us, and the centre of our world is our home. Home is our first learning environment and where we absorb the routines and culture of our family. It's where we first learn to play games, draw, sing, dance and follow the words and pictures in the storybooks our parents read to us; where we are praised and sometimes chastised. All the while we are learning from our parents, family and carers, regardless of whether they recognise themselves within the vital role as our first teachers.

## THE HOME AS A PLACE OF LEARNING

Nurturing begins at home and no one is so well placed as a parent to encourage a child's early learning experiences. *Good Beginnings: Getting it Right in the Early Years*, a report by the Lowitja Institute, highlights research that shows effective "...nurturing can influence brain development, maximise ability to learn, and enhance the ability of children to develop healthy ways of living in the world as adults" (Emerson, Fox & Smith, 2015). The influence of a nurturing family at home in the early years lasts a life time; the essential ingredients are quality parenting and learning.

Not every child has the same advantages at home. One in three children living in Australia's more vulnerable communities start school behind in one or more key areas of development, such as language and cognitive skills or social competence. But we can help to change this by providing our parents, grandparents, carers with the support and skills to teach their children. A program run by the Brotherhood of St Laurence is helping parents and children 'get it right' in the home. HIPPY - the Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters - might have a catchy name but it also has a serious ambition to build close relationships between parents and children through home-based learning activities.



Learning at home should be fun and a safe place of strong relationships, family routines and education. Providing a home visiting program – as HIPPY does – means that families can work together in a comfortable, convenient learning environment, receiving individual support. However, its broad focus on support allows HIPPY to work in different settings too; for some parents this can mean a place outside the traditional home setting, such as in a public library if this is where they feel more comfortable and can find support from other parents. Activities are integrated into daily life and parents and children spend 10 to 15 minutes a day for five days a week, doing literacy, numeracy and language activities, as well as physical activities, together. As Lombard (1994) wrote, we seek to "... to bring changes into the home [to] help prepare children to deal with the demands of school."

## **"Children explore their home, using their imagination and talking to their family and friends"**

HIPPY acknowledges the importance of the parent role playing and 'everywhere learning' – looking for opportunities in everyday

settings – as learning tools. Sorting laundry into colours, lying on the grass, describing shapes within clouds, watering seedlings and role-play games; all are rich sources of learning. Children explore their home, using their imagination and talking to their family and friends. The learning at home can be quick to see, and as a parent notes: "Me spending one-on-one time with him, along with the encouragement and fun activities, has helped his attention span."

We should also recognise that parents and carers are the experts, particularly when it comes to their own culture and language, but that parents who experience trauma sometimes find parenting challenging. In

Australia, the Brotherhood of St Laurence has run HIPPY since 1998 via not-for-profit organisations, coordinators and local tutors. Around 4500 families throughout Australia participate in HIPPY each year across one hundred communities, with a focus on vulnerable families and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Families come from over 70 cultural and linguistic backgrounds. "Coming from Lebanon, I was scared of the outdoors here, with my tutors help I started to let my children play outside and invite their friends into my home," says one parent. The Australian Government fully funds HIPPY, so participation by families is free of charge.

## **CREATING A NURTURING ENVIRONMENT**

Providing the ingredients for a nurturing home environment is not always obvious to parents and carers under stress. Secure and respectful relationships, family members who listen and respond to each other and who respect each other, established routines, everyday tasks that are recognised as learning experiences; these are the ingredients of a nurturing home. These ingredients come from the parent, but parents need the confidence to know they can provide them.

Mothers should experience proud moments where they watch their daughter move into school being confident, happy, creative and independent girls. A nurturing home environment includes resources to help parents embrace the role of teacher, which is why families start the two-year HIPPY program the year before their child starts school – usually around four years of age – and continue the program during the first year of school. In the first year we provide 30 activity packs, which are delivered weekly. Books, crayons, colouring-in pads, packets of seeds, and the encouragement to be with their child and work through the activities together; it's easy to assume

parents provide such things, but not every parent has ready access to them or the confidence to choose appropriate resources. In the second year, the 15 fortnightly packs include information for parents about children's learning and development, such as how the brain works to looking at your child when you speak to them. As a child tells us, "I never miss HIPPY in my whole life. It helps me at school."

Confidence also comes by having access to support networks. Home tutors visit families weekly or fortnightly. They live in the same community and understand families and the challenges they face, as they have usually started their own HIPPY experience as parents struggling with the same problems. Parents observe their child learning, recognise delays and obstacles for their child and can share this with the tutor in the safety of their home. The tutor, in turn, links the parents to services and other parents who can help. HIPPY can transform the home and celebrate the learning of both parent and child.

## **STRONG HOMES BUILD STRONG COMMUNITIES**

We know that children and families benefit from social inclusion and reduced disadvantage. Strong relationships between a parent and child build mutual self-esteem and confidence. Experiences within the home can contribute to educational and health and wellbeing outcomes, so programs to support learning in the home can help parents to develop their own capabilities, improve children's school readiness and strengthen participation; this helps children thrive at school.

Building and strengthening social networks and increasing engagement with local communities are central to belonging and wellbeing. This is a strong part of the HIPPY program, which aims to connect homes and encourages parents to participate in group

## **"By sharing their experiences, parents support each other"**

meetings. By sharing their experiences, parents support each other. They report that they like meeting other families, hearing from professionals, expanding their networks and knowledge of local resources, in addition to gaining information about teaching their children.

Qualified coordinators recruit families, train and supervise tutors, conduct parent group meetings and events. Home tutors discuss and work through the program activities, but it is the parent or carer who provides the instruction. The program also provides employment for more than 480 locals as home tutors, many from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background.

## **BREAKING THE CYCLE OF DISADVANTAGE**

The reasons some people struggle in society are as varied as the people who make up our communities. Some of us are well equipped, through fate, good fortune or hard work, to take on the role of the parent as the child's first teacher. But some of us battle against a disadvantaged background, social isolation, and language difficulties. This takes the time and energy of the parent to transform the home.

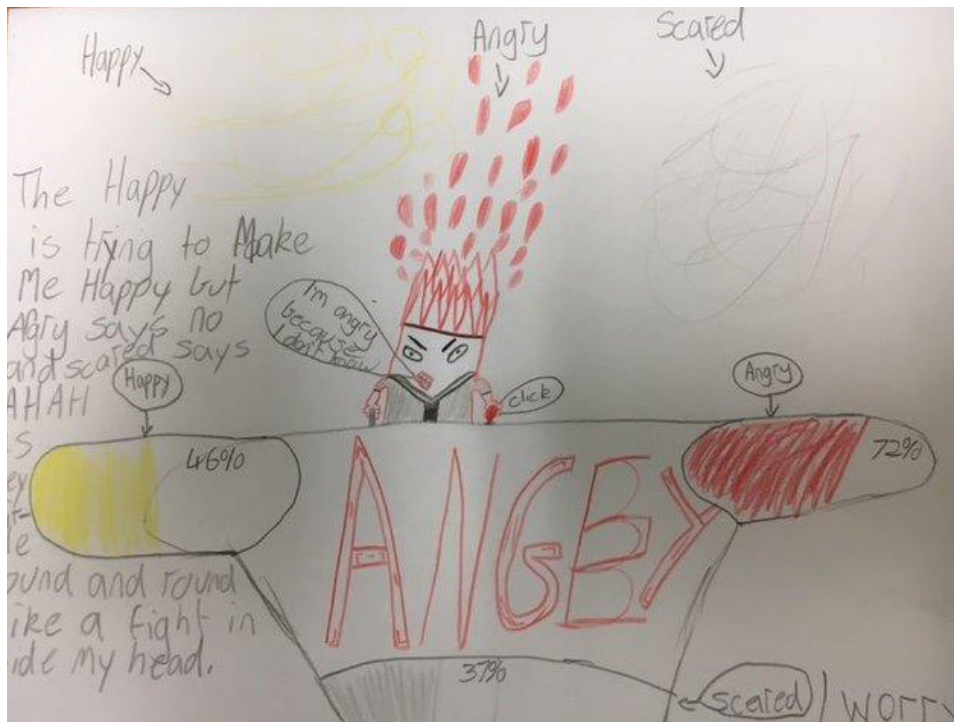
Importantly, parents can be given the scaffolding to be more confident as their child's first teacher. Not only do our HIPPY parents tell us that their children develop improved communication skills and feel ready to start school, but they enjoy better relationships with their children too. Parents say this gives them confidence to engage with employment and connect with their local community. As one parent says, "My relationship with [my son] has grown over the last two years... We've shared lots of laughs and learnt a lot about each

other... [The program] got me back into the workforce after being at home for three years after relocating [and has] given me my confidence back [and] taught me so much about myself as a mum, a teacher and as a person”.

By supporting children to learn in the home, with confident parents and carers as their first teachers, HIPPY invests in the home to benefit our current generation of children. We hope it will also benefit the next generation whose parents, because of their HIPPY experience, will naturally assume that learning starts in their home and that they, the parents, will be their children’s first teacher. ●

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# NEGOTIATING THE COMPLEXITIES OF HOME

by Shae Garwood

As the Senior Research Officer, Shae Garwood conducts research and advocacy to further the strategic goals of Anglicare WA. She is the author of *Advocacy Across Borders*, *Lessons for Social Change in the Global Economy* and journal articles on not-for-profit policy and practice.

She is an Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Western Australia. This article was developed in conjunction with Young Hearts Children's Domestic Violence Counselling, Parenting Connection WA and the Young Parents Support Program.

Names and some details in this article have been changed to respect client confidentiality.

**H**ome is the spatial and emotional centre of life, where parents teach their children the social, emotional and cognitive skills they use in the wider world. The bonds that form in the home provide the essential foundations children need in order to develop a strong sense of self and a place in society. However, this paints an idealised version of home.

**"Many people experience conflicted emotions connected to the place or places they call home"**

In reality, many people experience conflicted emotions connected to the place or places they call home.

The power of home is in the

positive and negative associations with home as a physical space and the feelings it engenders. For example, new parents may struggle with their own emotional ties to home and seek to break destructive patterns learned from their own parents.

Anglicare WA works with families and children facing a variety of circumstances. For some, their home has become a place of violence or where relationships have deteriorated. Anglicare WA walks alongside families and children to help them rebuild positive aspects of home and healing. This includes re-establishing a sense of belonging following family conflict or developing a sense of security in the home after a traumatic event. It also includes providing access to safe accommodation, supporting parental attachment, repairing relationships within families and creating connections between families and their communities.

## **NEGOTIATING COMPLEX HOME ENVIRONMENTS**

We asked our clients to draw pictures and tell stories of what home means to them. In addition to safety, security and family, they shared things that make a home such as family gatherings, a place to practice their culture and a space where they can be themselves free from judgement. They also expressed feelings about home as a place of anger, fear and fighting, reflecting how a positive sense of home can be compromised by violence and conflict.

These drawings and stories highlight how home, as the locus of intense emotional experiences, is a site for competing parts of a person's self to converge, making up who we are now and influencing who we will become. Understanding the past and addressing painful experiences begins the healing process to create alternate ways of being and doing, allowing people to develop more positive, nurturing experiences of home in the future.

## **CHILDREN'S PERSPECTIVES: WHAT HOME MEANS TO ME**

Creating art can be a powerful therapeutic tool for children and young people to communicate non-verbally, engage in an enjoyable activity on their own or with peers, and develop insights into their emotions around a certain topic or event. Children are naturally creative and drawing provides them with a non-threatening way to express themselves. It also provides counsellors with an opening to ask questions about what the child or young person thinks and feels about what is included in the picture (Gray, 2015).

Children in our Young Hearts program drew pictures about what home means to them. Young Hearts provides one-on-one

and group counselling for children and adolescents who have experienced family violence. Olivia, a 10-year old participant new to the program, expressed feelings about home including anger, sadness and happiness in her picture. She has had extensive exposure to violence and is currently living with her mum, who is struggling with alcohol and drug addiction.

Olivia's picture (page 22) shows the competing feelings she has at home. She wrote the happy side is trying to "Make me Happy, but the Angry says no and the scared says ahah [laughter] as they circle round and round like a fight inside my head." In her picture, the angry character says "I'm angry because I don't know," reflecting feelings of being out of control. She assigned percentages to the competing emotions showing how powerful the angry feelings are over the others.

Olivia asked her counsellor if the therapy can help her get the happy side of her stronger than the angry and scared side. Olivia's sense of safety and wellbeing has been compromised due to family violence. Anglicare counsellors are working with her to help her deal with strong feelings of fear, hurt, anger and betrayal. Olivia's drawing references characters from the film, *Inside Out*, which provided her with a way to visualise competing emotions and allowed her counsellor to talk to her about healthy ways to deal with her emotions. The film suggests that people are not a single, unified self, but rather the sum of competing parts, and these parts are forever changing with new experiences and memories (Baggini, 2015). Olivia conveyed this in her drawing, showing the competing and contested impulses directing her behaviour.

For children like Olivia, learning how to name feelings and developing appropriate ways to react to those feelings, are

critical in healing from trauma, as well as developing a strong sense of self and nurturing healthy relationships in the home. Katie, 10, drew a picture of an argument with her mother. It shows her mum saying "Go to your room" and Katie reacting by saying, "Shut up", because she was upset that her mother was yelling at her.

Katie's thought bubble says, "Oh maybey [maybe] I should have said, that upset me," reflecting her awareness about developing better ways to respond to shouting at home. Katie is working with her counsellors to learn how to process and express feelings, a critical step to healing from conflict and violence. Children often learn how to de-escalate and resolve conflicts by watching parents, siblings and extended family in the home. If they have witnessed family violence or have experienced abuse, they may not have positive examples of conflict resolution to emulate. Anglicare counsellors work with children and young people to develop skills to resolve conflict when confronted with difficult situations at home and beyond.



Illustration by Katie,\* courtesy of Anglicare WA



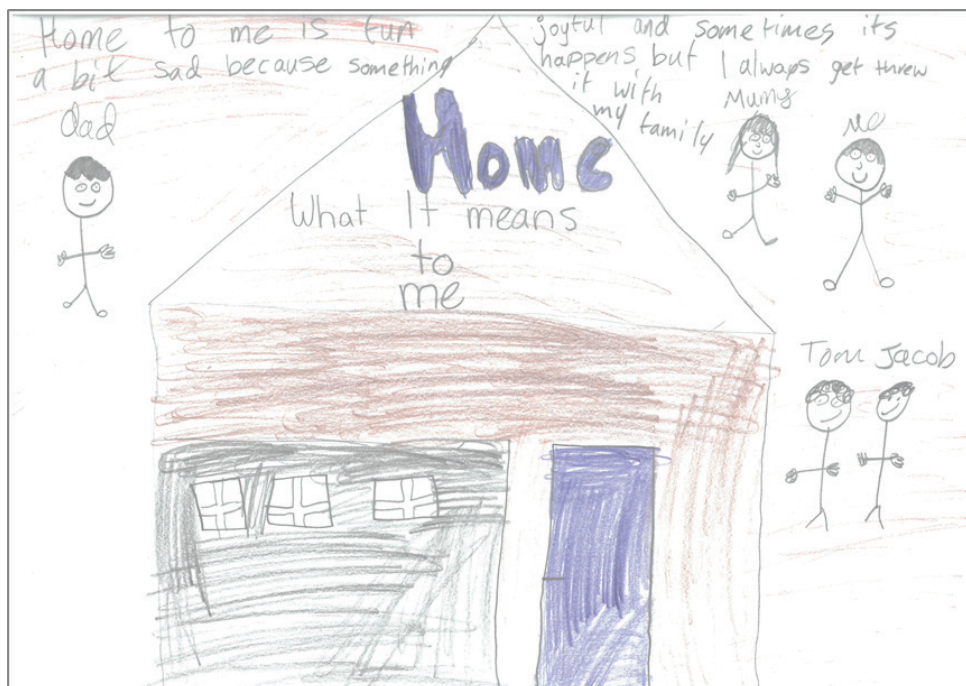


Illustration by Jack,\* courtesy of Anglicare WA

Parental separation can be a particularly challenging time for children. If they have only known one home with both parents, the experience of moving between multiple homes and/or living with one parent can be traumatic. Jack, 9, has been going through parental separation. In his picture, he drew his mother and siblings on one side of the house and his dad on the other. Jack is attending Anglicare WA's group sessions to help him through the separation. There is great resilience shown in Jack's picture and words, reflecting positive steps to healing the hurt and frustration he feels about his parents' separation. He wrote, "Home to me is fun joyful and sometimes its a bit sad because something happens but I always get threw [through] it with my family".

Children often use particular colours or hues to convey their mood or feelings. While this picture is muted containing only a few darker colours, other children chose to use bright colours in their drawing of home. Ella, 10, chose bright colours for her picture. She shows positivity and a sense of security after attending extensive individual and group counselling. She has experienced family violence and is not in contact with her father. Nevertheless, her picture depicts love, safety, playing, fun, helping, family and food, all as part of 'What Home Means to Me', with no visual reference to her previous challenges. Her picture provides an example of how children can re-establish positive feelings of home following traumatic events.

Ella's picture reflects the healing she has experienced through her engagement with Anglicare counsellors, in individual and group sessions, where she now feels home is somewhere you can feel love, safety, have fun and be nourished. She specifically asked the counsellor how to draw the Anglicare symbol, which she included on the right-hand side of her picture. While the physical structure of home is shown at the centre of the drawing, with a love heart outlined in red, she includes other activities and positive associations with home.

## NEW PARENTS CREATING A SENSE OF HOME

New parents have added challenges as they navigate their own memories of home while creating new spaces and experiences for their children. Samantha, a 25 year old Indigenous mum, tells one of our Parenting Connection WA Coordinators:

*Home to me is a place you feel safe, where you feel comfortable, it is where your loved ones are, it is where as a parent you can make the rules. I recently went on a trip to go to my ancestral Jaru country in Balgo for the first time. This was important to me to see for the first time where my ancestors called home for tens of thousands of years. It was not the best timing for me as I had to bring along my 8-month-old baby on this adventure, which would entail plane trips, long car rides, gravel roads and sleeping in a tent. Ultimately it meant taking my baby away from the secure home that my partner and I had made for her. A place with all her toys, blankets, clothes, medicine, warm bed and even her father. This gave me great anxiety as I did not know how she would respond to this upheaval. However, when we arrived in Balgo and met our family for the first time I felt at ease. My Balgo family immediately took my baby to introduce her to almost all of the community.*



Illustration by Ella, \* courtesy of Anglicare WA



*This was our family and I knew that we were safe and secure. We set up our own campsite in the community, made a fire and relaxed. It was an amazing feeling for me to stay on my traditional lands for the first time. I tried to absorb everything: every flower, tree, hill, termite mound, sand colour, etc. I felt a solid sense of self as I knew where I come from and what my ancestral lands look like. I can take that with me wherever I go, that I will always have a home in this land.*

Samantha's story expresses feelings of home beyond a physical space to live. She expresses a sense of security and connectedness to people and land that transcends long distances, evoking home as a positive feeling that she can take with her wherever she goes. The benefits of a positive association with home, in this instance, extend well beyond a roof and four walls, to influence how Samantha and her baby engage with the world.

**"The feeling of home can extend to much more than the building we live in. It can extend to the land and family to which we belong"**

building we live in and the immediate family that surrounds us. It can extend to the land and family to which we belong. Part of the role of Parenting Connection WA is to support parents and families in developing a sense of home, a feeling of safety, security, belonging and connectedness for their children.

Developing a home as a parent has many elements, including developing a secure and safe residence with family. The feeling of home can extend to much more than the

Young parents may face added challenges in creating a sense of home for their children. One of the young parents in our Young Parent Support Program said of her experiences, "I'm comfortable in chaos; I'm not comfortable in calm." For this young woman, chaos is more familiar and indeed, more comfortable since this is what she is used to. She is unsure how to create a positive, stable home for her child since this has not been part of her own experiences of home.

Another participant in our Young Parent Support Program, Jade, 20, is an Australian Muslim woman who is five months pregnant. She painted a picture that is a reflection of her life and desires to create a home with her partner for their child: full of colour, culture and love. She said she was excited about the art project because it was a great way of taking her mind off of her feelings of isolation. For Jade, nurturing a sense of connection and belonging is important to overcome the isolation of becoming a young parent.



Illustration by Jade,\* courtesy of Anglicare WA

Jade is seeking to create a sense of home for her child that includes a sense of belonging (love and family) as well a place to feel grounded (peace and culture) and a site of self-expression (being myself).

She hasn't always experienced these feelings in her own home and wants to create a nurturing environment for her child. She said she is looking forward to setting up her own home soon with her partner and welcoming their baby boy. For some of the children and young people who are in the early part of their journey with Anglicare, they are learning to articulate their feelings and expressing themselves in new ways to improve communication in the home. For others, who are further along in their healing journey, their artwork and words show resilience and hope for the future where home is a place of comfort, love and safety.

## HOME AND HEALING

The children's drawings show the complicated relationship they have to home as a site of complex, intense emotions and self-development. Home can be a place of anger and frustration, isolation and fear.

It can also be a place to change how people communicate with each other, help one another get through difficult times, and experience safety, comfort and connections to community.

Through the words and drawings of new parents, it is clear that the significance of home is beyond the physical building, and many new parents seek to create connections between their children and broader understandings of home. Young parents, particularly those who have had traumatic experiences of their own, seek to create a safe, nurturing space for their

children. For those who have not had a secure and nurturing experience of home in their own childhood, this task is made even more difficult in the absence of examples of positive parenting to follow.

### **"Home is an abstract concept, made up of a constellation of competing emotions that shape our understandings of ourselves"**

emotions that shape our understandings of ourselves. Recognising the role of home as a site of negotiation and learning is an important step in the process of healing from the past and creating positive pathways into the future.

Home is a powerful force as a physical place where relationships are forged and behaviour is learned. It is also an abstract concept, made up of a constellation of competing

At Anglicare WA, we're mindful of the changing and fluid nature of families and respecting that families can take different forms. This includes split and blended families, migrants establishing a home in a new country, and families who have a spiritual connection to the land as home.

Access to safe and secure accommodation is necessary, but not sufficient, for children to grow and thrive. Anglicare WA assists children, young people, new parents and families to improve communication and strengthen relationships, often under challenging circumstances, to create positive associations with home as a place of healing. •

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# PART II

# JOURNEYS TO

# INDEPENDENCE





## PORTRAITS



It's a place you can always go to. You are always welcome, and you are always safe. You can't do anything wrong at home. It's a place to make your memories. Home is what you make it.

I find myself speaking much more intelligently. I used to be very quiet and not say much because I didn't think I was smart enough.

**- Peter**

For Tiebe, the most crucial aspects of a home are freedom and safety.

"I never felt safe before, so safety is the most important thing for me," she says

Here in Coffs Harbour, she says "I feel very welcome and accepted.

The people are friendly, kind and supportive. I don't have to fight and struggle for everything."

Through her involvement with Anglicare North Coast, she has developed networks, capabilities and connections: "They are [also] helping me with my studies and in preparing to get a job".



Tiebe's portrait was provided by Anglicare North Coast



# SHOWN THE DOOR

by Irina Stojcevska

Irina Stojcevska is the project manager for Home Stretch, a national campaign calling on Government to provide out-of-home youth with the option to remain in care until they are 21.

**I**n all Australian states and territories, young people in out-of-home care get shown the door at 18. Planning to leave care starts as early as 15, regardless of whether the young person feels they are ready to leave the support they have in care and move out on their own.

Children in out-of-home care have already lost one home, having been removed from their natural parent/s often due to neglect or abuse. The loss of care at the age of 18 compounds the losses that many young people in out-of-home care have experienced in their home lives. As James, a care-leaver, says: “I would say that leaving care was thrust upon me. I didn’t want to leave care; obviously you want all the support you need, all the support you can get.” (Gill and Dew, 2017).

This expectation on young care-leavers to support themselves once they turn 18 sits in contrast with the experience of most young people who rely on family support as they enter adulthood. The vast majority of 18-21 year olds still live at home (HILDA, 2017), and many that do leave have the safety net of a family home, where they can ask for help or return to if they need to. A recent Australian study found that 63% of parents would let their adult children move back home (O’Brien, 2016). There is no such support available for young people who are leaving state care. Around 3000 young people ‘age

out’ of out-of-home care each year. When young people ‘age out’, they lose a right to a place they can call home once they turn 18; they also lose financial and emotional support.

In the context of the disrupted experiences of home that almost all young people in out-of-home care have experienced, the option of extended care could help them establish a safe and secure foundation on which they can build their lives (Gill and Dew, 2017). Otherwise, what we see is a child protection system that lays down a trap for the people it is designed to protect, taking away the security and support that young people need as they transition into adulthood.

## SECURITY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE LEAVING CARE

Dylan is a 23 year-old care-leaver who we interviewed for this piece. He described how, since the age of 12, he has been “... constantly moving from place to place”. Currently he is living at a friends’ house while his friend’s brother is in lock-up. Dylan’s understanding of home is one he would share with many; a place that signifies stability, security and a sense of belonging. Dylan says:

*What home would mean to me is a place that I know I can return to each night, and feel cared about and really own that space, because without a place to call home, we will all struggle.*



Dylan's description echoes the findings of a recent study on young people's experience of home (Natalier and Johnson, 2014). Participants described five dimensions of home: shelter, emotional well-being, control, routine, caring relationships and stability. The imagery young people used drew upon the cultural ideal of a home as a haven and the domain of relationships and practises that signified stability, routine, control, care and the emotional well-being associated with belonging and feeling 'at home'. Descriptions of sitting still, having a garden, listening to music, looking at their belongings, cooking, cleaning, having pets, being with their families and staying put (Natalier & Johnson, 2014, pp135). We know that many young people leave care and do well. They continue training or education, develop healthy relationships and get on with adulthood. However, 50% will end up homeless, unemployed, in jail or a new parent within the first 12 months (Raman et al, 2005).

## HAVING A SAFE AND SECURE HOME

### **"Safety and security is key for young people leaving care to build their lives into adulthood"**

life. Safety and security is key for young people leaving care to build their lives into adulthood. Having stability means young people will have the space to focus on their education, gain employment and establish themselves within their communities (Gill and Dew, 2017). The stability that home provides is both physical and social. Social stability may

For young people that we know will struggle with the transition to adulthood, having a place they call home can set them up for

not be as obvious, but it is also key to young people leaving care feeling secure and having ongoing access to social support. A New South Wales study found that the longer young people remained in their placement after leaving care, the more positive their overall outcome was (Cashmore and Paxman, 2006). "Translating stability in care into felt security, and into ongoing social support, is through and the continuity of relationships, acceptance and the normality of these young people's daily lives – and continuity that does not end on their 18th birthday (or before)." (Cashmore and Paxman, 2006 pp239).

Key to the stability and security is the importance of continuing relationships young people have developed with their carers and other key people in their lives. As explained by Ashley, a care-leaver, the three main struggles for young people leaving care include: a lack of financial support, as they might end up homeless; a lack of relationships, as they are often without someone to turn to; a lack of sense of belonging to community (CBC News, 2017). In addition to the stress young people are faced with when leaving care, there is an added pressure of not having stable relationships, nor a community to belong to and nowhere to go if things do not work out as planned; these are unreasonable expectations thrust upon this cohort. A startling 57% of care leavers felt unsafe in the area where they first lived after leaving care (Gill and Dew, 2017).

Especially in the context of such disrupted experiences of home, young people in state care need the option of maintaining their connections and support to navigate their journey into young adulthood and establish a home of their own. It is crucial that we ensure a more gradual and flexible transition is provided for young people leaving state care that reflects what they need from home.

## PROVIDING AN OPTION FOR EXTENDED CARE

**"For young people leaving care, the term 'care-leavers' can be misleading. In reality, these young people are 'care-losers'"**

vulnerability remain and in many cases are multiplied by this loss of care (Fenton, 2017).

In the United States of America, Canada, the United Kingdom and most recently New Zealand, care is being extended to 21 years. In both the United Kingdom and United States there have been direct outcomes when care is extended, with homelessness rates halved, education participation rates doubled and an increase in the likelihood of full time employment for this cohort (for further reading see: Courtney, Munro and *The Costs and Benefits of Providing Extended Care & Maintenance to Ontario Youth in Care Until Age 25*).

The United Kingdom initially extended care to 21 years for those in foster care placements, following positive outcomes with the introduction of Staying Close, for those young people leaving residential care. Staying Close is a process where young people leaving their residential homes at 18 can move in to a home that is close to their previous home. This is to ensure that connections and relationships are maintained and support is nearby. Many young people can return to their

For young people leaving care, whether they are ready or not, the term 'care-leavers' can be misleading; in reality, these young people are 'care-losers'. Care is lost but their needs and

residential homes for Sunday dinners, to get their laundry done or just for a chat with their support workers (Narey, 2016).

As Cashmore and Paxman (2006) wrote, "Stated simply, relationships are the 'active ingredients' of the environment's influence on healthy human development." Relationships assist us to define who we are, what we can become and how we are important to other people, and so extending care offers the opportunity of extending relationships, which can be the key factor in creating positive pathways to independent living (SOTF 20165). Cashmore and Paxman (2006) also found that young people that had one placement for at least 75% of their time in care were more positive about their time in care, less mobile and had better outcomes.

It is also clear that not all young people leaving care would want to stay on in their placements; many are eager to try life on their own as an adult. However, for those young people who would like to leave care and transition to independence on their own, there must be realistic housing options and a safety net to return to if things don't work out. Young people leaving care need to have the choice and safety, just like young people have in the wider community when they leave their family homes.

For far too long our state care system has had double standards when it terminates care for young people in state care at the age of 18. Australian parents know that their job as parents is to see the raising of the child through to the end. Parents don't usually quit the parenting job during tough times, or three quarters through, and they certainly don't quit just because their child turns 18. States and Territories and legal guardians need to follow suit.

# THE HOME STRETCH CAMPAIGN

To call for this change, a campaign called Home Stretch has been established. Home Stretch seeks all state and territory governments to provide young people with the choice to continue their care, if they choose to, until the age of 21.

Extending out of home care until the age of 21 will give thousands of young people the additional guidance they need to have a real shot at life. •

To learn more about the Home Stretch campaign, visit:  
[www.thehomestretch.org.au](http://www.thehomestretch.org.au)

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# HOME LOVE LIVE

by Belinda Jones

Belinda is the State Manager of Housing of Homelessness Services at Anglicare Tasmania. She began work at Anglicare Tasmania in a housing outreach program after completing a social work degree 23 years ago, and has worked in the area of homelessness and housing ever since. Belinda has been involved in the concept, design and implementation of Trinity Hill.

To Fontaine, the meaning of home can be represented in a drawing (see this report's cover art) of a moon and a bed: "I thought the bed was good because when you come home you need a bed to relax in. I also drew the moon because when you come home, if you have the time, you can sit down, relax, have a cup of tea and you can look out at the moon."

Fontaine is a resident of Trinity Hill, a new combined residential and training facility in Hobart for young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Trinity Hill offers safe, affordable, long-term, supported housing for young people (aged 16 to 25), allowing them to access education, training, employment and other opportunities to achieve their goals.

When Trinity Hill was still in the planning phase, we recognised the importance of creating a place where young people had the support to grow and the space to dream. Most of the 46 tenants of Trinity Hill have experienced periods of homelessness and/or childhood trauma and are estranged from their families. In creating an environment where young people don't have to worry about where they might be sleeping the night or what they might have to do to get a bed, Trinity Hill gives them the freedom and the space they need to look into the distance, at the moon in the sky, and imagine how they will make their way in the world.

The question of how to create a place in which young people were free to be themselves and where they were supported



Pictured: Trinity Hill, Anglicare Tasmania

to develop and realise their aspirations was always central to the design of Trinity Hill. We knew that Trinity Hill had to be a home for young people: a place that was welcoming, that provided safety and stability and shelter, but also a place in which they had the freedom and control needed for it to be a place they could call their own.

We worked with Housing Tasmania and the residents to create a large-scale artwork for Trinity Hill that would contribute to their sense of ownership over the place they call home. 'My Place' is an artwork 'created with the residents for the residents': it reflects the stories and lives of the participants, representing what home, and life at Trinity Hill, means to them personally. Using the residents' contributions to the artwork, this article explores the importance of home as a place for young people to be themselves and realise their dreams for the future.

## BLANK CANVAS

The idea of engaging the residents to collaborate in creating an artwork for Trinity Hill came about in discussions with Housing Tasmania while looking at one of the outside walls in the middle of the facility that was just crying out for a splash of colour and some kind of tenant-led initiative. It was important that this artwork started as a blank canvas, a project that was open to becoming what the residents wanted it to be. This approach also reflects our approach to Trinity Hill more generally: from the very beginning, young people have been central in determining how Trinity Hill was designed and how it now operates.

After selecting two local artists to work on the project, we started a series of workshops to generate ideas about designing an artwork for the wall. Initially

we thought our tenants would choose a graffiti art installation where they could contribute some of their own work. Through the course of the workshops, however, they came up with a very different design. Workshop participants wanted the project to represent how they felt about living at Trinity Hill. The design started with three key words: Home, love, live. In the workshops that followed, we explored what represented 'Home Love Live' for our tenants. Everyone who participated contributed a word and/or picture that was incorporated into the finished work. The following reflections are from participants about their contributions to the artwork. They talk about what home means to them, how they represent it, their experience of living at Trinity Hill and their dreams for the future.

## REECE

Home is a place that I know I'm safe. It's a place I can go to at the end of the day, chill out, relax, have dinner and be myself. If something is happening on the outside I don't have to worry about it, it's my own little getaway. I contributed the two hands that form the love heart. I drew this picture and thought it would fit in the artwork because it represents peace, love and happiness. Everything has changed since I've been at Trinity Hill. I have grown to be a better person compared to who I used to be and I've turned my life around to what I want it to be.

## SAM

Home is a place to call my own; a place to feel safe and secure. I contributed a self-portrait in the style of manga. Since I've been at Trinity Hill I regained my independence, started studying and gained work experience. My dreams for the future are finishing university, getting a job and being happy.

## COREY

Home is a place to stay and a roof over my head and it's a place where I can do what I want to do. I contributed the eagles to the artwork because eagles are free and I have freedom in my own place.

I've got my own place (at Trinity Hill) and been able to go to TAFE and completed courses there. I have also got my driver's licence and bought a car which gives me more freedom as I can drive myself around now. Since being at Trinity Hill I have also been able to look for work. In the future, I want to be able to drive trucks, so getting my car licence was a good first step for me to get to this goal.

## EMILY

A home is somewhere you can feel safe and have your own space. I contributed shelter because everyone wants a roof over their head but some people are less fortunate and some have to live in shelters and nobody wants to be in that condition. Since I've been at Trinity Hill, I've gained enough ability and help to get on the right paths in life choosing positive instead of negative. My dream for the future would have to be to gain a full-time job and start a family.

## BRAIDEN

Home is somewhere to lay your head. I contributed speakers to the artwork because I like loud noise. I've now got my own place (at Trinity Hill). I also got my licence and bought a motorbike. I'm also working now and I still like loud music so that hasn't changed. In the future, I want to move in to a bigger place of my own with less people.

## KYLE

Home is somewhere to put your head. Somewhere you can feel comfortable that's safe. I contributed a motorbike to the artwork because when I came here it helped me get stable, and then I was able to get my motorbike licence. Since I've been at Trinity Hill, I'm not on the streets and worrying about where the next place I can stay will be. I've got my own stuff, I've got work and it's helped to build towards my future. I really want to have a stable job so I'll have money, then I can look after my girlfriend and myself and have a happy life.

## HOME LOVE LIVE

The words and pictures on the theme of 'Home Love Live' help us to understand what it is that young people want, and need, from a home: a place where they feel safe and happy and cared for and where they are provided with what they need to grow into healthy, independent and confident adults.

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Clockwise from bottom left, artwork by Trinity Hill residents Braiden, Sam, Emily, Corey, Kyle, and Reece.





At a time of life that is characterised by change and growth, home is an anchor for young people, a safe haven, somewhere to seek advice and encouragement. This is what we aim to provide at Trinity Hill: a home where young people are supported to be themselves and realise their goals, a home providing the foundation for future health, development and wellbeing in adulthood.

There are 46 individual units at Trinity Hill with 16 of these purpose-built specifically for young people with a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) package. Facilities include a gymnasium, computer lab, training rooms, commercial kitchen, barbeque areas, games room and a variety of communal indoor and outdoor spaces. Free Wi-Fi is also available for all tenants. These are the kind of facilities that allow the young people at Trinity Hill to try new things, develop their skills, build

their confidence and hatch their ambitions. The individual units also allow the young people to have their own space.

Trinity Hill is located directly opposite Elizabeth College and is a short walk to the TasTAFE Drysdale Campus and Hobart's central business district. Its accessibility makes those goals of education and employment more possible to achieve, making it easier for the young people to take the steps they need to lay strong foundations for their future life journeys.

The sense of having others behind you, ready to provide support if and when it's needed, is an important aspect of home that is highlighted in the words and pictures above. Support staff are located on-site from 8.30 am to 8.00 pm Monday to Friday, and a live-in facility supervisor is available outside of those times. By having staff on-site we seek to offer a version of



the situated support that so many other young people get from living in their family home.

Co-located at Trinity Hill is the CREATE Foundation, the national peak consumer body representing the voices of children and young people with out-of-home care experience. CREATE Foundation's presence on-site shows young people that they have a voice and their voices matter.

A bed, a cup of tea and the moon:  
Fontaine's beautiful image captures what we aim to provide to the young people who call Trinity Hill their home. She also wrote:

*Home is a place to come back to and relax at the end of the day when you've done everything in the day that you need to and take all the weight off your shoulders. A lot has changed for me since I've been at Trinity Hill. I can be at home anytime I want because it's my own place and the door is always open and it doesn't feel like a prison to live here. I can also ask people for help at Trinity Hill. While living at Trinity Hill I've also been able to attend school and have done some courses that I'm interested in. I would like to live at Trinity Hill until I'm 25 and by then I'd like to have finished school and be working.*





Fontaine helps us to see what is created with the bed and the moon: the transformative nature of a home where you are supported to grow and have the freedom to dream. •

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“My Place” is an artwork created with the residents, for the residents, of Trinity Hill. The artwork represents the many stories and lives of the participants enabling them to have a sense of ownership over the artwork, and more importantly, their home.



# PART III

## AGEING



WHEN YOU NEED SOMETHING



**G SOMEONE IS THERE FOR YOU**

## PORTRAITS



Sheila's portrait was provided by Benetas

I didn't want to move into residential aged care; I loved living in my own home. I built that home, and my daughter lived just next door. But when the time came and it became too much for my daughter to look after me I knew it was the right choice. I liked it at first, but now I really like it.

It's home to me and that means I'm comfortable and I'm happy here. I was able to bring my cat Mack with me and that means the world. We have our own room and bathroom and I've got all my photos and paintings from home here. It's home because I have

really good friends here; my best friend lives in the room opposite.

We have our own space but there are so many things we can also do as a group; we eat meals together - just the eight of us - and that's really nice. We can also do activities with other residents, like exercise.

I know you can't have two homes and this feels like my home now. This year, I shared a glass of whiskey with my dear friend from the apartment on my birthday; they're the things that mean it's home for me.

**- Sheila**

# FEELING AT HOME WHEN YOU CAN'T LIVE AT HOME ANY MORE

by Catherine Joyce

This essay was a collaboration between current and former Benetas staff: Catherine Joyce, who is Research and Innovation Manager, led the writing of the essay. Other contributors were: Chris Karagiannis, General Manager, Strategy, Infrastructure and Housing; Kate Kelly, Strategic Projects Manager; Cassie Roberts, Communications Manager; Paula Trood, General Manager, Residential Services and Quality and Compliance; and Aaron Wyllie, former member of the Benetas Research Team and PhD candidate at Monash University.

Residential aged care facilities are often contrasted with 'home' as the alternative when an older person is not able to live 'at home' any more. In recent years there has been a strong rhetoric around creating more 'home-like' environments within residential aged care facilities. But what does this actually mean in practice? Can a collective living arrangement in which residents receive personal and clinical care ever be made to feel truly 'home-like'?

In this essay, we discuss the inherent tensions between the 'institutional' and the 'home-like'; we review the transition into a residential aged care facility, and what this tells us about the meaning and experience of home; and we describe Benetas' efforts to create a more home-like environment within the residential care setting, through new approaches to design and environment, and our new approach to care.

## INHERENT TENSIONS IN AN INSTITUTIONAL SETTING

*Home provides a sense of identity, a locus of security, and a point of centering and orientation in relation to a chaotic world (Chaudhury & Rowles, 2005).*

The concept of home includes experiential and emotional aspects: a feeling of familiarity, security, and comfort; an ability to follow personal routines; and a place to relate to significant others and to keep personal belongings (van Hoof, et al., 2016). Feelings of familiarity and security imply both physical and emotional aspects of a home environment, entailing control over entry and exit – the threshold of the inside and outside worlds, as well as the security provided by confidence in your knowledge of the environment – that you know where things are and how things work. Similarly, the ability to follow your usual routines and habits implies both familiarity and control – you can get up when you want, eat your preferred foods,

and go about your usual activities as you choose. Having a place to relate to significant others is an extension of this control, and underlines the key role of social relationships in our sense of identity and belonging, as well as a sense of connection to place, which often extends beyond the individual dwelling to the neighbourhood. Finally, our emotionally valuable personal belongings are an expression of our identity, and having a place for these contributes strongly to a sense of being at home.

**"Aged care facilities are traditionally institutional, large, impersonal, regimented, and clinical"**

How do these characteristics of home relate to the environment in residential aged care facilities? These facilities are traditionally institutional in nature.

Institutions

suggest large size, with an impersonal, regimented, and clinical character. The size of facilities can influence the degree of regimentation, focusing on efficiencies in providing meals, care and other services to a large number of people. Organisational culture reinforces this, and in turn, culture is influenced by the regulatory environment for aged care, which emphasises compliance. Residential aged care facilities can feel impersonal because of this regimentation, leaving residents lacking a sense of being known as an individual. The traditional name of 'nursing homes' also emphasises the clinical nature of aged care facilities, as a place where clinical care is provided to people.

Clearly, there are significant impediments to creating a sense of home within an environment in which a large number of

people live, and to whom clinical and personal care are provided on a regular basis. Providing a sense of control, belonging, and individual identity within this context is the challenge that residential aged care services face.

## **DECIDING ON YOUR 'LAST HOME'**

As with any major life transition, the decision to move into residential aged care is ideally made following a period of careful consideration of the available options, consultation with loved ones, and a process of psychological adjustment to one's 'last home'. For many people, the decision to enter aged care is made in recognition of their increasing healthcare needs, but at a point where they can maintain independence and ownership over the decision-making process, and take the time they needed to transition on their own terms.

Phyllis (names have been changed), an 84-year-old woman speaking soon after moving into aged care, emphasises the importance of feeling in control of this process:

*I knew I couldn't stay living on my own much longer, it was getting too hard for me and I knew my family were worried about something happening...It was important for me to make the decision on my own while I still could...choosing somewhere I liked...taking my time and doing it on my own terms...has really helped (Wyllie, 2017).*

Older adults who transition to residential aged care unexpectedly, directly from hospital or following an acute health crisis, can often find the process of adjustment punctuated by a sense of grief and loss. For Phil, a 78-year-old who transitioned into aged care directly from hospital following

a fall at his home, there was a sense of loss for not being able to say goodbye to his home and grief at now being unable to return, despite appreciating his new home:

*I like it here but I wasn't in a position to make a choice about it...my son thought I'd like it here because of the ocean and I do...but not having a choice in it all and not being able to make my peace with leaving home has been tough... it's too hard for me to get back there now, so I just have to accept it I suppose (Wyllie, 2017).*

## ADJUSTING AND MAKING HOME IN A NEW PLACE

While older adults arrive in aged care for many different reasons, all have left somewhere else. Most often, this is a place they have called home for many years, a place imbued with memories and relationships, good and bad, and a lifetime of meaningful possessions. As one 98-year old woman says, “[this is] the stuff of a life” that one farewells when entering residential aged care.

Older adults commonly find that making home in an aged care facility is a process, involving adjustment and reconciliation between home in the community and home in an aged care facility. With time, many older adults find ways of maintaining elements of their home-life they had found most meaningful, although this inevitably involves compromise – nothing is able to truly replace their homes in the community. Ruth, an 81 year old woman, speaks of the process of accepting life in her new home at an aged care facility:

*I had a really hard time when I first moved...everything was so different... nothing familiar... but things have become more familiar and I've been able to adapt I suppose. It will never be*

*the same as home, but I've worked out how to make it feel like home in some ways... I feel comfortable with having visitors now, which has been really important (Wyllie, 2017).*

## CREATING A HOME-LIKE ENVIRONMENT

To help address the challenges of living in a residential aged care facility, which can be felt most acutely when moving in to this environment, we have developed a new approach to residential care, supported by an innovative architectural design response that creates a home-like environment.

Our model is based around apartment style living. Each apartment has a living area, a dining room and a kitchen. Residents' bedroom doors open onto a lounge room shared with only seven other people. This is much more like a family home compared to the acute, hospital model of the 1990s, where residents had to go down long corridors into a communal area, which could have up to 50 people sharing a space.

In our apartments, there are discrete living areas where residents can physically be involved in as little or as much social interaction as they choose. Residents can part take in whole of facility activities in the common areas such as the café, gardens or the activity rooms. They can stay within their apartments and interact with only their immediate neighbours. Or they can choose to stay in their own rooms, which has a TV, lounge suite, and a private bathroom. We encourage residents to bring important personal items when they move in, to support a sense of individual identity, connection, and familiarity.

The advantages for residents living in this type of setting are significant. The apartment space supports familiarity and control with places for everyday activity such as meals within easy reach. Living spaces are close to personal bathrooms, just like being at home. Difficulties finding your way around, common in large institutions, are almost non-existent. The closeness of everything also reduces dependence on mobility aids such as walkers or wheelchairs. Having an enclosed area also means being inside the apartment actually feels like being in someone's home. There is a front door, which people knock on before they enter the apartments. All the care services (laundry, clinical services and so forth) are hidden away back of house, so there aren't drug trolleys or medical charts lying around. This is in contrast to the traditional residential aged care environment which often has a clinical feel. The apartment has its own climate control, so is physically warmer than the corridors of the facility.

The apartment design truly allows us to bring services to people, rather than having to bring people to services. Time is saved by not having to assist residents to traverse long corridors to dining areas. This frees up time to focus on meaningful interactions between staff and residents.

Apartment-style facilities are new for Benetas and for the Australian aged care sector, and draw on leading overseas services. What is distinctive about our new approach is not just the unique physical spaces, but a person-centred approach which is expressed through a focus on the relationships between people within the spaces. Our new approach involves rostering, role requirements and work practices that are unlike those in other aged care facilities, and which support genuine relationships that maximise autonomy, purposeful engagement, and quality of life for residents.

We have sought to dismantle the artefacts of the traditional biomedical nursing home form and culture, which act as a constant reminder of institutionalisation and disablement. We made a conscious decision not to let roster structures, organisational hierarchy, regulation and compliance get in the way of empowerment, flexibility, choice and creativity. We have also established dedicated staffing within apartments. Carers are rostered to the same apartment on a continuing basis, supporting the development of strong personal relationships, where people gravitate towards very natural social interactions.

The role of carers in our new approach is different, with carers empowered to make more decisions, including when to call in support from clinical staff. Carers work collaboratively with residents to support their choices in relation to basic activities such as when to eat and when to shower. This is in contrast to the standard approach in aged care, which has a top-down decision-making hierarchy that can disempower carers. Our new approach recognises that carers have most interactions with residents, and therefore that their wisdom should be central in informing and supporting decision-making.

**"Understanding what makes someone tick, knowing what brings them joy and fulfilment, is fundamental in this approach"**

To understand what makes someone tick, know what brings them joy and fulfilment is fundamental in this approach, and it

is the carers who achieve this through the relationships they develop with residents. This is supported by a workforce



recruitment and development strategy that focuses on the attributes and capabilities to match this carer role, with emotional intelligence and empathy topping the list.

Supporting increased choice and control also enables residents to develop a sense of meaning and purpose. This can be as simple as supporting a resident to choose their menu and to dine at a time that suits their daily routine.

Spontaneity and variety are the spice of life, and fostering a paradigm that 'allows' and fosters the carer to be in sync with the ebb and flow of residents' lives is ultimately reaffirming for all involved. It is now not uncommon to see carers, residents and families milling around the kitchen bench together enjoying a cuppa and a yarn.

## CONCLUSION

Moving into a residential care facility is life changing for the resident, and often for family as well. Your world as you know it, and how you interact with it has fundamentally shifted. Traditional aged care facilities compound the loss of meaning and control due to the very nature of how they are designed, how they work to meet regulations and budget targets, and by standardizing routines. Our new approach to residential care is designed to disrupt the dependence and regimentation of traditional aged care, and enable residents to engage meaningfully, and live as independently as possible, in their last home. •

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## PORTRAITS



Kathleen's portrait was provided by Benetas

I've been here six months and it's the best thing I've ever done. It really is. Up until six months ago I lived alone, I drove, I did housework, I did everything. But then all of a sudden my body gave way and I couldn't do any of it anymore. I told my family I had to move into residential aged care.

As soon as we walked in here we knew it was the right one. It's like I'm in my own home - not just because of the way it's set up, but because of the people here and how I get to live my life. There's a small group of us and it's like a family atmosphere. We share meals together; we laugh together. No one tells me what to do or when to do it. I live as though I was living at home, just without having to deal with all the bits and pieces I couldn't do anymore, like the housework or dealing with maintenance.

It's home here because I am left to be as independent as I want to be. I watch the footy, I read my books and the paper... all the things I would be doing if I were at home. I'm still sitting on the same couch! It's home because I don't have to worry here. Everyone's got a smile on their face and everything is ideal. I really mean that.

**- Kathleen**

# TAKING RISKS TO MAKE A HOME

by Shirley Essex

Shirley Essex is the Care Manager at AnglicareSA Brompton. She is a Registered Nurse with a Masters in Mental Health Nursing. Shirley has worked with the diverse group of residents at AnglicareSA Brompton for more than 10 years. Over this time, Shirley has built a unique team with an approach that is client-focused, non-biased and supportive of all residents and their individual lifestyle choices.

**E**stablished in 2004, AnglicareSA Brompton is a residential aged care facility in Adelaide for people who are financially disadvantaged, homeless or at risk of homelessness. Aged 50-80 years old, and typically younger than those in traditional aged care, the residents are often prematurely aged following years of alcohol or drug dependency. People are referred via the Exceptional Needs Unit of the SA Department of Health.

AnglicareSA Brompton provides an opportunity for residents to experience home, sometimes for the very first time. Often there are no alternatives available to them. In many cases it saves lives. It also enhances lives by allowing people to take risks, and so make choices about how they want to live. In supporting the resident to make choices about how they want to live, we support them in making Brompton their home.

## RESIDENTS LEAD THE WAY

AnglicareSA Brompton is different from other aged care facilities, not only due to the younger age and difficult backgrounds of its residents but in its approach to caring for them. There has been much debate and research over many years

about people under the age of 65 seeking support and service in residential aged care facilities. Many researchers believe that young people who live long-term in aged care facilities experience declining emotional, physical and mental health (Community Affairs References Committee, 2015).

The AnglicareSA experience is proving that with the right approach to care, younger people living in such facilities can have an enhanced lifestyle with improved emotional, physical and mental health.

So many residents at the Brompton facility have not had the experience of home for a very long time. They often come from a history of physical and mental abuse. Many have problems with alcohol and drugs and may have been prematurely aged because of these life experiences and choices. They may suffer from acquired brain injuries, memory loss or early dementia. Every one of our residents is unique and is treated as such. Each has a different life story, a different sense of home and different set of ideas about how they want to live.

Staff accept and adapt to the resident's needs in order for them to feel comfortable to stay. Our experience at AnglicareSA Brompton has taught us that the best

approach to planning a resident's care is to ask them how they feel, what they value and how they want certain situations managed. That then needs to be balanced with the rules and legislation that govern aged care facilities. A written agreement between management and residents around care delivery helps with this balance.

As with all aged care facilities, a care plan is developed for each new resident. A care plan typically details a resident's medical, physical, social, emotional, lifestyle and spiritual needs. It outlines how the resident wants services delivered. It will often also include information about family arrangements – who the resident does and does not want to have visit. For around half of our residents, guardianship arrangements are also included.

It is essential that these plans are developed with the resident and are tailored to reflect their individual situation. Without that involvement and leadership in how their care is managed and how they want to live their lives, most residents would not make the facility their home. When a new resident arrives at AnglicareSA Brompton they carry with them the burden of many years of hardship. Many come with no family support, as they may have been disowned by family due to their poor life choices, or escaped after years of abuse. Some have never known a home, having lived on the streets for most of their lives. Criminal histories, drug and alcohol abuse, and psychiatric disorders regularly feature in their stories. Lack of autonomy and little sense of self and self-worth are common.

Staff members aim to look beyond that and see each new resident as a fellow human being, who needs to feel safe and deserves to be treated with dignity. There is no judgement. Here they can feel accepted

and start afresh. They are encouraged to become the person they want to be and live the best life they can. With this clean slate approach, the resident is free to express their needs and desires when developing their care plan in partnership with the staff team. This is a key to making AnglicareSA Brompton a place that residents can call home: listening to and understanding what the residents want from their care plan helps staff to understand what they want from a home.

## A SLOW TRANSITION

The transition from homelessness or abusive lifestyles to making the facility a home can be difficult and slow for many. Residents invariably come from confronting backgrounds. They have lived in difficult situations for a very long time. There is often a lot of anxiety and inability to trust others.

Listening to the individual and encouraging small steps is vital. Sometimes relatively easy or minor changes can be made, other times what the individual wants can be very challenging for staff to accept and deal with. This may mean providing warm clothes and blankets for someone to sleep outside until they are comfortable to come inside at night and sleep in their own room. For someone else it may be going out walking alone at night; the only time and place they feel they can be themselves and keep a connection with their previous life on the streets.

Eventually residents start to feel more comfortable, create their own routines and establish a new life for themselves.

A standout example of this approach is a man who came to AnglicareSA Brompton after years in the prison system, as well as lengthy stints in criminal psychiatric units. With no control over his own life during his incarceration he refused

to wash and it took three prison guards to hold him down for his weekly wash. And so it took time and a lot of work to understand what he needed to feel safe at AnglicareSA Brompton. As for all new residents, a consistent approach to care was the key to building trust in the early days. He had the one carer dedicated to helping him settle in, as well as managers who regularly sat with him and talked, all building rapport and ensuring he knew he was cared about and valued. Things didn't always go smoothly. But now, in the care and comfort of his new home where he is treated with dignity and has a sense of autonomy, he voluntarily and regularly showers as part of his self-care routine and is making Brompton his home.

## TAKING RISKS

**"The basic right to choose what it is a person wants to do should not be taken away from them when they enter residential aged care"**

Everyone takes risks. It is a fundamental part of life and can be very positive, creating a sense of self and wellbeing. The basic right to choose what it is a person wants to do should not be taken away from them when they enter residential aged care. The best approach to caring for our residents is to work with them to minimise the chance of harm, while letting them live the best life they can.

Risk and risk mitigation has become an integral component of care, yet it frequently means restrictive care and

care plans that are guided by the fear of getting things wrong and doing harm. The concept of 'dignity of risk' is embraced at AnglicareSA Brompton:

*"Dignity of risk means respecting each individual's autonomy and self-determination (or dignity) in making choices. The concept means that all adults have the right to make their own decisions about their health and care. And basically, consumer directed care in a residential setting cannot exist unless aged care providers and governing bodies allow residents and clients the dignity to take their own risks" (Hills, 2014).*

Our staff do not allow themselves to be restricted by fear of what might happen. They work to understand residents' needs and desires and then look at how these can be achieved within their duty of care obligations. The managed alcohol program is a good example of this approach. One resident arrived at Brompton with a daily intake of more than five litres of alcohol. He was also regularly drinking methylated spirits. He didn't want to stop drinking. Working in consultation with his guardian, doctor, family and staff, he agreed to a gradual decrease in alcohol consumption to a level that was considered safe for him. He stopped drinking methylated spirits and his daily alcohol consumption dropped to 1.5 litres provided by staff over the course of a day. We take a similar approach to smoking. While all residents are offered Quit Smoking program, they often tell staff - in no uncertain terms - that giving up is not an option. Residents usually do however decrease their intake, and consumption is determined by what they can afford. Staff then distribute daily allowances to ensure the entire weekly quota is not smoked in one day.

The fact that a person finds themselves in a care facility does not take away their basic right to choose how to live, to decide for themselves whether to drink or smoke. The staff here just makes sure this choice is balanced with the physical and financial safety of the resident.

## CHOOSING HOW TO LIVE

**"The choice to establish new routines and continue with some old habits means that this is no longer purely a place of shelter, but a place for the resident to live"**

The choice to establish new routines, to continue with some old habits, to engage in new activities and learn new skills, means that this facility is no longer purely a place of shelter,

but a place for the resident to live. Life at AnglicareSA Brompton can be as active as the individual desires, with regular group sessions, programs and outings developed at the request of residents. Spiritual and religious needs are diverse and catered for in whatever way suits the resident. This may include private contemplation and meditation, attending an in-house church service, transport to a church or temple or private visits from a religious leader.

Visits with family and friends are important for those who have maintained relationships. Many though do not have those connections and so the social and entertainment opportunities provided by staff and volunteers are an essential and appreciated part of life. The weekly music program is much loved. Last Christmas residents worked with staff and volunteers to produce a CD of their music. Art classes are another welcome creative outlet.

Some residents regularly travel to an allotment where they grow fruit and vegetables. Others enjoy group outings which are arranged at the request of residents, including fishing charters, music concerts, trips to the theatre and sporting events. Regular shopping trips allow residents to have control of their money, often for the first time, giving them a sense of autonomy.

## LEARNING TO LIVE AT ANGLICARESA BROMPTON

Alan arrived at AnglicareSA Brompton in 2009 after a long history of alcohol misuse. He was often physically and financially abused by his partner. During one violent altercation he was stabbed by his partner who was subsequently imprisoned. Alan's four children were put into foster care and he drank excessively until he ended up in hospital. It was then that an Exceptional Needs Unit referral led Alan to admission into AnglicareSA Brompton at the age of 61.

When Alan arrived he was still being harassed and financially abused by a former partner. Staff worked with Alan and his guardian to ensure his personal and financial safety. After years of abuse, it was important to Alan to have sense of control over his finances and in particular to be able to spend his own money on his children.

Alan's four children ranged in age from 4 to 12 years when he came to AnglicareSA. Access visits were arranged and these have continued through the years. His access visit is now only with his youngest daughter and his other three children visit him independently. The access visits formed part of a very important connection to Alan's children. He would be accompanied by one of the AnglicareSA Brompton Lifestyle team to Noarlunga

where the visits were supervised. Alan would save what he could to shop with a Lifestyle carer the day before to purchase a bag of goodies. It was very important to him to be able to give his children treats.

Another part of Alan's sense of self and home is his room. The walls and shelves are adorned with memories of his childhood in Liverpool, with Beatles posters and Liverpool FC banners taking pride of place. Alan has seen Liverpool FC play in Adelaide twice in recent years, something he never dreamed would happen. His life in Adelaide is celebrated with Adelaide Crows paraphernalia, photos of Alan with his children, his children's artwork and Alan's own paintings and poetry.

It is a personal haven that Alan is proud of and keen to invite his guests in to share. Like many of his fellow residents, he has found comfort and an outlet in the arts. A keen participant in the music and art classes, he also discovered a love and talent for poetry when he settled at Brompton.

Alan's early poetry is heavy with references to poverty and homelessness, two things he says now no longer occupy his thoughts. "I'm not worried about that anymore," says Alan. "I'm not worried about anything. I've got no problems. It's as though all of my problems have flown out of the window thanks to the help of the wonderful people who work here. I feel relaxed... I don't drink anymore and have no desire to. I am really happy, no complaints at all. The staff are wonderful. They're my second family."

"I enjoy the group sessions, the various outings, the music and art classes. But the older I get, the more I enjoy my own company and I'm very content to spend time alone in my room. I make sure

I meditate in my room each day. It is something I did before I lived here and it really helps me to stay calm and happy."

"Seeing my children, meditation, my room, the staff here – all of this makes a happy life."

## A MODEL HOME

The experience of residents and staff at AnglicareSA Brompton shows that declining emotional, physical and mental health need not go hand in hand with younger people living long-term in residential aged care facilities. Alan and his fellow residents are proof that with care and respect, the disadvantaged and vulnerable can live happy, healthy lives with dignity.

Given the freedom to choose how to live, the individual can flourish within an aged care setting. •

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# PART IV SANCTUARY



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# ART HELPED TURN RAINBOW INTO A HOME

by Jeremy Halcrow

Jeremy Halcrow is the CEO of Anglicare NSW South, West & ACT, a major provider of Out of Home Care in NSW. Jeremy has a particular interest in research-based public policy advocacy, and is currently Deputy President of the Australian Council of Social Services. His research interests are highly diverse, and in the mid-2000s authored a series of papers looking at relational well-being and work/life stress. More recently he has co-authored reports on food insecurity, rental stress and homelessness.

Secluded behind a stand of trees and nestled in rolling farm land, Rainbow Residential House - located along NSW's Murrumbidgee River Valley - is almost the very definition of a 'sanctuary'. What strikes you at first is the sense of peace. The hum of traffic is missing, replaced by the occasional bleat from the neighbouring sheep.

Sydney and Canberra are a long way away. Mobile and internet access can be patchy. Some staff see this as a good thing to help the young residents escape from the pressures of school and the world.

Kim Bowen, coordinator of the Rainbow Residential Unit, says the relatively remote location was chosen to create a safe place away from a regional city or large town.

"When our young people arrive to residential care, often with their striped plastic bags and few possessions, their behaviours tell a story of loneliness, grief, hurt, and anger. Some have come to us mute and almost comatose. Others have come threatening and violent. Sometimes they break furniture and punch holes in walls," says Bowen. "These young people cannot tell us with words why they do

these things, though they do tell us if you know how to listen. They tell us through these behaviours that they have needs that have not been met in the past; they tell us that they are scared and need security. They need love and they need to be nurtured. They need a home. At Rainbow we work to provide them with this home."

After consultation with Brad Addison, Anglicare Riverina General Manager, Rainbow moved to its current location in 2015 on a three acre property half an hour from Wagga Wagga. "It was here that we started creating our Rainbow family," says Bowen. "Rainbow, as we know it now, was born through a therapeutic approach to our young people. From the colours and fabrics we chose to the smell of the house, each client's individual needs were considered and a plan was developed. Youth workers' skills were identified and new workers were also employed for specific roles."

For many of the teenage children who have come here, Rainbow is the first place they have found a sense of belonging and a home. Most children residing here have experienced multiple traumas and betrayals that result from child abuse and neglect. Their pain is so acute and their behaviours so confronting that many

well-meaning foster carers and family members have struggled to care for them. As a result, most children who come to Rainbow have experienced multiple placements and a pronounced lack of stability. Home for up to four young people at any one time, Rainbow is truly like a sanctuary offering a soft place to land.

**"Rainbow's workers not only help children heal from their past trauma, but serve to unlock the brilliant potential that lies inside each child and honouring their individuality"**

As you can imagine, forging a connection with a child who has experienced serious trauma in their past relationships is no easy task. Rainbow's experienced and committed workers not only help children heal from their past trauma, but serve to unlock the brilliant potential that lies inside each child and honouring their individuality.

One of the most striking things about Rainbow is the quality of the art works that adorn the walls. What is most surprising is the artworks have been done by the young residents themselves. "Having all these amazing artworks on the wall has helped change Rainbow into a real home environment," says Bowen. The origins of the art project was as a strategy to reduce property damage. This issue coupled with the difficulty some of the young women had in expressing themselves verbally gave rise to 'art arvos'.

Rainbow's trauma informed care model - whilst embedded in the latest neurobiological research in child development, attachment and trauma - remains holistic, respectful and compassionate.

"We didn't feel the young people had ownership of the home," says Bowen. "Since the art project has started our property damage has gone to zero."

We asked the young women themselves if the art project had helped Rainbow feel more like a home and a safe place to live. They replied:

*"When we are agitated it makes us feel relaxed."*

*"It has meaning, it really means stuff to us."*

*"Makes me forget about things."*

*"It brings us all together [to] do an activity all together."*

*"I like doing it cause it is fun and it makes us all happy."*

Through research based practice of therapeutic art, the Rainbow team has created a home for the young people that has allowed them to thrive as well as display their passions and brilliance. "When you reflect on the research," says Bowen, "this should have been expected." She points to work by Malchiodi, Perry and Gerber - together with a growing body of neuroscience - which indicates that trauma and art have connections to the lower parts of the brain that regulate functions such as stress, alertness and sleep.

The therapeutic benefits of art and other experiential interventions for healing child trauma should not be underestimated. When multiple traumas occur, the experience is not simply stored in one 'easily accessible' place in the brain, rather the memory of trauma is 'fragmented' and stored 'unconsciously'; language and reason cannot access it. For some children, traditional therapeutic treatments of counselling and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) are not an option, because

trauma limits verbal communication. Trauma adversely impacts the language areas of the brain, making 'talking about trauma' not just difficult, but impossible. Other methods of trauma resolution are imperative.

**"Art enables children to feel safe. It has no expectations of them and nothing they create can ever be 'wrong' "**

enables children to feel safe, because it is pleasurable and can be matched to their developmental age; it has no expectations of them and nothing they create can ever be 'wrong'.

"We surprised even ourselves with the profound impact we saw almost immediately by incorporating regular, structured, and fun art activities. This, in turn, allowed our young people to have a stable enough mental health platform to develop attachments to each other and to the care team," says Bowen.

Belinda Lansdell, Youth Worker, runs the project. Apart from working with Anglicare, Lansdell also runs a photography and videography business and is involved in theatre and a range of creative practices in the Riverina community. Lansdell has also worked as a diversional therapist in an aged care facility, which is where she discovered the benefits of art therapy.

"From the moment I entered the Rainbow house I knew I had entered a special environment," says Lansdell.

Art has the quality of providing a sanctuary because it is a safe therapeutic intervention for almost all children who have been abused and neglected. Art

"I knew coming into this house that the activities needed to be researched and appropriate for this to interest our young persons. One of the biggest factors in doing art therapy with young people is that it needs to be fun or they will easily lose interest. It has to be incredibly easy to start with and not appear hard in any way. Many of our young people suffer from a low self-esteem and this meant that I needed to make sure they were not overwhelmed with tasks."

The first art therapy activity Lansdell implemented was decorating canvas shoes. For this activity, the team purchased water based paints, white canvas shoes and clear spray bottles.

"One of our young people was triggered by too many direct rules, so in art therapy we try to be able to move boundaries in a healthy way," Lansdell says. "[So] I told the young people that they could spray each other with the spray bottles. The young people couldn't believe this, and by the end of the activity, everyone was rainbow coloured from head to toe, laughing hysterically. This was our first art therapy experience and it was a success. Now two years later here we are still doing our amazing art therapy activities and our young people have grown so much."

In the beginning, some of the young women were only able to concentrate for about 15 to 30 minutes. Now they are so engaged in the activities that Lansdell can facilitate art projects that extend for up to seven hours.

"Looking at how low their confidence levels were in the beginning and comparing it to now still amazes and astounds me," says Lansdell. "Rainbow House looks like a constant art exhibition and we proudly display all of our art."

When we have visitors, the young people take pride in doing a walking tour and showing their art to others."

Rainbow also now has a therapeutic art space where staff diffuse essential oils and play relaxation music. "The young people are proud of their special art place and often make comments about how much they like it. In the room there is a large photo wall that displays all the creative ventures we have undertaken," says Lansdell.

Lansdell has facilitated an incredible range of art therapy activities including photography, videography, ice art, oil painting, masks, framing, Aboriginal art and even a fairy garden.

"Now, art is a time for the young people to escape into a quiet space within themselves, where they are safe to explore and express their deepest innermost thoughts and feelings," she says.

"Needless to say, many of the young people that join us have chaotic feelings and are beyond afraid of many things. I have watched art therapy embrace our young people, like a safe cocoon. It becomes a moment where everything stops, and it creates a safe pause in time where they are simply safe to be who they are and feel how they feel."

Art therapy is merely one aspect that has helped transform Rainbow into a sanctuary for these young women. A holistic approach is taken ensuring that their health, education, spirituality, culture and emotional needs are all met. It is also clear that Kim Bowen's visionary leadership, which has included nurturing her staff, has also been a vital ingredient.

As Lansdell explained, "Each staff member brings a beautiful colour to make our rainbow home more vibrant. We all contribute. We all offer unconditional regard. We all offer respect."

Bowen agrees, pointing out the healing process goes both ways.

"A staff member told me one day the Rainbow does not only heal our young people, it also gives space and permission for staff to heal, as they share in the trauma our young people have experienced," says Bowen.

"The vision for Rainbow was to provide a sanctuary from the outside world, where all young people feel loved and accepted with a real sense of achievement and belonging. A place where workers are joyful and each staff member is recognised for the unique gifts they bring," Kim says. •

## PORTRAITS



Kell's portrait was provided by the Samaritans Foundation



Len's portrait was provided by the Samaritans Foundation

**W**hen I left jail I was on the street with nothing, but that's not good enough. I had no transport and no accommodation; I was on my own.

Samaritans helped me get temporary accommodation. Having that security makes a difference. I cherish the place I'm staying but I'd love to have a dog - man's best friend.

Having a dog gives me some responsibility to feed and walk it. It gives me some purpose and I think that's the best therapy, but I need to have a roof above my head.

**- Kell**

**I**t's like coming to my second home. It's the people here.

The carers who have been here for years, they know me. It's the compassion and empathy they show – it's unbelievable the patience they've got.

Coming here has a big impact on my life and also my wife. It gives her a chance to recharge her batteries and it's a good break for me as I get to go on outings I wouldn't usually go on.

**- Len**





**H**ome means comfort.  
Home means it's your  
space in this big world.  
Home gives you stability and  
you can build on relationships  
out of that.

When you have a place to call  
home you can focus on other  
aspects of your life, you can  
give back to the community  
and it gives you the freedom to  
participate.

To help us participate,  
Samaritans has made the  
neighbourhood more social and  
stepped into that support role for  
the tenants.

**- Lucy**



# BODY AND SOUL

by Janine Jones

Janine Jones is the Public Affairs Manager for Anglicare Sydney. Prior to this role, Janine worked in Marketing and Communications with a non-profit in the disability sector, as well working in government and business. For 20 years Janine worked in film and television and as a documentary film maker in Australia and overseas. She has a Masters in Media Production.

The expression 'keeping body and soul together' means having enough materially to sustain life and to survive. This 18th century English phrase comes from the Christian concept that human life continues as long as the soul inhabits the body. The expression resonated with me when speaking to Noor, a refugee from the middle-east who has recently arrived in South-Western Sydney. For Noor, keeping body and soul together meant leaving everything she knew behind; to travel alone in search of a new place she could call home.

Noor is an intelligent, creative young woman with a positive mindset. She already speaks excellent English. Noor says she sometimes missed the familiarity of where she grew up, but there is no life for her there anymore: "Life as I knew it, is finished for me there now."

Noor is one of 12,000 refugees from Syria and Iraq being resettled in Australia as part of Australia's commitment to increase our intake of refugees. When this additional intake was announced in 2015, Sydney Archbishop Glenn Davies called on Anglican churches, schools and welfare agencies in the Sydney diocese to provide a 'warm and generous welcome' and assist with refugee resettlement.

With 30 years' experience delivering migrant and refugee services and 168 years providing aid, Anglicare Sydney is well placed to respond.

Many refugees with family connections in Australia arrived on 202 Proposer visas. Their 'proposer' met them at the airport, provided accommodation on arrival - often in well-established cultural communities - and helped them find permanent accommodation. This meant that if we were to welcome and further assist these refugees, Anglicare Sydney needed to ask 'What else do new arrivals need to make Australia home?'

Home is a simple word with a complex meaning. Our home emanates from our history; family; identity; ethnicity; socio-economic status; need for security; sense of community and culture. For many refugees, some of these elements that created their home have been disrupted or destroyed. By supporting refugees across the physical, emotional, social and spiritual dimensions of their life, Anglicare Sydney aimed to help these new arrivals in their process of rebuilding a home.

Underpinning all our work is the belief that every person is made in God's image, and so has inherent value. As a result, we aimed to demonstrate God's love for all people by showing practical care and hospitality to those in need, regardless of race, cultural background, or religion.

## A PLACE TO BELONG

We may think we are living in a community with one another when we're really only living in proximity. Sharing our home and community requires us to extend ourselves by engaging with, getting to know and caring for one another. New arrivals face a plethora of challenges such as a new language, cultural and social expectations, reduced income, limited social connections and transience. Ultimately, they need to feel like they belong. When the Government announced an increased intake of refugees in 2015, we prepared for plane loads of refugees to land within a few months. However, it wasn't until May 2016 that significant numbers of refugees began to arrive and as a result of the 202 Proposer Visa, Anglicare Sydney was not part of the first welcoming phase. This required us to rethink our initial approach to reaching out and welcoming refugees.

Anglicare Sydney decided to use a three-pronged approach. Firstly, we needed to establish connections with local Syrian and Iraqi groups like the Australian Assyrian Association, so they could refer refugees onto our services.

Secondly, we identified certain gaps in government and other NGO refugee services and prioritised our own service delivery around existing and new programs. These services included assisting with food and other material essentials through Mobile Community Pantry; teaching English as a Second Language (ESL); preparing children from refugee families for the Australian school system via Early Learning through Play (ELTP); offering specialised counselling with expertise in torture and trauma; a sustainable housing programs for families in transition (SHIFT); generally connecting them to the wider community where they lived.

Thirdly, we sought to further develop partnerships with churches in areas where many refugees are settling to establish a local base for connecting with refugees.

## A PLACE OF COMFORT

Showing hospitality by offering food and basic necessities is a simple way to welcome strangers and make them feel at home. Anglicare's Mobile Community Pantry was already running in partnership with about 18 churches across the Sydney diocese. It was a natural progression for those within Anglicare to extend the fresh food pantry to churches with a high refugee population, such as Liverpool and Fairfield local government Areas.

Numbers have grown over the months. Now about 150 Syrian and Iraqi refugees attend mobile pantries at St Paul's Bankstown and St Luke's Liverpool. Each person pays \$10 to receive a bag of groceries valued around \$60. The van for these churches is packed with Halal food commonly used in middle-eastern cooking.

John Bartik, Rector at St Pauls, says "The Mobile Community Pantry offers practical, material assistance and is a powerful way to welcome new arrivals. It opens doors to relationships. Wherever we can, we want to love refugees, pray for them and support them spiritually so they feel part of our Christian community."

Recently, a Syrian woman came to Bankstown's Mobile Community Pantry, but not for her usual bag of groceries. She came because her husband was unwell, and she felt totally overwhelmed by her accumulating responsibilities. Visibly distressed, she sat crying with Houssun, one of Anglicare's Arabic-speaking community settlement workers. The woman had a sister and cousins in Sydney but they had busy lives and lived some distance away. She missed the larger

family support network back home in Syria, who were easily accessible and only walking distance from her house, so she came to talk with people at the Mobile Community Pantry instead. This story illustrates that while the pantry provides basic necessities, it also opens doors for deeper engagement.

As a community settlement worker, Syrian-born Houssun plays an important role in our Syrian and Iraqi Refugee Response Project. She is one of three Arabic speaking staff members who regularly attend the Mobile Community Pantry at different Church locations as a way to connect with refugees. Houssun's work varies from helping women get a hearing aid to distributing large numbers of ironing boards, blankets, and heaters in winter. One day she may be translating letters from the Doctor, bank or school. Another day she'll negotiate with Settlement Services International (SSI) to extend their housing support to a refugee because they weren't coping emotionally. Houssun also spends time visiting new arrivals in their homes to deepen personal connections and reduce social isolation. Whatever the day holds, she builds connections with refugees - especially those in complex circumstances.

## A PLACE OF FREEDOM

For many refugees, losing their home is like losing everything – their career, education, networks, even their future. In helping refugees build a new home, we also see the importance of rebuilding an individual's sense of identity and personal aspirations.

Noushig regularly attends the Mobile Community Pantry at Bankstown and, along with her husband Antoine and their two children, are Syrian Christians. The family escaped war and persecution in

## **"In helping refugees build a new home, we also see the importance of rebuilding an individual's sense of identity and personal aspirations"**

Aleppo and made their way to a refugee camp in Beirut, Lebanon. From there, the family received Humanitarian Visas to come to Australia. Settlement Services International

(SSI) provided housing for the family in Bankstown. Walking past St Paul's one day, they saw the Anglican church sign. It looked familiar, so they decided to attend services there.

"Our English wasn't good, but we tried to sing and read prayers on the overhead screen. Most important, we received a very warm welcome from the Ministers, John Bartik and Grant de Villiers. It felt like we were at home," says Noushig through an interpreter. "They asked us about our background. They listened to how we had suffered and offered us help with anything we needed. They supported us emotionally and psychologically."

Noushig still regularly attends the Mobile Community Pantry at Bankstown, even though the family no longer lives in the area. The cheaper supply of grocery items helps offset their high rental cost.

Noushig is particularly grateful for how Rev Bartik has supported her son, Mark. Mark grew up in a war zone, surrounded by car bombs, rocket strikes, death tolls, displacement, and lifeless bodies in the streets. He began learning piano at the age of five and later studied classical music at the Piano Institute in Aleppo. Music was his love and solace - until a direct hit

from a terrorist bomb on the family home destroyed his beloved piano. As a refugee in Lebanon, 14 year old Mark could not go to school or play a piano. He had to work instead and found life very hard.

When Rev Bartik heard that Mark hadn't played piano for two years, he suggested Mark use the Church piano to practice. He also arranged for the talented young pianist to play at a local Café and build his confidence in front of an audience. John and Anglicare Sydney's media department then arranged for Mark's story to be told on SBS TV News. This media coverage led to the Prime Minister inviting Mark to play piano at Parliament House in Canberra, to recognise World Refugee Day.

Mark's life has radically changed over the last six months since first arriving in Australia. He is now applying to study at Sydney's Conservatorium of Music, to pursue his dream of becoming a professional pianist. Their family story epitomises opportunities lost, demolished like the family home in Aleppo; and opportunities gained in his new home. The whole family are grateful for the chance to start afresh – and for Mark's new sonata.

## A PLACE OF SPIRITUAL SANCTUARY

Noor, who you encountered at the beginning of this article, met and fell in love with a fellow refugee from her country when in Thailand. Together they sailed to Christmas Island on an overcrowded fishing boat, in hope of a new life in Australia.

When I asked if she can make a new home in Australia, she said "I have to, I have lives depending on me. I need to look after my children, improve my English, and eventually start my own business.

I've always worked for myself. When I start making my own money, it will feel more like home." Achieving financial independence, personal fulfilment, and contributing to the community will be crucial for Noor's sense of belonging. However, finding a new spiritual home has had an enormous impact.

Noor and her husband were extremely disillusioned by their experience of their country's religious practice, its implementation and the impact this had on society. In coming to Australia, they were keen to explore what Christianity had to say about God. Through the Mobile Community Pantry, they built connections with the local Anglican church. This led the couple to make a seismic shift in their lives – so much more than a change of address.

In searching for answer to their spiritual questions, the young Muslim couple decided to become Christians. In their country of origin, this decision could have meant prison, torture and death threats. Even for some Muslims in Sydney, this decision can mean losing everything that once shaped their identity - family, friends and cultural community.

**"Helping refugees feel at home is about developing quality relationships with people so that we can 'hear' what they need"**

Helping refugees feel at home is about developing quality relationships with people so that we can 'hear' what they need.

Settlement can be a long and difficult process. Those working with migrants and refugees say we should 'meet them where they're at'. It's not about offering

Anglicare Sydney's Syrian and Iraqi Refugee Response Project trains parish volunteers and helps resource churches to welcome and care for the new arrivals in their community. The services, delivered in partnership with the parishes, are designed to meet people in their need, help them feel accepted and give them a sense of belonging.

Services like the Mobile Community Pantry fulfil immediate needs and provide regular, basic assistance with food and other essentials. Arabic speaking staff

welcome and connect with participants to build relationships, assist or refer people to other programs. Other services such as ESL, ELTP, counselling and our church partnerships by their very nature provide even deeper opportunities to build long term relationships and impact people's lives.

The love, support and friendship offered across all our services is unconditional and holistic - seeking to care for people *'body and soul'*. •

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Anglicare Sydney provides support to refugees and new arrivals





# PART V

# COMMUNITY







## PORTRAITS



**H**ome is about having connection to my country. I feel home when I am on country and I have my family around me. This feeling gives me strength and my identity.

I have two homes. On my father's country on Goulburn Island I learnt my traditional dance, my culture, to hunt and to understand country and what it means to me and my family. I learnt discipline through ceremony. I now live at Gunbalanya with my family and, even though I'm not culturally connected to this country, it is still my home which I respect.

I have many friends and extended family living here and it's where I go to school.

If I'm talking about home as a house, I need to have basic things like food and shelter. I need a mattress to sleep on to be comfortable and I'd want a TV to watch the footy and movies. But if I'm talking about country as my home, I'd want and need knowledge about my country, like where to get bush tucker, green plum, white apples, mangoes, nuts, where to fish and hunt, to get goanna, turtle, dugong and collect turtle eggs.



Brendon's portrait was provided by Anglicare NT

I need to know about sites of significance, sacred sites and stories about land, animals and people. This is what home means to me.

My family helps me to keep culture strong and connected to country. They help me to be a better person and to help keep culture alive for my generation and others after me.

**- Brendon**

# FINDING HOME IN CARING COMMUNITIES

by Damian Le Goullon

Damian has extensive experience providing education to disadvantaged communities. He works at A Place to Belong, a Brisbane based mental health network. He is the Coordinator of the Reading and Writing Program, which was the Winner of the 2015 Anglicare Australia National Award. As a Research Higher Degree student at the University of Queensland, he is investigating adult disability participation in community education.

George came to our reading and writing group to improve his literacy. George and his family have inherited dyslexia, a condition that has long been recognised as having genetic origins (T Scerri and G Schulte-Kurne, 2010). He was struggling with this hidden disability, feeling that it was harder to find work, maintain financial security and to be able to care for himself and his family. Once we got to know George, however, it became apparent that he needed more than words; he and his family needed a place to call home.

A Place to Belong is a service with a vision that encourages communities to 'walk with' people who have been isolated, estranged or alienated by social attitudes to mental illness and disability. We aim to activate community support and care rather than rendering people invisible through the segregated support of institutions. The idea of situated care is central to our approach. Care should be recognised not only as a behaviour but an attitude of "being with another" (Swanson as cited by J Dyson, 1996).

Situated care describes the supportive environment that can be created when we are connected with one another and open to each other's realities.

It is a person-centred approach to care, which recognises and is responsive to the unique situation of each person (M Schillmeier, 2017). By focusing on cultivating situated care, we help people who all too often experience exclusion from society find a place to belong; we invite them to make a home in communities that care. In this piece, we explore the notion of home as a site of situated care. We discuss the experiences of three people, George, Kathy and Anna, who are supported by A Place to Belong. The idea that home is defined by our interconnectedness and care for each other resonated strongly with George, Kathy and Anna, who have each overcome experiences of isolation and found the care they need by connecting to their families and communities.

It is often said that home is where the heart is. This discussion prompted the group to suggest that home is where the *hearts* are.

## HOME AND COMMUNITY AS SITES OF SITUATED CARE

When George became a grandfather, he gave up his housing commission flat for his daughter who had been unable to secure affordable housing for herself and her newborn. This act of care left him



functionally homeless, living in a disused farm property where he faced social isolation and declining health. George tells us:

*I had been working at markets till the Brisbane Floods. After the floods, I had free rent on a ramshackle property but no wage. The property had no windows and no running water and the pesticides in the tank also affected my health. When my daughter came to visit, she was eaten alive by mosquitos. I drove over an hour each week to learn to read. Then my car broke down.*

Having no option but to live in inadequate housing, where public transport was limited and there were few opportunities for social contact, George became isolated from his family and the communities where he had previously belonged. Without connection to family, employment or a community, he experienced a profound loss of social participation; not only was his housing inadequate, but he had lost his home - a place to belong.

George's story illustrates the difficult experiences that many people with disability have in finding a place where they can experience safety, security and belonging. For many of us our first experience of home is imbued with the personal care of our family community.

As adults, we need to belong to a community that cares: a community that respects our need for physical and emotional security; friends and allies from the community who can help us to connect to others and to ourselves. We need people to check on us and listen when we respond to that particularly Australian question: 'How are you going?' These personal and attentive relationships and environments of situated care help to make us feel at home.

**"Adults need a community that respects our need for physical and emotional security; friends and allies from the community who can help us to connect to others and to ourselves"**

A Place to Belong encourages and supports community relationships. When personal problems arise, rather than refer them to other services, we suggest that people activate their

personal networks to find the care they need. I encouraged George to reconnect to family and situate himself closer to their support. Once George found temporary accommodation in the community of his choice, he developed relationships and found opportunities that helped him to find a home. In his new home, George has cultivated an environment of situated care. He invited me to visit his new house, his horses, his Harley and his new partner, who has offered to be an ongoing support for George's literacy. He now also returns this care to his community as a volunteer with a local charity.

## HOME SAFE AND SOUND

Access to informal incidental care and concern fosters a sense of being at home in your local community. These are communities where you know others and others know you (P Barringham and N Barringham, 1997). It is important, then, especially for people with disabilities, that interpersonal contact is considered in urban design (PJ Clarke et al., 2011). By situating homes in built environments that have well-designed access to public transport, accessible walkways and public spaces, we can make it easier for people to

meet with friends, neighbours and relatives and establish new connections in and around their communities. Anna agrees: "We are building homes and cities for cars not people. Good public transport is vital, footpaths and parks are important, we need safe spaces for pedestrians and shade on our streets in Brisbane."

Kathy shares her story about how she struggled, as a young woman with a disability, when she left family care and moved into a unit on her own. She says she did not feel welcomed by the community:

*When I first moved into my unit it wasn't home. The units had lots of people with disabilities. People were always watching out for their car parks. They didn't get out to meet other people. You had to watch your things I felt at home when I locked the door.*

Without any connection to the other residents, Kathy felt insecure. She didn't even feel that the flat belonged to her due to restrictions on how she could decorate the unit. With time, Kathy found the company and care of the young people in the community allowed her to be herself and feel more at home. "It is sometimes a challenge to fit in if you don't have children. I started feeling better when I got to know more people my age. It's nice to chat," Kathy says.

Anna, a local resident of Brisbane's West End, described the contribution affordable housing has made to community diversity and belonging. Anna gained occupancy eighteen years ago of a public housing flat. It was at a time when the local community demanded public housing to offset the gentrifying effect of inner city development. "It is affordable housing and it allowed me to raise a child as a single mum," says Anna.

Anna's neighbourhood is important to her sense of belonging, saying "A respectful, nurturing environment is important to me, as it is good to be acknowledged within the community. I like it when you go for a walk for a coffee and you bump into people who know you."

Anna's long term tenure supported the continuity of her community relationships. This meant that Anna had access to well informed situated care when the voices she was hearing began to impact on her and her daughter's wellbeing and her daughter moved out, leaving her living on her own. At this difficult time, Anna took solace in her home and community who helped her to remain connected and get the support she needed, saying "As I live alone with a mental illness, I need good safety nets. Some of my safety nets are the community I live in, my family and friends."

## **"In seeking a home, we are looking to be situated amongst people who understand and care about us"**

In seeking a home, we are looking to be situated amongst people who understand and care about us. Home can extend beyond the door if

we receive welcome from a community that cares about our situation. A Place to Belong was named to invite people with disabilities to make themselves at home in a community that cares. At times our social systems risk congregating people with disabilities or excluding them from their communities of origin. People with disabilities are left financially and personally insecure. Communities which value diversity and welcome people with disabilities are home builders. Surely a community that cares is a home for us all.

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## PORTRAITS



Cowen found himself homeless after a series of tragedies, which took its toll on his family over a number of years. Cowen admits he spiralled out of control with his drinking as he tried to cope with the grief of losing loved ones in a tragic accident, which led to him experiencing health issues of his own.

Cowen said it took courage to climb out of the dark place he was in, acknowledging the support he received from ACCare staff, particularly his case manager Jen who went “far beyond” what he hoped for. He is proud of how far he has come.

ACCare helped Cowen with basic living skills and assisted him to get his finances and health back on track. After several months in ACCare’s transitional housing, he moved into private rental property where he has successfully maintained the tenancy.

Cowen has now restored relationships with his family and they are very supportive of each other, time and space allowing them to be a family again.

Although Cowen grew up in Queensland, he remains in the local area to be close to his mother and father.



Cowen's portrait was provided by ac:care

One of the difficulties Cowen experienced living in a small rural area was the discrimination he felt while experiencing homelessness. Cowen says he felt that many people blamed him for the situation he found himself in, and that he somehow deserved it.

To Cowen, home means stability, safety and the opportunity to enjoy the simple daily pleasures many of us take for granted, such as cooking and gardening.

Cowen continues to drop in regularly to ACCare's Community Centre, where he has found acceptance and a sense of belonging.

# FRIENDLY PLACES

by Ashley Perez

Ashley Perez is Executive Manager at Anglicare NT and is responsible for Housing and Homelessness and Social Policy. Ashley has worked in the community and education sectors in Western Australia, Victoria and the Northern Territory over the past two decades and has completed a Masters of Social Science (Policy and Human Services). Names and some details in this article have been changed to respect client confidentiality.

This country was, and still is, the home of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Yet the home invasion kicked off by colonial Australia, and the ongoing impact of that dispossession, have stripped away so many of the positive qualities of home discussed elsewhere in this report: nurture, security and a place to be yourself.

Nowhere is that more obvious than in the Northern Territory right now. Young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people make up 89% of those in the Territory's out-of-home care and 94% of children and young people in detention (OCCNT, 2016). Homelessness here is 16 times the national average (Wood, 2015). Far too many young Aboriginal people face doors that are simply closed to them or on them.

None of this occurs by accident. The detention, the institutional care and endemic homelessness are the consequence of dispossession, hardship, poverty, ill health and trauma. There is currently a Royal Commission looking into the failure of the corrections system to properly look after the young people in its care, the sharp end of which was the abuse at Don Dale Detention Centre, exposed by the ABC Four Corners

program last year. It is also looking at how the child protection system - which includes out of home care - contributes to the alienation of those young people and their passage into the criminal justice system.

Our community can no longer duck its responsibility to make sure there is space where young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can feel welcome, safe and comfortable, and access the support they need when they need it.

One of the places in the Territory, designed to offer an open door to all young people, is the headspace centre in Darwin operated by Anglicare NT. Like all headspace centres across Australia, it provides early intervention mental health support for 12-25 year olds and a range of services to improve their wellbeing in areas of mental health, physical health, work and study support, and alcohol and other drug services. It is funded by the federal government.

headspace has been running a national 'Yarn Safe' campaign for three years, designed to further assist young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The campaign is run with the tag line: "No shame in talking it out" (headspace, 2015). The Darwin headspace centre has supported over 1,200 young people

every year, of whom approximately 20% identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders (Hilferty et al, 2015).

I spoke to Daniel, a young Aboriginal man at headspace Darwin, about the sense of home and support he found there; about why it worked for him. Daniel has many reasons to be negative about home per se: he currently lives away from his family and has clearly come through a challenging childhood, but his overwhelming sense of positivity is hard to ignore and, clearly, headspace plays a role in that. Daniel has become a volunteer for headspace, which he says “feels like home; a space where there can be interaction with others who feel like family.”

As a volunteer, Daniel talks about what the youth space does, and “how headspace might be able to help, as well as how nice the people are.” He is perhaps a little too modest to say, but he sees himself as an ambassador and talks up the whole experience to fellow youth in Darwin.

Having volunteers like Daniel is a part of headspace’s focus on community engagement, which involves raising awareness of the centre, the services they provide and improving community awareness of mental health issues more generally. It also, purposefully, provides young people with training and development opportunities.

## NO WRONG DOORS

From his connection to his own community, Daniel sees too many young people who need support with their mental health but don’t know where to go. That is why, as a volunteer for headspace, one of his main points of focus is on making sure that his peers know that no matter what they’re going through, they can go to headspace for support.

## **"Young people shouldn't be referred from place to place, having to tell their story over and over again"**

experiences of “endless closed doors” when seeking assistance (Partners in Recovery South Western Sydney, 2017). Young people shouldn’t be referred from place to place, having to tell their story over and over again, as they try to find a service that will provide them with support. The ‘no wrong door approach’ aims to improve this process of referral by committing to support all young people who come to headspace; to engage with the services they need. If they do need to be referred to another agency that is better placed to support their needs, this is done in a way that actively involves the young person and ensures that their information - with permission - is sensitively but accurately transferred to the next provider. Giving young people the assurance that they can come to headspace - and will be helped - is a simple yet powerful way to help them manage difficult circumstances.

When I ask Daniel what he thinks the government could do to help young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in the Territory, he emphasises the importance of local and accessible services:

*I think we need more mental health support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, more money put into local things, so we can have more Territory based services that young people can easily access.*

A key feature of headspace is its ‘no wrong door approach’. This approach was developed in response to people’s repeat

## YOUTH FRIENDLY DESIGN

Young people not only need to have a place they know they can go, but they also need a place where they want to go. Unlike other health services that can have a clinical or institutional feel, headspace centres are described as "... welcoming, relaxed and engaging" (Hilferty et al, 29). Each hub is designed with input from young people.

The Darwin headspace centre has a youth advisory council – youthspace. youthspace has made a significant contribution to the architecture and design of the centre, the theming and decoration of the rooms, and the choice of furniture and equipment. They continue to play a part in promotion of the services and the centre's ongoing evaluation.

**"The youth friendly design and the flexibility of the services invites young people to just pop in for a yarn"**

saying "I think, the waiting area for young people because it has couches and a kitchen and looks like a home setting." The youth friendly design and the flexibility of the services invites young people to just pop in for a yarn, while small things - like being able to fix yourself a cuppa - give the centre a practical sense of home, and are really important in making the space comfortable and engaging for young people.

Daniel is a member of youthspace so, when he says it feels like home, we can see why. In fact, his eyes light up when I ask him about what makes him feel most at home,

## GOING FORWARDS

Daniel has varied experiences of family and living in a care setting. He says "headspace has changed me," and acknowledges he has grown in confidence since becoming involved. He knows firsthand about the powerful message he is able to deliver as a headspace volunteer. Recently, at an event where headspace was running an information stall, and in the absence of someone else to address the crowd, he "stepped up to give a speech in front of 200 people. I've never done that before, but I did and I was proud to do so".

To be a young person today is hard enough when all is travelling well, but when there are road blocks it can be challenging. Daniel, with some supports, has found a positive path: to help his peers understand there is a place to go that may provide them with the early intervention they need, and help them off the pathways that could lead to Don Dale or other institutions.

Daniel is a smart knowledgeable young person who, like many others, is waiting to see what comes out of the Royal Commission. He has a genuine interest in seeing the system of care improve for all young people and would like to see better case management supports and holistic care systems. He is happy to offer suggestions if the government was to ask.

How young people think about home is very different to generations past: it is much less about bricks and mortar and more about a sense of belonging somewhere and feeling like they fit in. It is about having a voice and a sense of purpose in their lives, remaining connected to "people, places and issues that matter to them, as well as their relationship to the times in which they live" (Cuervo, 2015). This may account for the success of Darwin headspace centre as a place that is

open to young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; a place they can go to and return to as they need. Like a home, it also mediates between inside and outside worlds, providing them with both physical and mental space.

Clearly our legal and social institutions have continually failed to offer those dimensions of home for young Aboriginal people their care. I find myself wondering if, after the Royal Commission, we might not see the Northern Territory and Federal Government invest, as Daniel suggests, in local services with an open door approach: providing more of the opportunities and care that headspace in Darwin has been able to do for some. •

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# SARAH'S STORY

by Amy Lanham

Amy Lanham is the Communications and Media Manager with Anglicare NSW South, NSW West & ACT. Amy has worked in not-for-profit fundraising, communications and marketing roles for over 10 years, and joined Anglicare in 2016. She is also currently completing studies in Public Sector Management. Names and some details in this article have been changed to respect client confidentiality.

**S**arah first connected with Anglicare through the Club 12/25 Youth Education Program (YEP) in the ACT. She was 15 years old and on the verge of leaving home.

She grew up in an affluent Canberra suburb, attended exclusive schools and displayed good academic potential. But the verbal and emotional abuse in her family created a lack of stability and ultimately a decision to leave home.

## A PLACE TO BELONG

A sense of belonging is fundamental aspect of the concept of home. To experience a sense of belonging is to feel valued and cared for by others, and to know that this care and concern will endure over time, even in the face of conflict (Corrales et al, 2016). In a home, belonging can help to provide stability in the emotional and social dimensions of our lives.

Sadly, for Sarah, home was a place of disconnection. Her increasingly erratic behaviour was not understood by her parents, and a similar lack of support from teachers meant that her educational outcomes began to be affected. Home became a place that simply reinforced her feelings of marginalisation.

To create enough stability to work through the difficult challenges she faced, Sarah needed to find a place where she could feel accepted, valued, and cared for; somewhere she felt a sense of belonging.

## FINDING A WAY

The complexity associated with a young person's decision to leave home can be attributed to many factors, however family conflict is often cited as their main reason for leaving (Rosenthal et al 2006). For Sarah, her decision was also influenced by bullying at school and sexual abuse at an early age that triggered her complex mental health issues. Finding herself labelled as a 'rebellious problem child', and feeling like she was unable to find the help or understanding she needed either at home or at school, Sarah left home.

During the transition into adulthood, teenagers often experience considerable change in their social environment and social roles which Trech (2012) asserts can negatively influence healthy behaviour trajectories. For teenagers like Sarah who are coping with additional chronic trauma, those negative influences can be exacerbated (Keane, 2016; Martijn & Sharpe, 2006).

"Even though I had food, clothing and a roof over my head, I found it was too stressful to stay at home," says Sarah. "I



didn't feel safe, understood or supported. My mum, in particular, didn't know what to do about me and I didn't like seeing her so upset. I didn't want to see her disappointed in me. I thought it would be easier for my family, and for me, if I left."

## **"The grief which may persuade a young person to leave their home can continue, affecting their perception of safety"**

Some studies go even further showing that the grief which may persuade a young person to leave their home will continue. It can impact the lived experience of homelessness, and affect

other potential home environments and the young person's ongoing perception of safety, well-being and development (Robinson, 2006).

Sarah first moved in with friends, but she didn't always feel safe:

*My friends were mainly guys so I would usually sleep fully clothed. I thought that if some of the other guys in the house came home, and saw me sleeping on the couch, they might try to touch me. When I stay at friend's places, even now, I still sleep fully clothed – coats and everything – just out of habit.*

In order to protect herself, Sarah would get into a relationship. This is a common theme for girls and women experiencing homelessness (Watson, 2016).

Homelessness, particularly street-based homelessness, has been shown to be a self-governing sphere with its own regulations. In the face of this hostile environment, women will evaluate the exchange value of their bodies for the purpose of protection (ibid, 2016). What could be perceived in other spheres as a sexual risk

behaviour - using sexual acts or physical intimacy in exchange for commodities like safety and shelter - is actually a form of self-protection (Heerde & Hemphill 2016). This protection, however, is inherently precarious, as it can create or reproduce relationships of indebtedness and control. "This is what many girls who are homeless do," says Sarah. "Girls can't defend themselves in the same way that guys can, so you find a guy you think can protect you. Even if you don't love them, you feel safe and other guys will usually leave you alone."

This is a practice that in the short term may appear to produce benefits such as a place to reside, but in the longer term may not secure a safe home environment in which a person can flourish.

## **CREATING STABILITY AND BELONGING**

During this time, Sarah was still attending Anglicare's Youth Education Program (YEP). "I had nothing behind me," says Sarah. "When I left home, I left with nothing - no money for food, no licence, not even a birth certificate. But the youth workers at Anglicare did everything in their power to make sure I was safe, healthy and still attending class."

"It's so difficult to concentrate on things like studying when you don't even feel safe in the place where you live. You are too busy worrying about whether you'll have enough money or food, or if some guy is going to do something to you," says Sarah.

At Club 12/25, Sarah was supported by a youth worker who helped her get a copy of her birth certificate and drivers licence. The youth worker even supplied Sarah with food hampers and bus passes if she had no money. "I remember going to sleep hungry sometimes," says Sarah.

Because of the comprehensive youth services offered at Club 12/25, Sarah knew she had somewhere she could go. The team was able to refer her to the Junction youth health services (also in the same building) to check her physical health. Counsellors were also on site to help talk through her mental health problems. As much as they could, the team gave Sarah the help she needed to keep safe and healthy.

"No matter how much I disappointed them and upset them by still harming myself, the staff always saw me as someone who could do well in life and achieve amazing things," says Sarah.

For Sarah, the holistic support offered by Anglicare's Club 12/25 gave her the qualities of a home environment such as safety and a place where she felt acceptance. This is in line with studies showing that traditional approaches to homelessness primarily based on resource distribution are not enough (Watson & Cuervo, 2017).

It is important to recognise the role that non-residential services play as a place of belonging and stability for people experiencing homelessness. Empowerment, self-respect and autonomy are other outcomes of a safe and nurturing home environment, and welfare policies and service practices need to be shaped to help produce this.

Because of the stability that Sarah found at the Club 12/25 services, her life began to improve. Through the support of the staff, she started to accept and control her mental health issues. She was able to overcome her eating disorder, and because of the more individualised attention in her education through the YEP program, her grades improved. She is currently studying social work at TAFE.

When asked what she wants in the future, Sarah's answer is quick: "A home."

She looks forward to a life where she is working in a job she loves, where she has a family of her own, and where her children are being raised in an environment that is safe and loving.

"Home has to be more than about food, clothing and shelter," says Sarah. "Yes, you need those things, but for me home will always be the people I love, no matter where I am in the world. Anglicare has shown me that and I think I have that now." •

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# CONCLUSION: KNOW WHERE TO GO?

by Kasy Chambers

Kasy Chambers is the Executive Director of Anglicare Australia, with extensive national experience in the community sector and government. She has worked in policy, advocacy, government relations, community development, and service provision in the UK and across Australia.

While home for most of us involves a roof and a bed in an ongoing way, as a bare minimum, this State of the Family Report directs us to its deeper meanings.

In the public *Meaning of Home* survey that we ran alongside this report, many people unsurprisingly expressed anxieties about being trapped and literally having nowhere to go:

*I worry a lot about homelessness, as a female contractor in my 50s I have to find another job every three months which is increasingly difficult. If I can't find work or become sick I cannot pay rent or a mortgage and cannot afford to live. I have no partner or family.*

Another respondent said:

*I really don't know. If I don't find work soon, the home I bought (and hoped my daughter would grow to adulthood in) might become unaffordable. Home would still be where my daughter and cats are, but that could be the car for all I know.*

In this report there were many stories from people that described the experience of having nowhere to call

home: like George, who had to move into an abandoned property on the outskirts of Brisbane after he lost his work; Sarah, who became homeless at age 15 after leaving an unsafe family environment; the young people in out-of-home care who are shown the door as soon as they turn 18.

But, in looking to the future, people also wrote with hope about how they might live their lives:

*"A place my children will leave and be welcomed back again and again with a bigger family."*

*"A place to slow down and do more of the things I enjoy."*

*"A space however small where I can have things around me which represent my life and have brought meaning to my life. Hopefully a space where my wider family can feel 'at home' also."*

*"Our space filled with love, an off-grid house in town with a wild and bountiful garden"*

How people imagine their future homes gives us a rich and detailed picture about how they want to live and connect to others. They are telling us, in microcosm, about the values they hope society will embrace and where that will lead us.

The Anglicare services, explored in *The Meaning of Home*, address some of those hopes. They show us home as a place of safety; a place to dwell; a place for caring; a place for healing; a place to be yourself. These dimensions of home are interconnected: the protection that home offers is built and strengthened with caring relationships; the healing and sanctuary that we find in home gives us the space to come into and develop confidence in ourselves, and our sense of belonging in our communities is supported by the sense of self that home can help us to define.

What this suggests is that home is not a pre-determined form but an ongoing process. Our homes and the way we live in them are negotiated with our families, our housemates and our communities throughout our lives. No one knows this better than the people who work with and get support from the Anglicare family. The centrality of this process in people's lives, and the transformative effects of their negotiation with it, make it a valuable point of focus for social policy analysis.

## NEGOTIATING SUPPORT

Much of the material in this report relates to young people at the cusp of their adult life. One of the key messages from the deep vein of stories and insights in this report is that it's a mix of opportunity and respect that truly offers a pathway to the independence, resilience and responsibility these young people hope to develop. It's worth recalling a previous government program, Youth Connections, that was not funded through forward estimates, and abandoned when government changed in 2013. There was a strong yet unsuccessful community campaign to extend the funding for that program because it worked so well in building connections to the education system for young people living with hardship, trauma and isolation.

## "Government and the community sector need to invest in the co-production of education and housing support"

Using that insight as a stepping stone for broader policy initiatives, we can see that government and the community sector need to invest in the

co-production of education and housing support. Youth Foyer services across Australia are one illustration of what's possible, as portraits embedded in this report testify. Trinity Hill in Tasmania is another. Stojcevskva, in *Shown the Door*, points to the need to look for ongoing relationships and support for young people who have grown up in out-of-home care. We are seeing of the principles of choice and control driving the reform of aged care and disability support. It is about time we started to think about how to accord the same respect to young people.

The same policy implications are present for employment services. There is nothing in *The Meaning of Home* that suggests that the punitive approach, which links income support to employment programs and which the government has embraced so fervently, does anything to improve the lives of young people already doing it tough and doing their best.

Anglicare Australia's *Jobs Availability Snapshot*, launched in October this year, showed there are not nearly enough entry level jobs for the people who need them: many of whom, of course, are young. Trapping young people in poverty and scapegoating them for their circumstances is not a pathway to employment or community inclusion. Working with them on pathways to education and secure work in their line of sight is likely to be much

more successful. Young people have said they want to develop their skills and career pathways through experience, immersion, and with peers (Foundation for Young Australians, 2017). Providing an open door to personal support and then concrete opportunities for real education and employment are key measures for success - that is the lesson from Trinity House in Hobart, the 12/25 Club in Canberra and headspace Darwin.

We should also look at co-production from the perspective of older people. The apartment style design of residential aged care at Benetas, and its associated model of care, is at its heart about partnership and respect. Of course, increasing frailty and chronic health conditions, amidst all the other imposts of residential care, imply a significant clinical involvement and duty of care. Nonetheless, putting the focus of care on relationships with carers and ensuring there is real choice and negotiation in having visitors, sharing a drink with a friend, having a cat as a companion (as per the portrait of Sheila Marks) through to the planning of meals and daily routines, echoes the principles discussed above.

**"Dignity relies on society more broadly accepting that people with a history of homelessness and alcohol - and other substance problems - are still fellow humans who we should love and accept"**

That is even more evident when we look at AnglicareSA Brompton, where the service only works if we accord the residents the dignity of risk. At a service level the policy implications are not new. The lesson for us here,

however, is that a part of that dignity relies on society more broadly accepting that people with a history of homelessness and alcohol - and other substance problems - are still fellow humans who we should love and accept. In his portrait, Kell discussed how when he left jail he was on the street with nothing, no place to stay and no means to get around. While Kell has found temporary accommodation through the Samaritans, he told us how most of all he wanted to have the security of a dog, something that would provide him with love and companionship; the sense of purpose and responsibility that he needed after coming out of jail. This is a person telling us clearly what they want and need in their rehabilitation. To take the same kind of public health and human rights approach that Brompton and similar services exemplify, we require a big change in public rhetoric around issues such as crime, homelessness and addiction. Our human service policies are very much shaped by how our leaders talk about the people society supports.

## SURVIVAL SKILLS

Government and industry advocates currently take a somewhat functionalist view of school education: presuming it should teach young people the skills they might need in order to appear as attractive employees in adult life. This narrow approach fails to address the more complex challenges children face in growing up, as identified in this report. As well as subject areas such as English and Science, Australia's national schools' curriculum already includes general capabilities such as critical and creative thinking, personal and social capability, and ethical understanding. Our schools need to be able to make room for those capabilities if they are to help all children have the chance to grow into resilient members of their communities.

Just as we now recognise that health care and family support needs to focus on the whole person, so too must education. As the Rainbow House, Trinity Hill and WA kids all show, there is truly serious place for the arts in how we understand and express our self. They also remind us of the intrinsic value of core early learning provided by healthy communication, protective behaviours and anti-bullying programs.

*The Meaning of Home* also points out we need to understand that learning how to learn can be a challenge in itself. The HIPPY program, which Pettit describes, clearly demonstrates the value in investing in young parents to explicitly promote the importance of learning, with obvious flow on benefits to the parent, to children and for family life. But Brendon Minkulk's story, from Gunbalanya, Northern Territory, drives home the message that learning is always a cultural activity, and respecting and supporting people to learn within and from their culture - to learn what their culture needs to teach them - is a key part of the true security embedded in the idea of home for so many of those represented in this report.

## SETTLING DOWN

Culture is not a one-way thing. One in three of the young people St John's Youth Services sees in Adelaide are recent arrivals. Many of them have a history of hardship and trauma. With support and opportunity, most go on to take on what our culture offers and create a home for themselves, despite the odds. There are also a number of portraits of women now settled on the North Coast of NSW. They all talk about the freedoms that come from access to education, independence and the opportunity to create a new life for themselves.

Australia's historical investment in settlement programs and refugee support has played an important role in building our social cohesion. However, that coherence is under threat along with the open-handedness of those government programs. The conditionality of support and acceptance requires us to look deeply at the nature of our own commitment to inclusion. Belonging, by its very nature, is undermined when it is open to extension and withdrawal at the convenience of others.

As Janine Jones points out, in *Body and Soul*, the combination of public programs and church based community support in Western Sydney is providing some new arrivals with the opportunity to connect to and change within their new society. The Anglicare North Coast portraits highlight the value of pragmatic support: Hoji at St John's shows us how hard that edge can be, and how vital the support.

While many of the policy implications of *The Meaning of Home* are about new initiatives, in this case we are concerned that the current political and media climate is putting some of the most valuable public investment in our community - and the associated good will - at risk.

## COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Urban design and development now features in the analysis of topics as wide ranging as infrastructure investment, economic productivity and locational inequity as well as playing a key role in delivering the support and opportunities proposed by this report.

The importance of secure and affordable housing, access to transport and public services such as health and education and the chance to build and then sustain healthy relationships are all positive



features of the programs we profile here. It might be stating the obvious, but it still needs to be said: the young people making a start at Trinity Hill, the local residents who are a part of the community at A Place to Belong in Brisbane, older people with a history of alcohol or other drug use, and young people, shown the door after growing up in Out-of-Home care, need security of tenure and appropriate housing. Almost everybody does, hence the need for a national strategy to increase the supply of affordable, appropriate, well designed and located housing that meets the specific needs of the most disadvantaged members of our society – and indeed all Australians – is obvious to everyone. The only thing that stands in its way, it would seem, is a lack of political will.

The new policy imperatives that emerge in *The Meaning of Home* tie these basic needs into the possibility of deeper social and interpersonal connections, which is why the broader issues of urban design and development are so significant. It is important here to note that in 2016 the Australian Government adopted the United Nation's sustainable development goals and the subsequent New Urban Agenda, which provides a framework to address locational disadvantage and poor health outcomes of our cities through inclusive development, high quality public spaces and all-age friendly design.

The capacity for people to remain connected to their existing geographic communities should be one of our national goals. To have the community infrastructure that can wrap around and open doors for people in need - as headspace in Darwin, 12/25 Club in Canberra and the Anglican churches in Western Sydney describe - or to have the physical access to friends and family as the siting and architecture at Trinity Hill and Benetas in Melbourne both imply: all

rely on inclusive urban design. *Home is where the hearts are* reminds us that the resistance to blanket gentrification has proved vital to sustaining the supportive community that offer a path to recovery for so many of us.

Anglicare Australia expects to see governments at all levels accept their important responsibility to lift the quality of urban design and development, with explicit outcomes for people otherwise disenfranchised and marginalised from the more affluent Australia. One of the Australian government's key national infrastructure tools is its City Deals investment. Tying that investment tightly to the New Urban Agenda, we would give every level of government a greater capacity - and incentive - to deliver the inclusive urban fabric from which a home-like town or city is made.

**"Public spaces and facilities, ranging from swimming pools and parks to arts venues and events offer the support or welcome that we ask of our home town"**

The form of the services or facilities themselves can also affect that inclusion. The open-door approach of headspace, which welcomes young people rather than assesses them for their level of need or debility, and

public libraries which are open to all, rather than a few who qualify as especially disadvantaged, are both inclusive by design. While it may appear to be financially efficient to tightly target the delivery of services to people who qualify on the basis of assessed need, that approach works against any meaningful diversity within communities. High quality

public spaces and facilities, ranging from swimming pools and parks to arts venues and events offer the support or welcome that we ask of our home town.

## HEALING

The essays in this collection show that re-establishing a sense of belonging and security after traumatic home experiences is a complex process. Both Garwood and Halcrow's essays describe how the anger, fear, uncertainty and powerlessness, felt by those who experienced abusive home environments, take time and space to express and work through. Out of this healing can come hope – an imagining of a different future – something highlighted in Belinda Jones' article about the residents' experiences at Trinity Hill.

**"To acknowledge inequality takes an acknowledgment of privilege and power. It takes an admission that the power structures that protect this privilege must be changed"**

These stories give us cause to reflect on what space we make for healing in our communities and society more generally. To acknowledge inequality takes an acknowledgment of privilege and power. It takes an admission that the power structures that protect

this privilege, that have inflicted these wounds and continue to do so today must be changed. Yet there is still a great unwillingness to recognise the nature of inequality and privilege in Australia today. The quickness with which we deny discrimination and oppression; the blame placed on people for circumstances borne from these structures; the single-

mindedness of our pursuit in punishing people who struggle in a fundamentally unfair system – all of this exposes how uncomfortable we are with confronting the weaknesses in our narrative about being an equal and inclusive society.

In the *Uluru Statement from the Heart*, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people called for a "fair and truthful relationship" with the people of Australia; for substantive change in social and legislative powers that would bring about a "fuller expression of Australia's nationhood." Makarrata, a Yolngu concept drawn on in this statement, describes a process of "coming together after a struggle"; facing wrongdoings and making peace. The recent rejection of this statement shows a country that is unwilling to face its wrongdoings, to reflect and change the narratives and structures that harm, disempower and exclude First Nations people. We have refused to make the space for healing and the hope of a better future together.

To return to the statement that opens this report, good human services represent the home we think everyone should have and it is clear we still have a long way to go in making Australia a home that welcomes and supports everyone; a home that gives love and support and hope to all. The importance of home as a place of healing and transformation, as explored in this report, points towards the need for much more work and engagement in making space for this at a national level.

## A PLACE WHERE THEY CAN GO

We believe it is important to bring the notion of home into our social policy making and human services design - not just in terms of housing but also, as this report has shown, into a wide range

of areas such as aged care, addiction, community development, mental health services and counselling. The meaning of home is a rich and varied concept that can make room for diverse experiences in life. It is also very powerful. It tells us what people want in their lives, from their communities and for their families and friends. It bolsters our collective position to assert that everyone has a right to a home. This position is captured in one young person's response to our question about what home means to them, and to whom we give the last word in this report:

*I think that everyone should have a home because everyone deserves to have a place where they can go when they are happy or sad. Everyone should have a safe place to go. Everyone deserves a place to feel trusted and have trust in everyone to be loved. A place where they can go to make and remember memories. That is the meaning of home to me. •*

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People wishing to find out more about the report or to purchase copies should contact Anglicare Australia at 02 6230 1775 or [anglicare@anglicare.asn.au](mailto:anglicare@anglicare.asn.au).





