



StreetSmart Collective Community Grants

APRIL 2020



Homeless and Vulnerable in a Pandemic

“There is great uncertainty across our community but we need to act fast to help front-line homeless services prepare and respond to the needs of vulnerable people.”

Adam Robinson, CEO StreetSmart Australia

The team at StreetSmart are deeply concerned about the impact of the COVID-19 crisis for people experiencing homelessness. Small homeless services are being overwhelmed by the challenging and changing environment. Some, reliant on volunteers, are closing or scaling back dramatically in a time of increased need.

During Nov-Dec 2019 StreetSmart partnered with 110 restaurants and small businesses to hold our annual DineSmart event. Through this event we have raised close to \$185,000 and will distribute these funds immediately to respond to **COVID-19**.

Currently there are approx 7000 people who are sleeping rough across Australia. There are close to 120,000 people sleeping in their cars, couch

surfing, living in tents and caravans, in poorly maintained boarding houses, in refuges and emergency accommodation.

We know that the COVID-19 health crisis is going to impact vulnerable people very hard, along with the services and staff that assist them.

Listed below are our Lead Projects for the April 2020 Grants round.

These organisations are struggling with increased demand, new challenges on a daily basis and they need immediate flexible funding support. That's why we are **fast tracking** these community grants to provide emergency brokerage funds.

We invite philanthropists with a similar focus to match our grants and assist in this response.

“With the announcement of the lockdown this afternoon, things are going to become very difficult from Tuesday. I truly believe this grant will be lifesaving...”

Peter Valpiani, The Haymarket Foundation

LEAD GRANTS FOR MATCHING

Organisation	Grant	Matched Funding Needed
VICTORIA		
Fareshare	\$7,500.00	\$7,500.00
First Steps	\$7,500.00	\$7,500.00
Justice Connect	\$6,500.00	\$6,500.00
Launch Housing	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
Sacred Heart Mission	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00
St Mary's House of Welcome	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00
Whitelion	\$6,500.00	\$6,500.00
Youth Projects	\$7,500.00	\$7,500.00
NEW SOUTH WALES		
The Haymarket Foundation	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00
Total	\$62,500.00	\$62,500.00

All matched grants are made under the StreetSmart Collective model to both support Lead Grants and StreetSmart's work in the community and sustainability. StreetSmart will retain 10% to be directed to help resource StreetSmart's community engagement and fundraising. Or add an additional donation to StreetSmart Australia on top of your matched grant.

Victoria – Projects for Funding

FareShare

FareShare operates Australia's largest charity kitchens. We rescue quality, surplus food and cook free, nutritious meals for people in crisis. Our experienced chefs work with groups of volunteers to cook 60,000 meals every week from our kitchens in Melbourne and Brisbane. The average FareShare ready-to-eat meal contains two thirds of the recommended daily intake of protein and vegetables for an Australian adult. At a time when the health of vulnerable Australians is at risk and food availability is low due to panic buying, our meals are more important than ever before.

While 1,000 people volunteered with FareShare every week before COVID-19, our usual model is unsafe in the current crisis. For the safety of our volunteers and to reduce the risk of a COVID-19 related shut down we are suspending kitchen volunteering. We propose replacing our volunteers with a smaller workforce of paid, experienced cooks and kitchen hands.

With the funding from StreetSmart we would engage hospitality workers who are out of work as a result of the crisis. With an experienced workforce, we would have less people in the kitchen at one time and a reduced risk of spreading COVID-19 and shutting down our operations, while keeping productivity at a maximum.

Funding of \$7,500 from StreetSmart would enable us to employ two part-time chefs for eight weeks. A further, matched grant of \$7,500 would enable us to employ a total of four part-time chefs for eight weeks, resulting in the cooking of 500,000 nutritious meals.

First Step

As a number of community organisations are forced to close their doors or significantly alter their services, medical services like First Step must simply not close. We are well positioned to take on additional responsibilities for our own clients and clients of other services who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. It is clear that flexible brokerage funds, particularly for food, hygiene products and emergency accommodation will be in great demand at First Step. Of our 2,500 clients we can project from current modelling that several hundred will contract the virus. Not only that, but many of those clients and indeed other physically or mentally unwell clients who would normally receive inpatient hospital care will be denied that support due to overcrowding of hospitals. Being able to provide support enhanced with brokerage funds during periods of illness will most likely save lives.

A fighting fund of flexible brokerage will go a long way to quickly meeting immediately needs, increasing health and safety and also to helping our staff gain the trust of highly anxious and confused clients and encouraging them to stay in regular contact with the clinic. We can reduce the risk of rough sleeping (a terrible outcome at this time) but also reduce the risk of infection and ill-health to people who simply can't find shelter.

Any support with this work will be greatly appreciated. This is a truly unprecedented emergency in the making, and unprecedented support is required to meet the challenge as a united community.

Justice Connect

Small amounts of money often make the difference between evictions into homelessness or entrenchment in the justice system, and empowering Victorians to maintain or access safe housing.

Brokerage is also central to Homeless Law's wrap-around response to the coronavirus (COVID-19), with more people experiencing housing insecurity and financial instability, reduced volunteer-based service capacity, and the escalation of essential needs such as food, clothing and phones to connect with ongoing social work supports.

Flexible brokerage is rarely available for rough sleepers, meaning that Homeless Law is not always able to support the most marginalised in our community to access justice. In response to the health crisis caused by COVID-19, small and flexible amounts of brokerage will be vital for Homeless Law's social workers in enabling rough sleepers to successfully navigate the justice system, including by covering costs of their essential and increasing needs.

Through this brokerage and our specialised services, Homeless Law can address legal and non-legal issues early, facilitate homeless Victorians to attend court and get fairer outcomes.

The social, economic and public health impacts on the two million Victorians who rent their homes has become an urgent issue as the COVID-19 health crisis continues to evolve. There is a compelling public health case for keeping the number of people forced to move house during this health crisis to the absolute minimum. In this context, small and flexible amount of brokerage, which are rarely available for people in public and community housing, will be essential for Homeless Law in negotiating for the most vulnerable tenants to avoid eviction.

Launch Housing

Without access to normal activities like Food and Nutrition Focus Groups and weekly BBQs we need to work with residents to connect with each other, and their communities, to prevent the negative mental health impacts of social isolation. We know that GPs, nurses, mental health practitioners and other health professionals are moving fast into online-only contact as this is the safest for people in the broader community. However, for people living in crisis accommodation, who often don't have the most basic mobile phones let alone access to programs like Zoom, Skype or Teams, it can mean being totally cut off from essential services.

With \$5,000 we could buy a good quality mobile phone for every single resident onsite, giving them access to all the necessary programs to communicate with health and mental health services, as well as friends and family.

Quality phones that clients can play games and connect to social media on will make a big difference for people experiencing isolation. Clients would be able to take their phones with them when they leave LSB, and could then stay in touch with their Launch Housing workers who can provide support in the community. If the \$5,000 were matched, we would be able to buy phones of much better quality, which would be particularly meaningful for our client group, as people with low IT literacy tend to find better quality technology far easier to manage.

Sacred Heart Mission

Sacred Heart Mission's Women's House is a safe, welcoming, open access service that provides practical support and housing assistance for women, experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Vulnerable women come to our Women's House knowing that they will receive caring one on one support. They trust the Mission and our dedicated staff.

In 2019, there were 7,021 presentations to Sacred Heart Mission's Women's House, often with accompanying children. Caring staff ensure women receive the right support at the right time, for as long as necessary. From helping women find safe housing, the Women's House provides a full wrap-around support service for each client. Many women have found themselves homeless due to family violence.

Compared to the same period last year, the number of women accessing the Women's House has increased 29%, with the expectation that thousands of women risk being pushed into homelessness as the COVID-19 health emergency unfolds.

Everything Sacred Heart Mission does supports women experiencing homelessness and chronic disadvantage. To keep women safe. They need access to support services to manage this health emergency. It is crucial, now more than ever, that Sacred Heart Mission delivers services to the most vulnerable women in our community.

Our Women's House services are preparing for a new wave of homelessness caused by this pandemic. We are focused on saving women's lives, who will be hit the hardest by these unprecedented times – for their children. These are very uncertain and challenging times and we are at risk of not being able to help the people who depend on us the most.

Please stand with Sacred Heart Mission and keep our Women's House running for each woman who comes to our door needing support.

St Mary's House of Welcome

St Mary's House of Welcome is a not-for-profit open access centre in the heart of Melbourne providing basic essential services to people who are homeless and experiencing poverty, severe and persistent mental health issues, and those who are extremely isolated and socially marginalised.

Many of those who come to St Mary's House of Welcome for help experience multiple issues such as sleeping rough, drug addiction, poverty, childhood trauma, mental illness, institutionalization and street drinking, all of which result in chronic social and health problems.

In response to the COVID 19 virus threat, St Mary's House of Welcome has been forced to make the difficult decision to suspend our dining room service, which provides 50,000 meals a year to some of our most vulnerable community members. This is to

minimise risk to both our service users and, of course our staff and volunteers. Instead, we are providing a substantial take away, brown paper bag lunch and emergency food hamper packs to those in real need from 10.30am each day. These will be prepared by staff until the situation is under control and the threat of public cross-infection eases.

We do not receive any funding for our meals service and are currently financing both the lunch pack and hampers through our limited cash reserves. A grant from StreetSmart would greatly enhance our capacity to continue to provide these meals and packs for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Whitelion

The Chatterbox program in Melbourne provides after-hours assertive outreach support to young people experiencing homelessness or at-risk of homelessness. Staffed by a team of professional youth workers and community volunteers, The Chatterbox provides a range of material aid such as food, clothing, blankets, safe-sex products, needle-syringe exchange and more. The Chatterbox is a known safe space where young people can hang out and connect, while also acting as an intake point into other Whitelion programs such as case management and a referral point to external services. The Chatterbox supports some of Melbourne's most vulnerable young people - often coming into the program during times of family breakdown, crisis, homelessness and/or being released from incarceration.

In the context of COVID-19, the Chatterbox team is committed to continuing support of young people and deepening our rapport with our existing cohort, whilst also working towards positive health and well-being outcomes for young people, workers, volunteers and the wider community.

Your support will help

1. Support us to staff multiple Social Media platforms, to ensure we remain connected to young people.
2. Support us to provide 'Virtual Material Aid', such as internet data and phone credit for young people who don't have access to the internet due to lack of funds.
3. Support us to increase the number of nights we provide evening support.
4. Support us to build upon our material aid support, such as food packages, toiletry packs, safe-sex products and sanitary products; including hand sanitiser, tampons and toilet paper.
5. Support us to continue our Safe Needle/Syringe Program.

Youth Projects

With a high number of services closing across Melbourne, Youth Projects is being placed under considerable pressure to continue to deliver services to young people and adults experiencing homelessness. We have over 300 high risk clients already identified as either immunosuppressed and or having long term chronic chest conditions, with nowhere to self-isolate and poor understanding of their grave health risk. And a further 500 young people at highest risk of being left behind in this crisis.

Youth Projects runs three major health services for those who are homeless and disadvantaged, in poor health and excluded. These health services support the people turned away by others. As the COVID-19 pandemic unfolds immediate action is needed but we face delays in acting for people who need us most.

Funding from StreetSmart will be used for a number of responses including shelter for those most at risk. Our health team will identify those patients who are immunosuppressed due to radiation, chemotherapy, HepC, HIV/AIDS and cardiopulmonary complications. We will identify motel accommodation of basic

but safe standard. We will know where they are and be able to provide outreach health checks, food, clothing and sanitary items. Up +/-30 ppl but we are in uncharted territory.

We also need to maintain stocks of supplies: Masks, gloves, sanitiser, testing and other medical and COVID-19 health related needs through rapid acquisition and distribution. Other necessities such as food, myki costs, phone data, laundry etc.

We are also entering some challenging times particularly for young people in Glenroy, so If matched funding is found we will be directing any new funds towards innovative tele-health services and high-risk outreach servicing for vulnerable people unable to attend our sites. We are re-directing staff and resources away from group activities and towards care for our most at-risk young people. We're contacting young people right now that are either couch surfing, living in unsafe conditions, or who have a dual diagnosis, comorbidities and other health concerns, so we can keep them safe.

New South Wales – Projects for Funding

The Haymarket Foundation

COVID-19 is going to have a disproportionately greater impact on people experiencing homelessness than the general community. These impacts can be understood in two primary domains; the health outcomes of this pandemic on this community, as well as the capacity of individuals and services to provide basic supports in a time of increased demand and resource scarcity.

Our key challenge at this time is to support people who are experiencing homelessness (in all forms) to remain as healthy as possible for as long as possible. A pragmatic but heartbreaking assumption that we have is that if the 'curve isn't flattened' and the health system cannot cope with demand, our clients will be the first to miss out.

To help with keeping people experiencing homelessness as healthy as possible, for as long as possible, organisations such as Haymarket will focus heavily on maintaining business continuity. Simply, we need ongoing access to the appropriate resources (staff, capital, and supply chain) to deliver critical services for as long as the pandemic response requires.

Our key challenge is that right now, we are experiencing a significant increase in demand while all three key resource streams are being placed under significant stress. Since Monday last week, we've had almost double the amount of people calling and requesting accommodation. The Government has made assurances that they will pay for additional staff etc. but there is not additional brokerage funds to pay for food or other basic essentials.

StreetSmart funds will be used for food, basic hygiene and infection control products, medicine, and accommodation. In particular we will ensure that a person has enough food to last a 14-day isolation period, secure accommodation, prevent an eviction, access prescription medication and other health essentials required to prevent infection (e.g. hand sanitisers and masks).

Our Team

NATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Zoey Masunungure – (Treasurer), Australian Red Cross Blood Service

Adam Milgrom – (Chair) Director, Dot Point

Adam Robinson – Founder and CEO, StreetSmart Australia

Michalel Sapountzis - (Secretary) Canterbury Surrey Hills Community Finance Limited

Anna Lyons – Justice Connect

Barbara Taylor – Heidi Museum of Modern Art

LEGAL ADVISORS

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AUDITORS

Jeffrey Thomas & Partners

If you're interested, let's talk. We want to make things happen and are keen to hear from you.

Please contact our Founder and CEO:

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StreetSmart Australia has Public Benevolent Institution and DGR 1 Classification.