

# Offering Houses of Hope



## A response to homelessness

Houses of Hope is an exciting community-based response to the critical shortage of housing for people seeking asylum living in our community. In partnership with churches and volunteers, Baptcare's Houses of Hope offer safe, suitable and secure housing to very vulnerable individuals and families who otherwise face homelessness.

These houses provide a stable foundation of affordable accommodation and support so that people seeking asylum – often with no government or financial support – are able to access basic services as well as pathways to education, employment and independence. Houses of Hope give churches and people who want to help a way to make a meaningful difference to people's lives.

Houses of Hope is an extension of Baptcare's Sanctuary program, which provides transitional accommodation and support to people seeking asylum while they wait for the outcome of their protection visa applications.

## How does Houses of Hope work?

- Churches and members of the community offer properties at no rent or at a reduced rate. This includes houses, unit and flats, ideally located close to public transport.
- Each tenant is carefully chosen and matched to accommodation to ensure their suitability. This includes men, women, couples and families of all ages. Tenants are expected to contribute a discounted rent if they have an income.
- Volunteers from local churches and the wider community are linked to households to provide practical and social support.
- Baptcare Sanctuary manages the tenancy arrangements, including furnishing the house and minor maintenance repairs.
- Houses of Hope residents access Baptcare Sanctuary services including casework, social and spiritual support and education and employment services.



## Homelessness – a critical issue

Many of the estimated 12,000 people seeking asylum living in our communities in Victoria are not legally able to work, or access Medicare or government financial support such as Centrelink payments. Those who are able to access Centrelink support are on very low incomes that place them in financial hardship.

People on lower incomes right across our community are facing a growing shortage of affordable housing.

People seeking asylum who have suffered trauma or have very limited resources face additional challenges. Barriers such as lack of rental history, language differences and racism mean that they are extremely vulnerable to homelessness.

**“I think it is a fantastic program, it is tremendously energising for a church community.”**

**- Peter, House of Hope committee member and volunteer**

Baptcare works for safety, opportunity and a fair go for people seeking asylum. Our commitment is to see all people experiencing fullness of life, regardless of culture, belief, and circumstance. Our vision for communities where every person is cherished sees us working to uphold the dignity and rights of people seeking asylum, and the creation of environments where all people can thrive.

## Houses of Hope Principles

### Empowerment.

Through education and employment.

### Independence.

By sharing skills and knowledge, and building confidence.

### Partnerships.

Between different expressions of the church and others in the community.

### Belonging.

To a caring, respectful community that values each person and their contribution.

## Support Sanctuary and Houses of Hope

### • Donate.

Money to pay for utilities and maintenance, household items, food vouchers, or if suitable consider offering your property at reduced rent.

### • Employ.

Sanctuary residents who are allowed to work are keen to find opportunities.

### • Educate.

Invite us to speak to your community group, show a film, talk to friends.

### • Volunteer.

Your time, skills and energy can make a difference.

To get involved contact us:

[sanctuary@baptcare.org.au](mailto:sanctuary@baptcare.org.au)