

Media Release

13 February 2024

Social Justice Day shines a light on unique housing support

Access to safe and secure housing is a fundamental human right.

Tuesday 20 February is [World Day of Social Justice](#) – aimed to help us recognise there are still many barriers that prevent millions of people from living a fair life, and that we need to create opportunities for all individuals to participate fully in society.

Paul, aged 70, was homeless and living out of his car before he was referred to the [Housing and Care Connections \(HCC\) program](#), run by for-purpose aged and disability services organisation VMCH, in late 2022.

HCC supports vulnerable older people who do not have family or friends to help them research, apply for, and set up support services, like home care and housing. Its particular focus is helping older people on low incomes, or who are at risk of homelessness, to find secure and affordable housing.

Paul ran a successful boat manufacturing business in Indonesia before COVID hit in 2020. Paul lost his business and moved back to Australia but was later injured in a workplace accident. With no income, Paul could not afford to live in a private rental and became homeless.

Thankfully, Paul was referred to the HCC program and dedicated Case Manager Amy Yuen, who found him transitional accommodation in Rowville, where he'll live until a more permanent home can be found.

Paul describes Amy as his “angel” and says he’s enjoying the safety and comfort of living in the home and tending to a garden.

Amy – who helps up to 15 people each year find a home – says HCC fills a gap in the system for those who need others to advocate for them.

“People may have language barriers, mental health problems or bad experiences with the social welfare system in the past, which make it harder for them to seek help,” she says.

This World Day of Social Justice, Amy hopes sharing Paul’s story will help raise awareness of the need for older, vulnerable people like Paul who need extra support.

Increasing rental assistance, building more affordable housing for people with additional needs, and simplifying the public/social housing application process would go a long way in supporting older, vulnerable people, Amy says.

“The system can also be rigid and not take into consideration people’s unique, yet important, needs. Just because someone lives alone does not mean they will enjoy living in a small, cramped apartment, for example. I get a lot of satisfaction in going above and beyond to help people take back control of their lives and improve their quality of living.”

If you would like more info on the HCC program (cities of Knox and Whitehorse only), call 1300 698 624.

Media enquiries

Cassie Zlonzak

Communications Manager

M: 0402 422 852

E: cassie.zlonzak@vmch.com.au

About VMCH

Here at VMCH, our services are as diverse as the people we support.

Our values underpin the work we do. As a Catholic, for-purpose organisation, love, joy, hospitality and courage aren't just words to us, they guide us in everything we do.

While we've been around for over a century, we're always moving forward. Always staying true to who we are by supporting people and families to live their best lives; providing a place to call home and spaces to learn and grow.

Our professional and compassionate teams are with you on your life journey; helping you with a wide range of support from early learning and therapy, specialist education, disability services, affordable homes, residential aged care, retirement living and at-home aged care.

