

A close-up photograph of a woman with dark hair tied back, smiling broadly while reading a book. She is wearing a light purple button-down shirt over a dark top. The background is softly blurred, showing a couch with patterned cushions.

2019 Annual Report

active
inclusive community housing

Chair and CEO Report

The Chair and CEO are pleased to provide our 2018–19 report. This has been a momentous year for Active on our journey to provide more housing and related services to Victorians with a disability.

This is Active's final annual report as a stand-alone company. As many of you will know, we merged with Haven; Home, Safe on the 1st July 2019 and we now operate as a specialist disability division within HHS.

Active was developed as an initiative of the Victorian disability sector in 1998, with a mission to provide high quality housing and related services to people with disabilities who require support to live in the community. Active has remained committed to this core mission over the past 21 years.

The emergence of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) sees Active strategically placed as the only Australian community housing company specifically focussed on disability.

Haven; Home, Safe is a large community housing association with a strong track record of growth in delivering housing and supports to vulnerable Victorians.

Throughout 2018–19, the Active board reviewed the broader housing and disability environment. We reaffirmed our core mission to provide housing and services to Victorians with disabilities. After careful consideration in February, we resolved to seek a merger with Haven.

In October 2018, we moved from our long-term offices in Yarraville to our professional and modern style offices in Mary Street, Preston.

Mr. Graham Forsyth resigned from the Board at our 2018 AGM, we thank him for his momentous 21 years of service with Active.

In February 2019 we completed our 4 SDA units in St Albans.

In partnership with Haven, in May 2019 we launched our Assistive Housing Hub.

In July 2019 our staff, our responsibility for 310 tenants and our balance sheet of \$8.471589 million transferred to HHS.



CEO, Chris Glennen



Chair, Warwick Cavanagh

Together Active and Haven; Home, Safe intend to:

- Achieve more housing and services for people with disabilities
- Dedicate funding to start-up new services (which was previously a challenge for Active)
- Engage with more service partners
- Obtain benefits available to large housing associations in the current policy and funding environment
- Place the new Haven company in the foreground for opportunities which will flow from the NDIS
- Create more opportunity for growth through borrowings and funding opportunities
- Work with Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) developers who may see large organisations as development partners of choice
- Improve capacity to promote issues and services
- Cement our shared commitment to the Assistive Housing Hub, providing services, research and development outcomes.

During all the changes that occurred in 2018–19, our Board, staffing team, partners, trades, contractors and other stakeholders continued to provide housing and services from Warrnambool to Mildura and Wonthaggi and many places in between. We thank all of you for your dedication and commitment to our core mission: housing people with disabilities.

Together we can do more

Following much deliberation and due diligence, Active and Haven; Home, Safe (HHS) merged in July 2019. Our aim is to develop a not-for-profit company capable of delivering more homes and services to people living with a disability across Victoria.

Haven; Home, Safe is a fully integrated affordable rental housing and homelessness support services provider employing more than 170 staff across offices in Bendigo, Preston, Geelong, Mildura, and Robinvale, with outreach services in Frankston, Swan Hill, Echuca and Kyabram. As a registered Housing Association, HHS owns or manages over 1,600 affordable rental properties across 29 Local Government Areas (LGAs) with total assets over \$330 million and an annual operating budget of \$35 million.

Active is Victoria's only dedicated disability specialist housing provider of high-quality housing for people with complex needs, including Specialist Disability Accommodation. Active's suite of services include home modifications, project management, assistive technology consultation, and property and tenancy management, available to people with disabilities, families and local community groups.

In the current environment, a large housing association with a strong disability housing division is the organisational form most able to deliver increased housing, services and advocacy for people with disabilities who require support to live in the community. Small specialist organisations, like Active, have the best focus, disability housing IP and experience in working with disability partner organisations, but are not favoured by government, nor able to borrow funds easily to resource housing growth, marketing and advocacy activities.

The Active board is confident that in merging with Haven, we have a partner with shared values and commitment to people with disabilities. Both organisations will continue to operate under their own brand names, with Active becoming part of Haven; Home, Safe, led by Chief Executive Officer Ken Marchingo AM.

Mr. Marchingo has over three decades of experience in leading organisational change and systems reform and said both HHS and Active had a strong history of commitment to care, support and community partnerships. "Together we can do more," he said. "We will have a stronger advocacy voice, and we will have access to broader resources and skills to meet our clients' needs."

Active CEO Chris Glennen has joined the Haven Executive Management Team and said the merger was the best opportunity for the organisation to create more accessible housing and achieve better outcomes for people with disability in the wider community. "The SDA housing market is a new and exciting market which is expected to create thousands of new dwellings over the next few years and ultimately deliver better outcomes for people with very high and complex disability support needs," he stated.

In a joint announcement on the 1 July 2019, HHS Acting Chair Jan Boynton and Active Chair Warwick Cavanagh said that merging the two organisations would deliver greater depth and breadth of innovative, quality services and an increased capacity to invest in areas of growing need, such as social and disability housing.

"We are two values-based, not-for-profit organisations that have seen the benefits of scale, and worked together closely to create a better outcome for the people we support, our staff, our stakeholders and the community in general... For the people we support, our staff, our stakeholders and our communities, it is very much business as usual," Ms Boynton said. Mr Cavanagh followed by saying:

“We’re here to make a difference in people’s lives, and this decision is about delivering the best possible outcomes for the people we support now and into the future. This decision is about extending Active’s mission, not diminishing it.”

— Warwick Cavanagh, Active Chair



Haven; Home Safe CEO Ken Marchingo and Active CEO Chris Glennen.

Active Operations

2018–2019

There is much to report in 2019. We begin by acknowledging the Active staff, who everyday carry forward our mission to provide quality housing and services to Victorians with disabilities who require support to live in the community.

The Active team is dedicated to working in partnership with community agencies to ensure tenants have the support they need to sustain their housing and participate in community life.

The **Tenant Reference Group** in partnership with Gabby Browne and the Active Housing Team have come to the fore again arranging outings, BBQs, meetings, reviewing feedback and providing input to the draft quality survey.

The **Housing Team** were front and centre with the work we commenced with Summer Housing in November 2018. We were selected to provide property and tenancy management services for the Summer Housing Fairfield apartments. This was a challenging time working with Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) participants, Service Coordinators, SILs and Occupational Therapists (OTs) to move ten people into their new homes over the holiday period. This has been a great result to see people move into to their new well-located homes and to have connected with Active as we helped them through this adjustment period.

This has been a very challenging year for the Housing Team, as increasingly we have to become skilled in managing tenancies and housing opportunities within the NDIS environment. The NDIS opens up new SDA opportunities, however, in many cases tenants not familiar with the NDIS have lost their support services, making the task of supporting sustainable long term housing that much more complex. We were pleased to have achieved 87% satisfaction for housing and services in our 2019 quality survey.

We welcomed Molly Taranto who joined the team in June.

The **Maintenance Team** under the Leadership of Peter Feltham, continued providing home modifications to people with disabilities in metro and regional Victoria, as well as completing upgrades and responsive maintenance to Active properties across Victoria. This was a service appreciated by our tenants with our 2019 quality survey indicating 91% satisfaction that things were “fixed well” and 98% ‘respect from Active trades’.

Our team manages 120 compliant trades and contractors and provided 24-hour maintenance and asset management services to dwellings ranging from single units, Specialist Disability Accommodation properties and small rooming houses. Robert Byrne joined our team in late 2018, replacing Ronan Daley, who had been a stalwart of the maintenance team for many years.

Within **NDIS Services** John Carter, our NDIS Services Manager, was a team of one. His role included managing the development of our SDA Villa Units in St Albans, project management for SDA units for Anchor (a NFP agency in Lilydale), providing SDA consultancy services and developing relationships for display partners in the Assistive Housing Hub. John left the team to join the NDIA in February 2019. We wish John well in his new job, where he is supporting SDA developers to provide the best housing they can for people with complex disabilities.

The **Administration and Finance Team** consisted of Jane Stevenson and Michelle Newman, who managed our myriad of finance, administration and reporting tasks with accuracy and efficiency. Their roles have become more complex as we develop new services and operate within the NDIS environment.

We farwelled Michelle and welcomed Allison Doyle to the team in June.

A great big thank you to everyone who made it all happen in 2018–19.



Housing Officer, Carmela Cassar, gives Active tenant, Wendy, her prize at the 2018 Tenant Halloween Party.

Active Board

Throughout 2018–19 the Directors’ skills and commitment to making the right calls for the company came to the fore as they charted a course for the transition of Active into Haven; Home, Safe.

Active is well governed by a skilled and experienced Board of Directors encompassing expertise in accounting, disability community service delivery, finance, project management and property development.

Under the leadership of our Chair, Warwick Cavanagh, the Board oversaw the development of the Assistive Housing Hub, further developed the *Better Homes, Better Lives* home modifications service and completed our SDA units in St Albans, whilst the company continued its core mission housing people with disabilities.

However, more importantly, the Board reflected on how best to provide and grow services for people with disabilities. During this process, the Board resolved to seek a merger with Haven; Home, Safe, subject to a stringent due diligence process.

This was a momentous decision, but it was the right one. Active has a sound property and tenancy business base. However, doing more of the same was not our choice. The Board could see the roll out of the NDIS provided the opportunity to develop new services and grow SDA and other housing that could be provided to Victorians with disabilities. These opportunities are most available to larger non-profit housing companies with stronger development capacity, balance sheets and self-funding capacity. We have been working with Haven on a basis of an MOU signed in September 2016, which led to the two boards having three common directors.

Whilst the board from time to time have been approached by other potential merger partners, we were very pleased to merge with Haven and effectively become the Haven; Home, Safe disability division from 1st July 2019.

At Warwick Cavanagh’s invitation, both the Active and Haven boards recently met for dinner to recognise this milestone and celebrate the future of the two values-based, not-for-profit organisations and our continued mission to benefit the community. Both boards had a fantastic evening at Matteo’s restaurant in North Fitzroy and we were delighted to celebrate the official joining of our two organisations.

We acknowledge and thank all Board members, for their professionalism and work throughout the year 2018–19 and also for their generosity as they give their time freely.

Chair: Mr. Warwick Cavanagh

Treasurer: Mr. John Wheller
– Chair Finance, Risk and Audit Committee

Directors:

Ms. Estelle Fyffe
Mr. Ian McLean
Mr. Leo Fincher-Johnson – Chair Development Committee
Mr. Graham Forsyth – resigned November 2018
Mr. Tony Bridge
Mr. Ken Belfrage
Ms. Melanie Rogers

Company Secretary: Mr Chris Glennen

The Board held 9 Board meetings in 2018–19. The board was supported by two standing committees; Finance, Risk and Audit Committee and the Development Committee.

Saward Dawson is the company auditor.



Haven; Home, Safe and Active Board Members dine to celebrate the joining of the two boards.

Assistive Housing Hub

Bringing innovation to independent living, the Assistive Housing Hub is an exciting new development, in conjunction with Haven; Home, Safe. It is designed to provide assistive technologies for people with disabilities.

The celebration of the Assistive Housing Hub earlier this year marked the official launch of the joint initiative between Active and Haven: Home, Safe. Held on the 15th May, the opening of the Hub is a significant step forward in bringing innovation to independent living. The Hub is home to some of Australia's state-of-the-art assistive technologies for people with a disability, showcasing the latest in communication systems and home automation, architectural hardware and furniture fittings, and telehealth monitoring.

Active has been providing a state-wide home modifications service for people with disabilities since 2017 and with the advent of the NDIS and development of assistive technologies, we recognised the need for a service in this space. The Assistive Housing Hub will provide an opportunity for families, people with disabilities and people who are aging, to learn and experience how adaptive technology can improve their quality of life.

We see it as a space for builders, Occupational Therapists, community housing providers, community organisations, carers and others to use the Hub as a resource to plan and deliver high quality housing and modifications for people who require extra support to live independently in the community.

The Hub will deliver products and consultancy, in home automation and communications, systems and telehealth monitoring and support options through leading partners. Located in our Preston offices, the Hub is an extension of our *Better Homes, Better Lives* services.

Find out more by visiting:
assistivehousinghub.com.au



**ASSISTIVE
HOUSING
HUB**

Bringing Innovation to
Independent Living

active *haven*
inclusive community housing HOME, SAFE

Thank you to our partners:

HAFELE

TECHSMAX
home automation

Tunstall

“It’s quiet. The people are nice around here. It’s a good little community. The tenants here feel like family and we all help each other out.”

John’s story

John has been an Active tenant and part of the Wonthaggi community for a year now.

Growing up in Reservoir, John started working when he was 14 washing cars in a car yard and continued working hard throughout his life. Describing himself as an ‘all-round fix it man’, John loves anything that’s hands on and spent 35 years working in underground power, completing work such as digging trenches and cabling underground.

Here, John is pictured amongst the community garden, which he tends to frequently and encourages other tenants to get involved. Although experiencing some medical issues himself, John is also a carer for his partner, Sonia. Both John and Sonia are great mentors for our tenants in Wonthaggi.

Active History

This is Active’s last annual report as a stand-alone company, and we are pleased to provide a brief history of our company, which was established in 1998 by community disability organisations from across Victoria.



Active grew out of VICRAID, a peak body of 15 community organisation members who all provided accommodation and support to people with disabilities. The organisations were located across Victoria with generally one per region. In the mid-1990s the members began to see a need for a trusted community housing partner. Active emerged as the only specialist disability community housing organisation in Victoria and remains the only specialist provider to this day.

Over the past 21 years we have remained committed to our core mission to house people with disabilities who require support to live in the community. We house families with disabled family members, however, generally our tenants are single adults on Disability Support Pension (DSP) incomes who require support either full time in Specialist Disability Accommodation or drop in support in our community housing and small rooming house accommodation.


Stacey's story

Stacey is also part of the Wonthaggi community and has become good friends with fellow Active tenant, John. Stacey has NDIS support and lives with her kitten, Oreo.

After a relationship breakdown, Stacey needed to move away from a difficult family situation quickly and no longer had a place to live. She couch-surfed amongst friends for a while but knew this was not a sustainable option. She then heard about Active, contacted them and was helped with her accommodation immediately.

Stacey was surprised how rapidly Active assisted and was touched by how helpful the staff were.

After settling into her home, Stacey is now starting to feel back on track and is undertaking a Hospitality Certificate III. She is also starting to apply for jobs as she nears completion of her studies.



“A big thank you to Active. They have done an amazing job and everyone at this property is so happy here. Especially finding people that fit together and the fact that we can have pets. It’s helped me a lot to have my cat, Oreo.”

Quality survey

Each year, Active commissions an independent confidential tenant survey. The quality feedback survey asks our tenants to tell us how satisfied they are with our services.

87%

Average satisfaction with Active's housing and other services across 13 survey questions (83% in 2018).

75%

Satisfaction with repairs and maintenance (81% in 2018).

85%

Questions and problems answered (89% in 2018).

“They (Active) treat me with respect and dignity. They have given me a home that is safe and secure to live in. All staff are helpful and kind.”

“They (Active) are friendly and they work on weekends.”

98%

Respect from trades (97% in 2018).

98%

Respect from Active (92% in 2018).

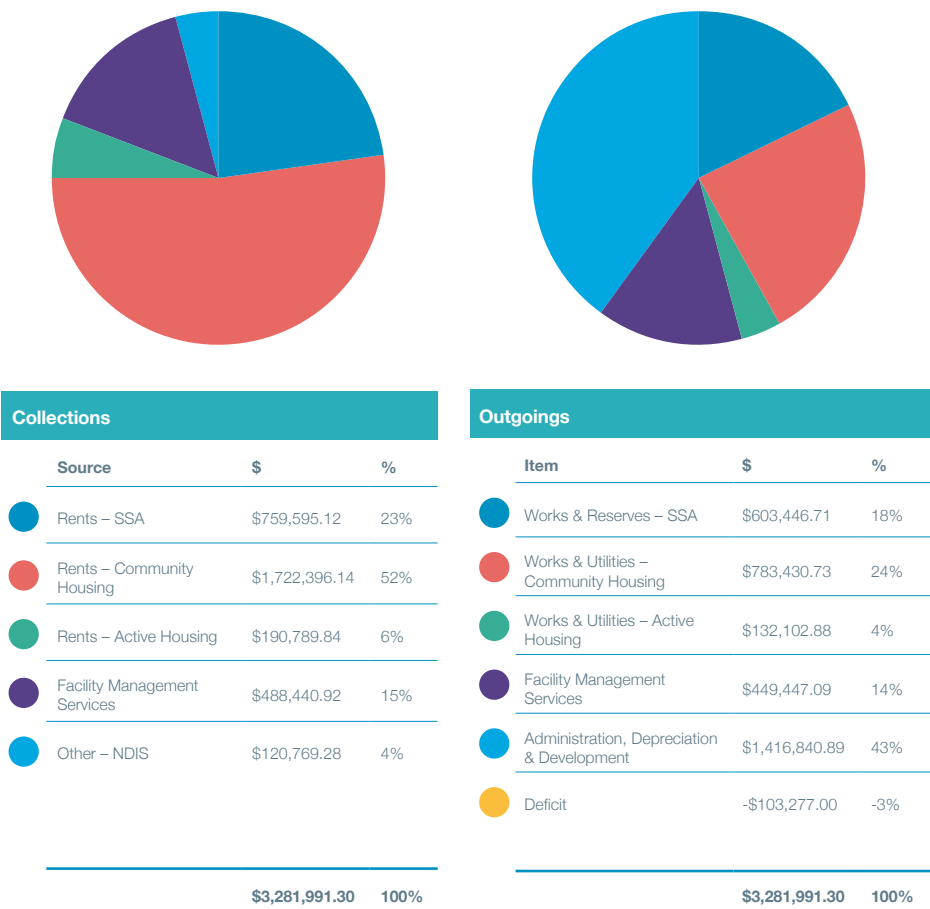
The survey includes 13 questions and lots of opportunity for comments. The 2019 tenant quality achieved survey responses from 24% of tenants and residents (24% in 2018).

Active tenants have a high level of satisfaction with the services they receive from Active in the Melbourne and Victorian regions, which is comparable to or better than national and state benchmarks.

“Tradesmen are amongst the best I have used. They assist me with the property always when there are issues.”



Financials



Balance Sheet		
Item	\$	%
Current Assets	\$1,561,298.00	16%
Property, Plant & Equipment	\$7,988,752.00	84%
Total Assets	\$9,550,050.00	
Current Liabilities	\$1,066,199.00	99%
Long-Term Provisions	\$12,626.00	1%
Total Liabilities	\$1,078,825.00	
Net Assets	\$8,471,225.00	100%
Reserves	\$7,878,990.00	93%
Retained Earnings	\$592,599.00	7%
Total Equity	\$8,471,589.00	100%

Active’s Partnerships

Active is the only registered housing company working exclusively with people with disabilities who require support to live in the community. Active is a partner critical organisation with partners providing support and in many cases properties to assist Active in our work. We acknowledge and thank all our partners for their work in 2018–19 and look forward an even more successful year in 2019-20.

Thanks to all our partners who include:

ACSO	CoHealth	Life Without Barriers	MS Society
Amicus Group	Eastern Region Mental Health	McCallum Disability Services	Sunraysia Residential Support Services
Annecto	Golden City Support Services	Mind Australia	Woodbine
Breakthrough	Independent Disability Services	MOIRA	Yooralla

Active’s accommodation includes community housing, small rooming houses and Specialist Disability Accommodation (i.e. staffed community accommodation for people with significant disabilities). As well as working with our community partners, Active benefits from positive working relationships with key stakeholders including: Director of Housing, Victorian Housing Registrar, NDIA and our panel of 120 trades and suppliers.

Top Moments of 2018–2019

This year has been an eventful one and there are a lot of highlights. We would like to share a few with you!

St Albans Specialist Disability Housing Accommodation completed

Active have completed and enrolled our four fully accessible villa units and overnight staff unit at St Albans. The units are built to platinum Livable Housing Australia standard. The units are 59 square meters including 1 bedroom, ensuite, laundry and kitchen, dining and living room.

We are pleased that our tenant group will soon be moving into their brand-new homes in the St Albans community.



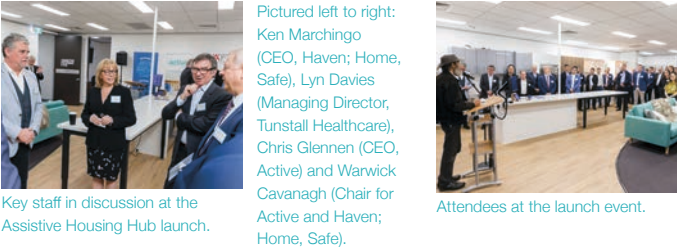
Assistive Housing Hub Launch Event

50 people attended the official launch of the Assistive Housing Hub which occurred on the 15th May 2019. Bringing innovation to independent living, the Hub is a joint initiative with Active and Haven; Home, Safe, designed to provide assistive technologies for people with disabilities. A special thank you to our partners Hafele, Techsmax and Tunstall for contributing to a successful launch.

Tenant morning tea in Wonthaggi

Housing Officer, Carmela Cassar makes an effort to go and visit many of our tenant communities at least once a month. She often shares morning tea to help bring the tenants together.

Our Wonthaggi tenants have created a veggie garden and supportive community in a former motel complex. Our Wonthaggi tenants were kind enough to share their stories and let us take some photos to be included in this report.



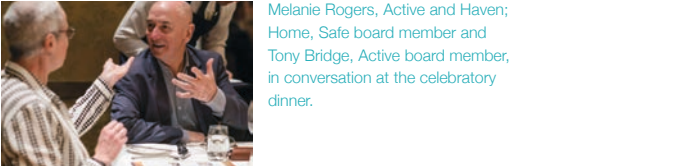
Haven; Home, Safe and Active Board Dinner

The two boards and senior staff came together in September 2019 to celebrate their union. The celebrations took place at Matteo’s restaurant in North Fitzroy and a great evening was had by all.

Tenant Parties Hosted by Active

The Tenant Reference Group at Active works hard to engage our tenants and provide them with opportunities such as educational grants as well as hosting and organising events to help tenants to build relationships within their communities.

Some of our regular events include: a Grand Final BBQ, Halloween party and our annual Christmas party. See some of the great times we had across 2018 -19, courtesy of the Tenant Reference Group. Thank you to the team and to all of our tenants for participating!





THANK
YOU!



It has been a big 21 years at Active. As we become part of Haven; Home, Safe, we would like to thank everyone who has contributed to Active's success.

We begin by acknowledging the VICRAID peak body members who had the foresight to develop a community housing group to separate housing and support for people with disabilities back in 1998.

We have remained the only specialist disability community housing company in Victoria. We acknowledge CDS Southern (MOIRA) WiN Support (now annecto) and Golden City Support Services, who provided much of the impetus to get us going.

Active has always been a partner critical organisation. Our partners provide the support services that make it possible for our tenants to live independently in the community. In many cases, partners also provide properties for us to manage. We are grateful that many of our original partners remain with us after 21 years.

Our greatest acknowledgement and thanks are, of course, to our tenants. People with disabilities who time and time again show us how to daily negotiate challenges and make their contributions to community and family around them. We are particularly pleased that many of the tenants in our first 22 properties transferred from LVRSA are still with us today.

Whilst all staff have made great contributions, Carmela Cassar deserves special recognition. Carmela has remained committed to our cause since the early days in Footscray, through to present day and our merger with Haven. Carmela is a favourite with so many of our tenants.

It is always important to understand and appreciate the work of our trades and contractors who provide a 24-hour maintenance service to our tenants 365 days per year. Our panel of contractors become very skilled at working with our client group and developing specialist knowledge of the modifications and essential services maintenance so important to our tenants.

We also acknowledge our board members, some of whom have offered their services in an unpaid capacity for up to 20 years. This includes Warwick Cavanagh (Chair), John Wheller, (Treasurer), Estelle Fyffe, Leo Fincher-Johnson, Melanie Rogers, Ken Belfrage and Chris Glennen (Company Secretary). We particularly acknowledge Graham Forsyth, a foundation Director, who resigned for his well-earned retirement in November 2018.

Thank you to everyone at Active who has contributed to our cause over the past 21 years. We now look forward to a bright new future housing even more people with disabilities, as part of Haven; Home, Safe.

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