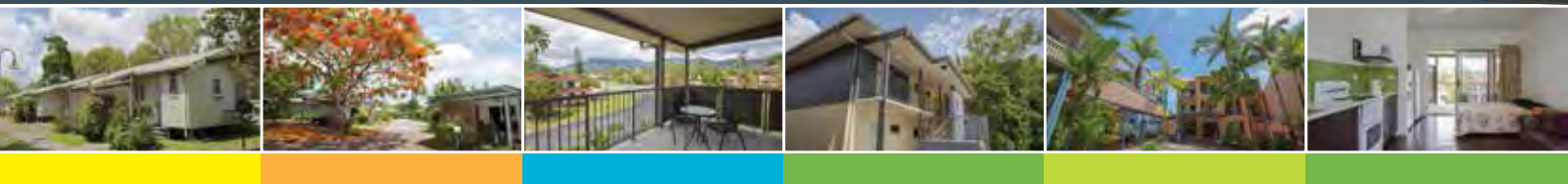




Access  
Community  
Housing

Better Homes, Better Futures



# Year in Review 2016 - 2017



# Acting Chair's Report

As the Acting Chair it gives me great pleasure to present to you the Year in Review for the 2016/2017 year. Access Community Housing has once again had an active and positive year, working with some of the most vulnerable people in Far North Queensland to achieve our goal of improving people's lives through housing solutions.

Firstly, I would like to thank my fellow directors who have given their time and expertise to guide and support the work of Access Community Housing. In that regard, I would like to personally acknowledge my current board colleagues Kerrie Richmond (acting Deputy Chair), Michael Delaney (Treasurer), Mark Stallman and Leah Cameron for their tremendous contribution to the organisation. Our substantive Chair, Michael Healy who has suspended his directorship as he contests the state election, and Sue Connolly Andrews who resigned from the board in June this year, have also both been committed board members and I thank them for their contribution.

Sadly, one of our present Directors, Tony McDonagh has decided to not resubmit for his board position for personal reasons. Tony has made a significant contribution to the board since October, 2014, notably his contribution to our Finance and Risk Management subcommittee. Tony your participation and insight will be missed.

On a more positive note, our new board member James Dixon has already added energy and experience to our board and we are pleased to have his valuable input.

During the year the board has participated in a Governance Review, facilitated by an external consultant. That review highlighted the diverse range of skills and experience that we have on both the board, and on our subcommittees. Our subcommittees (Finance and Risk Management, Building and Development & Legal and Risk) continue to provide valuable recommendations and advice to the board and to the leadership of the company.

I am also pleased to report that we have had a positive National Regulatory System (NRS) compliance audit. We are proud of our registration and we continually focus on improving our systems and policies to ensure this continues to be maintained.

Following our involvement in consultations and discussions about the future of social housing and the role of Community Housing Providers, we were pleased to see the much anticipated Queensland Housing Strategy 2017 - 2027 released. The board hopes that this blueprint will allow us to finally utilise reserve funds to undertake a building development in the near future, as we are cognisant of the chronic need for additional and appropriate social and affordable housing in our region. We have recently completed our Business Development Plan that sets as a building target of 57 properties or 10 percent increase in our housing stock over the next 5 years. The board is very keen to achieve that target so that we can improve the lives of more vulnerable people in Far North Queensland.

Finally, to the staff of Access Community Housing, I would like to thank you for your contribution throughout the year in assisting our tenants to achieve sustainable tenancies and in the work you do managing our 570 properties. The board looks forward to continue working with you to achieve our shared goals.

*Amanda*





## CEO's Report

I am thrilled to have the opportunity to share with you the year that has been at Access Community Housing. Firstly, I would like to thank the board of directors for their faith in me and support that they offered in a range of ways throughout the year. To the leadership team and staff, who are committed and passionate about the work we do and recognise the importance of housing to people's lives and wellbeing, a special thank you.

Tenants are at the centre of everything we do and that is why it is so pleasing to once again this year receive such positive feedback from our tenants. In the Year in Review there is a summary of the responses from 171 tenants. We have recently introduced a program, Tenancy Incentive Program, as a way of rewarding tenants for the efforts they go to make our job easier.

Since our last AGM, we marked a special milestone of 25 years of operation with a celebration and the launch of the book, Silver Linings. The tenants who contributed their stories were extremely excited and proud about the final product. I will never forget a comment from one of our tenants who was thrilled with the professional look of the book and the event, who said that "this is the best day of my life". It is comments like these and changing people's lives that encourage us as a workforce.

One of the highlights this year has been the launch of our first Reconciliation Action Plan, a document that aims to strengthen our respect and understanding of First Nations peoples, as well as provide the most appropriate housing and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tenants. This has been accompanied by the creation and appointment of a new position of Cultural Liaison Officer, a position that has already informed our practice. This year has seen significant changes in our staff as well as an organisational review that resulted in some structural changes and whilst this has brought challenges it has been an opportunity to review and revitalise our organisation.

We were fortunate this year to win a Dignity First grant from the Department of Housing and Public Works to produce and distribute 350 dignity packs, containing hygiene products and necessities, for homeless people throughout the Cairns area. This project has resulted in us working closely with charities, support services, churches and the hospital to assist in improving self-esteem and wellbeing of some of the most vulnerable people on our community.

Staff from Access Community have been involved in a range of events, committees and workshops throughout the year to promote the issue of housing being a right for all in our community. Some of these events have included our involvement in NAIDOC Week, Homelessness Week, the Cairns Housing and Homelessness Network and recently International Tenants' Day.

The State Government launched the Queensland Housing Strategy 2017-2027 in June this year and we have submitted an expression of interest to be an active participant in the Housing Construction Jobs Program. Moving forward this will be an exciting time in the Social Housing Sector, as we look forward to expanding our housing portfolio to meet the ever growing need for housing solutions in our community.

*Donna-Maree*

# Profile of the Organisation

Access Community Housing Company Ltd (ACHC) is a not-for-profit company, which provides social housing for individuals and families living across Far North Queensland. The organisation was established in 1991 and last year we celebrated our 25th year of operation. As the largest community housing company in Far North Queensland we have a stock portfolio of approximately 570 properties, from Mossman to Babinda. At any one time there are approximately 1100 people living in these properties.

## Our Vision:

To grow the quality and quantity of social housing stock through partnerships, innovation, service and leadership

## Core Values:

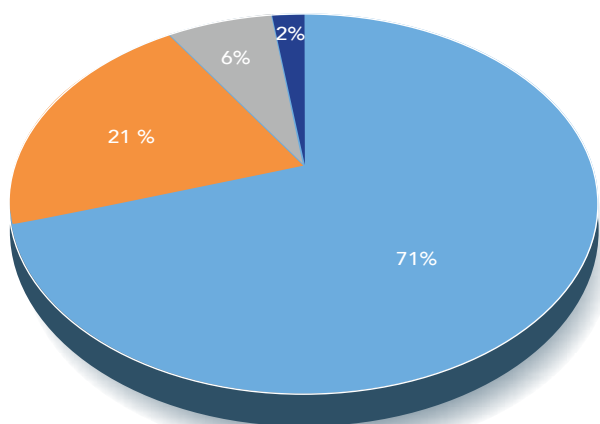
Respect, Integrity, People Focussed, Equity and Accountability.

## The National Regulatory System (NRS)

All housing providers are required to hold registration under the NRS. Access Community Housing is a Tier 2 provider.

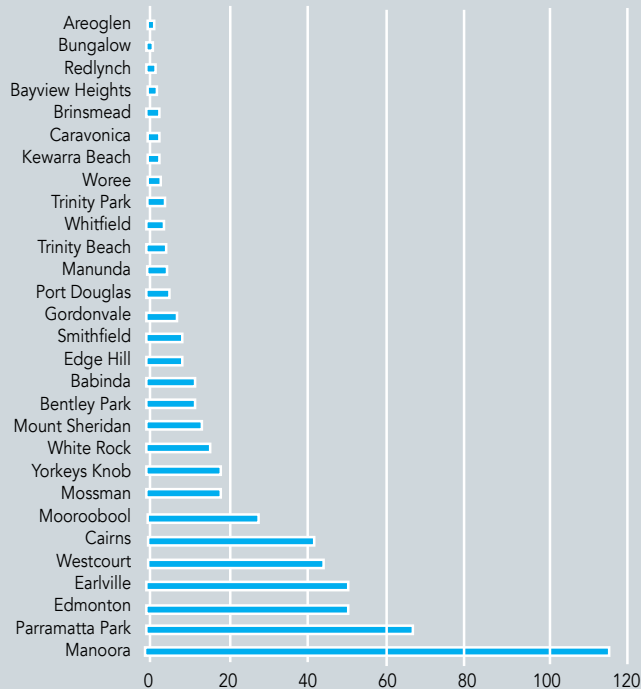


## Housing Stock Breakdown

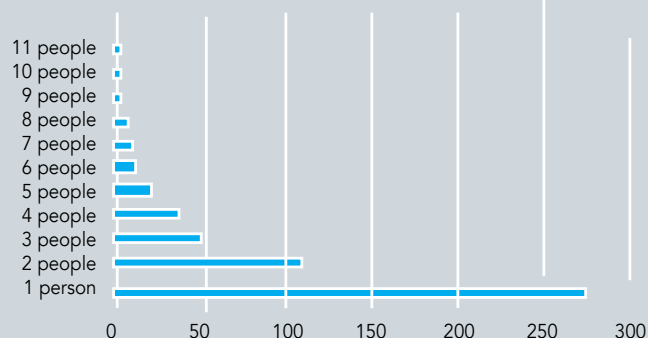


- State Government properties (DHPW)
- Private rental properties
- Cairns Regional Council
- Babinda/Boulders Court

## Properties by Suburb



## Household size





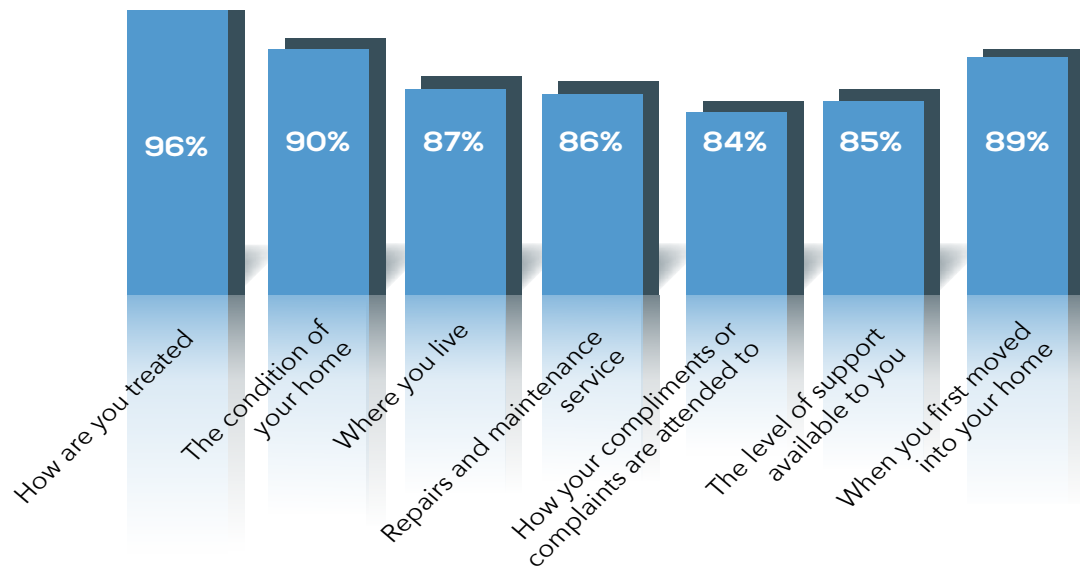


# Tenant Survey 2017 Results

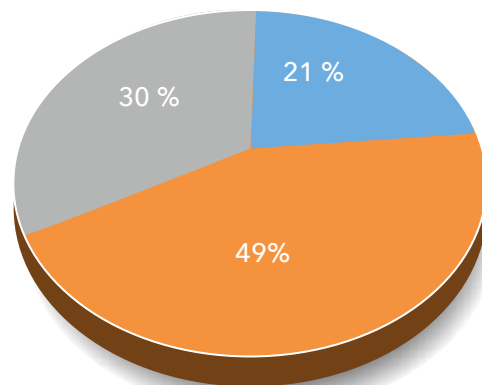
171 households (approximately 31%) took part in the annual tenant survey with surveys being distributed via the newsletter or through the post. Some face to face interviews were held where tenants requested support and some were completed via phone interviews.

The results of the survey will help us improve our services, future plans and strategies.

## Overall Satisfaction

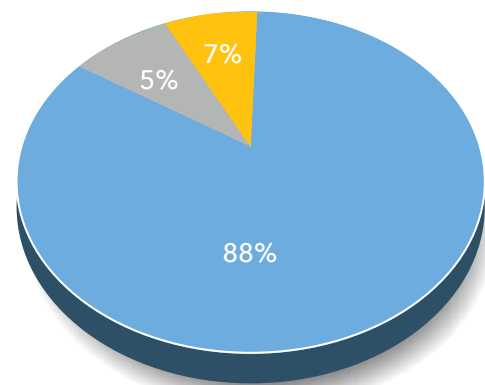


## Time as a Tenant



■ Less than a year ■ 1-6 years ■ More than 6 years

## Do you read the ACHC Newsletter?



■ YES ■ NO ■ UNSURE



# International Tenants' Day



On 3rd October 2017 Cairns celebrated International Tenants' Day for the first time. The day was aimed at acknowledging our tenants, their diversity but also to educate the community about tenancy matters and to provide an opportunity to discuss and learn about housing and tenancy issues. The theme for our event was "community pride- it starts at home". Our goal was to connect people, raise awareness and help people maintain a successful tenancy.

This event would not have been possible without the support of the Department of Housing and Public Works, the Cairns Regional Council, Tenants Queensland and Access Community Housing. There were over 40 stalls at Fogarty Park and there were a number of performances and speeches that helped highlight the strengths and diversity of our community. About 10 stalls were tenant stalls and the remaining stalls were managed by service providers.

It was great to be able to bring together community members, organisations, businesses and leaders to help us acknowledge and celebrate the day. We know that housing is a basic human right and we need innovative solutions to assist people in maintaining their tenancy. We want to help people maintain a successful tenancy by providing them the tools to connect with services around their needs, including health and wellbeing support, responding to domestic violence, drug and alcohol support, assistance around finances and budgeting, advice on legal and tenancy issues and help understanding their rights and responsibilities in maintaining a successful tenancy.

We hope that this event has highlighted the need for cross sector connectedness and support with the aim of building a more sustainable community.

## 25th Anniversary & Silver Linings Book



26 Tenants contributed life stories to the book "Silver Linings", which was launched to celebrate 25 years of operation for ACHC. It was a great celebration, attended by board members, tenants, current and previous staff who shared stories and memories from over this time.

## Development Business Plan 2017 – 2021

Following closely behind the launch of the Queensland Housing Strategy 2017-2027, ACHC released a Development Business Plan. Some of the features of the plan include:

- To increase our property portfolio by 10% over the next 5 years.
- To work in partnership with the Department of Housing and Public Works and the Cairns Regional Council to progress a Precinct development in Cairns.
- To develop a strategy which responds to the specific needs of young tenants



# Reconciliation Action Plan Launch 29th May 2017



Boigu Dance Group

2017 marks the year Access Community Housing published our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). We are committed to working in a culturally inclusive manner which will enhance our relationships and strengthen our partnerships within the Community. We value and respect the importance of culture and we know it is important to embrace diversity.

Our RAP launch was at the Wharf One Café, a great backdrop for this special occasion. The Welcome to Country, given by Henrietta Marrie and the inspirational speech from our board member Leah Cameron captured the audience. In Leah's words, "in 1967 we were counted, in 2017 we seek to be heard". The event also marked memorable performances by the Minjil Dance group and the Boigu Dancers. We thank everyone who attended and helped us acknowledge and mark this special day for the organisation.



Artist - Naurita Briscoe  
'Unspoken Forgiveness'



Donna-Maree O'Connor & Kerri Richmond



Donnella Mills, Henrietta Marrie & Leah Cameron

## NAIDOC IN THE PARK 2017 'Our Language Matters'

This year's event sent a strong message about the importance of languages. The theme this year was "Our Language Matters", to help highlight and raise awareness that language is an integral part of connection to country, community and culture. It is sad to see the number of languages that no longer exist. On the day we asked people to write their languages on a large canvas. It was great to see children get involved and ask their parents to help them spell or write their language. We really enjoyed being a part of the event with outstanding attendance on the day by stall holders and community members. NAIDOC's success was also marked by 1000 people attending the NAIDOC Week march on the Friday 7th July. Cairns residents sang in the region's native Yidinji Gimuy Walubara language before the event started at Fogarty Park.



Canvas of Languages



Charmaene, Lyn, Jess & Ben

# Activities and Achievements



## Dignity First

Access Community Housing received funding from the Department of Housing and Public Works to distribute 350 dignity bags to people experiencing homelessness. The aim of the project is to provide basic necessities to vulnerable and disadvantaged people and to assist with connecting people to support services. The project is working with a number of key health, housing and community services. There has already been some great inspirational stories that have highlighted the need for a coordinated response to homelessness and early intervention. We believe that this project, with the support of community support services, will help identify needs and enhance the pathway out of homelessness. We would like to acknowledge the generous support from Nick Loukas from Alive Pharmacy. Access Community Housing has been listed on the Piccones IGA community chest board and will soon be listed with Grill'd for community funding to support the project. This project is currently funded until November 2017.

Jess & Michael

## Our New Plaque



Our new plaque to acknowledge the traditional owners of this land, the Gimuy Walubara Yidinji people.

We recognise their continuous relationship to the land and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and future.

The plaque is proudly displayed in the reception area at our office.

## Say NO to Bullying—Pink Day

Pink Day is a concept that began to encourage students, staff, families and community services organisations to dress in pink to raise awareness around the message of anti-bullying. It is a global event and often people participate in a range of activities and wear pink to acknowledge and share anti-bullying messages. This year's Pink Day theme was "Make Nice" - we all have the capacity to be kind and compassionate. The slogan was a reminder that no matter what our differences are, being nice is always a choice worth making.

Abbie, Mira, Sally, Megan, Fiona, Sue & Jodi

Staff from ACHC





## Homeless Week

The Cairns Housing and Homelessness Network (CHHN) come together every year to raise awareness around local issues during Homelessness Week. The week is aimed at bringing together community organisations, leaders and people affected by homelessness. This year the event was on Wednesday 9th August at Billy's Coffee on Sheridan Street from 10am – 1pm. There was live music, performances and some inspirational speeches.

It was a fantastic opportunity to connect with people who share a vision to raise awareness, support and strive to reduce homelessness and assist people at risk of homelessness.



*Donna-Maree O'Connor*



## NAIDOC High Tea 6th July

Dee's Department Grooming and Self Care, in partnership with the Cairns NAIDOC committee, showcased for the first time a High Tea event at the Cairns International Pullmans. The purpose of the High Tea event was to celebrate the accomplishments of inspiring local women. We had a table at the event and were able to share the experience with many other local inspiring people.

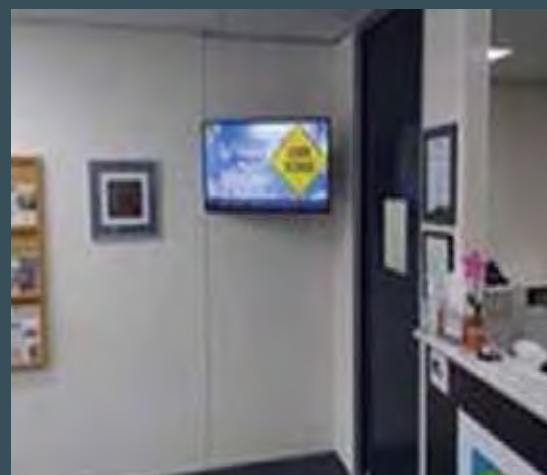
## Q Shelter Conference

The QShelter housing and homelessness conference was held in Brisbane this year. The theme of the conference was 'The next decade: Delivering housing and homelessness services for Queenslanders'. It was a great opportunity to network and hear about the exciting ideas, programs, research and innovative ideas that are being delivered nationally and across our State. It was great to share and highlight some of the innovative housing models and support programs available and being implemented across the country.

*Q Shelter Conference*



## Community Cast



The communitycast is an innovative project that has been set up to create a network between digital noticeboards. The aim is to keep the local community informed about events, services and programs. We are one of eight host organisations who have partnered with the Cairns Safer Streets Taskforce to pilot this project.

# Testimonials

## Real Estate Agent - Ric Allen

"Just a quick note to express my gratitude to the entire team. From dealing with reception to maintenance and monthly payments of rent, everyone is always courteous, professional and helpful. I know my properties are in great hands and look forward to many more years of this successful partnership. Furthermore I recommend you to people I speak with regarding the problems landlords can often have with rental agencies. Thank you again for such a wonderful service". - Ric Allen

"Access Housing provide an invaluable service in our region housing helping vulnerable people to find a place to live and make a life for themselves. Ray White Mossman has several properties in the area that we lease out to Access Housing. Over the many years, we have had a very successful working relationship. The staff are very knowledgeable and thorough, and work quickly to resolve any issues that may arise. The properties are kept well maintained and our landlords are assured of regular, on-time payments of their rent". - Ray White, Mossman

## Tenants

"I am in the seniors complex in Pease street. I love these cottages with front and back patios and gardens. I have been in this unit since early 2011 and found it very peaceful, so decided to write a book. I have just had my third book published, and find the complex is an ideal place to write. My eldest daughter was diagnosed with breast cancer in PNG in 2013 at the age of 34 and came down to Cairns for treatment. She has been receiving treatment for the last four years, and at the moment is cancer free. She spends up to 2 weeks at a time staying with me whilst receiving her treatment. Access housing were very helpful after learning of my daughter's plight, and for this I am most grateful. Access have also been very efficient in running this complex, I am very impressed with what they do". - Andy

"Allowing & supporting me to finally have affordable housing so I can live independently with my kids".  
- Linda

"Providing clean well maintained tidy homes for a sensible rent fee to elderly pensioners that are still able to look after themselves. Access property has provided this. You are good decent people". - Glen

"Complaints have been responded to quickly and politely. Extremely helpful and understanding. Absolutely perfect so lucky to be able to live in a home because you all are extremely understanding and friendly. Thank you all so much, I have so much respect for all of you. No need to improve anything".  
- Nahani

Access Community Housing offers assistance through programs funded by the Department of Housing and Public Works and our tenants come to us from the Department's Register of Need.

Long Term Housing (LTH) has properties for singles, couples and families. Community Managed Studio Units (CMSU) has properties for singles.

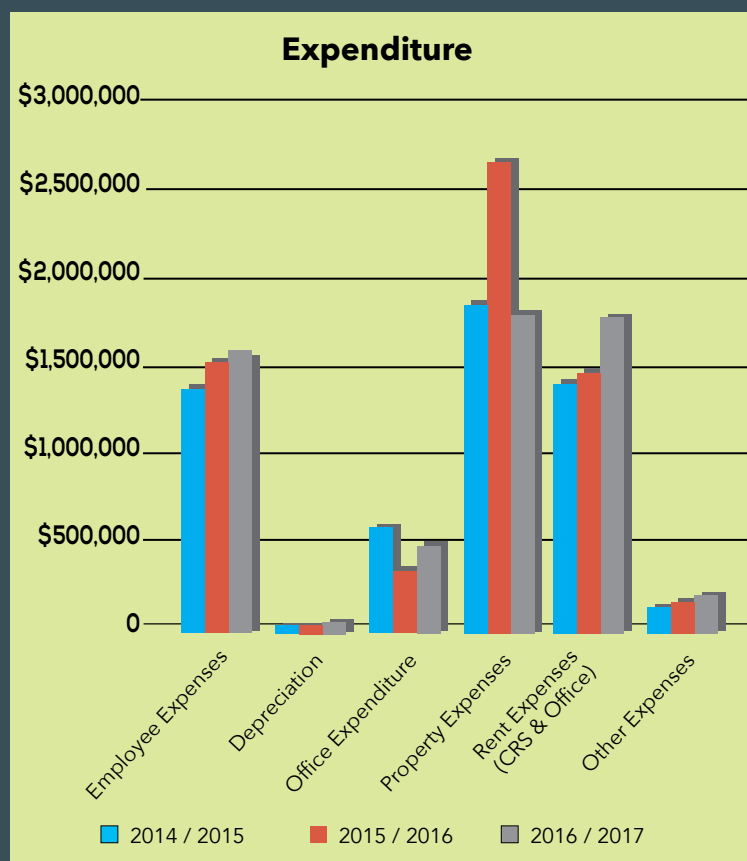
Community Rent Scheme (CRS) is transitional housing with a few properties owned by the Department and the majority of properties head leased through private owners and real estate agents



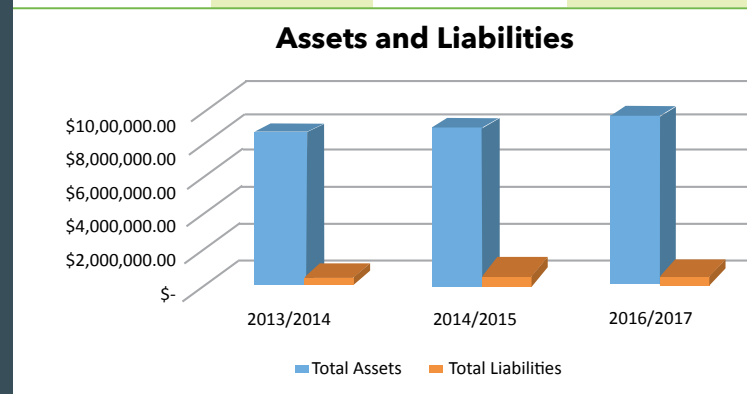
# Financial Highlights

## Profit and Loss, for the year ended 30 June 2017

<b>Income</b>		<b>\$</b>
Rental income	4,659,915	
Grant revenue	1,387,003	
Repairs reimbursement	109,690	
Other income	20,836	
	<b>6,177,444</b>	
<b>Expenses</b>		
Employee expenses	1,568,591	
Depreciation	39,248	
Office expenditure	491,273	
Property expenses	1,845,025	
Rent expense	1,744,878	
Other expenses	187,938	
	<b>5,876,953</b>	
<b>Results from operating activities</b>	<b>300,491</b>	
Finance income	230,941	
Finance costs	-	
<b>Net finance income</b>	<b>230,941</b>	
<b>Net surplus before tax</b>	<b>531,432</b>	
Income tax expense	-	
<b>Total comprehensive income</b>	<b>531,432</b>	



	2014/2015	2016/2016	2016/2017
Total Assets	\$6,514,307	\$7,994,238	\$8,320,917
Total Liabilities	\$390,253	\$714,372	\$456,594



## Our Board

In 2017 the board members have been:

- Michael Healy
- Amanda Langtree
- Kerrie Richmond
- Michael Delaney
- Leah Cameron
- Mark Stallman
- Sue Connolly-Andrews
- Tony McDonagh
- James Dixon

## Our Staff

During the year we have farewelled some of our staff, Wendy Pritchard, Ros Anderson, Marg McDonald, Nelson Lee, William Melleuish, Bronwyn Accoom & Sally Chalmers. We have welcomed Ben Whittle, Susanne Bayly, Michael Della Vecchia, Joanne Geary, Megan Sidey, Joanne Lewis, Mira Papic, Fiona Garvie & Charmaene Scott.



The team at Access Community Housing want to sincerely thank the following:

**Our Tenants**, for your support, co-operation and efforts in maintaining successful tenancies.

**Our Board**, who volunteer their time to ensure good governance and that ACHC continues to be a viable, innovative company serving the Cairns community.

**Our Government Partners** in State and Local Government for your funding, support and trust.

**Our Sponsors** for sharing our vision to support our tenants and for your continued commitment to our work.

**Our Social Support & Community Service** for your invaluable support and assistance with our tenants, and for our shared passion for the work we do.

**Our Contractors and Suppliers** for your responsiveness and professionalism in maintaining our properties.

**Our Owners and Real Estate Agents** for placing your properties with us so that we can continue to provide suitable, affordable community housing in this region.

Better Homes, Better Futures



Access  
Community  
Housing

**Phone** 07 4031 6702  
**Fax** 07 4051 0743  
**Email** [admin@achc.org.au](mailto:admin@achc.org.au)  
**Website** [www.achc.org.au](http://www.achc.org.au)  
**Address** PO Box 7381, Cairns  
**Location** 5 Anderson Street, Manunda QLD 4870

