



Women's Property Initiatives

Strategic Plan 2019 – 2022

Background

Women's Property Initiatives is a not-for-profit, community housing organisation that creates new beginnings for women facing homelessness, by providing permanent and affordable homes, access to support networks and ongoing advocacy.

We have been providing long-term housing solutions for women on low incomes and their children for 22 years. We currently provide high-quality, permanent homes for over 220 women and children in 84 properties located in thriving communities around Melbourne. In addition to this, we are managing an additional 139 properties for three other Community Housing organisations that are providing medium term housing for low income tenants.

Our tenants pay affordable rents that are limited to no more than 30% of their income. We are continuing to grow with 20 additional homes currently under development and the building of another 9 apartments and 1 house to commence shortly.

Everyone is entitled to a safe and secure home. Women face the greatest disadvantage in being able to afford or gain access to one.

Women earn less than men – 15% less based on the latest figures – and are over-represented in the lowest paying professions. They have less access to employment opportunities and often have limits on their ability to work because they are carers for children or the elderly. In the face of a housing affordability crisis, the inherent financial disadvantage that women face really hits home. This is reflected in women's homelessness increasing at a faster rate than men's, particularly for older women who are now our fastest growing group of homeless.

Women are also far more likely to experience family violence – one of the most powerful drivers of housing crisis and homelessness. The women affected by homelessness, or the threat of it, need long-term housing – beyond crisis or short-term solutions – to create a stable future that they can rely on.

We have a "housing first" approach, based on our belief that a secure home is required before women can address other challenges in their lives. We work with local support agencies to make sure that women and children have connections, support and links to their communities in order to make their new beginning a permanent change.

An affordable rent enables them to do more than just survive. They are able to live with dignity and become involved in their communities. Many women return to work or study. Some are able to focus on parenting their children after a period of instability and, all too often, exposure to family violence. Our research shows that our tenants have improved emotional and physical health, employment, personal safety, independence and positive lifestyle choices. They have increased ability to meet family needs, social inclusion and readiness for employment. Children living in our homes show improvements in their social and personal well-being, relationships and educational outcomes.

WPI's Social Return on Investment is \$11.07 for every \$1.00 invested.

Our Strategic Planning Process

During February 2020, WPI conducted another environmental scan across the organisation examining its current position since the 2019 environmental scan in terms of six key domains, namely, financial strength, product and service offerings, brand and reputation, capability and stakeholder relationships, impact and influence growth and systems and processes. An analysis of the organisations' key competitors was also undertaken. This key data served to provide the Board and key members of staff with a 'snapshot in time' of the WPI as they gathered to consider the organisations' strategic imperatives for the next three years.

On 15 February 2020 directors and staff, using this data, worked together to review the 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2022 strategic plan developed last year at their full day strategic planning session.

The group agreed that the strategy consultant would subsequently spend some time documenting the outputs of the session. The Directors would consider this document at their next Board meeting and confirm the amendments and updates to be made to the Strategy document. The CEO will develop the Annual Business Plan in line with the overall plan. The Chair would then review the draft plan and provide input before submission to the May Board meeting for review. Final approval is expected in June via circular resolution.

Strategic Business Plan

This document details the strategic Vision, Purpose, and Values statements and the seven (7) key strategic initiatives confirmed and updated at the Strategic Planning session held in February 2020 and further reviewed & confirmed via the outputs document considered at the March 2020 Board meeting.

A detailed strategic business plan which flows from the strategic initiatives and incorporates other significant 'business as usual' activity is attached at Appendix A. Therefore, it is a combination of both the strategic and the business as usual – hence a strategic business plan.

A dashboard reporting template for the business plan has been developed which is the primary reporting tool to the Board from management. Some of the initiatives naturally flow across the three-year period. The plan for each initiative now mostly focuses upon activity for the financial year July 2020 to June 2021. There continues to be a considerable amount of 'business as usual' work ongoing, although it has decreased in comparison to last year's Business Plan. It is clear that not everything can be done within the current resourcing constraints. The Board will need to address the matter of prioritisation and resourcing as a matter of urgency.

WPI Strategic Plan 2019 – 2022

Vision and Purpose and Values

 **Vision**

 We house 500 women and children and are regarded as the most innovative in providing solutions for homeless women

 **Purpose**

 Our purpose is to create new beginnings for women by providing secure and permanent homes, access to support networks and ongoing advocacy

 **Values**

 Ambitious, Purpose Driven, Open Minded, Passionate, Respectful and Collaborative

Our Vision

In early 2020 WPI houses 200+ Women and Children in affordable housing owned by WPI and an additional 150 tenants in affordable housing managed by WPI. Our vision is that by June 2022 we will have expanded and grown our housing stock so that we can house 500 women and children in safe affordable housing owned by WPI. This ambitious vision means that we will more than double our capacity in three years. We acknowledge the challenges in achieving such strong growth but there is a compelling urgency to reach more women in need that drives us to strive for this target. We believe that our strategic initiatives will support the attainment of the objective.

Our Purpose

Our purpose is to provide new beginnings for women who are facing adversity by providing secure and permanent homes that are affordable for them, by facilitating access for them to a range of support networks, helping them to navigate the often complex systems and bureaucratic structures and by continuing to champion the rights and needs of women through strengthening our ongoing advocacy.

Our Values

The most important values for WPI directors and staff are that we are ambitious in our objectives and our desire to improve the housing opportunities for vulnerable women; that we are purpose driven in everything that we do; that we exhibit open mindedness, passion and respect in all our interactions with each other and externally and that we work collaboratively with others to achieve our objectives.

WPI Strategic Plan 2019 – 2022: 7 Key Strategic Initiatives

1. We will develop a **Comprehensive Fundraising Strategy** for the core operations of WPI
2. WPI will continue to **develop strong relationships with local Councils** and developers to facilitate growth
3. WPI will support **PIRE to build its profile** and capacity
4. We will develop an **Alliance strategy** to build scale, get access to more stock and achieve economies of scale with a complementary organisation
5. **We will partner with a Community Housing Organisation or Service Organisation** to manage their stock in order to generate revenue.
6. **We will get mainstream media coverage** (TV radio) & social media to raise profile to facilitate our growth.
7. **Achieve financial security and certainty** including researching, investing in & implementing marketing, media & communications & fund raising activities

We believe we have currently reached an exciting time at WPI where there is a range of new and innovative projects in the pipeline. In addition to this, we have several productive partnerships and alliances which can be progressed significantly with the decision to allocate the resourcing required to pursue these opportunities.

To achieve the Vision of housing 500 women and children and be regarded as the most innovative in providing solutions for homeless women will require significant continuing hard work, but our strategic planning process has ensured we are clear about how we plan to get there.

Our plan will require ongoing regular review and adaptation, drawing on the flexibility demonstrated by WPI through its work in the past. Creating new beginnings by providing secure and permanent homes, access to support networks and ongoing advocacy will continue to be the driving force for the Board and staff of WPI to deliver its strategic plan.

We look forward to the continued support of our diverse stakeholders and funders. We are excited and enthusiastic about the possibilities for improving housing outcomes for disadvantaged women and children in Victoria and fulfilling our vision and purpose in the period.

Debra Mika
Chairman

Jeanette Large
CEO