

GOSPEL HALL INC. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT, NOVEMBER 2019

We began this year farewelling Stephen Novak, a member from 2013 to 2019, thanking him for his wisdom and guidance in many matters. In 2018, Carol Geyer and Peter White had joined us, adding their legal skills to our collective skill set. Ken Dusting, an Anglican member at St Paul's Cathedral, has offered to join the Board from November 2019, bringing many skills in corporate governance. Frank Rees assumed the role of Chair at the beginning of the year, following Ian Hughes who had served in this role for a number of years.

The Board has been exceptionally well served by all its members, who have contributed wisdom and engagement with the ongoing challenges of the twin activities of accommodation and education. Special thanks are due to Stefanie Pearce, Secretary, for her efficient co-ordination of many diverse and sometimes difficult matters, undertaken with personal care and commitment to the mission of the Trust. Similarly, Treasurer Monica Lusardo, along with Linda Cully (book-keeping) have provided exceptional service in sometimes confusing circumstances. Their advice is an invaluable resource to the Board's decision-making. We continue to be indebted to our auditor Michael Scott for his service and guidance.

The mission to provide accommodation to young people at risk, with the vision of supporting them into education and participation in the wider community, has continued in very effective partnerships with Melbourne City Mission and Housing Choices Australia. The partnership with HCA was especially embodied through the work of Jaclyn Bodycoat over many years. We were sorry to see her leave, as she moved on to other responsibilities. Nonetheless the procedures she had established have provided her successors and the Trust with clear and strong ongoing partnership, with the priority on the well-being of our clients.

Within the residential program, there have been some ongoing issues relating to anti-social behaviour or minor property damage. Specific and constructive responses have been put in place by MCM and HCA. Security has been upgraded with CCTV and automatic gate locking. Maintenance costs are increasing as the building ages and with wear and tear. Some refurbishment of the apartments is being undertaken progressively as the units become vacant.

As at July 2019, a total of 89 young people have been assisted through this ministry.

Urban Seed Education has continued under the new name of 'The Intersection—Urban Learning'. Mayra Stark took maternity leave from March 2019 and was ably replaced by Evan Morgan, who has worked assiduously towards implementing the re-branding, a marketing plan to regain school clients and develop the vision and reach of the new program, as well as seeking new forms of funding support.

The Board has been monitoring these transitional activities, towards sustainability of the program and its team.

One particular difficulty in the year involved considerable angst when it appeared that the Trust no longer qualified for insurance with the Baptist Insurance Services. Negotiations led to a stay of this action. It appears that our reporting relationship with the Collins Street Baptist Church was not as explicit as we might have expected. Further negotiations will continue. Meanwhile substantial work seeking competitive insurance quotations was undertaken.

A basic website has been established: <http://www.ghi.org.au/>

We conclude the year with a strong Balance Sheet, good relationships with our partner bodies and a commitment to sustainable and creative service in all aspects of our current mission. Next year will provided a particular opportunity to engage with the long term vision and strategy of the Trust.

I thank all members of the Board for your commitment to and support of the Gospel Hall Trust.

Frank Rees, Chair