



North West Youth
Accommodation Service

ANNUAL REPORT

2011-2012

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Funded by



Queensland
Government



MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING DATE: 24th November 2011

1. Present: Jim Fouras, Brian Parker, Robert Granger, Judy Timms, Tanya Turrell, Christine Robinson, Deon Menerey, Owen Jones, Debbie Bruford, Kerry Hackett,
2. Apologies: Holly-Emma Moulds, Paula Nixon, Amy Crowther
3. Minutes of Previous Annual General Meeting
MOVED: Robert Granger SECONDED: Judy Timms
4. Reports:
 - ✓ President:
MOVED: Brian Parker SECONDED: Robert Granger
 - ✓ Manager:
MOVED: Brian Parker SECONDED: Robert Granger
 - ✓ Financial Report /Audit:
MOVED: Brian Parker SECONDED: Robert Granger
5. Election of Office Bearers:
MOVED: Christine Robinson SECONDED: Tanya Turrell
6. Appointment of Auditor: Wilson Ross Accountants
MOVED: Jim Fouras SECONDED: Judy Timms
7. Close of Meeting
This is a true and accurate record of the AGM held on the 24th November 2012

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Yet another year of my long involvement with North West Youth Accommodation Service has passed and NWYAS continues its growth and development as a valuable community resource.

The organisation proudly continues to assist young people who need housing to make the transition to independent living by providing them with the necessary support and skill development opportunities.

The strategic plan, which was a major part of our work last year, continues to inform our direction and provide a solid focus for service delivery.

As stated last year, NWYAS is fortunate to draw its Management Committee from a broad community base, and the investment they make in the organisation is significant. I would like to thank my fellow Committee members for their continued commitment to the organisation and for all that they contribute, despite their own busy lives.

The staff team, as the drivers of the daily work of the organisation, continue to give life to the purpose and mission of the organisation. Their dedication and passion for the work is constant and NWYAS has been very lucky this last year to have a solid and stable staff team.

Stark changes to the landscape in which we operate, with the decrease in the size of the community services sector, will likely place pressure on the limited resources of the agency, as a small, independent specialist homelessness service. However, NWYAS will remain focused on its work with young people, regardless of the changing service environment.

My attendance at the recent National Homeless Conference has underlined that NWYAS has the necessary organisational values and that we have the right balance between our client's rights and their responsibility to contribute to their wellbeing.

Specialist Homelessness Services are extremely cost effective. Decreases in their funding, as well as in the size of Community Services sector, for short term budget savings will provide for a more difficult landscape for NWYAS. Our collaboration with other agencies has been vital to our success rates in transitioning young people to independent living.

Jim Fouras
CHAIRPERSON



MANAGERS' REPORT

Each year, as the time to put together the annual report arrives, we are provided an opportunity to reflect on the work and achievements of the organisation since the last Annual General Meeting.

As reforms to the Homelessness Service System have been implemented by the Queensland Government, changes to the performance measurement and funding arrangements for Specialist Homelessness Services have required that much energy be directed to the infrastructure supporting the service delivery work. In addition, participation in planning and networking activities such as the Homelessness Community Action Plan (HCAP), NGO Regional Meetings and Homelessness Information Management Project (HIMP) has been required in order that the organisation remains well informed and connected regarding service system changes.

We welcome any moves towards an improved service system which better enables young people who are homeless to connect to services that can meet their need. The struggle for small, independent services like NXYAS is to prioritise its limited resources across the day to day organisational and service delivery management whilst still contributing to an overall improvement in the broader service system. The lack of any additional resources makes this a tricky balancing act, but one we have managed as best we can.

At the service delivery end of the organisation's activities, NXYAS continues to have much to be proud of. The other areas of this report draw attention to the outcomes young people have achieved, and the extent of support that the agency has been able to provide. The balance between acting as a landlord and a support to young people is well demonstrated in the Tenancy Worker Report which refers to the ability of NXYAS to exit young people from failed tenancies whilst maintaining their support to access more appropriate accommodation options. It is this non-judgmental approach to those that we work with that results in young people returning to our service for assistance even after they have been unable to sustain their tenancy with us. I am personally very proud of the holistic manner in which our team approaches the diverse needs of our client group, and supports them in making their own decisions and managing the consequences of those decisions in their lives.

I would especially like to acknowledge the neighbours of our properties this year, as they have experienced some difficult times, but, on the whole, have maintained their support of the work of NXYAS. The relationship we have been able to develop with neighbours of our properties has ensured that any problems are now able to be addressed early, and that the "cost" to the community of the provision of Homelessness services has not been disproportionately borne by a small few.

I am hopeful that the ongoing changes to funding arrangements and the service system will not create a challenge to the survival of smaller, independent organisations like

ourselves. NWFYAS, at both the Management Committee and Staff levels, believe firmly in the contribution that we make to the lives of young people who are homeless, and to the local community which we service. There is no doubting the commitment and hard work of each staff and Committee member who is a part of this organisation, nor of the valuable work that we do. I am appreciative of each member of staff and our Management Committee for their support of the work of NWFYAS, and their hard work and dedication to assist young people in making the changes required to make the transition to independent living.

I would especially like to thank the following:

- Amovita Consulting – specifically Tracey and Nicola, who support is in so many ways to maintain the high quality standards we strive for in both our practice and the management of the organization.
- Blackwood St Chamber of Commerce for their donation to NWFYAS.
- Queensland Public Interest Law Clearing House and Minter Ellison for their assistance in finalizing our new constitution.
- Inner North Community Housing for their partnership in the provision of housing for our clients, and in the No Interest Loans Scheme.
- Queensland Youth Housing Coalition for their ongoing and invaluable provision of information and support to the service, specifically in relation to the renewal of our service agreement and the reform agenda for SHS's.
- The young people who share this transitional time of their lives with us and allow us to walk with them as they make significant changes in their lives.



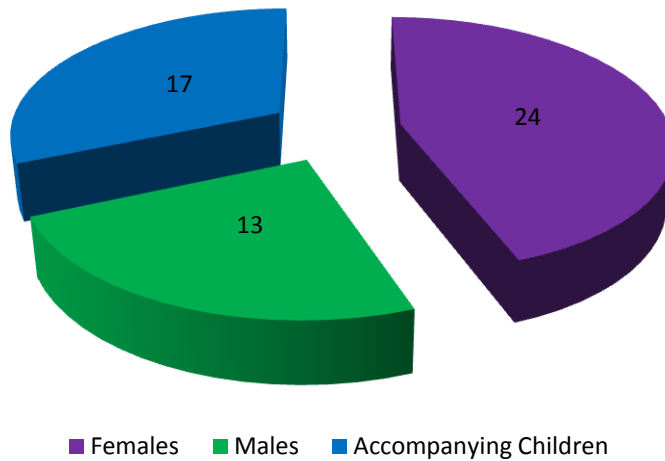
Youth Homelessness Matters Day:
Maria Leebeek (QYHC), Hon Tracey Davis, Minister for Communities, Tanya Turrell

Tanya Turrell
MANAGER

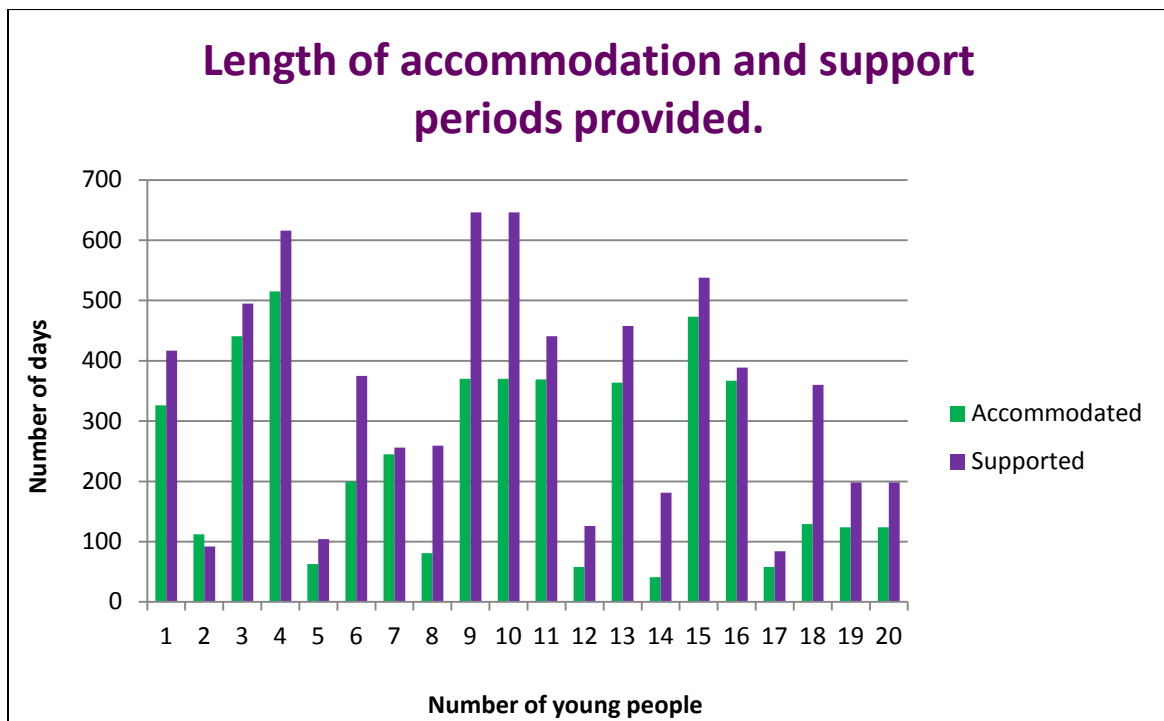
SUPPORT WORKER REPORT

The total number of young people accessing housing and support with NWFYAS in the 2011-2012 year is 37 young people and their 17 accompanying children. This data reflects that accompanying children represent 29% of those in our accommodation and that females form the majority of our client group, at 64%.

Number of young people receiving housing and support. 2011-2012



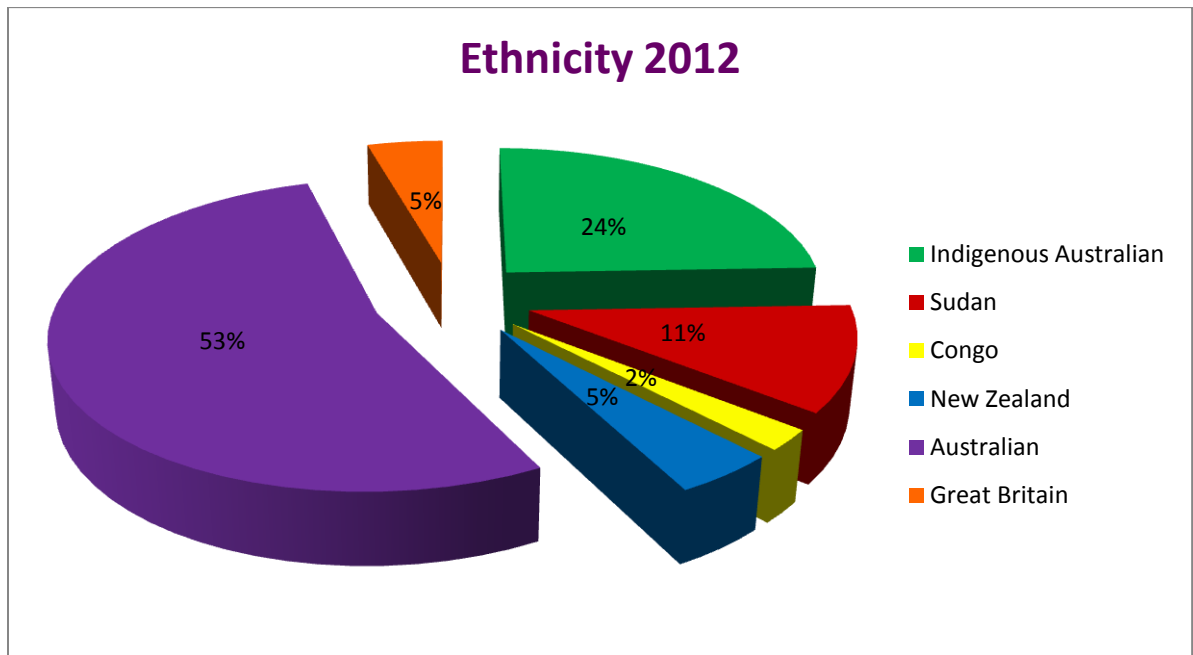
In the last financial year NWFYAS has had 20 young people exit our supported accommodation program. In nearly in all cases, young people have been supported prior to, and following their accommodation period.



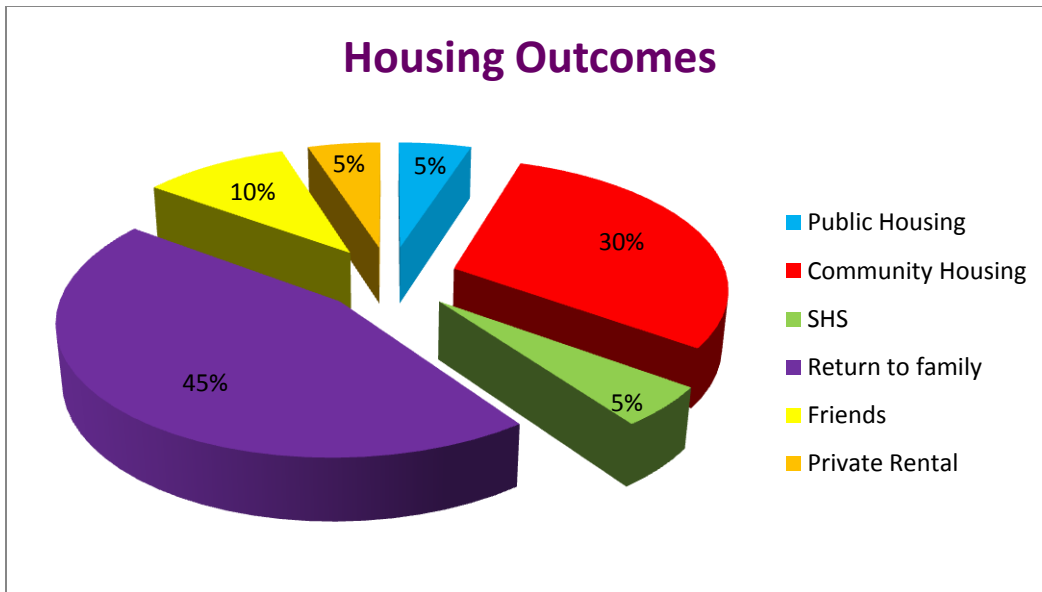
The remaining data consists of all young people who have received any service from NWYAS in the 2011-2012 financial year. Accompanying children are not included here. Services include:

- Housing and support;
- Support only;
- External support following exit from NWYAS accommodation.

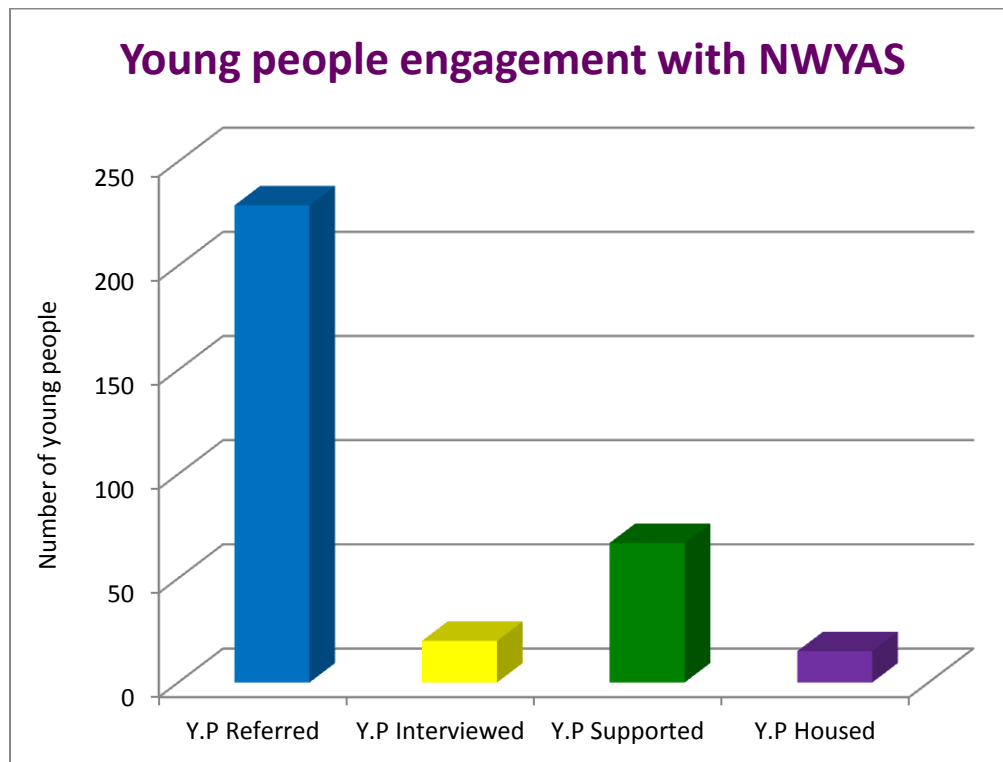
In comparison to last year’s statistics, numbers of young people identifying as Australian Indigenous, from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds and born outside of Australia have increased significantly. Services to Indigenous young people increased by 4%, while services to young people not born in Australia and identifying as CALD increased by 18%.



A breakdown of the ethnic demographics of the young people NWWYAS has provided support and accommodation for is: 11 young people identifying as Indigenous, 6 young people coming from African countries, 2 young people from Great Britain, 2 young people from New Zealand and the remaining 24 young people were Australian born. The high levels of access by young people who are Indigenous or from CALD backgrounds are consistent with those in previous years. This reflects our connection with these communities, especially those in our local area, and our ability to work respectfully and effectively across a diverse client group.



This financial year we have had six young people exit NPYAS to Community Housing and one young person to Department of Housing and private rental. Nine young people have returned to family living arrangements, two transitioned into friend’s places, while one young person transitioned to another Specialist Homelessness Service. In total, 40% of young people have successfully transitioned to longer term, independent accommodation upon exit from NPYAS accommodation.



In the relevant period, NPYAS has received a total of 229 referrals from young people seeking supported accommodation. Of this, NPYAS has had the capacity to interview 20 young people and house 15 new clients.

The total number of young people supported by NWFYAS is 67. Four of these young people had been previously accommodated by NWFYAS and re-contacted seeking one off or brief support after exiting their accommodation. Thirty-seven young people are current clients in receipt of NWFYAS accommodation or external support since their exit. A significant proportion of young people (22%) were provided with either one off or ongoing short term support where NWFYAS did not have the capacity to provide them accommodation. This support has consisted largely of assisting young people to secure accommodation, stabilise existing accommodation or access Income Support through Centrelink.

This data demonstrates that there is significant demand for accommodation which NWFYAS is unable to meet, but also highlights the importance placed by the organisation on assisting young people who are in need of an immediate response or early intervention to prevent homelessness. There are many occasions where a young person presenting to the organisation can be assisted briefly to stabilise their situation and in some cases, prevented from entering the homelessness service system.

Support Workers 2011-2012

Deon Menerey

Heather Rowe

Sarah Thorne

TENANCY REPORT

This last year has been a successful one for North West Youth Accommodation Service (NWyAS), despite a few challenges along the way, our organisation has had many positive outcomes for our tenants, staff and the organisation as a whole.

This year I was fortunate enough to be offered a scholarship through Department of Communities to study a Diploma in Social Housing. I have since attended two workshops for the Diploma and have felt the study very beneficial for the work I am doing within our organisation and I look forward to the two remaining workshops over the next year.

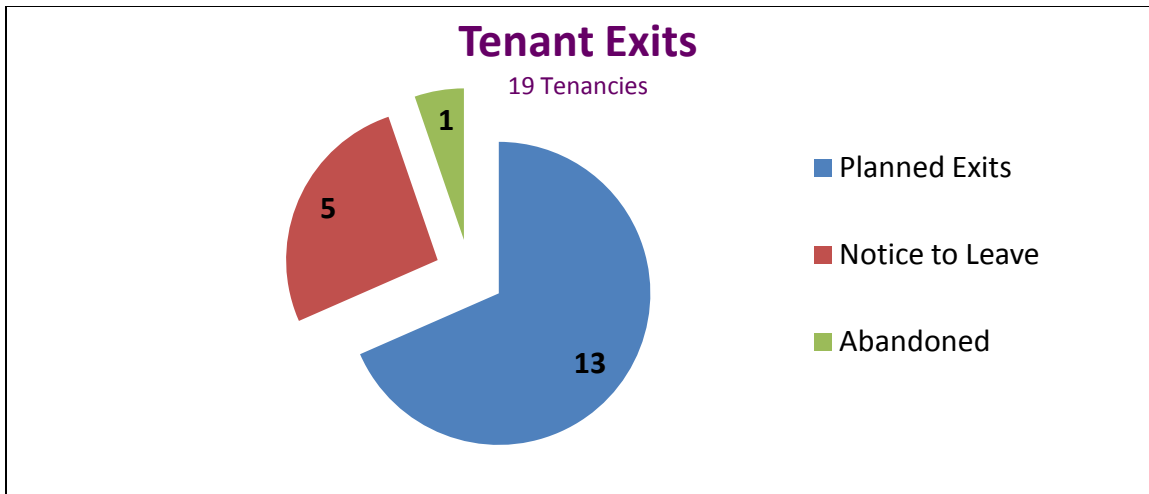
Another success for our organisation was receiving a grant through the Jupiter's Casino Community Benefit fund of \$29,854.00 to refurbish all 13 properties. We are currently in the process of purchasing the furniture and we look forward to the end result.

The past year has seen 19 tenancy exits from our housing. Five tenancies were ended due to tenants being unable to maintain their tenancy. Reasons for these tenancies ending included:

- Noise,
- Neighbourhood disturbance,
- Visitors
- Damage to their unit.

These five tenants were supported to find other more suitable accommodation options. One tenancy ended due to the property being abandoned and when we were able to contact the tenant they mentioned they were moving back in with family.

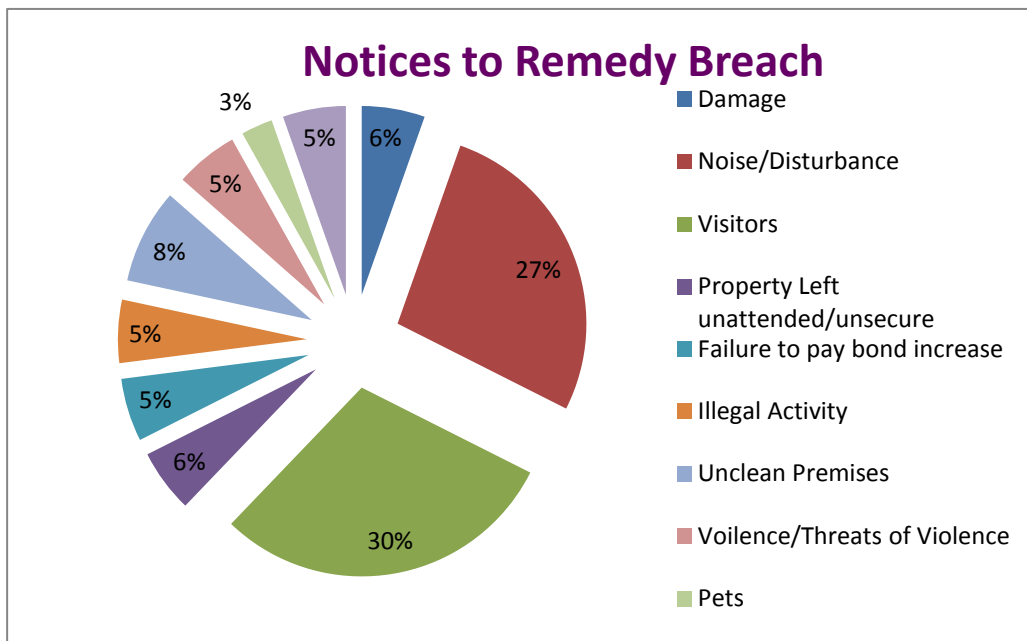
We had 13 planned exits, young people ending their tenancy within the terms of their agreement and exited into other housing, whether it was Department of Housing, private rental, family or other housing providers, a great result for the organisation and our clients.



* Number of tenancies different to number of young people – Tenancies counted by number of Tenancy Agreements, for example: couple counted as one tenancy

*Planned exits – Tenant maintained tenancy until they found alternative accommodation and exited within the terms of their tenancy agreement and support plans.

A highlight for our organisation this year has been the young people’s ability to stay out of rent arrears and be two weeks in advance with their rent payments. In the entire year only two Notices to Remedy Breache were given due to tenants falling behind in rent, both of these breaches were remedied and the majority of tenants that exited were in rent credit and required a refund. This is a vast improvement from last year where three tenancies were ended due to rent arrears. Noise and visitors made up the majority of breaches this year; unfortunately these particular breaches led to neighbourhood fatigue earlier in the year at one of our unit blocks and did result in tenancies being ended and clients supported to find more suitable accommodation.



The average occupancy rate for all properties over the past 12 months was 97.06%. Last year our Gaythorne unit block was our most successful block, but unfortunately this year it had the majority of vacant days. Our Gaythorne block had a couple of unsustainable tenancies earlier in the year which resulted in neighbourhood fatigue and units were vacant for a number of days due to repairs and cleaning. During this time we received a lot of support and formed great relationships with our surrounding neighbours, a great result that has helped keep the unit block successfully tenanted for the remainder of the year. Our Northgate block was more successful compared to last year with the unit block having only nineteen vacant days for the entire year.

The past year we have worked really hard to improve the standard of the properties inside and out. We have found this has helped give the tenants a great sense of pride and respect for their home. Our organisation relies heavily on the contractors that service our units, to assist us to keep safety a priority and vacant days to a minimum. We require fast and reliable service and are very grateful to have the continued support from our following contractors:

- Rein, Hire A Hubby Everton Park
- Mark, Ideal Locksmiths
- Steve and Heather, Pro Tec Cleaning Services
- Darran, Bears Landscaping

From all of us at NWFYAS we thank you and look forward to your continued partnership in the coming years.

Overall it's been a great year at NWFYAS and I am very fortunate to be surrounded by supportive team members and management committee. As an organisation we are proud of what we achieve and the positive experience we provide to our tenants and our local community.

Christine Robinson
Tenancy Worker

FINANCIAL REPORT

The Auditor has finalised the Financial Statement for the year and declared that the organisation is in a viable position, reporting in their statement of receipts and payments that North West Youth Accommodation Service posted a surplus of \$9,921 this financial year.

Both receipts and payments reflected an increase on the previous financial year, with the most significant variations, although minor, to be seen in the administration costs and the staff / salaries expenses. These expenses are largely due to the changes in the Industrial Relations environment and the increased costs of insurances.

After lengthy discussions with the Department of Housing regarding retained surpluses in the CAP and CAP Headlease programs, the agreed brought forward balances are reflected in the Total equity position of \$136,271, which is a significant reduction since the previous financial year.

Much work has gone into the development of our financial systems and processes this year, and I look forward to working with the new Auditor as we continue to ensure our accountabilities to our funding providers.

Finance Worker

Paula Nixon
Suzie Dennis

Treasurer

Holly-Emma Moulds

