



Amélie Housing
Building hope through housing

Issue No. 2

AMÉLIE NEWS

Spring 2022



A CHANGE OF SEASON FOR AMÉLIE CEO BRIAN MURNANE ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT

After 9 years at Amélie Housing, 40 years in the community housing sector, and 50 years as a member of the St Vincent de Paul Society, Brian Murnane will retire as CEO of Amélie Housing in December this year.

Those that know Brian know he has dedicated much of his life to improving housing services and outcomes for our community's most vulnerable. He was a leading advocate for community services on public housing estates in Campbelltown during the 1970s and over the course of his career has established hostels for homeless men, refuges for women & children, childcare centres, disability accommodation, and residential drug and alcohol rehabilitation centres, as well as served on a number of Ministerial Advisory Committees.

An enormous part of Brian's legacy will be the contribution he has made toward the establishment and operation of Community Housing in NSW. Brian founded and established Argyle Community Housing in 1982 and pioneered intensive tenancy management services that were delivered at Claymore and later Airds Bradbury. In 2007, he was cofounder of BlueCHP a not-for-profit development company. He also led the establishment of St Vincent de Paul Housing and later Amélie Housing (following the merger with Ecclesia Housing).

On behalf of the Amélie team, customers, partners and community members, we would like to thank Brian for his extraordinary leadership, inspiring vision and humility in service. He will be sorely missed but we wish him all the best for his retirement!



Happy Retirement

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FAREWELL FROM CEO BRIAN MURNANE



Welcome to the spring edition of our Customer Newsletter.

As this will be my last newsletter, I want to take this time to express my sincere thanks to you, our customers, staff and community members – for the various contributions and support you have given me, the Amélie family and community over the last nine years.

When I started at Amélie in 2013, I was their first and only employee. Thanks to the support of many, I am proud to say that we now have over 40 staff, Tier 1 Registration, and manage approximately 1,500 dwellings across NSW, ACT and South Australia with plans to grow to around 2,500 dwellings by 2027.

It has been my pleasure to serve alongside such a passionate and supportive team, who care deeply about our customers – and work tirelessly to improve housing services and outcomes for our community's most vulnerable. It goes without saying, that I will miss them greatly, but I have every confidence that Amélie will go on to achieve many more milestones and I wish the incoming CEO, Graham West every success for the journey ahead.

Over the last 40 years, it has been my absolute privilege to walk alongside many of you, to hear your stories, meet with you in your homes, and get to know you, your families and neighbourhood. As I head into retirement, I will remain forever grateful for the things I have learnt, the warmth I have experienced and the conversations that I have had with so many of you, over this time. You have kept my heart connected to purpose and my passion steadfast for a more just and compassionate society.

As we head into the tail end of the year, I wish you all the best for the future and a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

AMÉLIE UPDATES

Message from Amélie Housing Chair, Tony Carpani

On behalf of the Amélie Housing Board of Directors, I am delighted to announce the appointment of The Hon. Graham West to the position of Chief Executive Officer, beginning 12 December 2022.

Graham will replace our current CEO Brian Murnane, who will retire later this year.

Graham's appointment comes after a comprehensive executive search and candidate evaluation process. As a Board, we are confident that Graham will bring invaluable knowledge and experience to this critical leadership role.

Graham has over 25 years' experience in the NFP and Government sectors as a CEO, Government Minister, Member of Parliament, Board Member and Chair. He has a proven track record of achieving transformative outcomes in the social sector, leading and championing change, and advocating for greater investment in social housing and homelessness support services.

'I am honoured to be appointed as Amélie Housing's next CEO and to have the opportunity to work with



Incoming CEO: The Hon. Graham West

such a dedicated team of people who are so passionately committed to creating safe and secure pathways to housing for those at greatest risk of homelessness throughout our nation. I share the team's passion for providing quality, affordable housing and support for all, and I look forward to working with a spirit of collaboration to pursue justice and charity, as was done by The St Vincent de Paul Society's founder, Frederic Ozanam,' said Mr West.

To enable a smooth handover, outgoing CEO Mr Murnane will remain at Amélie Housing for a leadership transition period. His last day will be Friday 23 December 2022.

A Christmas Message from the Amélie team

As the silly season begins and the year draws closer to an end, we would like to wish all of our customers, partners and community members a safe and happy Christmas and New Year.

We recognise that for many people, Christmas is their favorite time of the year - a time to hang out with family, decorate the tree, open presents and overeat. Yet, we are also mindful of the fact that this time of the year can be especially difficult for people who live alone, have lost or cannot be with their loved ones.

So, what can we do to support those that are feeling socially isolated this holiday season? Here's a few ideas...

1. Offer kind words and encouragement to people in your community who may be struggling or feeling alone.

2. Donate books, toys, and games to children who may not receive anything this Christmas.
3. Invite your neighbours around for a cup of tea or a meal – use this as a chance to chat.
4. Offer a parent a smile and words of encouragement that they are doing a good job.
5. Help an older person become more tech savvy so they can take advantage of more opportunities in an increasingly digital world.

And remember - if you need additional support this Christmas (providing the essentials, or looking for connection over Christmas), please do not hesitate to contact your Housing Officer so we can link you to a support partner. We are here to help so you can experience joy this Christmas!

NEWSROOM

Supporting Community Mental Health

On 8 September, the Amélie Housing team recognised R U OK? Day by taking time to 'check in' with each other, as well as customers, family and friends. With the 2021-22 National Study of Mental Health and Wellbeing reporting that over two in five Australians aged 16-85 years have experienced a mental disorder at some time in their life, it has never been more important to make asking, 'Are you ok?' a regular practice in our daily lives.

For this reason, members of the Amélie community attended a BBQ hosted by the Community Inclusion Program of Oak Estate, to recognise



Mental Health Month Community BBQ at Oaks Estate

Mental Health Month. Approximately 50 people attended the community event, with guests including the Minister Rebecca Vassaroti and Minister Emma Davidson, as well as members of the Oaks Estate Residents Association and staff from a range of support services and partnering organisations.



Artist: Dale Pracy

Reconciliation Action

Our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Committee are pleased to advise that we have resubmitted our draft Reflective RAP, based on feedback that was provided to us by Reconciliation Australia. We look forward to providing an update on the status of our Plan in our next newsletter.

In the meantime, we are thrilled to have received our first piece of commissioned First Nations art, completed by our staff member, Kelly Hallam's sister, Dale Pracy - a proud Aboriginal woman from the Wiradjuri nation/people.

Dale, works for State Revenue NSW as the Coordinator First Nations, Supported Customers and Outreach, and paints as a hobby in her spare time.

She explained that the art represents, 'connecting people to communities. The circles represent communities that are connected by the orange lines, and the outer symbols are people, men, women and children being taken by the hands and [embraced] within communities'.

Staff Spotlight: Roman Kowalczyk

What is your role and how long have you worked in housing? I am Amélie's South Australian State Manager and I have over 45 years experience working in housing.

What are your favourite movies? Top Gun, Phantom of the Opera

Music tastes: 70's

Top 3 dinner guests of your choice (dead or alive): JFK, Barack Obama, Bill Clinton

Life mantra: Don't give up!



Roman Kowalczyk

Thank you Brian

It's been a privilege to work with Brian since we merged two Community Housing Providers together and watched Amélie grow. Brian won't like any fuss but he should know that he means so much to so many people. He has been at the forefront of shaping the community housing sector, has been awarded a Centenary Medal and been Citizen of the Year in his local community. The list of his achievements is long and all based around service to the community. His wit and wisdom will be sorely missed! We wish him all the best and remain grateful for his leadership.

Mark Thompson, National Operations Director

I have never met someone so committed to assisting community members in need. Brian has great compassion and seeks to understand the needs of community members who are homeless or in financial hardship – and he does this without judgement. He affords respect in a way that gives service to all regardless of creed, ethnic, social background, health, gender or political opinions. His integrity in promoting, maintaining and adhering to the mission, vision and values of St Vincent de Paul and Amélie Housing is amazing. His advocacy to work in transforming the causes of poverty and challenging the causes of human injustice is an example to all of us.

Roman Kowalczyk, State Manager, SA

I have always admired Brian for his ability to connect with people and demonstrate empathy. This has no doubt, been at the core of his long and successful career in the community sector. Brian is always available and supportive of his team. He is a beacon of knowledge, well respected and an inspirational leader that has made me want to do better for our team, tenants and communities.

Poppy Whiting, State Manager, NSW/ACT

Brian has been an instrumental part of the community housing sector and it has been a luxury having access to Brian's networks and wealth of knowledge. On a personal note, the thing that I value about him the most is his ability to provide guidance and support, while also empowering all levels of leadership to operate autonomously.

Malcolm Picken, SAHF Program Manager

HOME HINTS AND TIPS

Fire Safety - Spring into action!

Summer is coming and so is the fire season. There are a number of things that you can do now to protect yourself, your family, friends and neighbours from, or in the event of, a fire:

- test that your smoke alarm/s are working. If not, change the batteries.
- familiarise yourself with where the fire exits are in your building
- ensure that you keep fire safety doors closed at all times and do not use anything to hold doors open
- keep stairwells clear of rubbish
- do not use gas cookers inside and never leave cooking or other open flames unattended (this includes candles and oil burners)
- do not store gas (LPG) bottles inside
- reduce clutter in your homes and ensure your personal items are not blocking windows and doors that you may need to use to exit your home
- do not hang or install privacy screens on your balcony (e.g. bamboo or plastic screens)
- have a home escape plan and discuss it with your whole family.

Finally, **if there is a fire in your home, do not wait, EVERY SECOND COUNTS, GET OUT and STAY OUT and then call Triple Zero (000).**

REMINDERS

FOR REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE:
Call 1800 950 575

Home Visits

Not feeling well? Please let your Housing Officer know so we can reschedule to another time.

Rent Review

Our second yearly Rent Review will take place in October and November. Be sure to keep an eye out for your Notice of Rent Review letter.

Arrears

With the festive season fast approaching, it's a good time to consider making additional payments towards your rent or water, so that you do not fall behind during the holiday period.

If you would like to discuss your options for doing this, please do not hesitate to speak to your Housing Officer or speak to our Debt Recover Officer, Tracy on 0421 204 478.

South Australian customers, please call 1800 950 575 and ask to speak with Marianne.

Christmas Caramilk Rocky Road

Ingredients:

- 250g choc ripple biscuits
- 125g butter, melted, cooled slightly
- 250g packet marshmallows, quartered
- 1/2 cup roasted salted macadamias, roughly chopped
- 4 x 52g Cherry Ripe bars, cut into large pieces
- 200g packet snakes, cut into 2cm lengths
- 2/3 cup moist coconut flakes, plus extra to decorate
- 3 x 180g blocks Caramilk, melted

Method:

1. Grease an 18cm x 28cm pan. Line base and sides with baking paper.
2. Place biscuits in food processor. Process until fine crumbs. Add butter. Process until well combined. Press mixture over base of pan. Refrigerate.
3. Combine marshmallow, macadamia, Cherry Ripe, snakes and coconut in a large bowl. Add 3/4 of the melted chocolate. Spoon mixture evenly over prepared base, pressing firmly to compact. Drizzle with remaining chocolate. Sprinkle lightly with extra coconut. Refrigerate for 3 hours or until set.
4. Stand rocky road at room temperature for 20 minutes before cutting into pieces. Serve.

Feedback and Complaints

Amélie Housing takes feedback, complaints and appeals seriously. If you would like to lodge a complaint, appeal a decision, or provide feedback on what we do well or what we can improve, there are several ways you can do this:

- **Use our online Feedback form**
(Go to <https://bit.ly/ameliefedback> or scan the QR Code).
- **Call us on 1800 950 575 (free call).**
Note: Some charges may apply for mobile users.
- **Access independent support.**
If you need assistance in making a complaint, appealing a decision or providing feedback you can ask a nominated person to help you. You will just need to provide consent for staff to talk with another nominated person on your behalf.

Your voice matters to us. For more information or for assistance, please speak to our staff.



ONLINE
FEEDBACK FORM