

Community housing stabilises young lives

As the understanding of community housing grows, life is beginning to look better for local families on low to moderate incomes.

After a long period of uncertainty in her life, local Bairnsdale resident Rudell McVeigh says the community home she has moved in to is beyond her expectations. After four years and nine homes all of which were in poor condition, Rudell is now an unbridled advocate for the community housing offer she received from Community Housing Limited (CHL).

Rudell moved into a recently completed CHL property three weeks ago with her two children: a brand new four-bedroom property in which the rent is capped as a fixed percentage against the household income.

For the previous four years, she had been living in private rental, and was subject to the frustration of her unit either being sold by the owners, being demolished, or being in an undesirable location for a young family.

"Earlier this year, I thought when I moved into a unit in Paynesville that I had some security. I was told it would be mine for years to come, but two months later it was put on the market for sale. The uncertainty of it all made things very difficult," she says.

The consequences were also serious. With two young children, Rudell was going to be homeless in this month if it wasn't for the good work of Quantum Support Services in cooperation with CHL.

"Quantum and CHL worked wonders. Melissa at CHL told me a new property was going to be available, and it's my dream home. It has four bedrooms including an en suite and a study. I really don't know myself," she says.

"The greatest relief is knowing I have long term secure housing that my children can grow up in," she says.

"Community housing looks like any other house in the street, but it offers tenants long term security of tenure at a rental rate that is usually around 60 to 75 per cent of the market rate."

"However, given my experience over the last four years it will probably take some time before I really know we're secure and start feeling a strong sense of ownership."

Community housing is an exciting new housing option in Bairnsdale for people on low to moderate incomes. Still relatively small in number, the homes are owned by a not-for-profit housing organisation that manages and maintains the property for the long term. While the Federal and State Governments contribute funding,

community housing is separate from public housing and should be thought of more as a stable alternative to private rental.

"We're still educating the public on what community housing is," CHL managing director Steve Bevington said.

"Community housing looks like any other house in the street, but it offers tenants long term security of tenure at a rental rate that is usually around 60 to 75 per cent of the market rate. It is called 'community housing' because it is a long term housing option for families who want to remain in their local community - when one tenant leaves, another individual or family from the area can move in."

Community Housing Limited (CHL) is a national and international provider of affordable housing. Its mission is 'to provide affordable and sustainable housing for all'.

CHL is a registered housing organisation in Victoria and an approved growth provider in NSW, Tasmania, WA and SA. Its international operations are located in Timor Leste, Chile, and most recently India.

CHL is a vertically integrated operation that manages the entire housing lifecycle. This includes securing funding, locating suitable land, project managing, designing and constructing, then managing the tenancy for the long term which includes collecting rents and maintaining the property.



Ashlee Kerton and Kate Reed were supporting Bruthen in the Omeo District Football League grand finals at Ensay on Saturday. The Bulldogs defeated Swift's Creek for the junior title, but lost to the Demons in the seniors. K726-98

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