

HOME SHARE MELBOURNE BECOMES...

HANZA's fledgling social enterprise Home Share Melbourne is well on the way to an independent life with a new name and legal entity! Over the last three years HANZA has supported HSM to develop and grow, and now it has reached a point where it is ready to stand on its own two feet and become a brand-new not-for-profit charity in its own right. It will do so with a great new name: BRIDGE IT.



BRIDGE IT has new support from two very generous foundations and a brand new board of amazing people excited by the opportunity to take shared living initiatives to scale! The existing housing-focussed homeshare programs will continue to grow and expand, but BRIDGE IT will also be adding other new exciting programs. HSM's co-founder and inspirational leader, Carla Raynes and her talented, hardworking team aim to launch BRIDGE IT in October 2021.

At its inception in 2017, Home Share Melbourne was funded by Launch Housing, South Port Community Housing Group, and the City of Port Phillip. However, none of these organisations was able to give this innovative program a home during the pilot phase, and so in 2018, HANZA took Home Share Melbourne under its wing. HANZA is delighted that we took on the challenge of getting this exciting social enterprise off the ground and we are enormously proud of what Carla and her team have achieved in just three years.

Stay tuned for BRIDGE IT news on HANZA's Facebook page and in the spring edition of HANZA News.

RECOMMENDED READING FROM THE USA

Homeshare International recently shared a new report from the University of Washington's School of Public Health on its website. The report, entitled "Homeshare Study Policy Recommendations", was commissioned by the Washington State Senate to examine the potential of homeshare as a way to alleviate housing instability. It is an excellent piece of research and a huge step forward in the long campaign to achieve recognition, acceptance and support for homesharing and similar programs.

Australia shares similar housing instability issues with the USA and would also benefit from studying and supporting the efforts being made right here at home to develop homesharing and other shared living arrangements. HANZA commends this report and encourages everyone to **read and share it!**

**HOMESHARE COMES OF AGE!**

July 2021 marks 21 years of making homeshare matches in Melbourne! This provides an excellent reason to celebrate—not just the anniversary of our first match, but also the fact that we are still here and still fighting doggedly for recognition of homeshare and its potential!

Back in July 2000, the fledgling program Homeshare Victoria had employed its first Homeshare coordinator—a plucky young 50-something social worker by the name of Beris Campbell. Beris and her hard-working, committed steering committee studied the successful models of Homeshare operating in the US and UK, set up its systems, and were raring to go! Homeshare Victoria was piloting the homeshare model under the auspices of Mecwa, a strong, highly regarded aged care organisation in Melbourne's south-eastern suburbs.

One of Mecwa's long-standing clients was a wonderful 95-year-old retired solicitor who was very determined to stay in his own home for as long as possible. His daughters also desperately wanted him to be able to do so, but his needs and frailty were worrying them enormously. Lots of services were coming in during the day, but being on his own at night was the big concern.



Beris at the filming of the 2002 video

The old family home had plenty of room and in fact the upstairs area was hardly being used as climbing the stairs had become more and more difficult for the householder. The family were attracted to the new homeshare program as a possible solution. The careful assessment processes and the rigorous screening of applicants to live with their father, impressed the family enormously.

As an experienced social worker, interviewing and assessing people's issues and problems was all in a day's work, but assessing and matching people to *live* together was a whole new ballgame! The funniest part in making this first match was the exciting stage of doing the introduction and accompanying the carefully selected aspiring homesharer to meet the householder. "I suddenly realised as I introduced the two parties to each other and we took our seats in the old-fashioned lounge room, that I hadn't thought about how to run this meeting!" recalls Beris. "Luckily for me, the old solicitor switched into automatic – as if he were interviewing a new recruit for the legal practice – and beamed at the young man and said, 'Well, tell me a bit about yourself, young man!' And the young man promptly started talking and the interview went swimmingly from there."

The young man was an excellent match for the householder. An intelligent 35-year-old accountant of Chinese-East Timorese background, he had been working in big mines in central Australia and recently come to Melbourne. He was looking for shared accommodation and was attracted to the homeshare ad in the "Share Accommodation" column in *The Age*. Back in 2000, this was the best—if not the only!—way to recruit homesharers. The young man moved in on the 15th July 2000. The match was highly successful, lasting for exactly two years, and it allowed the householder to fulfill his great wish of staying at home right to the end of his long, long life.

Homeshare Victoria made 10 matches in that first year. All of these were successful and rolled over into the second year. Three of the matches were shortish—lasting six or seven months—but the other seven lasted for 12 months or more, and the longest remained for four years. Five of the 10 householders had more than one match and stayed with the program for several years.

Three of our early matches featured in the wonderful video made in 2002 which you can still **view on our website**. These matches were all long lasting: John and the young couple Liz and Dan were together for 18 months; Lorna and Chris's match lasted four years; and the record-breakers were Bernice and Malcolm, who were together for eight years!

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CAN YOU HELP?

HANZA greatly appreciates any and all donations! We are staffed entirely by volunteers, and even small donations can make a big difference. All donations over \$2 are tax deductible. If you'd like to contribute, hit the button above!

AGEING AT HOME OPTIONS – A@HOS

HANZA is reaching out to other organisations to see whether there is an appetite for working together to promote and advocate for broader, more flexible ways of living as we age.

The home care sector has been arguing for years that the majority of people prefer to age in their own homes, but it has taken the strong voice of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality & Safety to finally get the message across: the Royal Commission's overwhelming conclusion was that the majority of people wish to remain at home as they get older.

However, it is important to emphasise that ageing at home should not be limited to formal aged care services for *later years* of increasing frailty. Ageing at home is a constantly changing situation as needs and circumstances change. We have many needs, of course, and we all need company and social interaction as we age—but most importantly, we need secure, affordable housing.

The home care sector has always played second fiddle to the *big*, expensive and expanding residential aged care sector. It is now time to shift the focus onto home care.

The options to age at home have been developing slowly since the late 1960s but seem to have stood still since the emergence of "packages". While Commonwealth Aged Care Packages (CACPs—now Home Care Packages or HCPs) were a great leap forward, and have been invaluable for supporting people in their frail ageing years at home, there have never been enough of these packages to meet demand. They have always lacked a vital element, namely affordable security and company at night—particularly, of course, for those living alone.

"Australians want the Government and community to assist older people to live well in their own homes for as long as possible. The Royal Commission has been investigating how to achieve that."

— Royal Commissioners the Honourable Tony Pagone QC and Ms Lynelle Briggs AO

So far, increasing the dollars for packages has been the only response by government to the Royal Commission's recommendations. Welcome though this is, it should not be the only solution to the Commission's recommendations for reform and improvement of the home care sector, and HANZA (and others) have been disappointed in the lack of concrete recommendations regarding the home support options available through, and in addition to, the current system of packages. There is an urgent need to introduce broader, more flexible ways of living as we age beyond what exists today.

Ageing@Home Options is essentially a housing focussed framework being shaped by HANZA. It incorporates high standard enabling services that ensure ageing people live where they want to live, with people of their choice.

It's time for creative thinking to reform and build the Ageing@Home sector and see it as a continuum from active ageing as one qualifies for the Seniors Card, through ever-changing circumstances as time goes on. Let's focus on ageing at home safely and well; staying engaged with friends, neighbours and community. Homeshare and other shared living initiatives are the pathway for achieving this and we must build on the work already underway and learn from experience both here and overseas.

Email us at hanza@homeshare.org.au if you would like more information about our A@H campaign!