

## Item 3.2

### St George Community Housing Foyer

File No: S051491

#### Minute by the Lord Mayor

To Council:

Access to affordable and social housing is essential for a diverse, cohesive, and economically successful global city. Yet as we know, Sydney is Australia's least affordable City.

Although tackling housing affordability is primarily the responsibility of the State and Federal Governments, the Council is committed to supporting affordable and social housing any way we can. This includes through our Affordable and Diverse Housing Fund, which we established with \$10 million in 2015, and supplemented with another \$10 million in 2020.

One of our earliest grants under this Fund was a \$3 million grant for St George Community Housing's Foyer Central project at 26 City Road, Chippendale. And earlier this month, I was really inspired and encouraged when I was taken on a tour of the Foyer by two of its impressive young residents.

Like all of the residents in this 53-room purpose-built complex, these young women had been in out-of-home care and were at risk of homelessness when they turned 18 and had to leave, and fortunately they connected with staff and support workers at the Foyer. And now they are clearly thriving.

To prepare their residents for independent living, the Foyer provides wrap around services so they can set and achieve educational and employment goals that will set them up for life. In return, residents are expected to see their development coaches for at least an hour a week, attend a range of life-skill lessons and – most controversially, as far as the residents are concerned – keep their room tidy!

They say "it takes a village" and the Foyer certainly attests to that. It is run by St George Community Housing, Uniting and Social Ventures Australia. The Sisters of Charity provide scholarships that support some of the residents at university and an Aboriginal officer from Redfern Local Area Command runs weekly yarning circles. In addition, many local community organisations, such as OzHarvest, volunteer their time to support the residents achieve their goals.

Staff told me that one of the best things about the Foyer is its location. It is close to buses, trams and trains; three universities; a TAFE; and any number of businesses and employment opportunities. Although the residents clearly benefit from all the City has to offer, we in turn undoubtedly benefit from all the residents have to offer.

I would also like to take this opportunity to commend the NSW Government for raising the age of out-of-home care support from 18 to 21 years of age. Many of us cannot imagine how hard it is for children growing up in out-of-home care facing the transition to adulthood without the love and support of our families. This increased investment from the Government means that young people can be supported for longer in places like the Foyer and be better prepared for independent living.

**Recommendation**

It is resolved that Council:

- (A) reaffirm its commitment to continue taking action to increase affordable housing in the City of Sydney;
- (B) continue to recognise the important role the Affordable and Diverse Housing Fund plays in the development of affordable and diverse housing in our area;
- (C) congratulate St George Community Housing and its partners for delivering on its goal of providing a safe haven for some of our most vulnerable young people; and
- (D) commend the NSW Government for raising the age of support for young people in out-of-home care from 18 to 21 years of age.

**COUNCILLOR CLOVER MOORE**

Lord Mayor