

24 May 2004

Dr Robert Leslie
CEO
Yarra Community Housing Ltd
PO Box 2933
Fitzroy Vic 3065

Dear Dr Leslie

The Brotherhood of St Laurence (BSL) is happy to support Yarra Community Housing (YCH) in its Registration of Intent (ROI) to become an Affordable Housing Association (AHA) and to participate in the growth of affordable housing in Victoria.

Shared history

The BSL has a long history with Yarra Community Housing. In 1997 Yarra Community Housing Group Ltd was incorporated when the new group retained the staff, office, tenants and service policies and procedures of the BSL Rooming House Service. At that time, the BSL became and still is, one of five founding Organisational Members. Accordingly, since the incorporation of YCH the BSL has held a director position on the Board, has a legal relationship with YCH as an organisational member and participates in setting the strategic directions of YCH.

Shared directions

BSL supports this ROI because the strategic directions of YCH are consistent with the Brotherhood's commitment to affordable, well located housing and our exploration of alternative financing options to increase its supply. The broad scope of the ROI is also in line with the strategic directions of BSL and if successful, will provide the opportunity for joint ventures as well as further research and policy advocacy to increase the supply of affordable well-located housing.

Shared client group

The Brotherhood also supports YCH's ROI proposal to evolve into a specialist statewide single persons because single people in lone person households are most vulnerable to poverty and its associated hardships. YCH's commitment to continue to focus primarily on marginalised single people in receipt of Centrelink payments reflects a shared interest in improving the living conditions and life chances of this group.

Shared ideas

The Brotherhood is already a member of a group of non-government organizations, lead by YCH in the exploration of a community hotel model to supply low cost single rooms in the inner metropolitan area. We support YCH's ROI to continue to explore new styles of singles accommodation—self-contained furnished units with the provision of communal utilities and services—as well the "community hotel" concept.

For your information, BSL has also accepted an invitation to become an associate member of Melbourne Affordable Housing who we believe will also be registering their intent in this process. As we are not formal partners to this ROI we do not see any conflict in our relations with the two organizations.

If further information is required, please contact Ms Sally Jope on 9483 1306.

Yours sincerely

John C Wilson
Acting Executive Director