



20
YEARS
SEARMS

Honouring our Past
Building our Future

.....
2022-23 ANNUAL REPORT

SEARMS Community Housing Aboriginal Corporation



Acknowledgment of Country

Walawaani njindiwan – Welcome everyone!*

Recognising Country is essential as we honour and pay respect to the Aboriginal Elders who are the descendants of the Original Custodians; and to the traditions and culture of the People and Land.

SEARMS main office is on the land of the Walbunja Traditional Custodians in Batemans Bay. SEARMS has also established a Ngunnawal Country (Canberra) satellite office and Wodiwodi (Nowra) outreach office.

**Dhurga is the first language of the Walbunja People (NSW far south coast between Wandandian and Wallaga Lake). "Walawaani" means have a safe journey whether you are meeting or parting in the south-east coast Dhurga language.*

WARNING! Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are warned that the content of this report may contain images of deceased persons.

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Key Milestones

2003

Formation of SEARMS

SEARMS was established on October 29, 2003, as a housing cooperative by Aboriginal leaders to address housing needs in Southeast NSW. It was formed through a collaboration of various Aboriginal community organisations.

It started as a Co-Operative that consisted of seven founding Aboriginal Housing Owners as follows:

- Batemans Bay Local Aboriginal Land Council
- Batemans Bay Aboriginal Corporation (Pre Budawang Aboriginal Corporation)
- Bodalla Local Aboriginal Land Council
- Bodalla Aboriginal Housing
- Cobowra Local Aboriginal Land Council
- Mogo Local Aboriginal Land Council
- Ulladulla Local Aboriginal Land Council

2004

SEARMS' first logo

Design origin unknown — made its earliest known appearance in the Board minutes of August 2004.

It remained in use for over a decade, representing the organisation until 2015.



• 2004 SEARMS Logo

2006/15

Manager Leadership

Christine Lee (below left) served as General Manager from May 2004 to February 2015, providing nearly 11 years of stable leadership during a time of significant change.

Recognised for her strong interpersonal skills and deep commitment to community, she was praised by Tom Slockee in 2005 for "moulding her team with a real heartfelt commitment to the Aboriginal people in our communities."

Christine also played an active role in local advocacy, including serving as Chair of the Eurobodalla Shire Council Aboriginal Advisory Committee in the late 2000s.



2008

AHURI Study SEARMS case study

SEARMS was featured in research published by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) and was likely the case study identified as 'NSW008'. The study recognised "coherent regional leadership" as a key strength — reflecting the impact of Tom Slockee's two decades of leadership.



2010/11



Build and Grow Strategy

SEARMS continued to provide management services for AHO and non-AHO homes implementing AHO Build & Grow strategy.



Key Milestones

2011/15

Transition to a Corporation

SEARMS transitioned from a housing cooperative to a more formal corporation structure, allowing it to comply with stricter regulations and grow its operational capacity.

This shift marked an important step in professionalising the organisation.

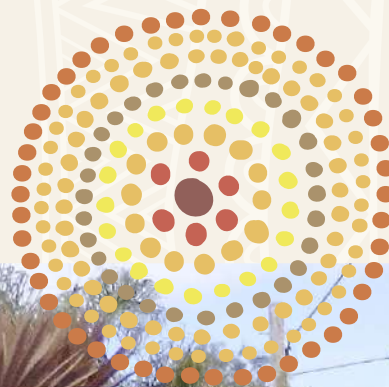
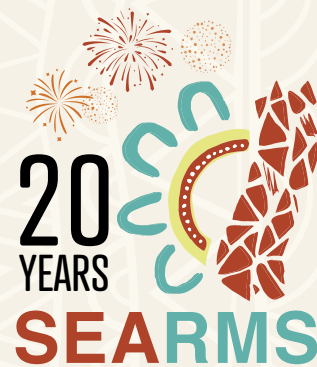


2013/18

Challenging Years

SEARMS faced significant challenges during this period, including changes in Aboriginal housing policy, high staff turnover, and funding difficulties.

Despite this, SEARMS continued to provide essential housing services to the Aboriginal community.



Key Milestones

2018

Growth Providers and Diversification

SEARMS explored new opportunities to diversify its services and partnerships. It reviewed the workforce and restructured to meet the challenges ahead. Facing further AHO subsidy cuts for managed properties, it took on the ageing housing portfolio from Budawang Aboriginal Corporation and prepared for NRSCH registration.



2019/20

Regeneration and Resilience

The December 2019 bushfires had a huge impact on SEARMS staff and tenants. SEARMS staff worked hard to ensure tenants had access to Emergency and Recovery services and housing.

Following this event, SEARMS moved most of its software platforms to the Cloud to protect the organisation from future business interruptions.

This was followed by a cascade of flooding events and the COVID pandemic, all occurring within the first 3 months of 2020.

Despite this challenge, SEARMS became registered under the National Regulatory System for Community Housing providers (NRSCH) in January 2020.

In March 2020, SEARMS was selected by NSW AHO as one of NSW's first Aboriginal Community Housing Growth Providers. This meant SEARMS had met standards for further property management transfers.



2021

Recovery and Renewal

The challenges of the previous years takes a toll on staff with high turnover and cost escalations due to COVID restrictions placing pressure on service delivery.

SEARMS joins forces with NSW Southern Health to stand up Covid pop-up clinics as well as sourcing and delivery care packages to tenant households.

SEARMS opens Canberra presence in July 2020, moving into office space in Feb 2021.

Moves into residential development upon signing AHO AHIF contracts for delivery of 26 new dwellings by June 2022.



■ Canberra Office 2021, 11 Swanson Court



■ Covid 19 Care Packages distributed by staff



**Aboriginal
Housing
Office**



Key Milestones

2022

Diversification and Delivery

SEARMS gained control of additional housing stock from the NSW Aboriginal Housing Office, increasing its capacity to serve more Aboriginal communities across Southeast NSW.

- **SEARMS takes on additional AHO properties under PMT 1 on 31 August for 154 houses in the Nowra area**

- **Leases Batemans Bay Community Centre and moves Batemans Bay office**

- **Bajiindji Mana is created**

An internal social venture undertaking to: increase Aboriginal employment opportunities, have better quality control over timing and attendance for R & M requests, and better control of trade costs.

- **ACHIF continues with significant challenges with the construction industry**

Including cost escalations, voluntary administration – as well as ongoing community opposition to new housing development.

These challenges resulted in the termination of 3 projects for Boomerang, Merrimans LALC and Mogo LALC and reduction in scope of SEARMS secondary housing programme.



■ Batemans Bay Office, 3 Museum Place

2023

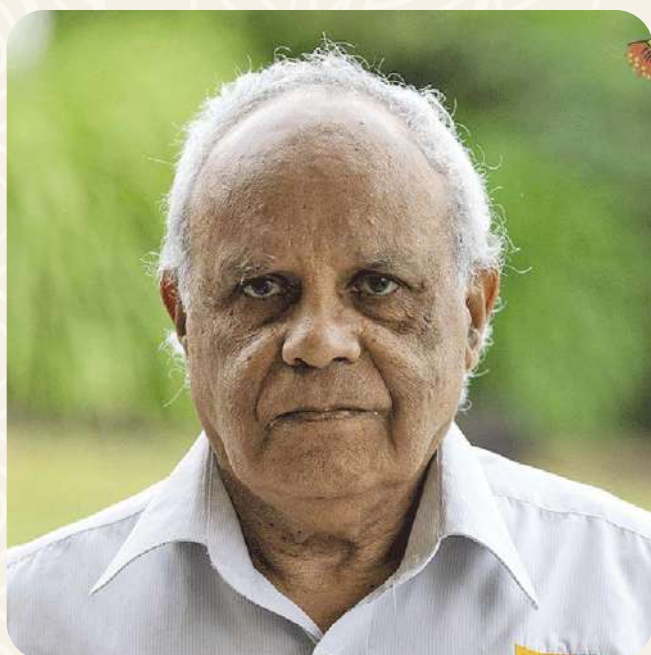


20th Anniversary of SEARMS

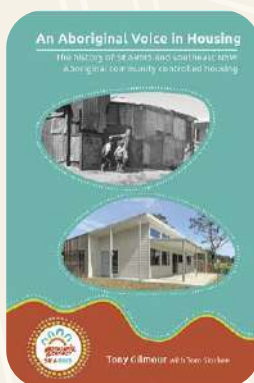
SEARMS celebrated its 20th year of operation, having grown into the fifth largest Aboriginal community-controlled housing organisation in Australia.

The organisation reflected on its journey, challenges, and achievements, continuing its mission of empowering Aboriginal communities through housing.

- NAIDOC Finalist Elder of the Year Award – Uncle Tom Slockee
- Launches book in November – December
 - ACT event
 - Kiama event
 - Brisbane Conference



■ NAIDOC Finalist Elder of the Year Award, Uncle Tom Slockee



- An Aboriginal Voice in Housing book launched in 2023

“ This timeline reflects the significant moments in SEARMS’s history, highlighting both its growth and resilience in the face of challenges over the past two decades ”

Chairman's Message

SEARMS was established to support the small Aboriginal Community Housing Providers (including LALCs) and to grow our organisation by owning and managing AHO properties.

2023 was our year to recognise and celebrate 20 years of providing quality and culturally appropriate Aboriginal Housing Services to our people and communities.

We want a reputation of delivering culturally appropriate Aboriginal housing services to meet the needs of our people. We want to engage and listen to the heart of our people's concerns and hopes. We want to respond to the expressed housing needs in a professional and timely manner.

It's taking a long time, but the AHO finally decided to transfer the management of properties to the Community Controlled Aboriginal Housing sector. SEARMS were transferred properties to manage in the Shoalhaven, Eurobodalla and Queanbeyan areas.

“ SEARMS as a whole has responded to the challenges presented and continued to ensure a high level of service to our tenants and communities ”

I would like to acknowledge the dedication and hard work of our Directors and all staff over the last 12 months. Through, what has been another challenging year for everyone.

In 2020 and 2021 it was recovery & renewal and in 2022 growth and delivery. 2023 was also a year of growth and diversification and our plans for sustainability.

SEARMS as a whole has responded to the challenges presented and continued to ensure a high level of service to our tenants and communities.

SEARMS took over the management of another tranche of AHO properties in the Eurobodalla area with 69 properties in the Queanbeyan area with 77 properties.

One of our core strategies is to offer quality and culturally appropriate housing services to our small Aboriginal Housing organisations. However it is challenging to manage on behalf of the smaller Aboriginal Housing organisations like Local Aboriginal Land Councils. So due to financial constraints placed on SEARMS through low rents and decisions made by leaders who are also tenants, which were not conducive to effective management and with SEARMS having to subsidise from our own resources. SEARMS had no option but to withdraw our services to some smaller organisations.

The good news is that we did grow to managing 460 Social Housing properties though the property management transfers from the AHO.

We did deliver new housing for the Mogo LALC and commenced the secondary dwellings in Batemans Bay.

We have experienced challenges because of delays with development approvals, rising prices for materials and shortage of trades.

■ We were successfully assessed under the National Regulatory System for Community Housing Providers NRSCH assessment as a Tier 3 Community Housing provider. I commend the CEO and the management for all the work and commitment they have given, the many extra hours and dedication to the task in meeting the standards under NRSCH, is appreciated by the Board.

We are establishing and delivering a Core and Cluster service for women and children escaping domestic and family violence (DFV). Core and cluster is a crisis accommodation model that moves away from a shared house environment, to having fully independent living quarters with private bathroom and kitchen facilities. It combines the services and supports of a traditional refuge with the independent living facilities of transitional accommodation.

“ It combines the services and supports of a traditional refuge with the independent living facilities of transitional accommodation ”

We are founding members of the **National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Association (NATSIHA)** and the **Aboriginal Community Housing Industry Association NSW ACHIA** and we continue to be a strong supporters and partners of both the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Peak Bodies.

We continue to advocate and communicate with the ACT government and community in regards to offering our NRSCH accredited Aboriginal Housing services to the community of the ACT.

The challenges ahead;

- Continued quality services to our tenants and communities
- Gaining funds to develop new housing for Aboriginal People
- The ongoing demands for more Aboriginal Housing
- The cost of living is affecting our tenants and households, so rental affordability remains challenging for many Aboriginal people, with many families requiring additional supportive services to keep them in a house and out of the homelessness
- Rationalising organisational structure without compromising service standards
- Rent setting and management
- Maintaining National Regulatory System for Community Housing Providers (NRSCH) registration
- The successful management of the risks involved in a growth strategy
- Successful early intervention for at-risk households and sourcing funding for seamless case management services for those households; and,
- Continued embedding of cultural appropriate and informed service policy and processes.
- Diversification of our housing options.

I am thankful for the strength and continuity of the Directors. Thanks to our strong, steadfast and dedicated CEO Kim Sinclair. Kim's leadership and inspiration has forged a team of great Aboriginal Community Housing workers. I thank our people who are in the front line, helping, advising and supporting our people on a daily basis.

Kim has a caring and professional way in dealing with complex staffing issues. Our current staff and our communities have benefited because of Kim's advocacy and support. Kim's leadership and strong yet caring management has lifted the morale and productivity of our people.

“ Kim's leadership and inspiration has forged a team of great Aboriginal Community Housing workers. I thank our people who are in the front line, helping, advising and supporting our people on a daily basis ”

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our tenants, customers and the local communities along with our partners and stakeholders for the continued support and collaboration to ensure that we are fostering better outcomes and opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities across our region.

It has been both a satisfying and challenging year, we continued to deliver our tenancy and property management service to our tenants, customers and local communities throughout the Capital Region.

In the coming year, we will look to growth opportunities under Housing Australia. We will strengthen our current collaborative partnerships and build new supportive ones with our tenants, customers, communities, and stakeholders to continue to meet needs and ensure we are contributing to better outcomes for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.



Tom Slockee
Chairman



CEO's Report

In this 20th year of SEARMS, it is clearer than ever that we stand on the shoulders of those who came before us — visionaries who held firm despite the unique challenges faced by the Aboriginal housing sector. These pioneers carved out a space for an Aboriginal voice, one that speaks with authority earned through decades of understanding how government policies have disadvantaged and marginalised Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Yet, despite these obstacles, they remained committed to engaging and participating, shaping a better future for the Aboriginal organisations and communities dedicated to improving housing and housing outcomes.

“ Shaping a better future for the Aboriginal organisations and communities dedicated to improving housing and housing outcomes ”

This journey wouldn't have been possible without allies who ensure that organisations like SEARMS have a seat at the table. This year, we were fortunate to collaborate with one such ally, Dr. Tony Gilmour, who has a long history in Australia's community housing sector. He assisted us in facilitating strategic planning sessions with the Board and helped document SEARMS's 20-year journey.

The result is a historical account of our organisation's highs and lows. It details how changing government policies forced SEARMS to adapt, contract, and evolve to meet financial challenges, while still providing services to our members and tenants. You can purchase a copy of this book from our SEARMS offices in Batemans Bay and Canberra or order it online at: <https://searms-community-housing-aboriginal-corporation.square.site/>

The book is a testament to the strong governance and financial literacy that have enabled SEARMS Boards and CEOs to navigate the political fluctuations of government policies and funding models over the years. SEARMS has also weathered external challenges such as bushfires, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the struggles of the development and construction industry.



With our reserves dwindling, rental revenue and management fees remain our primary financial support with operational funding at an all time low of \$138,453 for just 47 properties. A marked contrast to 2011 when SEARMS received operational funding of just over \$1 m to service 285 households.

This year, we've faced another challenge — misinformation spread by a small group of tenants and non-tenants, which has affected staff and service levels. Addressing these external pressures has been difficult, especially without additional funding.

Unsurprisingly, this has impacted on staffing levels requiring a further organisation review and restructure in an effort to maintain service standards within a constrained financial situation.

Despite these challenges, I invite you to reflect on SEARMS's many accomplishments this year and to recognise the resilience of our Board members and staff as we continue this journey.



Kim Sinclair
Chief Executive Officer





Our Mission

Since its inception in 2003, SEARMS has remained committed to improving housing and housing-related services for Aboriginal peoples, as the need for better housing continues to grow. With the gap in outcomes for Aboriginal communities remaining a critical challenge, our mission is focused on action, guided by our core values and strategic goals. The inclusion of housing in the Closing the Gap priorities represents a welcomed step toward addressing these disparities, and we are committed to being part of the solution.

“ Aboriginal communities remaining a critical challenge, our mission is focused on action, guided by our core values and strategic goals ”

Our mission is to improve services and outcomes for Aboriginal peoples through our key areas of focus:

- Relief of poverty
- Housing and homelessness services
- Social enterprise businesses
- Training and employment opportunities
- Social welfare programs
- Land and property dealings
- Homeownership options
- Community development activities and infrastructure
- Education, health, housing, and employment resources for the community
- Maintaining a deductible gift recipient fund

At SEARMS, we believe Aboriginal people deserve more choices across the housing continuum, including access to culturally appropriate housing and homelessness support services that are currently delivered by non-Aboriginal organisations. Our vision is to be the Aboriginal housing provider of choice, meeting the needs of the 1,700 households in our area currently living in social housing, while empowering Aboriginal communities through employment and participation in our growth and success.

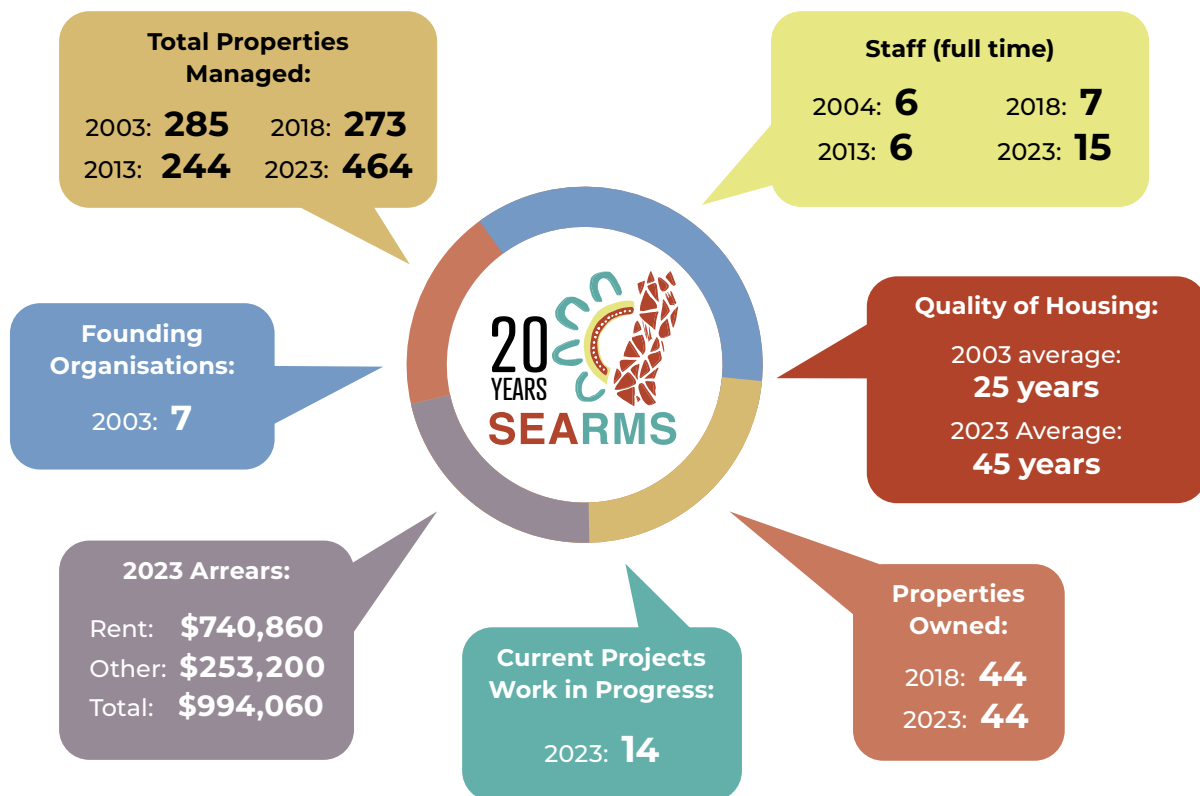
Our Strategic Goals for 2023–2027

Our strategic goals are the foundation of our ongoing efforts to close the gap and address systemic inequities:

1. **Deliver High Quality Services:** We remain focused on providing exceptional service to our tenants, partner organisations, and communities, ensuring that the needs of Aboriginal people are at the heart of everything we do.
2. **Provide Leadership and Innovation:** SEARMS aims to lead the Aboriginal community housing sector through innovative practices that set new benchmarks for Aboriginal-led housing solutions, supporting Aboriginal workforce development and inclusion at all levels.
3. **Strengthen Organisational Viability:** We will continue to grow and diversify SEARMS, ensuring our long-term sustainability and empowering our Aboriginal workforce to take on leadership roles in the organisation and broader housing sector.
4. **Transform SEARMS into an Efficient and Resilient Business:** Our ongoing transformation focuses on increasing operational efficiency and resilience, while ensuring that our services are both culturally appropriate and responsive to the evolving needs of the communities we serve.

Closing the Gap

We believe that housing is the foundation for better social, economic, and health outcomes for Aboriginal families and communities. To close the gap, we aim to provide more than just housing; we strive to create opportunities for Aboriginal people to thrive. This includes designing and building homes that better suit the needs of our diverse communities and offering integrated support services that help sustain tenancies and improve lives. By expanding the Aboriginal workforce and ensuring that our people have leadership opportunities, SEARMS is committed to being a part of the solution for Aboriginal self-determination and prosperity.



■ 2023 Staff Strategic Day

2022 – 2023 Key Achievements

2022

- **June – July:** SEARMS attended meetings and contributed to NATSIHA's Aboriginal Workforce Development Strategy.
- **August:** Successful in securing a further 146 tenancy management transfers from the AHO comprised of Eurobodalla Shire 69 properties; Queanbeyan 77 properties. These AHO transfers took effect December 2022 and proved challenging as SEARMS and AHO navigate the age of the stock and property condition, as well as high rental arrears on transfer.
- Ongoing meetings and discussions with Owner Organisations to update SEARMS Management agreements noting AHO notice to cease their Head Leases with Owner Organisations.
- **June–September:** Meetings with Department of Communities & Justice, Katungul AMS and Murria Mia to contribute to modelling of Aboriginal Specialist Homelessness Service.
- **September:** Attend formal launch of NATSIHA including housing workshop in Canberra.
- **October:** Submit RFT for Core & Cluster Tranche Golf Links.
- **November:** Social media trolling, impacting pending AHO transfers of 6 December and SEARMS recent reviews of its own portfolio.



2023

- **February:** RFT Core & Cluster Tranche 2 – Revised for another more suitable property (similar value).
- SVE grant for assets successful \$231k.
- **March:** On 31st March, AHO Head Leases with Batemans Bay LALC And Ngambri cease. SEARMS hands back BBLALC and signs Management Agreement with Ngambri.
- SEARMS meets with Budawang members.
- **April:** SEARMS signed ACT Government contract to auspice Clybucca Dreaming program that supports women exiting custody, homeless in the ACT.
- CHAA contract signed.

- AHO ceases Head Lease with Ngunnawal HAC with no governance structure in place. SEARMS holds until 31 May 2023.
- **May:** Strategic Planning day.
- CHIA NSW Conference Sydney.
- 5th Housing and Homelessness forum, Darwin.
- Uncle Tom finalist in National NAIDOC Male Elder of the Year 2023.



- **June:** NRSCH compliance assessment returned.
- AHO updated rental policy to ACHRP.
- NHFIC roadshow.
- Developments: ACHIF terminates Ainslie Parade, PC is mutually terminated and new PC appointed for SEARMS 2nd Dwellings, close to completion Mogo properties.
- A9 Website refresh commences.
- 20 Year book commences.



■ SEARMS's SVE Team



For Our Elders

NAIDOC Week

2-9 JULY 2023

#NAIDOC2023 #ForOurElders

 @naidocweek  @naidocweek  facebook.com/NAIDOC

For Our Elders, Bobbi Lockyer

Where there is knowledge there are our Elders. Our Elders paved the pathways for us, taught us our knowledge, our history, they passed down their art, stories and wisdom. Our Elders are the foundation of our communities and role models for our children. With this poster I wanted to showcase how important our Elders are in passing down traditions and culture to our children and future.

Aboriginal Flag designed by Mr Harold Thomas. Torres Strait Islander Flag reproduced by kind permission of the Torres Strait Island Regional Council, designed by the late Mr Bernard Namok.



naidoc.org.au





NAIDOC Week

In May 2023, Uncle Tom Slockee was a finalist in the National NAIDOC awards for Male Elder of the Year.

Thomas (Tom) Slockee is a respected Elder who helped pioneer and lead the movement for secure and affordable housing for Aboriginal people across six decades. His contribution has changed the lives of people and communities in the NSW south coast, across the state, and the nation.

Realising the need to influence broader society, he was the first Aboriginal councillor of Eurobodalla Shire, later serving as Deputy Mayor. In the 1990s, Tom was a member, then chairperson, of the influential Aboriginal Housing Development Committee which advised the NSW Housing Minister. This led to the passing of the NSW Aboriginal Housing Act (1998) which established the NSW Aboriginal Housing Office. He was the Aboriginal Housing Office inaugural chair and again led the organisation later in the 2000s. Through his leadership the Aboriginal Housing Office promoted a new regional model to support smaller, community focused Aboriginal housing organisations.

“ Aboriginal communities remaining a critical challenge, our mission is focused on action, guided by our core values and strategic goals ”

In 2003, Tom was a co-founder and first chairperson of the South Eastern Aboriginal Regional Management Service (SEARMS) Aboriginal Community Housing. SEARMS is a regional management body which began by working with six local land councils and Aboriginal housing organisations. Starting with just over 100 tenancies, SEARMS is now one of the five largest Aboriginal housing organisations in Australia. SEARMS currently manage 500 homes for Aboriginal people across south-east NSW and the ACT.

Tom remains chairperson, leading a majority Aboriginal board and staff. Rather than just managing tenancies, SEARMS now develops new homes, employing Aboriginal Housing Officers and cadets, boosts Aboriginal trades employment, supports communities and has helped rebuild homes destroyed by the recent bushfires which devastated south-east coast communities.

“ SEARMS supports communities and has helped rebuild homes destroyed by the recent bushfires which devastated south-east coast communities ”

Over the last 5 years Tom has been central in establishing, and acting as chairperson and director, of 2 new peak bodies: the NSW Aboriginal Community Housing Industry Association and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing NATSIHA.

Tom also Co-Chaired the National Working Group to develop the Housing Sector Strengthening Plan for Closing the Gap.

Further links:

<https://www.naidoc.org.au/award-finalist/tom%C2%A0slockee>

<https://www.abc.net.au/listen/programs/speakingout/tom-slockee/102402162>

<https://www.abc.net.au/listen/programs/drawingroom/uncle-thomas-slockee-on-a-lifetime-of-service-to-his-community/102571890>

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-07-01/batemans-bay-aboriginal-housing-advocate-naidoc-award-nomination/102542310>

<https://www.eternitynews.com.au/culture/struggling-to-find-a-good-family-home-drove-tom-to-fight/>

<https://www.abc.net.au/listen/programs/speakingout/speaking-out/102375164>



Tenancy & Property Management

At SEARMS, we are committed to delivering housing services that not only meet the needs of our tenants but also recognise the profound effects of trauma on both tenants and staff. Our approach to tenancy and asset management, project development, and policy recommendations is rooted in an understanding of trauma and its impact on individuals and communities, particularly within Aboriginal communities.

Our key services include:

- **Tenancy Management:** Providing local, social, and affordable tenancies with a focus on tenant well-being and long-term stability.
- **Asset Management:** Ensuring our housing stock is maintained to a high standard through ongoing repairs and maintenance.
- **Project Management:** Leading residential development projects that aim to increase the availability of culturally appropriate housing.
- **Housing Policy Recommendations:** Offering guidance on rent setting and arrears management to owner organisations to ensure fairness and support for tenants.
- **Residential Property Development:** Expanding our housing capacity to better meet the needs of our Aboriginal communities, starting from 2021.

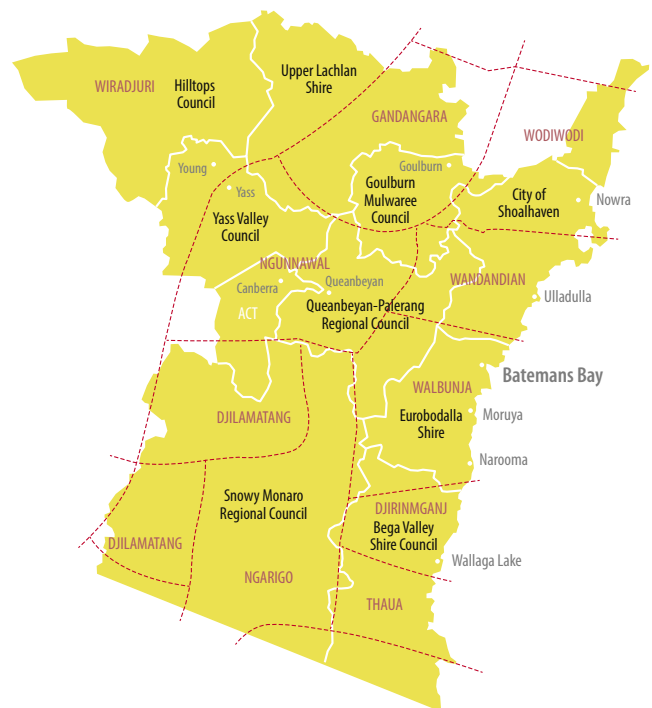
A core component of our service delivery is ensuring that tenants have access to the supports they need to sustain their tenancies. To do so, we work closely with tenant advocacy provider Murra Mia and a range of locally based health and employment services. We understand that trauma affects the ability to maintain housing stability, so our services are designed to be supportive and responsive to the unique needs of each tenant.

We also acknowledge the impact of trauma on our Aboriginal staff, who bring lived experience and cultural knowledge to their roles. Trauma-informed care is not only about supporting tenants but also recognizing the importance of mental health and well-being for those who provide care. Our Aboriginal staff often face the challenges of working through trauma, both personally and collectively, and we strive to create a supportive and empathetic work environment that prioritises their healing and resilience.

Where possible, we promote Aboriginal employment within our operations, particularly in the procurement of contractors and services. This supports both economic empowerment and the well-being of our community, creating employment opportunities that are culturally safe and provide opportunities for growth and healing.

Education and consultation with stakeholders — from tenants and client organisations to local service providers — is central to our work. By engaging in these ongoing conversations, we ensure that our services remain culturally appropriate, trauma-informed, and sustainable. This is essential to meeting our responsibilities and obligations in providing effective housing solutions that close the gap in outcomes for Aboriginal communities.

SEARMS is a recognised AHO Growth Provider and became a registered community housing provider under the National Regulatory System for Community Housing (NRSCH) in January 2020. This registration provides additional opportunities to expand our housing options, with a focus on delivering culturally safe and trauma-informed services for Aboriginal tenants and their families.



Source Aboriginal Language Groups: NB Tindale 1974

Residential Development

Advancing Self-Determination Through Residential Development

SEARMS is proud to have taken a transformative step into residential development — a pivotal move in advancing self-determination for Aboriginal communities. By leading the design and construction of new homes, we are actively responding to the growing need for culturally appropriate housing while enabling Aboriginal communities to shape their own living environments.

This strategic expansion allows us to deliver housing solutions that are not only fit-for-purpose but also deeply reflective of the unique values, needs, and aspirations of our people. In doing so, SEARMS is fostering greater economic participation, strengthening local capacity, and creating opportunities for sustainable growth. Our residential development initiative is laying the foundation for long-term community wellbeing, cultural integrity, and self-sufficiency.

Supporting Aboriginal Organisations Post-Bushfires

In the aftermath of the devastating bushfires, many Aboriginal organisations faced significant challenges. Insurance claims took over 15 months to finalise, and the payouts were insufficient to fully fund rebuilding efforts. The opening of the Aboriginal Community Housing Innovation Fund (ACHIF) grant round by the Aboriginal Housing Office in December 2020 presented a critical opportunity.

SEARMS submitted several applications to this grant round and was notified of its success in April 2021. We secured funding on behalf of Mogo Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC), Boomerang Meeting Place, and Merrimans LALC — supporting their recovery and development goals.

Additionally, SEARMS obtained funding for a secondary dwelling project aimed at constructing new two-bedroom homes on existing SEARMS-owned properties. More than 15 suitable sites were identified by our contractors, and tenants were invited to participate in the program. Ten households provided consent, primarily to alleviate overcrowding or to provide secure housing for close family members experiencing unstable or unsuitable living conditions.

Through these efforts, SEARMS continues to demonstrate our commitment to supporting Aboriginal organisations, enhancing housing outcomes, and building resilient communities.

Mogo Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) Projects

SEARMS continues to support the development and delivery of housing projects in partnership with Mogo LALC. The following progress was recorded:

■ Park Street, Mogo

Practical completion was achieved on 23 September 2022, with the Occupancy Certificate issued shortly thereafter.

■ Veitch Street, Mogo

This property also reached practical completion on 23 September 2022, with the Occupancy Certificate following in the weeks after.

■ Ainslie Parade, Mogo

This property was deemed structurally unsafe due to extensive termite damage. SEARMS successfully secured funding to demolish the existing structure and construct two replacement dwellings (a three-bedroom and a two-bedroom home).

Unfortunately, construction was halted due to threats made against the contractor and SEARMS staff, stemming from ongoing conflict between Mogo LALC members, tenants, directors, and SEARMS.

SEARMS remains committed to working collaboratively with all stakeholders to resolve these issues and ensure a safe environment for work to resume. In parallel, SEARMS is reviewing termination clauses in the building contract as a contingency measure.



■ Veitch Street, Mogo, after the 2020 fire
Builder/Principal Contractor: Bruce Mullaney Builder

Boomerang Meeting Place

Significant efforts continue in the planning and delivery of new housing at the Boomerang Meeting Place, including:

- **Dhurga Street, Mogo**

A construction contract was signed in January 2022. However, progress has been delayed due to the site's classification as a Flame Zone. While the builder originally priced the project based on this risk rating, they are now seeking to reassess the site to a BAL-40 rating to potentially reduce associated costs and requirements.

SEARMS continues to liaise with the builder and relevant authorities to progress the Development Application (DA).

SEARMS Projects – Secondary Dwellings

- **Clare Crescent, Batehaven**

Additional site works were required to remove an old septic tank, resulting in an unanticipated cost of \$19,000.

Progress on the broader secondary dwellings program includes:

- 7 of 9 concrete slabs completed and at the framing stage.
- Project is currently up to five months behind schedule, with delays attributed to site complexities and contractor availability.



Residential Development

Park Street, Mogo, after the 2020 bushfires

Builder/Principal Contractor: Bruce Mullaney Builder



Park Street, Mogo, rebuilt after the 2020 bushfires

Builder/Principal Contractor: Bruce Mullaney Builder



Veitch Street, Mogo, after the 2020 bushfires

Builder/Principal Contractor: Bruce Mullaney Builder



Veitch Street, Mogo, rebuilt after the 2020 bushfires

Builder/Principal Contractor: Bruce Mullaney Builder





Residential Development

Secondary Dwellings Progress



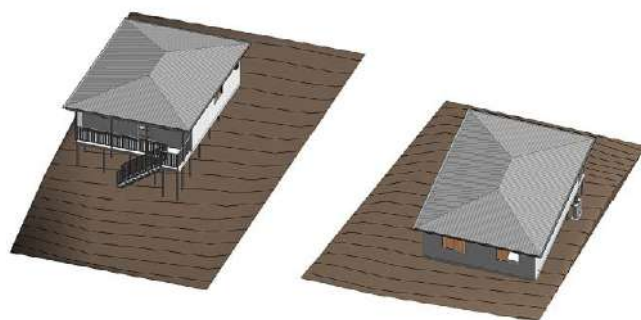
■ Clare Crescent, Batehaven



■ Clare Crescent, Batehaven



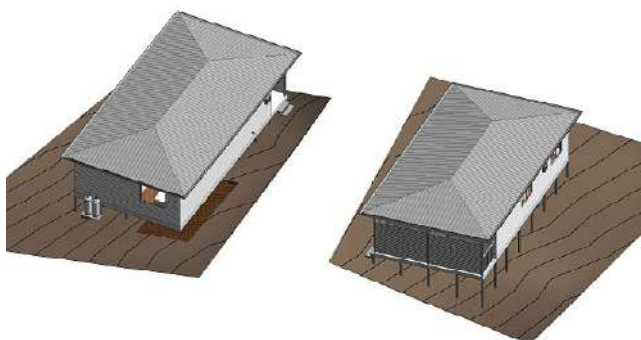
■ Clare Crescent, Batehaven



■ Clare Crescent, Batehaven



■ Berrima Place, Catalina



■ Berrima Place, Catalina

Residential Development

Secondary Dwellings Progress



■ Pacific Street, Batemans Bay



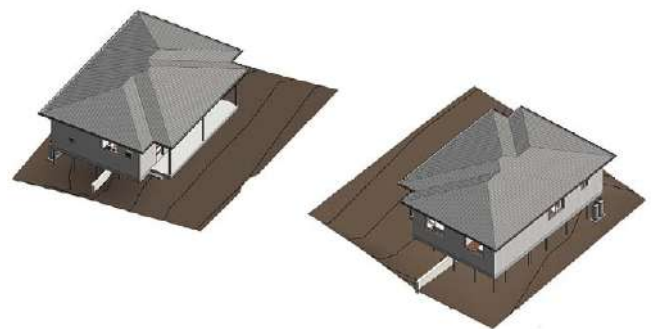
■ Pacific Street, Batemans Bay



■ Ridge Street, Catalina



■ Ridge Street, Catalina



Clybucca Dreaming

Strengthening Aboriginal-led solutions

In 2022–2023, Clybucca Dreaming Consulting was awarded an **ACT Government Family and Domestic Violence Grant**, with auspice support provided by SEARMS to provide its Yhurwun Bullan program for women leaving custody in the ACT.

Clybucca Dreaming is an Aboriginal-led organisation committed to breaking cycles of disadvantage and creating safer, stronger futures.

“ By integrating allied health, justice, housing, and legal supports, Clybucca Dreaming delivers culturally grounded solutions that empower individuals, families, and communities ”

Their holistic, trauma-informed approach addresses interconnected challenges — including incarceration, domestic and family violence, and crime — through Aboriginal-led case management

and wraparound services. By integrating allied health, justice, housing, and legal supports, Clybucca Dreaming delivers culturally grounded solutions that empower individuals, families, and communities.

As auspice, SEARMS is proud to walk alongside Clybucca Dreaming by providing governance and corporate support to help strengthen their reach and impact. This partnership reflects our shared commitment to the principles of Closing the Gap — truth-telling, reconciliation, reparation, and the growth of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led initiatives.

Through this collaboration, Clybucca Dreaming has been able to focus on what matters most: delivering life-changing, community-driven services. Together, we are building capacity, creating opportunities, and fostering long-term positive outcomes for Aboriginal people across the ACT and beyond.



Yhurwun Bullan

Nurturing · Caring · Healing

Governance

At SEARMS, we are proud to have a Board comprised of highly skilled Aboriginal leaders who bring deep expertise, lived experience, and cultural knowledge to our governance processes.

Our Board members are integral to the strength and resilience of SEARMS, guiding our organisation with a focus on sustainable growth, cultural integrity, and the empowerment of Aboriginal communities.

Their leadership is vital in navigating the challenges we face, and their commitment to closing the gap ensures that SEARMS remains a trusted provider of culturally appropriate housing and services for Aboriginal peoples.



Tom Slockee
(Chairperson)

Finance & Audit Committee Member

Tom Slockee was born in a humble hessian bag house and raised within a close-knit Aboriginal community where, despite limited material possessions, care, generosity, and shared responsibility were foundational values. His father and uncles built the first proper house he ever lived in – an early example of the importance of safe and secure housing in shaping lives and communities.

Following his service in the Australian Army, Tom settled in the Batemans Bay region. There, he was confronted by the continuing challenges faced by Aboriginal people in securing housing. Experiencing racial discrimination firsthand when trying to find a rental property, Tom was driven to take action. He founded Budawang Housing Corporation to help address the systemic barriers Aboriginal families faced in accessing housing.

Tom's leadership and unwavering commitment to community service soon gained broader recognition. He was appointed by the NSW Government to lead the Aboriginal Housing Development Committee (ADC) – the precursor to the Aboriginal Housing Office (AHO). Tom served as the inaugural Chairperson of both bodies, shaping policy and laying the foundations for long-term housing support for Aboriginal communities.

In 2003, Tom played a pivotal role in establishing the South Eastern Aboriginal Regional Management

Service (SEARMS) as a Co-Operative, serving as its first Chairperson. He returned to the role in 2011, guiding SEARMS through its transition to an Aboriginal Corporation under the Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act, with a skills- and merit-based board structure.

A servant leader, Tom is widely respected for his transformational vision, inclusive leadership, and deep sense of social justice. He is known for fostering trust, building community, and bringing people together to create sustainable, long-term change. His work is grounded in faith and a strong moral compass, always driven by a mission to serve those doing it tough.

Throughout his career, Tom has held numerous key leadership positions, including:

- Chairperson, Budawang Aboriginal Corporation
- Chairperson, Murra Mia Tenants Advocacy and Advisory Service
- Chairperson, Aboriginal Housing Office (AHO)
- Deputy Mayor, Eurobodalla Shire Council
- Chairperson, Umbarra Regional Council (ATSIC)
- Board Member, Campbell Page Ltd
- Board Chair, Southern Area Health Services Board
- Director, Aboriginal Hostels Ltd
- Board Member, Batemans Bay Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC)

Tom Slockee continues to be a tireless advocate for the rights, dignity, and wellbeing of Aboriginal communities, working to ensure that all people have the opportunity to live with security, respect, and hope for the future.



James Allen
(Director)

Resigned November 2022

Jim is the former Chairperson of the Batemans Bay Local Aboriginal Land Council. He currently manages the Murra Mia Tenant Advice and Advocacy Service, providing vital support to tenants and communities in their interactions with landlords and the Consumer, Trader and Tenancy Tribunal.

Jim has served as an active member of the Housing Appeals Committee (HAC) and was a dedicated

advocate for Aboriginal housing as a Director on the NSW Aboriginal Housing Office Board.

With a deep commitment to social justice, Jim has long been a strong voice for the disadvantaged and marginalised – regardless of background or social standing. His work is driven by a passion to ensure that all individuals have access to fair representation, housing security, and a platform to be heard.

Jim resigned from the SEARMS Board in November 2022.



Roslyn Field
(Director)

Development Committee Member
Resigned November 2022

Roslyn Field (née Ella) is a proud Walbunja/Yuin Elder with a lifelong commitment to advancing Aboriginal communities. Based in Sydney for most of her life, Roslyn began her career as an infants school teacher before moving into the Australian Public Service, where she spent 22 years in senior roles focused on Aboriginal education, training, and employment. She retired in 2007 as the NSW Director of Indigenous Education with the Department of Education, Science and Training.

After a year dedicated to caring for her family, Roslyn took on the role of CEO at the La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council – initially a short-term appointment that evolved into three impactful years of leadership. In 2011, she joined the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) in Narooma as Joint Management Coordinator and currently serves as Chairperson of the Gulaga National Park Board of Management.

Roslyn has spent her entire career working to improve outcomes for Koori and Murri people, with a strong focus on community development, capacity building, and creating pathways to education, employment, and socio-economic independence. Having experienced the challenges of overcrowded and inadequate housing firsthand, she brought her passion and leadership to the SEARMS Board, advocating for improved housing conditions and better futures for Aboriginal families.

Roslyn resigned from the SEARMS Board in November 2022.



Cheryl Moreton
(Director)

Finance & Audit Committee Member

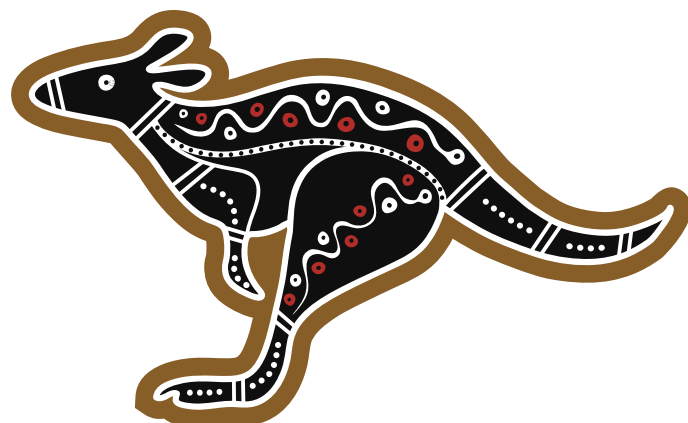
Cheryl Moreton began her career in 1986 with the NSW Aboriginal Land Council, (initially Far South Coast Regional Aboriginal Land Council). Following her redundancy in 2004, Cheryl continued her commitment to Aboriginal affairs through various roles across community organisations.

She holds a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAE40110) and is currently undertaking a Certificate IV in Business to further enhance her leadership and governance skills.

Cheryl currently serves in several key leadership roles, including:

- Chairperson, Bodalla Local Aboriginal Land Council
- Director, Bodalla Aboriginal Housing Company
- Board Member, Regional Aboriginal Housing Committee (RAHC)
- Chief Executive Officer, Wagonga Local Aboriginal Land Council

Her extensive experience and dedication to community development make her a valued member of the Finance & Audit Committee.



Governance



Anne Greenaway
(Director)

Chair of Finance & Audit Committee

Anne Greenaway is a proud Aboriginal woman, traditionally from Taree, who has lived and worked in communities across the Far South Coast for over 22 years. With more than 30 years of experience in the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health and Housing sectors, Anne has been a tireless advocate and leader in supporting her people.

Though now retired from full-time work, Anne remains deeply engaged in her community. She continues to represent and advocate on a wide range of Aboriginal issues and currently serves as Chair of the Little Yuin Preschool and Family Centre at Wallaga Lake. She is also a proud great-grandmother to seven great-grandchildren.

Anne holds the following qualifications:

- Bachelor of Arts, Master of Letters (History)
- Diploma of Business (Management)
- Certificate IV in Governance
- Certificate IV in Training and Assessment

Key experience includes:

- Current Board Member, SEARMS (8 years)
- Current Chair, Little Yuin Preschool and Family Centre
- Former CEO, Merrimans Local Aboriginal Land Council (6 years)
- Former Director, AH&MRC (NSW Aboriginal Health Peak Organisation – over 15 years)
- Former Deputy Chair and CEO, Katungul Aboriginal Corporation (South Coast Medical Service)
- Former Director, NSW Aboriginal Legal Service
- Former Director, Oolong House
- Former Manager, Moruya Women's Refuge

Anne's leadership, dedication, and lived experience continue to contribute meaningfully to the wellbeing and future of Aboriginal communities on the Far South Coast and beyond.



Steve Shanahan
(Director)

Finance & Audit Committee Member

Appointed as an Independent/Specialist Director at the 2018 AGM, Steve Shanahan brought with him over 30 years of experience in the housing sector across the ACT and NSW. His career has included leadership roles in youth, special purpose housing, strategic and business planning, and culminated in executive positions within the Department of Family & Community Services, where he oversaw public housing operations in Southern NSW. Steve also previously served as Interim General Manager of SEARMS.

A committed advocate for 'housing first' approaches, Steve is particularly focused on improving housing access and sustainability in regional communities. His work has consistently aimed to integrate support services with housing delivery to ensure long-term, stable outcomes for individuals and families in need.





Brendan Moyle

(Director)

Chair of Development Committee

Resigned 13 January 2023

Brendan Moyle is currently the Branch Manager, Delivery – Operational Policy at the Department of Social Services (DSS). In this role, he leads the development of strategic operational policies that underpin the effective delivery of DSS-funded programs and services across the Department's national network.

Brendan brings extensive experience in public policy, governance, and Indigenous affairs. He is a current member of the Aboriginal Economic Development Advisory Committee for the NSW Aboriginal Land Council, contributing to strategies that support economic opportunities for Aboriginal communities.

His previous roles include General Manager Operations at Aboriginal Hostels Limited, and Senior Advisor, Indigenous Organisational Capability at the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, where he was responsible for developing national policy frameworks to enhance the capability of Indigenous organisations.

Brendan has also served as Director, Indigenous Leadership and Governance Frameworks at the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, and as Branch Manager, Governance at the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations, where he played a key role in strengthening governance systems within Indigenous corporations.

Brendan resigned from the SEARMS Board in January 2023.



Jason Oakley

(Director – appointed AGM 2020)

Member, Finance & Audit/
Development Committee

Jason Oakley is a seasoned senior public servant with diverse experience spanning both government and non-government sectors. He has a proven track record in delivering effective policy development, risk management, and program and service delivery frameworks. Jason consistently achieves results through comprehensive stakeholder engagement, strategic policy formulation, and efficient program administration, all within fast-paced and high-pressure environments.

His expertise also extends to high-level events management, where he has successfully led and coordinated a variety of complex events. These include significant projects for Ministerial Offices, the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), Indigenous Youth Leadership Programs, and initiatives for the National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC).



Our Team 2022 – 2023

During 2022–2023, SEARMS strengthened its organisational structure as part of CEO succession planning by introducing a full executive leadership tier under the CEO. This included the establishment of a Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Chief Services Officer (CSO), and Chief Operating Officer (COO). These roles have been critical in building leadership capability across the organisation and ensuring SEARMS is positioned for long-term sustainability and growth.

“ These roles have been critical in building leadership capability across the organisation and ensuring SEARMS is positioned for long-term sustainability and growth ”

A strong emphasis was placed on developing Aboriginal leadership pathways, with targeted investment in building the skills and confidence of Aboriginal staff in both executive and management roles. This approach reflects SEARMS' commitment to Aboriginal self-determination and governance. However, this work has also been undertaken in the context of significant funding constraints and the additional cultural load borne by Aboriginal staff, including the impacts of lateral violence and an ongoing social media campaign targeting SEARMS. These challenges have translated into higher operational costs, increased absenteeism, and the need for additional support mechanisms across the organisation.

Recruitment and Workforce Development

The SEARMS team remained dedicated to attracting, recruiting, and retaining qualified and experienced Aboriginal staff. The organisation recognises that a strong, culturally informed workforce is vital for delivering housing outcomes that meet the needs of our communities.

Key workforce development initiatives in 2022–2023 included:

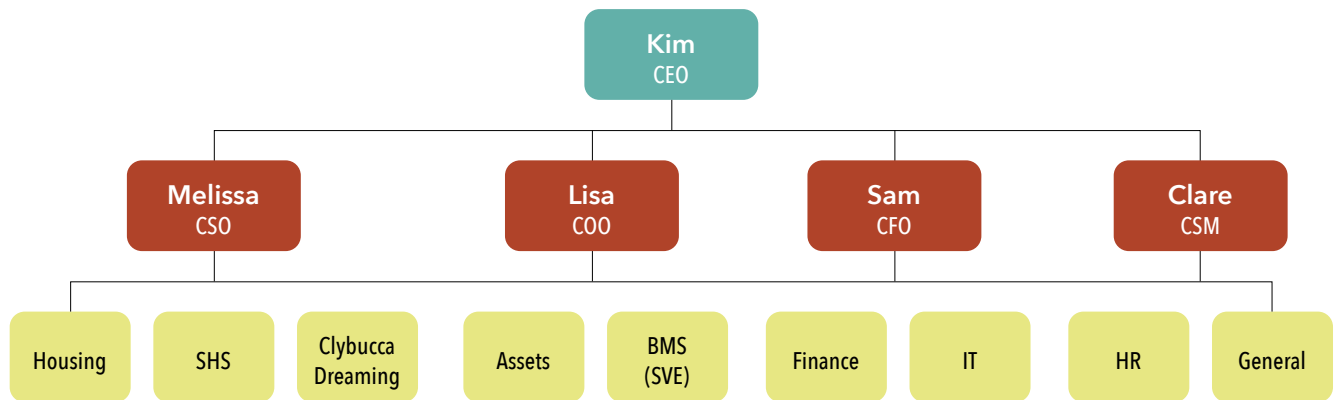
- **Professional Development:** Continued investment in ongoing training, including access to the Employee Assistance Program, and sector-specific courses delivered through the Australasian Housing Institute, the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD), and other recognised providers.
- **Cadetship Program:** SEARMS auspiced and supported Aboriginal cadets to complete the CHIA NSW Certificate IV in Social Housing program, providing structured pathways into the sector for emerging Aboriginal professionals.
- **Specialist Training:** Staff accessed tailored training to strengthen compliance, governance, and service delivery capacity, ensuring SEARMS maintains its high-quality standards in line with NRSCH requirements.
- **Auspicing Partnerships:** SEARMS also auspiced programs such as Clybucca Dreaming, broadening opportunities for Aboriginal workforce participation and community development.

A Dedicated and Resilient Team

Despite challenges, the SEARMS team has demonstrated remarkable resilience, professionalism, and dedication to community outcomes. Our staff not only deliver housing services but also carry the responsibility of providing culturally safe support to tenants and their families.

Through investment in professional training, cadetship pathways, and workforce support initiatives, SEARMS continues to strengthen its team and uphold our vision of a community-led, culturally grounded housing service.

SEARMS 2023 Organisational Structure



Tenancy & Property Management Services:

17 Staff overall – 15 x FTE and 2 x PTE (65% Aboriginal)
489 Properties
11 Development Sites

Cadets:

1 x Cadet (100% Aboriginal)

Bagiindji Mana (SVE):

2 x FTE + Casuals (100% Aboriginal)

Development Services:

1 x FTE



CHIA NSW Cadet Program

In partnership with the NSW Government, the Community Housing Industry Association (CHIA) NSW offers a Cadetship Program designed to build sustainable career pathways in the community housing sector. The program enables participants to undertake the CHC42221 Certificate IV in Housing, alongside 12 months of paid, practical employment with a Community Housing Provider.

“ SEARMS is committed to nurturing future leaders and building capacity within the sector ”

SEARMS has proudly supported the Cadetship Program since its inception, offering cadets a culturally safe and supportive environment in which to gain hands-on experience across tenancy management, property allocation, and asset maintenance. As a values-driven organisation focused on Aboriginal self-determination, SEARMS is committed to nurturing future leaders and building capacity within the sector.

2023 Graduates

In 2023, SEARMS supported the successful graduation of three cadets from the CHIA NSW Cadetship Program. Each brought a unique perspective and commitment to community service, and all demonstrated significant professional and personal development throughout the year.

Charley D:

Charley completed her cadetship in 2023, demonstrating strong leadership potential and a deep commitment to culturally responsive housing services. Drawing on her lived experience and professional background in the disability sector, Charley made a valuable contribution to her team. With support from SEARMS, she strengthened her communication and tenancy management skills and is now pursuing long-term opportunities in the community housing field.

Tegan G:

Tegan brought strong community values and a passion for social justice to her cadetship. Through structured training and mentoring at SEARMS, she gained practical experience and developed a deeper understanding of the positive impact stable, secure housing can have on individuals and families. Tegan completed the program with enhanced workplace confidence and a clear pathway into the housing sector.



Jacinta F:

Jacinta approached the cadetship with dedication and empathy, shaped by her personal experiences navigating the housing system. With guidance from SEARMS staff and mentors, she successfully completed her Certificate IV in Housing and is now well-positioned to begin a meaningful career in the sector.

These three graduates exemplify the impact of the Cadetship Program — not only in creating employment pathways, but also in building the leadership capacity needed to serve Aboriginal communities with cultural integrity and care.



■ Cadet Graduates 2023

Cadet Program

Current Cadet:

Baeden D:

Baeden commenced his cadetship in 2024 after transitioning from a career in hospitality. Based in Batemans Bay, he has embraced his role as a Housing Officer, gaining experience in property maintenance and tenant support. With ongoing guidance from the SEARMS team, Baeden is progressing through his Certificate IV while making valuable contributions to SEARMS' operations. He describes the cadetship as a deeply rewarding step toward a career in community service.



Alumni Spotlight – 2021:

Iesha S:

A proud Walbunja woman, Iesha joined the CHIA NSW Cadetship Program in 2021 following a break from the workforce. With the support of SEARMS, she rebuilt her professional skills, completed her qualifications, and transitioned into full-time employment as a Housing Officer. Iesha's journey reflects the powerful role the cadetship can play in enabling self-determination, building confidence, and creating meaningful employment outcomes for Aboriginal people.

SEARMS extends its congratulations to all cadets – past and present – and reaffirms its commitment to developing a culturally capable, community-informed workforce that reflects and serves the diverse communities of the region.



Partnerships

SEARMS is primarily funded through rental income. Our tenants and households often present with complex needs, and in line with our commitment to sustaining tenancies, we work closely with a range of external services. We make targeted referrals to these partner organisations to ensure tenants receive the support they need and rely on organisational resources from peak bodies and other funding opportunities.

These collaborative partnerships and referral pathways are essential to achieving our strategic objectives and delivering long-term housing stability.



NATSIHA

www.natsiha.org.au

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Association (NATSIHA) is the national peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing. NATSIHA provides leadership, advocacy, and support to ensure that First Nations peoples have access to housing that is safe, secure, culturally appropriate, and community-led.

Guided by a vision that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have housing aligned with their diverse cultures and aspirations, NATSIHA champions self-determination and community-controlled housing solutions. The organisation works collaboratively with governments, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations, and strategic partners to influence policy, drive systemic change, and strengthen the sector.

As a national voice, NATSIHA supports the growth and sustainability of the First Nations housing sector by amplifying its voice, promoting culturally grounded approaches, and ensuring communities have the tools and resources needed to thrive.



ACHIA NSW

www.achiansw.org.au

The Aboriginal Community Housing Industry Association NSW Limited (ACHIA NSW) is the peak body representing Aboriginal Community Housing Providers (ACHPs) in New South Wales. ACHIA NSW advocates for all not-for-profit, Aboriginal community-controlled housing providers – including Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALCs) and other legally constituted organisations – to deliver safe, secure, and culturally appropriate housing opportunities for Aboriginal families and communities.



CHIA

www.communityhousing.com.au

The Community Housing Industry Association (CHIA) is the national peak body representing Australia's community housing sector, which manages a portfolio of over \$20 billion and more than 132,000 rental properties. These homes support individuals and families on low to moderate incomes who face barriers in accessing affordable or suitable housing in the private market.

Established in 2015, CHIA was created to provide a unified, independent voice for the community housing industry on national issues. It is a member-funded organisation that leverages the expertise of state and territory bodies to improve housing services and outcomes for tenants across Australia.

CHIA's core mission is to lead, represent, and advocate for the growth and development of a strong, world-class community housing sector. It engages in research, policy development, and advocacy, arguing that expanding the role of community housing providers is essential to solving Australia's affordable housing crisis.

Partnerships



CHIA NSW

<https://communityhousing.org.au/about/>

The Community Housing Industry Association of NSW (CHIA NSW) is the peak body representing the community housing sector in New South Wales. It advocates for a housing system that delivers safe, secure, and affordable homes for people on low incomes, with a focus on long-term social and economic stability.

CHIA NSW represents 94 not-for-profit community housing providers, who collectively own, manage, and maintain more than 54,000 homes across the state. These homes are designed as long-term rental properties, offering critical housing support to individuals and families facing housing stress.

The sector has experienced significant growth over the past decade, with more than \$2 billion invested and over 5,800 new homes delivered through member organisations. This expansion highlights the sector's growing role in meeting the demand for affordable housing in NSW.

CHIA NSW supports its members through policy advocacy, capacity building, and sector development. Its work focuses on strengthening the ability of community housing providers to meet increasing housing needs and contribute to a more equitable and sustainable housing system across the state.



Murra Mia: Southern NSW Tenancy Advice and Advocacy Services

nswats.com.au/branch-locations/southern-nsw-murra-mia/

Murra Mia provides professional, culturally sensitive tenancy advice and advocacy services to Aboriginal people across Southern NSW. Operating under the Management and Advisory Services Aboriginal Corporation, Murra Mia supports tenants in social, community, and private housing throughout regions

including the Illawarra, South Coast, Southern Highlands, Hume Murray, and Riverina.

Their services include phone advice, support letters, mediation with housing providers, and representation at the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT). Murra Mia also assists with Housing Appeals Committee applications, negotiates with landlords (including Housing NSW), and follows up on repair issues.

Face-to-face support may be available, depending on location and circumstances. In addition to direct advocacy, Murra Mia offers community education, duty advocacy, and referrals to other relevant services, aiming to empower Aboriginal tenants and uphold their housing rights.



NSW Ministry of Health

www.health.nsw.gov.au/about/ministry/Pages/default.aspx

The NSW Ministry of Health supports the responsibilities of the Health, Regional Health, Mental Health, and Medical Research Ministers. Acting as the system manager of the NSW public health system, it oversees more than 220 public hospitals and various community and public health services. Delivered through local health districts, specialty networks, and affiliated non-government organisations, these services form NSW Health. The Ministry also leads the planning and investment in health services to align with the NSW Government's health priorities for the benefit of the community.



NSW Police Force

NSW Police Force

<https://communityhousing.org.au/about/>

The New South Wales (NSW) Police Force operates under the Police Act 1990, with a mission to collaborate with the community to reduce violence, crime, and fear. Their primary goals are to protect people and property through crime prevention, detection, and investigation. They also focus on promoting road safety, maintaining social order, and managing emergency and rescue operations across the state.



OneLink

www.onelinkonline.net

OneLink is the central access point for human services in the ACT, helping individuals and families connect with the right support quickly and simply.

Operated by Woden Community Service and funded by the ACT Government's Community Services Directorate, OneLink assists with accessing services such as housing, disability support, and family services. Its goal is to make it easier for people to focus on overcoming life's challenges by streamlining access to essential support.



Roundabout

roundaboutcanberra.org

Roundabout Canberra is dedicated to ensuring every child has a safe start and every family receives dignity in times of need. They provide high-quality, essential baby and children's items – including cots, prams, car seats, clothing, and toys – donated by the Canberra community. These items are carefully cleaned, sorted, and safety-checked before being distributed to families in need.

Roundabout partners with over 500 social workers and support workers from over 100 social service and community organisations in Canberra, including public hospitals, women's and domestic violence refuges, migrant and refugee support services and more, to distribute these items to families across Canberra and surrounding regions. By working directly with these organisations, Roundabout helps them focus on their core mission while ensuring families have access to necessary items in great condition. Although primarily focused on the ACT, Roundabout also supports families in parts of regional NSW.

Partnerships



SAHSSI

www.sahssi.org.au

SAHSSI (Supported Accommodation and Homelessness Services Shoalhaven Illawarra) is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to supporting vulnerable women and families in the Illawarra and Shoalhaven regions. Formed in 2014 from the merger of two women's refuges, SAHSSI has over 30 years of experience in assisting women, with or without children, affected by homelessness and domestic violence.

SAHSSI focuses on providing safe, long-term accommodation and services to help individuals lead healthy, connected, and productive lives. The organisation continuously seeks innovative approaches to support its clients and ensure they have access to effective pathways out of homelessness. Governed by a diverse management committee and registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC), SAHSSI is a vital local resource for women in need.



Services Our Way (SOW)

www.aho.nsw.gov.au/sow

Services Our Way (SOW) provides culturally appropriate service coordination and support for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander individuals and families experiencing vulnerability. Led and supported by an all-Aboriginal team, SOW offers a holistic, family-centred approach that empowers clients to improve their wellbeing and access the services they need.

Through tailored support, SOW connects clients with a wide network of government, non-government, and community-based programs to help them navigate complex areas such as:

- Advocacy
- Transport access
- Cultural, social and community participation
- Disability support
- Education and employment
- Family and domestic violence
- Financial management
- Health and wellbeing
- Housing and homelessness
- Justice

SOW's specialist staff work collaboratively with clients and service providers to develop culturally appropriate solutions that address the underlying causes of hardship, supporting long-term stability and resilience.



SEWACS (South East Women and Children's Services)

sewacs.org.au

SEWACS is a community-based organisation dedicated to breaking the cycle of domestic and family violence and homelessness in its region. Guided by a feminist framework, SEWACS supports individuals – particularly women and children – who are impacted by violence and homelessness, helping them build safety, skills, and well-being.

Their work is grounded in key values of empathy, trust, honesty, and respect for each person's right to self-determination. SEWACS operates as a welcoming and non-judgemental space, advocating for social change and safety for all.

The organisation's approach is collaborative, trauma-informed, strength-based, and includes crisis intervention. SEWACS is both a support provider and a grassroots advocate for long-term, systemic change.



sharethedignity

Share the Dignity

www.sharethedignity.org.au/home

Share the Dignity is an Australian charity dedicated to supporting women, girls, and people who menstruate who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness, domestic violence, or poverty. The organisation works to achieve menstrual equity by providing free period products to those in need through national Dignity Drives and Dignity Vending Machines.

Partnering with over 3,000 charities across Australia, Share the Dignity ensures access to essential menstrual and personal care items. They also run the It's in the Bag campaign each Christmas, distributing bags filled with essential items to those in crisis. Their goal is to ensure that managing a period is never an added burden for someone already facing hardship.



Thread Together

www.threadtogether.org

Founded in 2012 by Andie Halas, Thread Together was created around a simple but powerful idea: donate unsold clothing rather than send it to landfill. The organisation aims to address two critical issues in Australia — fashion waste and clothing insecurity — by redistributing brand-new, excess clothing to people in need.

Believing that clothing is a basic human right, Thread Together partners with leading fashion brands to rescue unsold garments and works with a national network of registered charities to deliver them, free of charge, to individuals facing crisis, homelessness, domestic violence, natural disasters, and other forms of hardship.

Through the support of volunteers, corporate partners, and community groups, Thread Together has redirected millions of new clothing items from landfill to those most in need — offering dignity, hope, and a sustainable solution to fashion waste.

Waminda

Waminda

waminda.org.au

Waminda – South Coast Women's Health and Wellbeing Aboriginal Corporation (ICN: 853) is a culturally safe, holistic service dedicated to supporting Aboriginal women and their families. Based on the South Coast of New South Wales, Waminda's vision is for Aboriginal women and their families to lead and live self-determined futures.

The organisation provides a supportive environment where women and their families can access quality health and wellbeing services that are culturally appropriate and community-driven. With a strong focus on strength-based, tailored care, Waminda empowers Aboriginal communities by fostering belonging, resilience, and self-determination.

Westnet

Westnet

www.westnet.com.au/customers

Westnet, founded in 1994 in Geraldton, Western Australia, began with a mission to offer straightforward, great-value phone and internet plans backed by reliable service. In 2008, it was acquired by iiNet, combining two companies committed to excellent customer support. Today, Westnet customers benefit from the same friendly service, enhanced by iiNet's global internet network. iiNet is part of the TPG Telecom group, a leading Australian internet provider with nationwide coverage.



Grants & Donor Recognition

Donations Received

In 2023, SEARMS received \$1,000 in community donations to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) people navigating the court system. These funds were specifically directed toward transportation assistance, enabling better access to legal proceedings for those in need.

Grant Funding Summary

- **FRRR Strategic Planning – Living Library Grant \$14,000**
Community engagement and cultural storytelling initiative
- **Aboriginal Affairs NSW – Community and Place Grant \$234,000**
Establishment of a Social Venture Enterprise (SVE)
- **Aboriginal Affairs NSW – COVID-19 Community Response Grant \$10,000**
Health and wellbeing support for vulnerable Aboriginal community members during the pandemic.

Strategic Initiatives Funded by Grants

FRRR Strategic Planning Grant: *Living Library – Knowledge Circle*



FRRR
Foundation for Rural
Regional Renewal

**Djamaga
Djama**



The Living Library – Knowledge Circle initiative builds on findings from a previous FRRR-funded project and Australian National University (ANU) research. This project directly supports two key SEARMS strategic priorities:

1. **Strengthening Community Engagement:**
 - Expanding the stakeholder network
 - Engaging the community throughout project lifecycles
 - Embedding continuous learning and refinement of engagement strategies
2. **Building Sustainable Internal Capacity:**
 - Cultivating trust-based relationships with community stakeholders
 - Strengthening SEARMS' responsiveness to feedback and cultural guidance

Program Overview

The Living Library initiative will offer culturally safe, interactive storytelling sessions based on Aboriginal oral traditions. Elders and Future Leaders will lead discussions in a library-style setting, engaging with:

- High school students (Batemans Bay)
- Local Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal not-for-profit organisations
- Government representatives, including Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Officers

Each session will feature a Welcome to Country, storytelling, Q&A, and informal connection over shared refreshments, fostering truth-telling, mutual understanding, and reconciliation.

Anticipated Outcomes:

- Improved visibility and understanding of SEARMS services
- Strengthened relationships with Elders, youth, and partner organisations
- Increased internal cultural capability and staff confidence
- Promotion of inclusive, collaborative approaches to housing and homelessness solutions

A local Aboriginal team member will lead the project, supported by a SEARMS cadet, ensuring cultural leadership and the development of emerging community leaders.

Grants & Donor Recognition

Aboriginal Affairs NSW Grant: Social Venture Enterprise (SVE)



With the support of \$234,000 in Community and Place grant funding, SEARMS is establishing a Social Venture Enterprise (SVE) focused on delivering property maintenance, gardening, and minor repair services for SEARMS-managed homes.

Program Objectives:

- Increase economic participation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- Provide employment opportunities for SEARMS tenants and community members
- Reduce reliance on external trades, enabling cost efficiencies for property upkeep
- Strengthen SEARMS' commitment to self-determination and local capacity building

Currently, SEARMS engages a casual team of Aboriginal workers — many of whom are tenants — to perform maintenance and yard work. Through the SVE, this workforce will be formalised and expanded, offering stable employment, skills development, and economic independence within an Aboriginal-led enterprise.

COVID-19 Response Grant – Implementation and Impact



Through a \$10,000 COVID-19 Community Response Grant from Aboriginal Affairs NSW, SEARMS provided targeted, culturally appropriate support to vulnerable Aboriginal community members during the pandemic.

Key Achievements:

- **Vaccination Support:** Hosted booster clinics in partnership with NSW Health at the Batemans Bay Community Centre, improving vaccine access for local Aboriginal residents.
- **Care Package Distribution:** Delivered essential supplies to isolated Elders, ensuring their wellbeing during lockdowns and transport limitations.
- **Support for Families with Special Needs:** Assisted households caring for children with disabilities, recognising the heightened challenges faced during the pandemic.
- **Health Promotion:** Disseminated COVID-19 health messaging and service information through social media, increasing awareness and community safety.

These efforts reinforced SEARMS' position as a trusted, community-led organisation capable of delivering responsive, culturally safe support in times of crisis.

Call to Action

Our story is one of resilience and community strength — but it is also a call to action. With dwindling operational funding, Aboriginal Community Housing Providers like SEARMS are expected to meet the highest standards of compliance, service delivery, and accountability — without the sustainable investment needed to grow and protect our workforce.

We know Aboriginal housing is a specialist sector. With appropriate recognition and funding from government, and with the support of donors, we can continue to:

- Deliver frontline housing services that are culturally safe and community-led
- Promote cultural wellbeing and security for tenants and families
- Empower the next generation of Aboriginal housing leaders

Join Us

With your support, SEARMS can continue to preserve and grow this legacy. Whether it's contributing to frontline services, sponsoring Aboriginal workforce

development, or investing in leadership pathways, every contribution helps strengthen the Aboriginal voice in housing.

Discover Our Story

Explore An Aboriginal Voice in Housing – The History of SEARMS and Southeast NSW Aboriginal Community Controlled Housing — a powerful record of resilience, advocacy, and community strength.

Donate or purchase your copy today at:

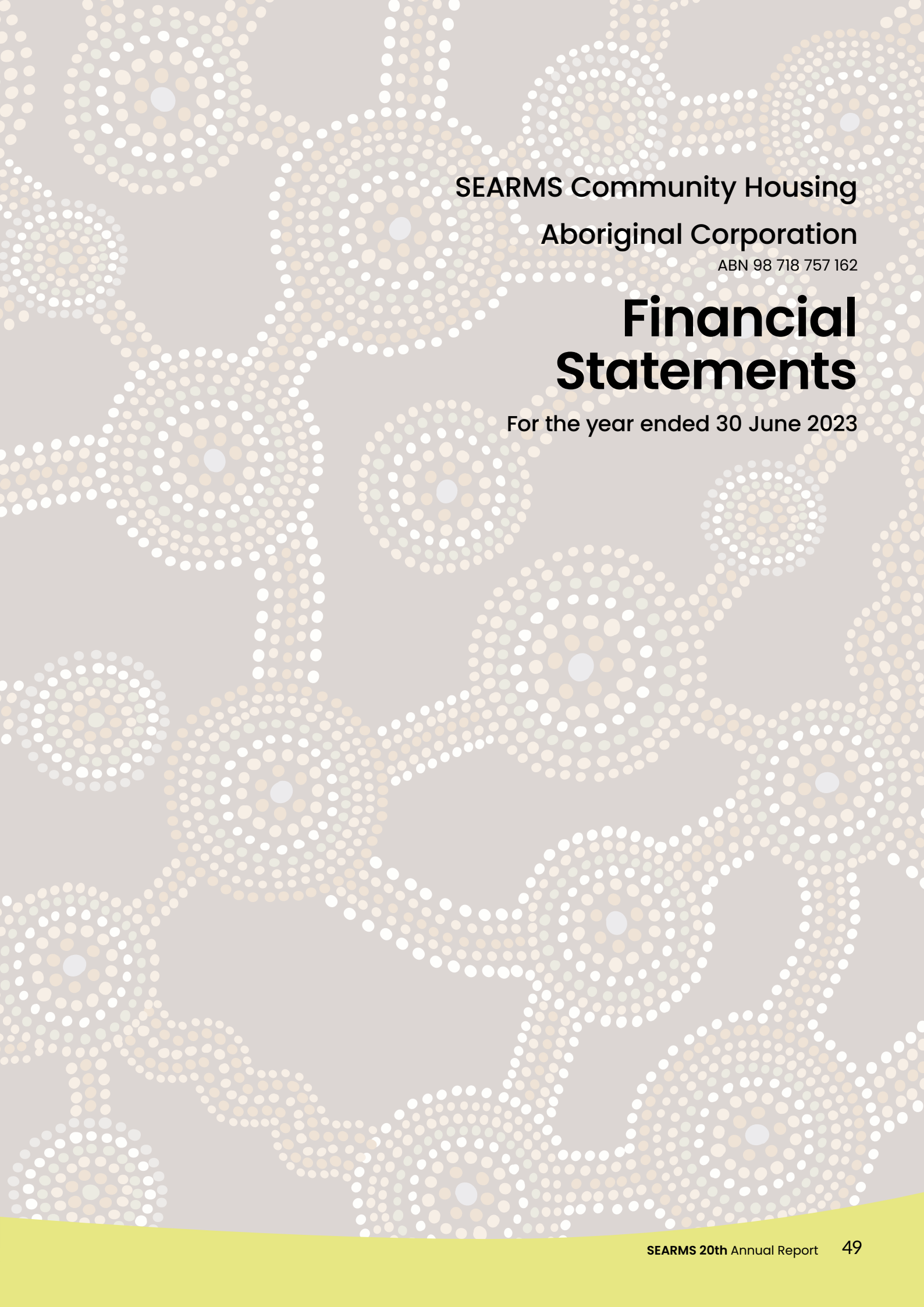


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Together, let's keep the voice of Aboriginal communities strong in the places we call home.







SEARMS Community Housing

Aboriginal Corporation

ABN 98 718 757 162

Financial Statements

For the year ended 30 June 2023

Contents

SEARMS Community Housing Aboriginal Corporation

ABN 98 718 757 162

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Director's Declaration

30 June 2023

The Board of Directors present their report on the Corporation (SEARMS) for the year ended 30 June 2023.

(a) General information

Principal activities

The principal activities undertaken by the Corporation during the financial year to achieve its objectives & strategic outcomes include:

1. Continuing to provide tenancy & property management services to other Aboriginal housing owner organisations and the Aboriginal Housing Office (AHO) NSW for their eligible tenants
2. Continuing to provide rental rebates to its eligible tenants in its own housing stock
3. Continuing development and construction activities on behalf of other Aboriginal housing owner organisations
4. Continuing development and construction activities to increase the supply of rebated housing properties for its own housing stock to eligible tenants
5. The creation of an internal 'social venture enterprise' property care team providing additional employment opportunities for the local Aboriginal community.

The Corporation will continue to carry on the principal activities noted above, while also working towards:

- Accreditation as a NSW Specialist Housing Provider under the Australian Service Excellence Standards (ASES)
- Enhancing service delivery to our tenants by pursuing Specialist Housing Service funding to provide wrap-around support
- Continuing to identify future opportunities to increase the supply of rebated and/or specialist housing for rent.

Operating Result

SEARMS Community Housing Aboriginal Corporation's operating surplus for the year to 30 June 2023 was \$191,843 compared to a deficit of \$11,256 in the prior financial year.

Directors

The names of the Directors throughout the year and at the date of this report are:

Tom Slockee	Chairperson
Roslyn Field	Director, resigned 25 November 2022
Anne Greenaway	Director, Chair of Finance and Audit Committee
Cheryl Moreton	Director
Brendan Moyle	Director, Chair of Development Committee, resigned 13 January 2023
Jim Allen	Director, resigned 25 November 2022
Jason Oakley	Director
Stephen Shanahan	Director

Director's Declaration

30 June 2023

(a) General information

Directors

During the financial year, 7 meetings of Directors (including committees of Directors) were held. Attendances by each Director during the year were as follows:

	Directors' Meetings		Finance Committee		Development Committee	
	Number eligible to attend	Number attended	Number eligible to attend	Number attended	Number eligible to attend	Number attended
Tom Slockee	7	7	6	5	1	1
Roslyn Field	2	-	-		1	-
Anne Greenaway	7	6	6	6	-	-
Cheryl Moreton	7	6	6	4	-	-
Brendan Moyle	3	3	-		1	-
Jim Allen	2	1	-		-	-
Jason Oakley	7	7	6	5	1	1
Stephen Shanahan	7	5	6	6	-	-

Management Contracts

No contracts of significance to which the Corporation was a party and in which a member or Director had a material interest, whether directly or indirectly, subsisted at the end of the year or at any time during the year. At no time during the year was the Corporation a party to any arrangements to enable the members or Directors of the Corporation to acquire benefits.

Director's Declaration

30 June 2023

(a) General information

Indemnifying Officers or Auditor

No indemnities have been given or insurance premiums paid, during or since the end of the financial year, for any person who is or has been an officer or auditor of the Corporation.

Significant changes in state of affairs

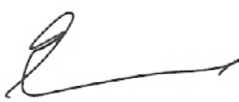
There have been no significant changes in the state of affairs of the Corporation during the period.

Significant events after the balance date

There are no matters or circumstances that have arisen since the end of the financial year that have significantly affected or may significantly affect the operations of the Corporation, the results of those operations or the state of affairs of the Corporation, for the year ended 30 June 2023 that are not adequately disclosed in these financial statements.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Board at Batemans Bay, NSW:

Director: 

Director: 

Dated this 21 day of Feb 2024

Auditor's Independence Declaration under Section 60-40 of the Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 to the Directors of SEARMS Community Housing Aboriginal Corporation

I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, during the year ended 30 June 2023, there have been:

- (i) no contraventions of the auditor independence requirements as set out in section 60-40 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* in relation to the audit; and
- (ii) no contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.

Hales Douglass



Andrew Hare
Partner

Dated this 21st day of February 2024

Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

		2023	2022
	Note	\$	\$
Income	2	6,699,233	4,103,686
Cost of sales	3	(4,740,778)	(2,812,539)
Gross profit		1,958,455	1,291,147
Accounting fees		(37,980)	(17,868)
Advertising		(346)	(238)
Auditors remuneration		(9,000)	(9,100)
Bank charges		(429)	(2,548)
Community Outreach		(5,442)	(17,101)
Business Development		(1,440)	-
Board Costs		(29,568)	(47,649)
Cleaning, Garden & Waste Removal		(4,394)	(8,008)
Computer expenses		(43,629)	(46,908)
Consultant Fees		(51,772)	(55,111)
Depreciation & Amortisation		(180,407)	(145,062)
Electricity		(7,504)	(4,062)
Insurance		(55,791)	(48,241)
NAIDOC		(233)	(1,384)
Interest Expense		(64,491)	(29,690)
Legal Expenses		(14,428)	(15,948)
Meeting Expenses		(12,041)	(4,456)
Motor vehicle expenses		(32,630)	(12,886)
HR Support incl Recruitment		(62,002)	(38,327)
Other equipment		-	(7,703)
Permits & Licences		1,359	-
Training and Development		(36,168)	(3,486)
Postage, Printing and stationery		(31,994)	(32,245)
Rates		(11,016)	(16,590)
Rent Storage		(12,013)	(13,748)
Rental		(19,423)	(75,830)
Repairs and maintenance		(32,387)	(13,167)
Security Service		(1,425)	(1,336)
Staff Amenities & Recruitment		(10,896)	(4,471)
Staff uniforms		(3,603)	(2,835)
Sundry Expenses		(910)	(4,175)
Telephone & Internet		(22,694)	(11,576)
Travel		(39,219)	(30,313)
Subscriptions		(4,274)	(9,314)
Wages and Salaries		(928,422)	(571,027)
Surplus for the year		191,843	(11,256)
Other comprehensive income			
Revaluation changes for property, plant and equipment		8,097,653	-
Other comprehensive income for the year, net of tax		8,097,653	-

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

	Note	2023 \$	2022 \$
Total comprehensive income for the year		<u>8,289,496</u>	<u>(11,256)</u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Statement of Financial Position

30 June 2023

	Note	2023 \$	2022 \$
ASSETS			
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	4	3,782,978	3,697,349
Trade and other receivables	5	1,035,602	860,406
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		4,818,580	4,557,755
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Property, plant and equipment	6	24,855,990	16,745,594
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS		24,855,990	16,745,594
TOTAL ASSETS		29,674,570	21,303,349
LIABILITIES			
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Trade and other payables	7	548,035	700,297
Funds in Trust	8	258,910	273,533
Lease Liability	12	129,412	93,234
Provisions	10	102,068	80,294
Grants in Advance	9	3,983,503	3,924,557
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		5,021,928	5,071,915
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Lease Liability	12	582,226	476,808
Provisions	10	26,294	-
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		608,520	476,808
TOTAL LIABILITIES		5,630,448	5,548,723
NET ASSETS		24,044,122	15,754,626
EQUITY			
Reserves	11	13,918,715	5,821,062
Accumulated Funds		10,125,407	9,933,564
TOTAL EQUITY		24,044,122	15,754,626

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Statement of Changes in Equity

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

	Note	\$
1 July 2022		15,754,626
Operating Surplus/(Deficit)		191,843
Revaluation Increment		8,097,653
Balance at 30 June 2023		24,044,122

	Note	\$
1 July 2021		15,765,881
Operating Surplus/(Deficit)		(11,255)
Balance at 30 June 2022		15,754,626

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Statement of Cash Flows

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

	2023	2022
Note	\$	\$
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:		
Receipts from customers & members		
Payments to suppliers, employees & members	6,610,655	5,905,684
Interest received		
Interest paid	(6,352,783)	(3,711,297)
Net cash provided by/(used in)	122	63
operating activities	(18,830)	(6,272)
	<u>239,164</u>	<u>2,188,178</u>
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:		
Purchase of property, plant and equipment		
Net cash used by investing activities		
	(153,535)	(1,724,188)
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES:		
	<u>(153,535)</u>	<u>(1,724,188)</u>
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents held		
Cash and cash equivalents at		
beginning of year		
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year		
	85,629	463,990
	<u>3,697,349</u>	<u>3,233,359</u>
	<u><u>3,782,978</u></u>	<u><u>3,697,349</u></u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

1 Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

(a) Basis of Preparation

The financial report is a general purpose financial report, which has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006*, Australian Accounting Standards and other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards board.

The financial report was authorised for issue by the Directors on the 21st day of FEBRUARY 2024.

(b) Reporting Basis and Convention

The financial report has been prepared on an accruals basis and is based on historical costs and does not take into account changing money values or, except where specifically stated, current valuations of non-current assets. The following material accounting policies, which are consistent with the previous period unless otherwise stated, have been adopted in the preparation of this financial report.

Significant accounting policies adopted in the preparation of these financial statements are presented below and are consistent with prior reporting periods unless otherwise stated.

(c) Adoption of New and Revised Accounting Standards

In the current year, the entity has adopted all of the new and revised Standards and Interpretations issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board (the AASB) that are relevant to its operations and effective for annual reporting periods beginning on 1 July 2022. The adoption of these new standards and Interpretations has not resulted in any changes to the Entity's accounting policies that have affected the amounts reported for the current or prior years.

Australian Accounting Standards that have been recently issued or amended, but are not yet effective, have not been adopted in the preparation of this financial report.

(d) Significant Accounting Judgements, Estimates And Assumptions

The preparation of the financial statements requires management to make judgments, estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts in the financial statements. Management continually evaluates its judgments and estimates in relation to assets, liabilities, contingent liabilities, revenue and expenses. Management bases its judgments and estimates on historical experience and on other various factors it believes to be reasonable under the circumstances, the result of which form the basis of the carrying values of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. Actual results may differ from these estimates under different assumptions and conditions. Further details of the nature of these assumptions and conditions may be found in the relevant notes to the financial statements.

(e) Compliance with IFRS

As the Entity is a Not-For-Profit entity it is not required to comply with all International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRSs). The financial report is prepared in accordance with Australian Equivalents to International Financial Reporting Standards applicable to Not-For-Profit entities.

(f) Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents in the balance sheet comprise cash at bank and in hand and short-term deposits with an original maturity of three months or less that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and which are subject to an insignificant risk of changes in value.

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

1 Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

(g) Trade and Other Receivables

Trade receivables, which generally have 30-60 day terms, are recognised initially at fair value and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less an allowance for impairment. Collectability of trade receivables is reviewed on an ongoing basis at an operating unit level. Individual debts that are known to be uncollectible are written off when identified. An impairment provision is recognised when there is objective evidence that the entity will not be able to collect the receivable. The amount of the impairment loss is the receivable carrying amount compared to the present value of estimated future cash flows, discounted at the original effective interest rate.

(h) Property Plant & Equipment

Property, Plant and equipment is stated at historical cost less accumulated depreciation and any accumulated impairment losses. Depreciation charges have been calculated so as to write off the net cost of each asset over its estimated useful life. Additions are depreciated from the date of purchase in the year of acquisition. The estimated useful lives used are:

Motor Vehicles	8 Years
Plant & Equipment	3-10 Years
Office Equipment	3-13 Years
Buildings	40 Years

The assets' residual values, useful lives and amortisation methods are reviewed, and adjusted if appropriate, at each financial year end.

(i) Leases

The determination of whether an arrangement is or contains a lease is based on the substance of the arrangement and requires an assessment of whether the fulfilment of the arrangement is dependent on the use of a specific asset or assets and the arrangement conveys a right to use the asset.

Finance leases, which transfer to the Corporation substantially all the risks and benefits incidental to ownership of the leased item, are capitalised at the inception of the lease at the fair value of the leased asset or, if lower, at the present value of the minimum lease payments in accordance with AASB 16. Lease payments are apportioned between the finance charges and reduction of the lease liability so as to achieve a constant rate of interest on the remaining balance of the liability. Finance charges are recognised as an expense in profit or loss. Capitalised leased assets are depreciated over the shorter of the estimated useful life of the asset and the lease term if there is no reasonable certainty that the Corporation will obtain ownership by the end of the lease term.

(j) Trade and Other Payables

Trade and other payables are carried at amortised cost. Due to their short term nature they are not discounted. They represent liabilities for goods and services provided to the Corporation prior to the end of the financial year that are unpaid and arise when the Corporation becomes obliged to make future payments in respect of the purchase of these goods and services. The amounts are unsecured and are usually paid within 30 days of recognition.

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

1 Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

(k) Provisions and employee benefits

Provisions are recognised when the entity has a present obligation (legal or constructive) as a result of a past event, it is probable that an outflow of resources embodying economic benefits will be required to settle the obligation and a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation.

Provisions are measured at the value of management's best estimate of the expenditure required to settle the present obligation. As all obligations are expected to be settled within 12 months the balances are not discounted.

Wages, salaries, annual leave and sick leave

Liabilities for wages and salaries, including non-monetary benefits, annual leave and accumulating sick leave expected to be settled within 12 months of the reporting date are recognised in respect of employees' services up to the reporting date. They are measured at the amounts expected to be paid when the liabilities are settled. Expenses for non-accumulating sick leave are recognised when the leave is taken and are measured at the rates paid or payable.

(l) Revenue Recognition

Revenue is recognised and measured at the fair value of the consideration received or receivable to the extent it is probable that the economic benefits will flow to the Corporation and the revenue can be reliably measured. The following specific recognition criteria must also be met before revenue is recognised:

Rendering of services

Revenue is recognised by reference to the stage of completion of a contract or contracts in progress at balance date or at the time of completion of the contract and billing to the customer.

Interest revenue

Revenue is recognised as interest accrues using the effective interest method. This is a method of calculating the amortised cost of a financial asset and allocating the interest income over the relevant period using the effective interest rate, which is the rate that exactly discounts estimated future cash receipts through the expected life of the financial asset to the net carrying amount of the financial asset.

(m) Grants Received

Government Grants, including non-monetary grants at fair value, are not recognised until there is reasonable assurance that all conditions will be complied with, and that the grants will be received. Grants are recognised in the income statement over the periods necessary to match them with the related costs which they are intended to compensate, on a systematic basis.

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

1 Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

(n) Recognition & Treatment of sub lease Surpluses

This policy relates to the recognition of income and expenses for properties managed under AHO Sub Leases which are now recognised through Profit & Loss. SEARMS has reviewed its sublease contracts with the Aboriginal Housing Office which leases properties to SEARMS at a peppercorn rent of \$1 per annum. These contracts require SEARMS to perform certain tenancy services and maintain the property assets to certain standards. SEARMS may keep all rents in order to fulfil these requirements and meet all the expenses incurred in such duties, including covering its associated staffing and administration costs. These contracts also state that on expiry or termination of the lease, SEARMS is to return any surplus at the end of the sub-lease to the AHO. As these contracts are ongoing and are not expected to generate surpluses after allowing for repairs and maintenance the balance that may be repayable upon completion of the Sub-Lease will be disclosed as a contingent liability in the Annual Financial Statements for each year.

Based on an analysis performed by SEARMS all property portfolios are operating at a deficit once reasonable direct costs have been allocated to them. As such SEARMS is not recognising any contingent liability as it is not anticipated that any funds will be required to be returned at the completion of the sub-lease or management agreement period.

2 Revenue and Other Income

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Revenue from continuing operations		
Revenue		
- AHO Growth Subsidy	138,453	191,257
- Other Grants	92,957	164,976
- Rent Received - Commercial	25,498	57,902
- Management Fees - Property	136,639	221,228
- Management Fees - Project	273,402	388,110
- Rent Received - Residential	4,208,615	2,990,464
- Gain/(Loss) on Sale of Fixed Assets	-	(172,500)
- Other revenue	15,782	1,489
- AHO ACHIF Funding	1,055,116	(22,000)
- AHO CHIA Cadet Program	141,008	124,004
- Donations	1,000	-
- Insurance Recoveries	268,237	8,467
- Hall Hire	11,033	-
- Meeting Room Hire	4,271	-
- Property Care Services	19,742	-
- Grounds Maintenance	7,728	-
- Rental Recoveries	299,630	150,228
	6,699,112	4,103,625
Finance income		
- Interest Received	122	63
	122	63
Other Income		

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

2 Revenue and Other Income

Revenue from continuing operations

Total Other Income

2023	2022
\$	\$
6,699,234	4,103,688

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

3 Cost of Sales Cost of Sales

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Residential Property Portfolios		
Rent Deduct Fees	13,256	9,054
Insurances	659,751	620,896
Insurance Claims	41,761	1,821
Property Depreciation	186,414	189,414
Property Valuations	-	22,200
Land Rates & Body Corp Levies	767,851	460,382
Rates Water & Tenant Utilities	428,467	310,759
Tenant Accommodation	5,808	27,786
Tribunal Fees & Court Costs	2,067	3,508
Repairs and Maintenance	951,323	532,185
Total Residential Property Portfolios	3,056,699	2,178,002
Commercial Property Portfolios		
Insurances	3,276	8,558
Property Depreciation	6,607	6,369
Land & Water Rates	11,370	6,190
Repairs & Maintenance	1,700	1,005
Total Commercial Property Portfolios	22,953	22,122
Direct Service Staff		
Wages - Housing & Assets	611,234	294,241
Corporate Wages Allocations	163,238	212,781
Accrued Leave Movement	7,977	18,707
Travel & Accommodation	1,657	9,833
Direct Staff Amenities	-	(569)
Direct Staff HR Support incl Recruitment	-	24,092
Superannuation	51,818	(146)
Training & Development	332	11,500
Professional Fees - Other (Subcontractor)	-	27,273
Workers' Compensation	3,405	2,236
Telephone & Internet	4,891	4,137
Printing & Stationary	30	252
Direct Service Staff	844,582	604,337
Community Centre		
Event Catering	1,078	-
Total Community Centre	1,078	-
Development		
Grant expenditure	784	5,103
ACHIF Project Expenditure	810,795	-
Consultants	-	2,975

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

3 Cost of Sales

Cost of Sales

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Supplies and Consumables	3,887	-
Total Development	815,466	8,078
Total	4,740,778	2,812,539

4 Cash and cash equivalents

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Operating Account	240,455	2,253,926
Rent Account	3,249,986	1,443,423
Cash on Hand	292,537	-
	3,782,978	3,697,349

Reconciliation of cash

Cash and Cash equivalents reported in the statement of cash flows are reconciled as follows:

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Cash and cash equivalents	3,782,978	3,697,349

5 Trade and other receivables

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
CURRENT		
Trade Debtors	207,711	120,156
Owner Receivables	1,855	1,855
Prepaid Expenses	409,913	712,831
Sundry Receivables	416,123	25,564
Total current trade and other receivables	1,035,602	860,406

The carrying value of receivables is considered a reasonable approximation of fair value due to the short-term nature of the balances.

The maximum exposure to credit risk at the reporting date is the fair value of each class of receivable in the financial statements.

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

6 Property, plant and equipment

	2023 \$	2022 \$
Land & Buildings		
At cost	22,989,216	14,847,608
Accumulated depreciation	(606,460)	(413,438)
Total Land & Buildings	22,382,756	14,434,170
Capital works in progress (ACHIF)		
At cost	1,492,949	1,527,058
Total capital works in progress	1,492,949	1,527,058
Plant and equipment		
At cost	64,612	57,941
Accumulated depreciation	(53,783)	(52,822)
Total plant and equipment	10,829	5,119
At cost	102,852	72,852
Accumulated depreciation	(13,825)	(2,219)
Total Motor Vehicles	89,027	70,633
Office Equipment		
At cost	430,433	348,653
Accumulated Depreciation	(283,973)	(243,673)
Total Office Equipment	146,460	104,980
Leasehold Improvements		
At cost	85,188	59,949
Accumulated Depreciation	(11,068)	(1,993)
Total leasehold improvements	74,120	57,956
Right Of Use Asset - Leases		
At cost	896,482	663,845
Accumulated depreciation	(236,633)	(118,167)
Total Right Of Use Asset	659,849	545,678
Total plant and equipment	2,473,234	2,311,424
Total property, plant and equipment	24,855,990	16,745,594

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

6 Property, plant and equipment

(a) Movements in carrying amounts of property, plant and equipment

Movement in the carrying amounts for each class of property, plant and equipment between the beginning and the end of the current year:

	Capital Works in Progress	Land & Buildings	Plant and Equipment	Office Equipment	Motor Vehicle	Leasehold Improvements	Right of Use Asset - Leases	Total
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Year ended 30 June 2023								
Opening Balance	1,527,058	14,434,170	5,119	104,979	70,633	57,956	545,679	16,745,594
Additions	1,210	43,954	6,671	81,781	30,000	25,238	232,637	421,491
Disposals	(35,319)	-	-	-	-	-	-	(35,319)
Depreciation	-	(193,021)	(961)	(40,300)	(11,606)	(9,074)	(118,467)	(373,429)
Revaluation increase recognised in equity	-	8,097,653	-	-	-	-	-	8,097,653
Balance at the end of the year	1,492,949	22,382,756	10,829	146,460	89,027	74,120	659,849	24,855,990
	Capital Works in Progress	Land & Buildings	Plant and Equipment	Office Equipment	Motor Vehicles	Improvement s	Property, Plant and Equipment UD1	Total
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Year ended 30 June 2022								
Opening Balance	22,000	14,798,369	4,948	73,843	-	-	53,593	14,952,753
Additions	1,505,058	4,084	945	81,300	72,852	59,949	571,956	2,296,144
Disposals	-	(172,500)	-	-	-	-	-	(172,500)
Depreciation	-	(195,783)	(774)	(50,164)	(2,219)	(1,993)	(79,870)	(330,803)
Balance at the end of the year	1,527,058	14,434,170	5,119	104,979	70,633	57,956	545,679	16,745,594

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

7 Trade and other payables

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Trade Creditors	97,653	28,080
Credit Cards	3,877	(7,287)
GST payable/(refundable)	(149,040)	(189,581)
PAYG Withholding	41,686	32,964
Sundry payables and accrued expenses	14,386	15,053
Superannuation	3,866	608
Unidentified Deposits	23,753	16,988
Rental Trust Creditors	104,257	64,648
ATO Integrated Client Account	(30,457)	-
Insurance Premium Funding	427,008	738,824
Other payables	11,046	-
	548,035	700,297

All amounts are short term and the carrying values are considered to be a reasonable approximation of fair value.

8 Funds in Trust

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
CURRENT		
Batemans Bay LALC	32,220	32,220
Bodalla LALC	26,101	23,210
Mogo LALC	67	1,322
Wagonga LALC	9,191	420
Ngambri LALC	18,760	-
Bodalla Aboriginal Housing Corporation	87,939	157,165
Gunangarah Aboriginal Corporation	66,077	49,355
AHO Funds in Trust ERA	6,709	778
Boomerang Meeting Place	11,846	9,063
Total	258,910	273,533

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

9 Income in Advance

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
CURRENT		
General	718,646	104,556
ACHIF (SEARMS Owned) Income in Advance	1,398,058	1,119,268
ACHIF (non SEARMS) Income in Advance	791,927	2,548,459
Insurance Settlement Income in Advance	1,074,872	152,274
	3,983,503	3,924,557

10 Employee Benefits

Current liabilities

Annual Leave	102,068	80,294
	102,068	80,294

Non-current liabilities

Long Service Leave	26,294	-
	26,294	-

(a) Movements in Provision Balances

Opening Balance	80,294	47,354
Leave Accrued	96,963	70,169
Leave Taken	(75,189)	(37,229)
Closing Balance	102,068	80,294

11 Reserves

(a)

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Asset Revaluation Reserve		
Opening Balance	5,821,062	5,961,062
Revaluation	8,097,653	(140,000)
Closing Balance	13,918,715	5,821,062

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

12 Capital and Leasing Commitments

(a) Finance Leases	2023 \$
Minimum lease payments:	
- not later than one year	169,579
- between one year and five years	693,065
Minimum lease payments	<u>862,644</u>
Less: finance charges	<u>(151,006)</u>
Present value of minimum lease payments	<u><u>711,638</u></u>

Finance leases are in place for motor vehicles & the main office building and normally have a term between 3 and 5 years. The Office Lease has two further 3 year options which are included in the commitments above. The leases have terms of renewal but no purchase option or escalation clauses. Renewals are at the option of the entity holding the lease.

13 Financial Risk Management

(a) Introduction

The Corporation's financial instruments comprise receivables, payables and cash and cash equivalents. The main risk arising from the Corporation's financial instruments is liquidity risk. The Corporation does not use derivative instruments to manage risks associated with its financial instruments.

The Directors have overall responsibility for risk management, including risks associated with financial instruments. Risk management policies are established to identify and analyse the risks associated with the Corporation's financial instruments and to monitor the significance of these risks.

This note presents information about the Corporation's exposure to liquidity risk, and its objectives, policies and processes for measuring and managing risk. Further quantitative disclosures are included throughout this financial report.

(b) Financial Instruments Composition and Maturity Analysis

Liquidity risk is the risk that the Corporation will not be able to fund its obligations as they fall due. The Corporation manages liquidity risk by monitoring forecast cash flows and ensuring that adequate liquid funds are available to meet normal operating expenses. The tables below reflect an undiscounted contractual maturity analysis for financial assets and liabilities. Cash flows realised from financial assets reflect management's expectation as to the timing of realisation. Actual timing may therefore differ from that disclosed. The timing of cash flows presented in the table to settle financial liabilities reflects the earliest contractual settlement dates.

	Less Than 1 year		1 to 5 years	
	2023	2022	2023	2022
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Cash & Cash Equivalents	3,782,978	3,697,349	-	-
Trade Debtors	207,711	120,156	-	-

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

13 Financial Risk Management

(b) Financial Instruments Composition and Maturity Analysis

	Less Than 1 year		1 to 5 years	
	2023	2022	2023	2022
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Owner Receivables	1,855	1,855	-	-
Sundry Receivables	416,123	25,564	-	-
Trade Creditors	(97,653)	(28,080)	-	-
Visa Card	(3,877)	7,287	-	-
GST Payable/(Refundable)	149,040	189,581	-	-
Sundry Payables	(14,386)	(15,053)	-	-
Funds in Trust	(258,910)	(273,533)	-	-
Rental Trust Creditors	(104,257)	(64,648)	-	-
ATO Integrated Client Account	(30,457)	-	-	-
Insurance Premium Funding	(427,008)	(738,824)	-	-
Total	3,621,159	2,921,654	-	-

14 Related Party Transactions

The Board received total remuneration from the Entity of \$28,462 during the year (2022: \$47,649). There were no transactions with related parties, other than those at normal commercial terms and conditions, and other benefits approved by members at the annual general meeting.

Key management personnel have been identified as members of the board for the year ended 30 June 2023 and also the Chief Executive Officer.

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Short-term benefits	247,651	208,161

15 Remuneration of Auditors

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Remuneration of the auditor for:		
- auditing the financial statements	10,500	9,500

16 Contingencies

In the opinion of the Board, the Corporation did not have any contingencies or commitments at 30 June 2023 other than those noted in Notes 1(n) & 11 (30 June 2022:None).

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

17 Cash Flow Information

(a) Reconciliation of result for the year to cash flows from operating activities

Reconciliation of net income to net cash provided by operating activities:

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Operating Surplus	191,843	(11,256)
Non-cash flows in net surplus:		
- depreciation	373,429	330,803
- non-cash interest on Finance Leases	27,423	23,418
- net loss on disposal of property, plant and equipment	-	172,500
Changes in assets and liabilities, net of the effects of purchase and disposal of subsidiaries:		
- (increase)/decrease in trade and other receivables	(175,196)	(238,811)
- increase/(decrease) in trade and other payables	(226,403)	1,878,584
- increase/(decrease) in provisions	48,068	32,940
Cash flow from operations	239,164	2,188,178

18 Events Occurring After the Reporting Date

No matters or circumstances have arisen since the end of the financial year which significantly affected or may significantly affect the operations of the Corporation, the results of those operations or the state of affairs of the Corporation in future financial years.

19 Corporation Details

The registered office and principal place of business of the Corporation is:

SEARMS Community Housing Aboriginal Corporation
3 Museum Place
Batemans Bay NSW 2536

Director's Declaration

In accordance with a resolution of the Directors of SEARMS Community Housing Aboriginal Corporation, the Directors declare that in their opinion:

1. the financial statements and notes of the Corporation are in accordance with the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006* and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, including:
 - giving a true and fair view of the corporation's financial position as at 30 June 2023 and of their performance for the year ended on that date; and
 - complying with Accounting Standards in Australia and the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Regulations 2007* and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013*;and
2. there are reasonable grounds to believe that the corporation will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

Director 

Director 

Dated this 21 day of Feb 2024

Independent Audit Report to the members of SEARMS Community Housing Aboriginal Corporation

Report on the Audit of the Financial Report

Opinion

We have audited the financial report of SEARMS Community Housing Aboriginal Corporation (the Company), which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2023, the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, the statement of changes in equity and the statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and the director's declaration.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report of the Company is in accordance with the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders) Act 2006* and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, including:

- (i) giving a true and fair view of the Company's financial position as at 30 June 2023 and of its financial performance for the year ended; and
- (ii) complying with Australian Accounting Standards to the extent described in Note 1 and the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders) Regulations 2007* and *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013*.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of our report. We are independent of the Company in accordance with the auditor independence requirements of the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders) Act 2006* and *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* and the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Responsibilities of Directors for the Financial Report

The directors of the Company are responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders) Act 2006* and *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* and for such internal control as the directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the directors are responsible for assessing the the Company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the directors either intend to liquidate the Company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the entity's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Entity to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Hales Douglass



Andrew Hare
Partner

Ulladulla NSW 2539

Dated this 21st day of February 2024



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