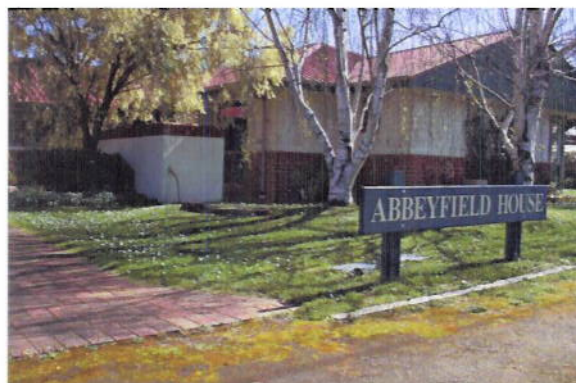




Abbeyfield Australia in profile



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An overview of Abbeyfield Australia

Collaboration with the Australian Government

Abbeyfield Australia is keen to collaborate with the Australian Government to meet the growing demand for affordable and cost effective community housing.

We have a vision for growth and see collaboration with the Australian Government as an ideal way to leverage Abbeyfield Australia's expertise and community volunteer commitment against the financial support of the Australian Government.

Collaboration with Abbeyfield Australia will deliver the greatest possible housing outcomes to the Australian Government in the most cost effective way.



About Abbeyfield Australia

Abbeyfield Australia is the peak national body representing 26 affiliated Abbeyfield Associations. Together these community based incorporated Associations successfully manage 23 Abbeyfield Houses and three aged care facilities across Tasmania, Victoria, South Australia, New South Wales, the ACT and Queensland.

Traditionally, Abbeyfield's focus had been affordable, assisted group housing for older people, though in response to community need we have moved actively to meet the growing demand for assisted housing for adults with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities, and local communities seeking independent living units to complement Abbeyfield housing. Our model adapts to meet local community needs.

Abbeyfield Australia opened its first Abbeyfield House in Melbourne in 1986.

Abbeyfield Australia is a part of the world wide Abbeyfield movement encompassing 18 countries as diverse as the United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand, Italy, Japan and South Africa. The Abbeyfield concept began in 1955 in the United Kingdom and today more than 9000 people in 850 houses throughout the world live in Abbeyfield Houses.

Abbeyfield Australia is a not for profit company limited by guarantee and a registered charitable entity.

Whilst being a national peak body advocating for all Abbeyfield Houses and Hostels, a key role of Abbeyfield Australia is to maintain a management and support framework for local Abbeyfield Associations. We do this by providing:

- legal and governance advice
- national representation and advocacy

- planning, building design and project management
- a national framework of policies and operational procedures
- a comprehensive suite of targeted insurance policies
- affiliation and management agreements
- ongoing operational guidance
- collegial support and volunteer networking opportunities.

Abbeyfield Australia provides a national framework within which local communities can provide high quality and very cost effective housing.

Our strategic direction - Abbeyfield Series 2

Abbeyfield Australia's strategic plan is bold and achievable. It establishes a new strategic direction for the Abbeyfield movement in Australia. We call this 'Abbeyfield Series 2.'

We see a future in which we continue to provide comprehensive services to our existing local Abbeyfield Associations whilst growing nationally by developing more houses in collaboration with the private sector, philanthropic organisations and government.

Abbeyfield Australia is committed to growth through continually reviewing and challenging its model and services. We understand that affordable housing is a dynamic environment and have the capacity to adapt to meet emerging needs. For example, future Abbeyfield Houses may have 11 or 12 residents and incorporate greater private living space for each resident. Our Houses may be co-located with complementary housing options such as single occupant residential units, or be part of a joint venture with another housing provider, an aged care organisation, or retirement village.

A key strength of the Abbeyfield model is that it matches the passion and commitment of volunteer community Associations with the benefits of a single national Abbeyfield framework. This ensures consistent, high quality housing outcomes and makes Abbeyfield accommodation very cost effective.

Every Abbeyfield House or Hostel is a local community solution to a local community need, which is managed by the local community within a consistent national framework maintained by Abbeyfield Australia.

What is an Abbeyfield House?

An Abbeyfield House is a group house in which residents live independently within the dynamic of a shared supportive house. The residents 'come and go' as they please, socialise with other residents as much as desired, enjoy the support of a live-in housekeeper and remain engaged with the community.

Abbeyfield Houses are based on an 'assisted independent living' philosophy and residential concept where:

- each house has ten residents who each enjoy a private suite comprising bedroom and ensuite. (We envisage an 'Abbeyfield Series 2' house for future developments - in which the house accommodates 11 or 12 residents and each resident enjoys a larger private suite.)

- residents share a comfortable lounge room, dining room, garden, and laundry
- nutritious meals are provided by a full-time live-in house keeper
- all maintenance and house costs covered by the local Abbeyfield association.

Abbeyfield Houses are constructed using Abbeyfield Australia's own design specification. This ensures the structure retains a normal comfortable domestic house 'feel'.

An Abbeyfield House is a large house but it is not an institution or a facility. It is just an ordinary house in an ordinary street.



Abbeyfield's response to the need for affordable housing

Abbeyfield Australia understands that our nation's demand for affordable housing will continue to increase rapidly with the ageing 'baby boomer' generation and that group living and other intentional communities represent a highly cost effective way of providing quality, community based accommodation.

We also recognise that 41 per cent of all people over 60 need assistance managing their health conditions or coping with everyday activities, and that this percentage increases to:

- 26 per cent of 60 - 69 year olds
- 84 per cent of 85+ year olds.

(Source: ABS. Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, 2003)

Further, the same ABS report revealed that property maintenance and housework ranked as the first and fourth (respectively) most common issues with which older people need assistance.

Abbeyfield Australia believes that these three observations foretell an ageing population more reliant upon assistance with daily living and less able to cope in the traditional family home.

Abbeyfield Australia has the capacity and experience to develop an extensive and motivated community based response to this growing housing demand. Such a response will

- be based on a robust business plan
- be professionally managed
- achieve the targets agreed with the Minister
- allow the Australia Government to provide high quality and cost effective housing to a growing demand base.

The Abbeyfield House business model

A unique feature of the Abbeyfield model is that each Abbeyfield House is managed by a local Abbeyfield Association (an incorporated Association managed by a volunteer Committee of Management). The local Association manages all aspects of the house in accordance with the governance principles and procedures of Abbeyfield Australia, and are responsible for issues such as:

- compliance with tenancy legislation
- compliance with food safety standards
- induction and ongoing liaison with residents
- employment of the live-in housekeepers
- consultation with residents (individually and via a residents' house meeting)
- budgeting and financial management.



Once constructed, an Abbeyfield House requires no ongoing government subsidy as operational costs are funded through affordable resident rent.

This business model:

- ensures consistent quality outcomes whilst encouraging local control (as all Abbeyfield Houses operate under a national framework)
- is very cost effective because it maximizes the commitment and contribution of volunteers at the local level
- ensures the local community remains engaged with its Abbeyfield House which is emotionally 'owned' by the local community as a community asset.

Abbeyfield Houses add value

The benefits and impact on the overall life of residents afforded by the Abbeyfield model include:

- affordable, supportive, safe and long term secure accommodation
- greater independence for older residents and increased opportunity for people with disabilities to leave their parents' home
- enhanced social relationships and companionship
- increased community participation and lessening of isolation for people living in isolated areas with limited access to lifestyle and social relationship choices.

- increased capacity to make choices and be involved in decision making
- increased opportunities to increase skills and activities of daily living
- increased opportunities to access secure meaningful work (particularly for disAbility House residents) and participate in leisure activities.
- Increased ability to remain in their home town / community rather than having to relocate to another town to access appropriate accommodation.
- enhanced relationships with family members who no longer have to carry the burden of care and concerns regarding the long term accommodation and support needs of loved Ones.

The origins of the Abbeyfield concept

The Abbeyfield concept was conceived in London in 1956 when Richard Carr-Gomm OBE volunteered as an unpaid home help to assist elderly people who needed practical help and friendship to address deprivation, homelessness and loneliness. Richard purchased and renovated a run-down house, and opened the doors with himself as the housekeeper. The Abbeyfield concept was born...



The Abbeyfield concept now exists in 18 countries providing extraordinary shared international expertise in community based housing.

Like to know more?

Please contact Chris Reside, Chief Executive Officer, Abbeyfield Australia on (b) 03 9419 8222, (M) 0403 952 387 or email chris@abbeyfield.org.au

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