

Social Enterprise Finance Australia

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Social Enterprise Snapshot

Three Sista's transforms its accommodation and services

Three Sista's is dedicated to providing affordable crisis accommodation and integrated support and health services for marginalised and indigenous people in far-North Queensland.



Three Sista's aims to develop a model of support and empowerment that directly contributes to the improvement of health, living standards, emergency housing and employment opportunities for socially disadvantaged families, displaced and indigenous people in Cairns and those travelling from Cape York communities for medical procedures.

The organisation is the brainchild of Janet Guthrie and Stuart Wright, who identified the need for the provision of safe, friendly and culturally sensitive accommodation and associated services. Between them, they have extensive experience in housing, community development services, indigenous affairs and health. They have worked across three levels of government, and have strong links to local community, business and social networks.

In mid-2012, Three Sista's took over the management of 68 low-rent units, some in disrepair or uninhabitable, transforming the complex into a positive social accommodation enterprise model with an integrated support strategy. Using a SEFA loan, Three Sista's was able to obtain management rights, purchase several units, and undertake major refurbishment. They were also able to introduce additional tenant services, such as

community gardens, an on-site kiosk, patient transport, dedicated family area and special programs for children.

Three Sista's has been able to improve its existing model by collaborating with other service providers to develop innovative tenancy agreements that allow for the inclusion of special conditions that engage families in social reforms and assist in the reestablishment of a strong family unit.



'With close to 1,500 people sleeping rough or are homeless in Cairns on any given night, we saw this as the perfect opportunity to address the critical needs and SEFA understood our vision.'

Janet Guthrie, Executive Director,
Three Sista's

What SEFA says

Three Sista's were able to acquire management rights over the accommodation and could buy at an attractive price. The proposal for development combined mission, entrepreneurship and security. It also matched our own mission very well.