

## Darren and Cheri Birch

Darren and Cheri have 30 years' experience working and living with people who cannot access the resources required to be a home owner. They often open their home for people in need, providing a safe and supportive environment during times of transition and uncertainty.

Darren and Cheri married in 2000 and seek to model a life of service to others, including to their four children.

Cheri works in a local NGO supporting a diverse range of families, having graduated with a Masters of Applied Social Work.

Darren completed a Bachelor of Commerce because of a love for numbers and finance. After graduating from The University of Melbourne, he put his skills to work in not-for-profit organisations, increasingly finding himself gravitating into management roles. As Darren's career progressed, he identified it was people that most intrigued him.

Encouraged by others who identified his entrepreneurial potential, Darren undertook to further his business knowledge. He also pursued a more people-centred ideology which included a Master of Arts. As a small business owner, Darren increasingly operated at a strategic level, across project management and management accounting.



Darren brings extensive expertise in strategy and getting things done, and plays a key role in realising organisational vision. As a long term coach and lecturer, his greatest enjoyment comes from maximising individual and team potential.

Darren has applied project management skills as an avid home renovator and investor. He was the regional team leader for Habitat for Humanity and has been involved in managing the development of two Community Centre builds. He and Cheri support moves towards a rental WOF and are supporters of decent affordable accommodation.

### Darren's Story:

The collapse of our family business upended my world. As a five year old, I recall walking garden pots down the street from our family home into the first of multiple rentals. My two brothers and I shared a single room, six inches from one bed to the next. Cheap rent and food vouchers from a caring community enabled Mum to house, feed and clothe her family. As best she could, Mum worked hard to provide a stable environment.

Fifteen years later, through a gift from someone who cared, Mum was back on the road to home ownership. Mum, now retired, owns a modest two bedroom unit and lives well.



What if ...

What if, fifteen years earlier, a shared equity investor had partnered with my mum? Mum could have owned her home long before she was 69. Our family could have avoided disruption and constant uncertainty. I would have benefited from a stable home, with an increased sense of belonging and relational connection within my local community.

"Owning a home reduces the stress of life in retirement"