



THE
WELLINGTON WOMEN'S
BOARDING HOUSE
TE WHARE AWHI WĀHINE O WHANGANUI-Ā-TARA

IN OUR WOMEN'S WORDS

SHELLEY'S STORY

“When coming to the house I felt quite a lot of trepidation. I have always lived on my own and been in control of my own life. I was nervous about how I would find it.”

Shelley is 55 years old and this month she is moving in to her own home and setting up her own business. Before coming to stay with us at the Wellington Women's Boarding House she'd been living in Melbourne studying counselling and working in homelessness sector providing housing and support services.

After being diagnosed with advanced cancer that needed aggressive treatment she wanted to come home to New Zealand. She returned to Nelson, but with no community and without a supportive family she was on her own with no financial resources to fall back on. It took six years for Shelley to recover from the effects of chemotherapy on her immune system. When she was finally ready to work again she realised that she would need to move to a larger city to set up her own counselling practice.

After finding us online she spoke to Margaret, our House Manager, and came to meet us.

“It is clear that Margaret is making inroads into creating an environment that is pleasant and clean. I first noticed the garden and a sense of warmth. The word boarding house feels old school, but it gave me a platform to work from. I have been really ill this year, but because it was affordable I wasn't under pressure. It felt like a good starting point. A spring-board. And the location is fantastic”.

This month Shelley is moving into private rental and is busy setting up her own business. She's already joined the community gardens and is looking forward to growing her own vegetables, being part of a community and developing a real sense of belonging.

**Shelley is not the resident's real name.*

Wellington Women's Boarding House, a charity organisation that offers women who are homeless or in transition six to nine months of low cost accommodation and support. To find out more about the house go to wwbh.org.nz.