



# Social Housing Cleaning Services Case Study

How Crown Property Services  
Creates Dignified, Safe Spaces  
for HousingFirst Residents

**“They’re not just providing a service; they’re working with us to create safe, dignified spaces for our tenants”**

*“When we were looking to tender our cleaning services, we had previously relied on small subcontractors, but this approach created operational risks.*

*Moving to larger-scale contracts required a different level of compliance, appreciation of risk, risk management policies, procedures, and insurances. George and his team at Crown Property Services not only met these requirements but stood out for their enthusiasm for purpose-driven work, passion for technology, and commitment to quality.*

*Their maintenance reporting system means they’re like our eyes on the ground – it saves us so much time identifying issues on-site in real-time and sending updates directly to our team.*

*Their use of GPS tracking and live reporting was leading the way. These tools have been invaluable – not only for security but also for resolving disputes and maintaining quality.*

*What stood out to me was that they’re not just providing a service; they’re working with us to create safe, dignified spaces for our tenants. George instils a high level of authenticity in his values, which flow from the top down. His staff are properly trained and well-supported. That’s a big differentiator compared to other providers.*

*After more than three years of working with Crown, I know I can pick up the phone and George will handle any issue quickly and appropriately. It’s a true partnership, built on joint values, the culture he instils, and the service levels he strives for personally.*

*Crown Property Services has proven to be a partner we can rely on to deliver consistent, quality results for our residents.”*



**Clive Bowden**  
Chief Commercial Officer  
**HousingFirst**

# HousingFirst is one of Melbourne's largest community-focused affordable housing providers.

With **over 1,200 properties under management**, including family townhouses, apartments, and rooming houses, they're dedicated to providing **secure, affordable, and attractive living spaces** for vulnerable residents.

HousingFirst not only manages the properties but also **champions tenant satisfaction and well-maintained environments**, ensuring residents feel at home.

When it came to delivering cleaning and grounds services across all sites, HousingFirst needed a partner who could handle the **sensitive and challenging nature** of social housing.

The ideal provider would be **compassionate, dependable, and capable** of meeting rigorous standards for safety, hygiene, and dignity. That's where Crown Property Services came in.



## The Challenge: Clean, Safe, and Compassionate Spaces for Vulnerable Residents

Cleaning services for social housing require special consideration.

Some residents may face **unique and challenging circumstances**, including mental health issues, addiction, domestic violence recovery, and financial hardship.

Previously, HousingFirst relied on various subcontractors to meet cleaning needs, but this approach **lacked the consistency, control, and professionalism** that social housing demands.

Moving to a single, dedicated provider was essential to **improve quality, safety, and accountability** as the organisation scaled.

*“We had a couple of subcontractors doing it in some cases, but we needed a more mature, scalable solution with a greater appreciation of risk management, compliance, and quality,”*

*explained **Clive Bowden**, Chief Commercial Officer of HousingFirst*

## Why HousingFirst Chose Crown Property Services

Crown Property Services specialises in **cleaning services for sensitive, complex and high-stakes environments**. We have an established track record in aged care, healthcare, and social housing for organisations like Launch Housing and Life Without Barriers.

Our approach is values-driven, and **we pride ourselves on being a “people-first” business**.

HousingFirst selected Crown Property Services not only for our experience but for our commitment to Social Impact. We actively support employment pathways for vulnerable and marginalised individuals, including sponsoring vocational training and other return-to-work programs with several social housing providers.

## Our Approach: A Comprehensive, Human-Centred Solution

From the beginning, we saw our role as more than just delivering cleaning services.

Our purpose was to create **clean, safe, and welcoming spaces** that positively impact residents' lives. Crown's work for HousingFirst covers the full spectrum of cleaning and maintenance services.

We brought processes, professionalism, and scale that their previous solution couldn't, while ensuring that every cleaner is a **vett ed employee**—something large facility management companies didn't offer.

### Services Delivered:

- ✓ **Day-to-Day Cleaning:** Routine cleaning of shared areas and grounds across HousingFirst's 40+ large sites.
- ✓ **Scheduled High-Impact Cleaning:** Monthly and quarterly deep cleans, including steam cleaning, high-pressure washing, and window cleaning, to keep sites in optimal condition.
- ✓ **Sanitary Services & Consumables:** Regular stocking and waste disposal to keep shared spaces hygienic and comfortable.
- ✓ **Emergency & Ad Hoc Services:** Rapid-response for biohazards, floods, and emergency situations that could impact resident safety or well-being.

- ✓ **Vacate Cleans:** Comprehensive cleaning for turnover units, often involving heavy rubbish removal and detailed sanitation for challenging cases like hoarding or severe neglect.
- ✓ **Maintenance Support:** Real-time reporting for issues like broken fixtures, leaks, and pest control, ensuring timely action without burdening HousingFirst's maintenance team.

## A Compassionate Approach to Social Housing Cleaning

Social housing can make for **unpredictable and confronting cleaning environments**. We're prepared for it all: hoarding, biohazards, animal waste, and drug and chemical residues.

It's not easy work, but it's work we approach with a steady, respectful hand.

Our cleaners are trained in safely handling biohazards, knowing that **responsiveness is crucial**—not just for safety but to minimise residents' exposure to unpleasant sights or smells.

*Reflecting on Crown's work, Clive shared*

***“George sets the tone with empathy, making sure his cleaners aren't just driven by routine but by respect for our residents.”***

It's about creating spaces where **residents feel safe and comfortable**. Everything we do is designed to enhance their daily experience and dignity.

## Safety and Accountability: Protecting Residents and Cleaners Alike

It's crucial we do everything we can to ensure residents' feel secure in their homes. For those who may be **especially sensitive to having people in their space**—whether due to past trauma or mental health challenges—we take extra steps to **ensure visibility and trust**.

All of our cleaners are thoroughly vetted and undergo **police background checks**.

### Our approach also includes:



Formal cleaning  
schedules



Uniforms



Clearly marked,  
sign-wrapped  
vehicles



GPS vehicle  
and personnel  
tracking

Each site is geo-fenced, allowing us to **monitor cleaning times** and give HousingFirst real-time updates, building a reliable presence in the communities we serve.

HousingFirst receives detailed, timestamped reports with **before-and-after photos** of each job, supporting transparency and accountability.

## Expertise in Vacate Cleans for Social Housing

We conduct vacate cleans almost daily, and while some are straightforward, many involve complex, challenging conditions. In extreme cases, we encounter situations where residents have been living among piles of rubbish or extensive property damage, due to mental health challenges or personal hardships.

Our team is equipped to handle these situations with care and efficiency, removing all types of waste, both hard and soft, and ensuring the unit is thoroughly cleaned and restored.

This allows HousingFirst to provide a welcoming environment to new tenants, maintaining a safe and respectful living environment for all residents.

## Adding Value Beyond Cleaning

We also help HousingFirst stay on top of property maintenance. Our cleaners use our proprietary iPhone app to report issues right away. With a quick photo—whether it's a broken light, damaged door handle, or graffiti—they can send a job report directly to HousingFirst.

*Clive said*

*“This saves us so much time. They're like our eyes on the ground.”*

This system helps HousingFirst **quickly prioritise and address maintenance**, marking tasks as P1 or P2 as needed. With our team on the ground, HousingFirst's facilities team doesn't have to visit every site for every issue. Instead, they can manage maintenance centrally, saving time and resolving tenant concerns more quickly.






# Transparent Reporting and Proactive Maintenance

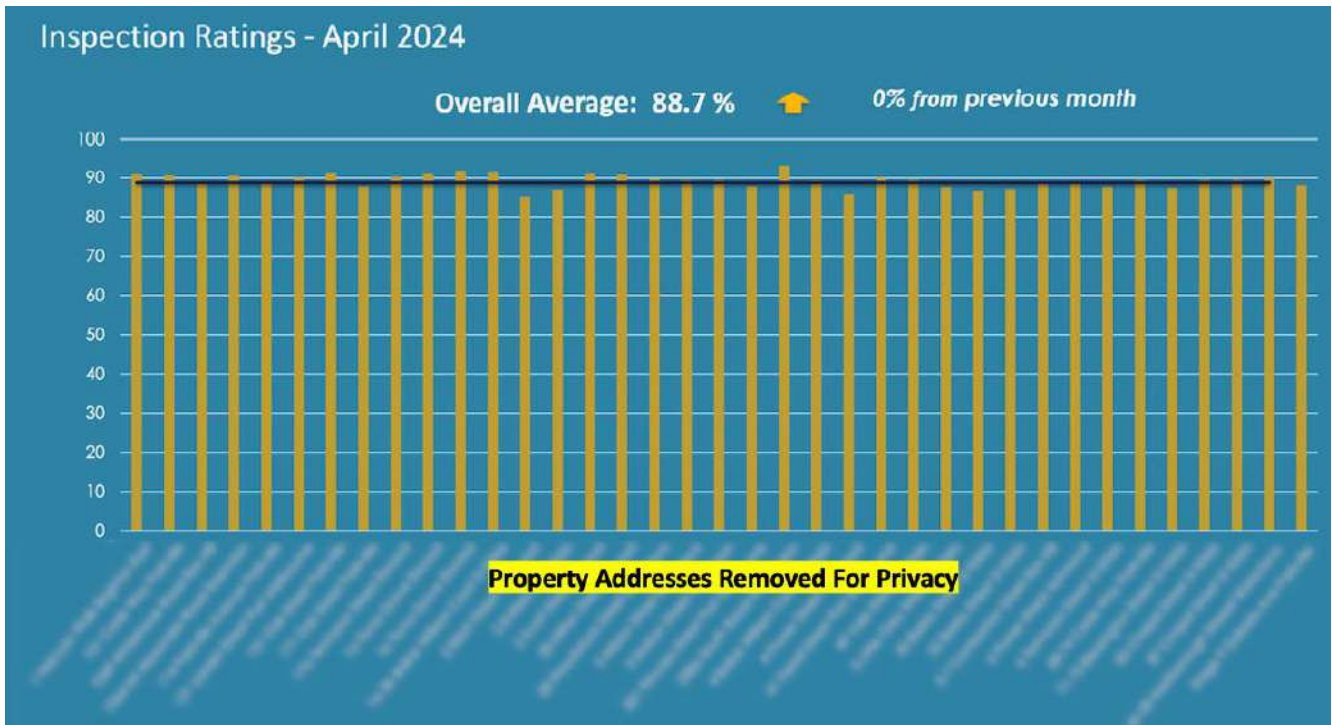
We use a proactive reporting system that keeps HousingFirst fully informed and in control of property conditions. Each month, HousingFirst receives:

1

**Detailed property reports** with breakdowns of all elements within each property, reviewed by our Quality Coordinators and supported by photo documentation.

<b>Sweep and Mop Hard Floors</b>	Good
<b>Remove stains, and spillage from all toilets and fixtures</b>	Good
	
Photo 2	
<b>Clean, wash and disinfect all showers, shower doors or partitions and bathtubs including taps and fittings</b>	Good
<b>Clean and remove all marks from mirrors, doors, walls, tiles, dispensers and hand-dryers</b>	Good
<b>Clean all basins, sinks, strainers, bench-tops and exposed piping. Where chromed piping or similar is evident, the surface shall be polished to a high sheen.</b>	Good
	
Photo 3	
<b>Clean and wipe down window ledges</b>	Good
<b>Clean toilet seats, topside and underside</b>	Very Good
<b>Disinfect all toilet bowls and urinals</b>	Good
<b>Rinse down urinals with water</b>	NA
<b>De-cobweb entrances and window areas</b>	Good
	
Photo 4	

**2** / **Inspection Ratings** showing overall satisfaction averages—so they know standards are met consistently.



**3** / **Work Orders List** detailing every ad hoc and vacate request, along with timestamps and completion status.

HOUSING FIRST WORK ORDERS APRIL 2024						
Work Order Name	Client Work Order No.	Work Category	Job Status	Start Date and Time	Account Name	Invoice No.
118, 2 Elbert Street, BUNBURY VIC 3247 - M009384	M009384	Ad-hoc	Completed	26/04/2024	Housing First	INV-20021
Vacate Clean - 7, 4 Balke William Court, 37 ELSTON, VIC 3182 - M009347	M009347	Vacate	Completed	26/04/2024	Housing First	INV-20108
Vacate Clean - 5, 12 Banks Street, 37 ELSTON, VIC 3182 - M009307	M009307	Vacate	Completed	26/04/2024	Housing First	INV-20012
Vacate Clean - 105, 88 Marlborough Street, BUNBURY VIC 3247 - M009329	M009329	Vacate	Completed	26/04/2024	Housing First	INV-20009
Ad-hoc - 41 Galada Avenue, FRANKLTON, VIC 3092 - M009292	M009292	Ad-hoc	Completed	22/04/2024	Housing First	INV-20010
Ad-hoc - 78 Ladbroke Way, FRANKLTON, VIC 3092 - M009225	M009225	Ad-hoc	Completed	19/04/2024	Housing First	INV-20107
Ad-hoc Rubbish Removal - 41 Galada Avenue, FRANKLTON, VIC 3092 - M009237	M009237	Rubbish Removal	Completed	26/04/2024	Housing First	INV-20011
Apartment Rubbish Removal - 2 Elbert Street, BUNBURY VIC 3247 - M008974-1	M008974-1	Rubbish Removal	Completed	18/04/2024	Housing First	INV-19985
Rubbish Removal - 87 Chapel Street, 37 ELSTON, VIC 3182 - M008977-1	M008977-1	Rubbish Removal	Completed	18/04/2024	Housing First	INV-19981
Water Damage - 2 Elbert Street, BUNBURY VIC 3247 - M009124	M009124	Ad-hoc	Completed	12/04/2024	Housing First	INV-19984
Vacate Clean - 1, 4 Scott Street, FRANKLTON, VIC 3094 - M008918	M008918	Vacate	Completed	4/04/2024	Housing First	INV-20109
126, Rubbish Removal - 2 Elbert Street, BUNBURY VIC 3247 - M008612	M008612	Rubbish Removal	Cancelled	12/04/2024	Housing First	INV-19783

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**Monthly Snapshot** summarising tenant interactions, formal complaints, biohazard reports, and maintenance needs, all in a single-page overview.

Summary Report – April 2024			
Reportable WHS Incidents	0		
Maintenance, General & Safety reports submitted	24	Reportable Incidents - HF	
Reportable Tenant interactions	0	Reportable Incidents - CPS	0
Formal Complaints	0	Formal Complaint Response	0
Vacate Clean requests	4	Vacate Cleans completed	4
		<i>Re-work orders</i>	
Ad-hoc clean requests	4	Ad-hoc cleans completed	4
Rubbish Removal requests	4	Rubbish Removals completed	4
Periodical services due Bin Cleaning	1	Periodical services completed	1
Invoices submitted	14 HF & 8 PP	Outstanding Invoices	0
Self Audits completed		PH –	2

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**Maintenance & Safety Reports** for water leaks, pest issues, and property repairs, complete with photographs and resolution statuses.

This transparent, data-driven approach allows HousingFirst to monitor site conditions in real time, making informed decisions on maintenance priorities without adding to their workload.

## Training & Professional Development

Our staff undergo **regular training tailored** to the social housing environment.

Each month, **we conduct "Toolbox Talks"** that cover both technical cleaning skills and softer skills.

### These include topics like:

- ✓ Handling Sharps and Biohazards
- ✓ Working in High-Risk Environments
- ✓ Chemical Safety and Green Cleaning Practices
- ✓ Recognising Signs of Mental Health Crisis
- ✓ Prevention and Management of Onsite Violence/Aggression
- ✓ Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Refreshers
- ✓ Safe Waste Disposal and Rubbish Removal
- ✓ Emergency Response Protocols

Cleaners sign off on each training, ensuring they're prepared for the complex, often sensitive nature of social housing.

## A Relationship Built on Trust and Mutual Respect

Over the past several years, Crown Property Services has proven to be more than a vendor—we're a partner HousingFirst can rely on.

We're driven by a commitment to treat every resident with respect and ultimately **provide the most inviting living environment we can**, and HousingFirst recognises this.

*"George and his team are genuinely invested in our residents' well-being,"*

*Clive reflected.*

*"If I have a problem, I know I can pick up the phone, and they'll be there, ready to help. It's rare to find that kind of dedication."*

Our partnership with HousingFirst exemplifies our belief that quality cleaning isn't just about pristine surfaces; it's about creating **safe, dignified, and compassionate spaces that elevate lives.**

