



Hope Street Youth and Family Services Limited ACN: 167 510 018
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Hope Street Welcomes the release of the Royal Commission into Family Violence: Report and Recommendations.

Hope Street Youth and Family Services have welcomed the release of the Royal Commission into Family Violence: Report and Recommendations.

Hope Street says the recommendations that focus on young people and children highlight the need for specialist youth focused responses and are particularly critical for this cohort of people in our community experiencing family violence.

Hope Street's CEO Donna Bennett said that "in our experience young people are often voiceless in the family violence space falling through the gaps; largely the focus is on women and their children (as it should be) but not the adolescent who leaves home without a parent or siblings. Effective responses must be aimed right across the continuum of client cohorts and young people need to feature significantly in this response."

In April 2015, Hope Street conducted a snapshot survey seeking the main reason why young people sought assistance from Hope Street. Of the 95 young people surveyed, 87% reported they had experienced family violence.

Hope Street's CEO Donna Bennett said this 'highlighted the real need to provide timely and appropriate supports to young people who do not fit neatly into other government social service systems. Young people have different needs and this requires consideration when developing social policy and services."

Hope Street also welcomed the recognition too of the need to support young people experiencing homelessness due to family violence in the outer growth corridors of Melbourne.

Ms Bennett, highlighted that "Gandel Philanthropy has recognized the need for resources in Melton for vulnerable young people and partnered with Hope Street to pilot an innovative project: Hope to Home. In partnership with Raine and Horne Melton this project provides young people with future hope via a pathway out of homelessness and disadvantage and into private rental."

"There is a real lack of crisis accommodation for young people living in outer areas such as Melton. The nearest emergency facility is over 25km's away. In the absence of emergency support, young people seek refuge elsewhere and as a consequence often disconnect from their other support systems like school, employment and extended family." Hope Street's Service Development Manager, Mandy Baxter said.

Hope Street is currently working with various stakeholders in the LGA of Melton to establish an emergency accommodation and support services for over 220 young people experiencing homelessness providing them with stable and safe accommodation. This will be in the form of a youth refuge and outreach support service. The significant difference from the usual youth refuge is this facility will provide an enhanced response with onsite specialist supports like counseling, education and mental health services tailored towards the specific needs of young people. It will also follow them once they leave the facility providing them with ongoing case management for up to 12 months to ensure they move above and beyond the homeless/family violence service system.

Hope Street has called on the State Government to provide the ongoing operational funding for this much needed new youth focused initiative. The Melton Council has provided in principle support for land. Local businesses and service groups are also behind this initiative. With the assistance of local stakeholders, Hope Street is currently seeking expressions of interest from builders/developers to construct the facility.

"The Royal Commission into Family Violence: Report and Recommendations is a real opportunity to make a significant difference to the lives of so many young people. Hope Street will be a champion of this change" CEO Donna Bennett said.

For further media enquiries contact Mandy Baxter, Service Development Manager on 0431 773 205 or Donna Bennett, CEO on 0412 674 694