



Hope Street Applauds State Government Funding Announcement to increase immediate funding for crisis and emergency accommodation in Outer Growth Corridor Melton.

Hope Street Youth and Family Services applauds The Premier, Daniel Andrews, and Minister for Housing, Martin Foley, for today's comprehensive funding announcement which is a significant response to the recommendations of Royal Commission into Family Violence.

Today's announcement acknowledges that young people who experience homelessness require specific tailored responses as *"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 groups and young people need to feature significantly in this response. Today's funding announcement will start to address their particular needs"* states Hope Street's CEO Donna Bennett.

Hope Street has been working closely with various stakeholders in the LGA of Melton to establish an emergency accommodation facility along with specialist wrap around support services for over 220 young people experiencing homelessness. A youth refuge and community outreach services are designed to provide at risk young people with stable and safe accommodation and youth-specific supports. Ms Bennett states that *"today's announcement will go towards funding the operation of this service, ensuring young people who are homeless, largely due to family violence, are provided with a rapid response and housing enabling them to continue to develop with the stability of their local community"*.

"There is a real lack of crisis accommodation for young people living in outer areas such as Melton. The nearest emergency facility is over 25kms 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" said Mandy Baxter, Hope Street's Service Development Manager.

Ms Bennett also states that *"the population growth rate of the City of Melton is the second fastest of all Victorian local government areas and has a projected 85% increase in children and 83% increase in young people by 2031. The Andrew's government's wide ranging funding packages will ensure that incidents of family violence and youth homelessness will not continue to grow at the same rate as the Melton community population"*.

Hope Street acknowledges the collective effort from the Melton community, local businesses, Melton City Council, Local MPs and Service Clubs, that continue to provide real leadership and advice ensuring this initiative becomes a reality. *"This is a real reflection of how a strong community comes together to support its young people"* says Ms Bennett. *"We now call on local developers, builders and other businesses in the LGA of Melton to join with us in partnership to construct this innovative facility"* Ms Bennett added.

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