Hope Street in Melton is a model of eight self-contained units and two family units, based on the youth foyer-like model of supported transitional housing. It provides young people and young families with safe, secure and affordable accommodation for 12 months to two years. Young people are active participants in creating opportunities to strengthen their housing, employment, education, training and personal and social development. Young people who exit the program are provided with up to 12 months of outreach support.

**Community support**

Hope Street in Melton continued to benefit from the support of the local community and business partnerships. Organisations including The Period Project, Princhas, Bunnings, Melton Youth Services, the GAP, Redkink, Melton Waves, L2P and Western Emergency Relief Network have shown their commitment to the continued success of the program and also provided additional supports which enhance the young people’s wellbeing and connection to community.

The following support and services were provided:

- Medium-term / transitional housing (27%);
- Advice and information (15%);
- Living skills (7%);
- Advocacy (8%);
- Transport (5%); and
- Family relationship assistance (3%).

At the end of the supported services, 39% of young people were receiving the Youth Allowance, 23% of young people had income from employment, 8% were receiving the New Start allowance and 8% were receiving the parenting payment.

**Holiday program**

The holiday program continued to be a favourite among residents, with programs as diverse as the young people we support. The holiday programs assist young people to connect with and explore the community, to build on their social skills and to increase their resilience. Activities this year included:

- Volunteering for Pets Haven Animal Shelter;
- Visiting historical areas;
- Hiking and creating connection with nature;
- Visiting museums;
- Attending arts programs; and
- Visiting regional centres and Melbourne city.

**HAYDEN’S STORY**

Hayden, 21, stayed at Hope Street’s youth refuge in Brunswick West from December 2018 to March 2019 after leaving his family home in Melton after suffering unexplained issues.

Hayden knew where to go for help when he became homeless. “I had heard of Hope Street through my brother, who had also left home, and I knew I could go there for help,” he says.

Hope Street’s First Response Youth Mobile Outreach Service team in Melton immediately started looking for crisis accommodation so that Hayden wouldn’t have to sleep rough on the streets. They found him a bed in Hope Street’s Youth Refuge in Brunswick West.

In March, after a five month stay, Hayden got the news that his application for a one bedroom property in the Hope Street in Melton program (a youth foyer-like program where young people can stay for 1-2 years) was successful. “I had the biggest sigh of relief to be honest. I was so emotional and felt so happy that I was going home to Melton back to the place where I belong, back to my friends. It’s where I need to be,” he said.

Hayden is now residing in the Melton foyer-like program. He has recently completed a course in hospitality, and plans to pursue a career in acting one day. He has chosen to speak about his experience of homelessness in the hope that it may help other young people.

Hayden was a guest speaker at the Hope Street corporate and philanthropic breakfast event held at the Sofitel Hotel, and he represented Hope Street on ABC TV’s Q&A panel discussion show where he posed a question to the panel about the provision of youth homelessness services in growth corridors.

“I have hope again.”