

HOPE STREET IN MELTON REPORT

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.



The program currently has two part-time Case Managers working Monday to Friday, who focus on intensive one-to-one specialist youth support, and two weekend Youth Residential Support Workers who focus on living skills development.

Our young people

Hope Street in Melton provided support to a total of 27 young people during 2018-2019, including 14 clients who were carried over from the previous year, and 13 new clients. There were two accompanying children. Client demographics of note include:

- 18 females and nine males;
- The most common client age groups:
 - o 18-20 years old: 59%;
 - o 21-25 years old: 19%; and
 - o 15-17 years old: 15%;
- The most common country of birth was Australia (70%), with 7% of clients identifying as having an Aboriginal background. Other countries of birth included Iran, Sudan, Ethiopia, New Zealand, Somalia and Vietnam;
- The most common reasons young people sought support were:
 - o Domestic and family violence: 31%
 - o Inadequate dwellings: 23%
 - o Relationship or family breakdown: 15%; and
- A previous mental health diagnosis was reported by 39% of clients.

Our impact

Throughout the year, 13 young people transitioned from the program into a variety of housing options, the most common of which were:

- Rent-free private housing (reuniting with immediate or extended family): 31%;
- Accessing private rental: 23%;
- Securing public housing: 8%; and
- Securing transitional housing: 8%.

A total of \$8,126 was spent on supporting young people during this period, including costs such

as establishing and maintaining private rental tenancies; for training, education or employment supports and other purposes.

Youth Specialist Case Managers and Youth Residential Support Workers assisted young people to achieve a variety of successful outcomes to assist with the transition into independent living in the community, including:

- Engagement in employment and/or connecting to education and training;
- Enhancing living skills and the ability to live independently;
- Increased connection to health and support services; and
- Strengthened 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.

Community support

Hope Street in Melton continued to benefit from the support of the local community and business partnerships. Organisations including The Period Project, Pinchapoo, Bunnings, Melton Youth Services 6801, the GAP, Reclink, 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.

SAF-Holland, a Melton-based designer, manufacturer and distributor of engineering components, provided quarterly donations and offered young people access to an employment readiness program.

Woodgrove Shopping Centre continued to raise funds and awareness for Hope Street in Melton via various marketing and community engagement activities.

Mirvac community day

Hope Street in Melton received a make-over of its grounds in October 2018 when a team of 40 staff from property developer Mirvac volunteered their

time to run a working bee. Mirvac, who run the nearby Woodlea housing development, selected Hope Street as one of their charity partners for their nationwide Community Day which sees hundreds of staff members stop their usual duties and volunteer their time for community benefit.

The team rolled up their sleeves to upgrade the garden beds, develop a child-friendly play area and install a cubby house for the Hope Street in Melton program. They also created a social area with paved patio and tables and chairs and upgraded the client interview room for the First Response Youth Mobile Outreach Service. The Hope Street team hosted a barbeque lunch to thank the workers, and certificates of appreciation were distributed to each volunteer.

The Hope Street in Melton team is grateful for the opportunity to support each of the 27 young people we've worked with this year.

Report written by Kylie Charleson, Intensive Support Case Manager.



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 unbearable 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 up about his experience of homelessness, in the hope that it may help other young people. He 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."

