

## YOUTH RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM REPORT

The Youth Residential Program provides accommodation in West Brunswick for at risk young people and their children. Our program team are available 24 hours, seven days a week so that there is always someone available if young people need assistance or advice.

### Client Demographics

The Youth Residential Program provided 108 support periods during the year, including seven support periods continuing from 2016-2017. Of the 61 young people receiving support, 54% were 20-24 years old, followed by 41% aged 15-19 years, 3% aged 20-29 years and 2% being children under 10 years old. Most of the young people at our refuge were born in Australia (48%) with 3% identifying themselves as being of Aboriginal heritage. The majority of overseas-born young people originated from Somalia (13%), Ethiopia (11%), Sudan and Kenya (5% each).

The most common reason young people sought assistance were their previous accommodation ending (21%), followed by relationship or family breakdown (21%) and domestic and family violence (19%).

### Duration of Stay and Outcomes

During 2017-18, young people stayed at our refuge for an average of 27 days. The duration of stay for each young person varies greatly depending on their needs and the type of vacancy advertised. The majority of young people (39) stayed at the refuge for under ten nights, while 10 young people stayed between 50 and 100 nights, four young people for 30-50 nights and three young people for 10-30 nights. Five young people stayed at our refuge for over 100 nights. This means that their 6-week stay was extended for a second period of 6 weeks due to not achieving a suitable housing outcome within the initial 6-week stay. Reasons for this included a lack of income, high support needs or no suitable housing being available.

The housing outcomes for young people in this program can be viewed in our Youth Support Service Program Report as these are the same young people being accommodated at our refuge. In addition to the 53 young people supported in our Youth Residential Program, there were 48 support periods offered to young people who were accommodated without case management. This means that they were offered an emergency bed for one to three nights.

Emergency bed clients have a safe and private place to rest. They also have access to healthy food, crisis support, medical care, free toiletries and basic clothing, as well as personal support in a non-threatening environment. On expiry of their emergency bed young people usually return to the access point. If they have liked the Hope Street environment and a further vacancy has become available, they can be referred into it again or on to another refuge vacancy in the Opening Doors system.

### Achievements and Highlights

#### Pet Therapy: A Two-way Gift with a Wagging Tail

Hope Street refuge has been fortunate in its continuing partnership with the Lort Smith Animal Hospital who provide Pet Therapy to the young people at the refuge. Several young people have had pets in their lives prior to entering refuge crisis accommodation, and may be missing their animals due to becoming homeless. This community activity is a chance for our young people to connect with a furry friend (Tiffany) and spend time with the owner (Lucia) in a relaxed, social context.

#### Living Skills Program

This program offers workshops to prepare young people for independent living such as budgeting, cooking, cleaning, laundry, hygiene, and personal management. Additional workshops are provided to meet individual needs (eg stress management, relaxation skills and self care). Young people who progress through the full series of workshops receive vouchers valued at \$100 to purchase household items such as lamps, rugs, kitchen appliances or linen for their next accommodation.

During the year, young people benefitted from approximately 100 group-based or individual workshops including: art and craft workshops run by our creative Youth Residential Program support staff and BOOST night time staff, a Shared Household Skills Workshop from our Youth Reconciliation Practitioner, and a Legal Workshop with a visiting lawyer from the Northern Community Legal Centre.

#### Mirvac National Community Day

To those at risk and seeking shelter, the importance of having a place to stay in that is comfortable, clean and pleasant, is paramount. On Mirvac National Community Day, volunteers from Mirvac and Woodlea gave freely of their time and skills to improve and beautify the Brunswick West refuge. The volunteers enjoyed a delicious lunch prepared by the young people and Hope Street team members to thank them for their hard work.

**READ MORE:** Business Development and Partnerships Manager's Report



Christine Fagan  
Programs Manager  
(North East)



"HOPE STREET IS A PLACE/HOME I WILL NEVER FORGET. IT WILL ALWAYS BE A PLACE THAT IS REMEMBERED AS A HOME BECAUSE THEY TOOK ME IN WITH LOVE AND KINDNESS. THEY TAUGHT ME THE VALUE OF LIFE AND TO GIVE MYSELF MORE CREDIT WITH EVERYTHING THAT I HAVE ACCOMPLISHED IN MY LIFE. THEY TREATED ME WITH RESPECT AND THAT IS WHAT I APPRECIATED THE MOST."

### Program Overview

The Youth Residential Program at West Brunswick provides young people with a safe and stable environment including meals, basic clothing and toiletry supplies. We provide round the clock supervised support and a range of youth-specific programs. Young people are provided with their own private space and have access to two recreation spaces with indoor and outdoor facilities. There are eight beds in the main residential block and a two-bedroom family unit onsite to accommodate young families experiencing homelessness.

Young people are allocated a living skills worker who works with them to acquire and improve independent living skills and knowledge. Social and emotional development are also promoted via relaxation, self-awareness, social learning, sharing meals together and other group interactions.

We have local partnerships with the Coburg YWCA gym for our young people to access, the Moreland Library group and the Salvation Army in Brunswick.