



Queensland Youth Housing Coalition Inc.

QYHC is 'Good Will Hunting' through short films:

In April of the year 2010 whilst celebrating Youth Homeless Matters day, Queensland Youth Housing Coalition (QYHC) the Queensland Youth Homelessness Peak body, the organisation charged with advocating for and supporting the well being of homeless young people is calling for good will.

QYHC's Executive Officer, Maria Leebeek states: "Sleeping under bridges isn't good will, sleeping rough isn't good will. Couch surfing provides no secure housing but shows good will on behalf of those who allow young people a sleep cycle periodically through their homes. Allowing our children and young people to be homeless without a place to call home in our state and our society is something that falls very short of good will".

A short film festival will be held to celebrate Youth Homeless Matters day 2010. The Queensland Youth Housing Coalition will hold a forum on the **14th April at the Brisbane Square Library** to highlight through short films and a discussion panel the need for a more coordinated effort to address youth homelessness.

We have all heard it – where there is a will there is a way! QYHC is calling for a way forward from youth homelessness because youth homelessness need not be swept under the bridges of our cities and our communities – it needs to be addressed and young people need to be housed and supported. The way forward is good will.

Each year more than 105,000 Australians are homeless, almost 50% of these are our children and young people. In Queensland we have 10,000 young Queenslanders whom are without safe, secure shelter.

Ms Leebeek challenges: "Don't belie the myth that this is choice. Mythology plays an unfortunate role in letting us all off the hook and denying the reality of the situation our most vulnerable young Queenslanders face. If you believe that homelessness is a choice for young people who don't like rules or otherwise, take yourself out to a night on the streets or a week on a friend's couch, then another few days with another friend, then a couple of days under a bridge, then a few in a park and then ask yourself if that seems

like a choice someone with the option of a safe and secure home would choose. I suggest the average person trialling this challenge would have a major realisation after only one or two nights of this experience”.

During Youth Homelessness Matters day QYHC will be calling for a **Queensland Youth Homelessness Action Plan**. On the 14th April 2010 they and their members will be seeking a drastic reduction in the 7000 young people in Queensland who are homeless on any given night.

Ms Leebeek asserts: *“Good Will requires debunking the myths that let us all believe there is nothing to be done and ‘someone else is to blame’, often the homeless young person. It requires us to delve into the social, familial and economic inequities that children and young people who are homeless grapple with. **Good will ultimately requires us to see what we see, know what we know and to act to ensure change”.***

Youth homeless does matter and on April 14th QYHC will be holding its Youth Homelessness Matters day function in the Brisbane City Council’s *Brisbane Square Library* to highlight this most concerning of social and fiscal issues for our society. Not only does youth homelessness matter, it costs – emotionally, financially and socially. To unburden the personal, societal and community costs of homelessness we need engagement, strategies and plans for action: all of which require attention, time, energy and most significantly good will.

Ms Leebeek acknowledges: *“We are fortunate to have a Federal Government in support of the principles to reduce homelessness. We also need the State Government to equally commit to this task whilst also acknowledging the high rate of youth homelessness and the many complexities homeless youth face in Queensland. In times of economic crisis young people are particularly hard hit. Thus, the need for action to mitigate the levels of youth homelessness becomes even more essential”.*

Films will be screened from 2.30 to 3.30pm with the panel discussion from 4.00 to 4.30pm. Media welcome to attend for short movie viewings and interviews at 3.30pm.

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