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UNMET DEMAND

A PAPER EXPLORING ACCESS TO HOMELESS
SERVICES FOR YOUNG QUEENSLANDERS
FEBRUARY 2008

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DID YOU KNOW THAT...

1 in 2 people are turned away from homeless services in Australia, due to the homeless system running at **full capacity** (pg 4)

According to the SAAP (Supported Accommodation Assistance Program) NDCA (National Data Collection Agency) data the rate of daily turn away for young people is higher at 61.8%. (pg 4)

The Census 2001 reports that close to half of the 99,900 homeless people were less than 25 years of age (46%) with those aged 12 - 18 years a prominent group (26% of all homeless people) (pg 8)

15 out of every 1000 school students identify as homeless.

Children accounted for over two-fifths (43% or 68100) of the 157,200 people who accessed a SAAP service in 2004 - 05. (pg 9)

The largest group of SAAP clients (34%) are young people aged between the ages of 15 - 24 year. When compared to the general population 1 in every 73 young person aged 15 - 19 was in a SAAP service. (pg 9)

The most common unmet need for young people 12 -17 was for housing and accommodation. (pg 10)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people only make up a small percentage of the Australian population (2.4% in 2001 Census) yet they are overrepresented in the homeless population (18% of SAAP Clients).

OVERVIEW

The Queensland Youth Housing Coalition (QYHC) is the peak advocacy body in Queensland for young people's housing issues, with a particular focus on the link between youth housing and education. QYHC provides leadership, support and a voice for the community based youth housing, youth education and related sectors.

The Queensland Youth Housing Coalition is advocating strongly for a Commonwealth /State Homelessness Strategy that includes a youth specific stream, as we are concerned that specific homelessness strategies and youth homelessness would be lost within a mainstream housing framework.

The aim of the paper is to provide the reader with a snapshot of the numbers of young people who are homeless in Queensland, presenting issues and current service responses in attempting to meet these needs.

The paper attempts to highlight that whilst in recent years we have been focussed on numbers of homeless young people and risk factors, much of this work has been structured within an economic framework. The development of a truly robust homelessness response requires us to understand structural disadvantage, the characteristics of young people from an economic **and** social perspectives, adolescent development and young people's life experiences. Further to consider responses to homelessness across a continuum of care.

The paper outlines that young people form a large part of the homeless service system and that the current service system is working to capacity. In fact 1 in 2 people are turned away from a homeless service in Australia. According to the NDCA data the rate of daily turn away for young people is higher at 61.8%. However a quick collection of data by QYHC from services around the State is showing that most youth services are experiencing much higher percentage turn away rates than this.

This paper outlines that young people experiences of homelessness is fundamentally different from adults and their homelessness careers reflects this. In response we must explore service models that meet the needs of young people taking into consideration young peoples' lived experiences coupled with understandings of adolescent development and the need for key support personnel.

This means that services may need to be smaller and more intimate, keeping young people in their communities and allowing young people to stay connected to mainstream services such as local schools, social and recreational opportunities and casual employment.

The paper also explores that young people experience homelessness differently depending on factors such as age, whether they live in the city or country, are indigenous or non indigenous, are in school or unemployed and if they have mental health issues.

The concern for the Queensland Youth Housing Coalition is that while the current system is at capacity we do not want to have the future responses to this large unmet demand being institutional models of service or that the size and nature of the services stigmatise young people.

Lastly the paper outlines the gaps in services and areas where immediate investment would provide significant positive outcomes for young people.

CHARACTERISTICS

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) enumerates the homeless population using the cultural definition of homelessness (Chamberlain 1999). This identifies 'primary', 'secondary' and 'tertiary' homelessness.

Primary homelessness is the same as literal homelessness or 'rooflessness'. Secondary homelessness includes people who are staying in any form of temporary accommodation, with no other secure housing elsewhere. Many homeless people move frequently from one form of temporary accommodation to another. Tertiary homelessness refers to the occupants of single rooms in private boarding houses who live there on a long-term basis (three months or longer).

There is a range of structural and as well as individual characteristics that contribute to youth homelessness in Australia. Structural causes include low incomes, poverty, unemployment and inequalities in the labour market, lack of appropriate and secure housing including public housing. Most of the recent research has focussed on 'at risk' characteristics that individualise blame and predominately examine economic indicators.

There has not been a lot of recent data on the individual characteristics of young people who are homeless. We can extrapolate from various research reports the social dimensions of homelessness. The characteristics of young people, in each stage of homelessness described below, attempts to incorporate both social and economic dimensions (this is just a starting examples). In doing so it starts to provide us with a clearer picture of homeless young people;

⊕ Primary homeless

Runaways- first time out of home

High level of family conflict

Young people not in school

Young people with no income

Young people on fixed incomes with high and complex needs

Young people with poorer health outcomes

Young people engaging in opportunistic prostitution

Engagement with juvenile justice system

⊕ Secondary homeless

Young people on fixed incomes (unemployed) with high and complex needs

Limited engagement with family

Low levels of community engagement ie sporting clubs

Young people with mental health issues

Young people exiting Out Of Home Care (child protection)

Secondary homeless students

Young pregnant and parenting people

⊕ Tertiary homeless

Young people on fixed incomes (unemployed)

Young people on low incomes

Young people on traineeships or apprenticeships

Young people with mental health issues

NUMBERS OF HOMELESS PEOPLE

The 2001 Census counted that there were 99,900 people who were homeless (52.3 per 10,000 population). A quarter of these homeless people were living in Queensland at a rate higher than the national average (69.8 per 10,000). The Census 2001 reports that close to half of the 99,900 homeless people were less than 25 years of age (46%), with those aged 12-18 years a prominent group (26% of all homeless people). In the report Youth Homelessness 2001, using the census data, it noted that there were 26,060 homeless young people in Australia and that this was an 8.4% increase from 1996.

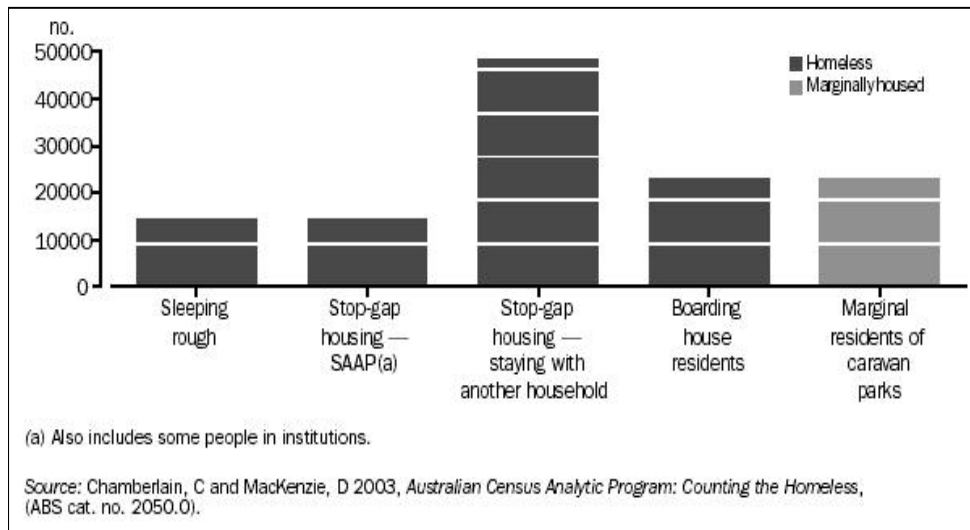
The table below from the Youth Homelessness 2001¹ report demonstrates that Queensland had a higher rate of homeless in the 12 –18 age bracket when compared to the national average.

	NSW	Vic	ACT	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	Aust
Number of homeless	6,242	4,663	400	6,381	2,394	3,508	1,008	1,464	26,060
Rate per 1,000	10	10	12.5	18	17	18	21	69	14

In terms of the 99,900 homeless people in 2001:

- ⊕ 14,200 (approx) people were in the most extreme situation - 'sleeping rough' (i.e. in improvised dwellings or tents, or in streets, parks, cars or derelict buildings) - 14%
- ⊕ 14,300 (approx) were staying in emergency or transitional housing—mainly in SAAP services—14%
- ⊕ 48,600 (approx) were defined as homeless because they were staying with another household and had no usual residence -49%
- ⊕ Lastly 22,900 people living in boarding houses - 23%

¹ Chamberlain and Mackenzie, Youth Homelessness 2001, RMIT, July 2002



The census data found that out of the 26,000 (approx) young people most were unemployed (15,000 approx), 8,500 were students and 2,100 were TAFE students.

The 2004/05 NDCA data showed that a large proportion of the people who access SAAP services are children. The AIWH report *Homeless Children in SAAP 2004/05* stated that “Children accounted for over two-fifths (43% or 68,100) of the 157,200 people who accessed a SAAP service in 2004–05, either as children accompanying a parent or guardian who was being supported (36% or 56,800 were accompanied children) or directly as clients independently of a parent or guardian (7% or 11,300 were unaccompanied children aged 17 years and under).²”

Out of the 11,300 young people, most were female and:

- ⊕ 4% were aged 11 years and under
- ⊕ 4% were aged 12–13 years
- ⊕ 24% were aged 14–15 years
- ⊕ 68% were aged 16–17 year

² AIWH report *Homeless Children in SAAP 2004/05*, pg

Of more interest is that 5% of these young people had children accompanying them—although the data is not clear whether the children were their own or siblings that they had guardianship over.

The SAAP NDCA data continues to demonstrate that young people form a large part of the client group of the program. In fact the largest group of SAAP clients (34%) are young people aged between the ages of 15 – 24. When compared to the general population 1 in every 73 young person aged 15 – 19 was in a SAAP service – the highest of any age group.

The 2005 – 2006 SAAP NDCA data notes that 1 out of every 126 Australians received support from the program. The demand for SAAP services continues to exceed supply with one in two people seeking accommodation at a refuge being turned away.

In 2004/2005 NDCA data showed that most of the young people between the ages of 12–17 years who presented independently to a SAAP agency did so because of issues in their interpersonal relationships (52%). In particular most presented due to family or relationship breakdown (24%) and time out from family or other situation (13%).

DURATION OF HOMELESSNESS

The 1998 report *‘Youth Homelessness – Early intervention and Prevention’* notes that *“On balance, we estimate that between 30 -40% of homeless people have a short-term problem (less than two weeks); that between 40 -50% are long term (some months of homelessness); and that between 15 and 25% are chronically homeless.”*³

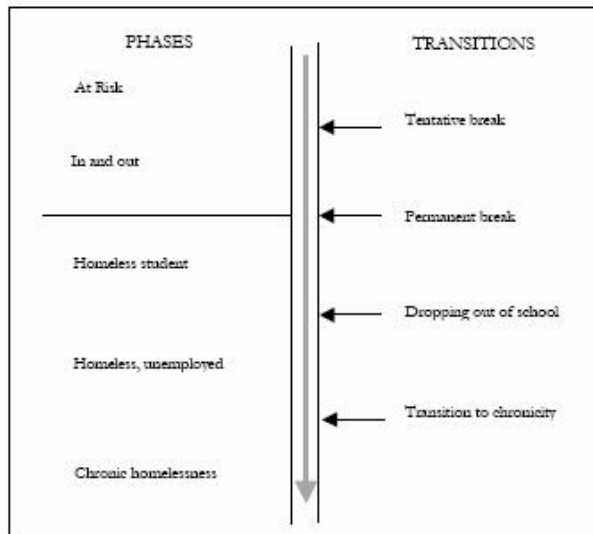
The SAAP NDCA data for 2005- 2006 found that young people had an average length of stay of 14 days. There is no data on the variation of length of stay depending on the model of service.

It must be noted that homelessness is a process. Chamberlain and Mackenzie in their report *Youth Homelessness 2001* developed the idea of a homeless career. As they write *“... young people go through various stages before they develop a self identity as a homeless*

³ Chamberlain and Mackenzie, *Youth Homelessness, Early intervention and prevention*, Australian Centre for Equity through Education 1998

person”⁴ There are no definitive start or ending points with regard to this process however there are clearly a range of ‘risk’ factors.

Figure 1: Homeless Youth Career



The Queensland Youth Housing Coalition notes that the concept of risk must be placed within a continuum of care framework otherwise risk can be a very broad concept. QYHC would argue that risk factors must relate to the risk of becoming homeless.

Young people ‘at risk’ of homelessness may be young people who:

- ⊕ Have been harmed or continue to be at risk of harm from physical, sexual and emotional abuse and/or neglect;
- ⊕ Have no significant caring adult figure who can exercise care and responsibility;
- ⊕ Are engaged in risk taking behaviours and have families who are unable and/or unwilling to protect them from the harm this exposes them to;
- ⊕ Experience family conflict and breakdown;
- ⊕ Have no or limited support networks;

⁴ Chamberlain and Mackenzie, Youth Homelessness 2001, RMIT, July 2002, pg 5

- ⊕ Are unable to value and respect themselves;
- ⊕ Experience emotional instability and/or mental health issues;
- ⊕ Experience education and employment issues.

The protective needs of young people may be further exacerbated as a result of particular disadvantage due to cultural and social impacts, these include:

- ⊕ Young people with intellectual disability or learning difficulty;
- ⊕ Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander young people;
- ⊕ Young people from diverse cultural backgrounds;
- ⊕ Young people with psychiatric illness;
- ⊕ Gay/lesbian/bisexual and transgender young people;
- ⊕ Young people with substance abuse issues.
- ⊕ Young people who are pregnant and parenting

The report '*Homeless Careers*'⁵ clearly articulates that the homeless career is fundamentally different between young people and adults. They also highlight that inadequate support for homeless young people can create a transition to adult homelessness –: "*this is not a separate career typology, but a continuation of the youth homeless career into adult homelessness*"⁶

⁵ Mackenzie and Chamberlain, *Homeless Careers: Pathways in and out of homelessness* – a report from the counting the homeless 2001 project, funded by all State and Territory Governments and the Salvation Army, May 2003

⁶ Mackenzie and Chamberlain, *Homeless Careers: Pathways in and out of homelessness* – a report from the counting the homeless 2001 project, funded by all State and Territory Governments and the Salvation Army, May 2003, page vi

REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

In 2004/2005 NDCA data showed that most of the young people between the ages of 12–17 years who presented independently to a SAAP agency did so because of issues in their interpersonal relationships (52%). In particular most presented due to family or relationship breakdown (24%) and time out from family or other situation (13%).

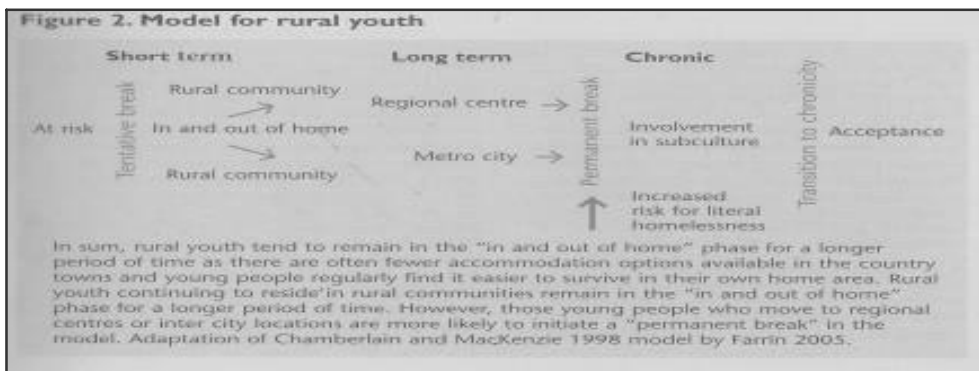
In SAAP the NDCA data showed that the majority of requests for assistance for young people 12 –17 years was met.

The most common unmet need for young people 12 –17 was for housing and accommodation. The data also demonstrated that request for mental health assistance had a high proportion of unmet need and a high level of referral. It was also one area where there was a low proportion of direct service provision.

RURAL HOMELESSNESS

The AHURI Youth Homelessness in rural Australia research and Policy Bulletin⁷ note that *“Homelessness amongst young people in rural areas generally takes the form of secondary or tertiary homelessness, contributing to their relative invisibility.”*

Earlier studies by Farrin, Dollard and Cheers⁸ also note that there are different experiences of homelessness by rural young people and they articulate a process of a homeless career for rural young people – see diagram below.



⁷ AHURI Research and Policy Bulletin Issue 82 August 2006 Youth homelessness in rural Australia

⁸ Homeless youth in the country: Exploring options for change, Youth Studies Australia, Volume 24 no 3 September 2005

STUDENT HOMELESSNESS

The Youth Homelessness 2001 report indicated a very high rate of student homelessness in Queensland with approximately 15 out of every 1,000 school students identified as homeless.

	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
No. of homeless (final figures)	3,063	2,886	3,073	1,018	829	574	324	460	12,227
Rate per 1,000 of school population	7	10	15	11	7	14	14	37	10

In terms of the 2004/05 NDCA data it showed that the majority of unaccompanied 12–13 year-olds entered and exited the program did so as a primary or secondary school student (85% of closed support periods). This declined however with around one-third of unaccompanied 14–15 year-olds and over half of unaccompanied 16–17 year-olds in SAAP not in the education system. The data showed that SAAP was able to retain young people in education however the program was not able to increase the participation rate of young people in education.

The Brisbane Catholic Education reports⁹ found that out-of-home students in Catholic primary schools in 2004 was at 14 students per 1000, and in 2003 there were 13.9 secondary students per 1000, consistent with the national data. Surprisingly was the number of young people who are in out-of-home care at the primary school level being comparable to secondary schooling levels.

In Queensland there has been an acknowledgement of young people disengaging from school earlier due to social and emotional issues and the higher risk of these young people to becoming homeless. The Youth Support Coordinator Program has been funded to assist these young people and their families. There are 38 funded services/113 funded Youth

⁹ Dethlefs, Wally, Making Room for Us: Improving responses to the emotional and physical well-being of students, Brisbane Catholic Education 2003 and Little People have problems, BCE 2004

Support Coordinator positions throughout the State. These positions are focussed on working with young people who are at risk of disengaging from school and training. The YSC program works with young people on an individual, family, group and community level.

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER YOUNG PEOPLE

There are a range of structural disadvantages faced by indigenous young people, and the symptoms of this include high levels of homelessness, lower levels of home ownership, overrepresentation of young people in the juvenile justice system and low health outcomes.

The research over the years has shown that while aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people make up only a small percentage of the Australian population (2.4% in 2001 census) they are over-represented in the homeless population (18% of SAAP clients – NDCA data May 2004).

The 2004/05 NDCA data showed that;

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples made up a relatively large proportion of the children in SAAP. Nearly a quarter (23%) of accompanied children presented with a parent or guardian who identified as being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and 18% of unaccompanied children were Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

The Indigenous Homelessness within Australia ¹⁰report identified five distinctive types of ATSI homelessness:

- ⊕ *Spiritual homelessness (separation from traditional land and family)*
- ⊕ *Overcrowding (a hidden form of homelessness)*
- ⊕ *Relocation and transient homelessness*
- ⊕ *Escaping from an unsafe or unstable home (mainly women and children)*
- ⊕ *Lack of access to any stable shelter ie “no where to go”*

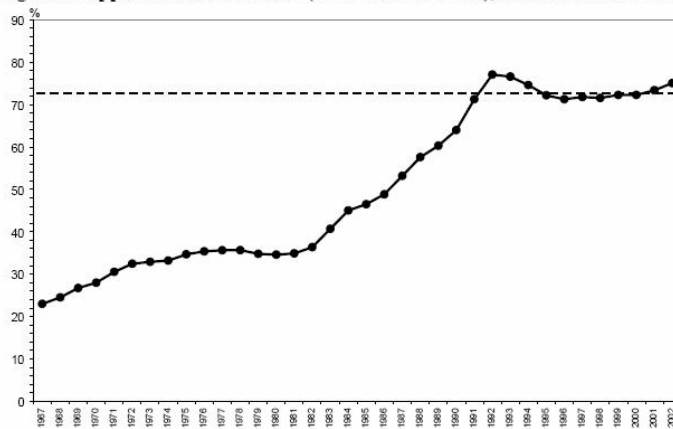
¹⁰ CACH and FaCSIA, Indigenous Homelessness within Australia, Australian Government, May 2006, p xi

The report goes on to say that:

In short, it appears that Chamberlain and McKenzie's three-tier definition of homelessness overlaps sufficiently well with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experience of homelessness to remain the most useful national definition of homelessness within Australia. However, this sufficiency for enumeration purposes should not disguise the cultural reality that while there may appear to be similarities between certain forms of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous homelessness, the causes and contexts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's experience of homelessness are fundamentally different.¹¹

The research has shown that there is a link between homelessness and early schooling. Erratic school enrolment patterns, high mobility between schools and broken attendance means that a good deal of school time is lost. A downward spiral in academic achievement follows and in turn leads to low academic self esteem and disengagement from school. Data from the ABS has shown a general increase in retention rates between 1967 and 2002.

Figure 1: Apparent retention rates (Year 7/8 to Year 12), Australia: 1967–2002

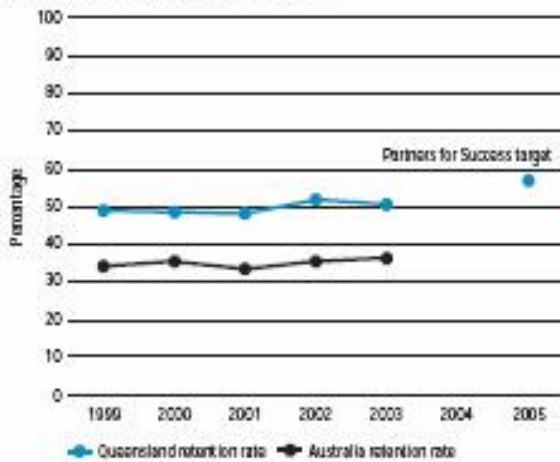


Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Schools Australia*, successive years, Cat. No. 4221.0

However in Queensland the retention rates for indigenous young people is consistently at about 50%, with the national average hovering in the mid thirties.

¹¹ CACH and FaCSIA, *Indigenous Homelessness within Australia*, Australian Government, May 2006, p9

Figure 25: Apparent retention rates Years 8–12, state schools, Indigenous students, 1999–2003



Apparent retention rates for Indigenous students in Queensland remain consistently higher than the Australian rate

The high level of indigenous access to homeless services is also mirrored in the data relating to child protection notifications.

The responses to homelessness must have a greater focus on indigenous young people and their families. The Indigenous Homelessness within Australia outlines a range of principles that can inform practice however noted that barriers to the implementation included:

- ⊕ Racism as a barrier
- ⊕ Inadequate investment as a barrier
- ⊕ Bureaucracy as a barrier

INTERVENTIONS

The Youth Homelessness 2001 report notes that:

“As age can be a determining factor in a young person’s ability to access services and in the types of services they require, it is not surprising that the main reasons children sought support varied depending on their age. It does, however, highlight the fact that different responses may be needed depending on the age and circumstance of the child. For example, early intervention and family counselling may work well for younger children where family reconciliation is still possible and a homeless state is not yet entrenched as a way of life. However, as unaccompanied children get older and family ties become more eroded more intensive support may be required (Chamberlain & MacKenzie 2003). That the family connections for older children have been eroded is demonstrated by the reduced proportion of older children who leave support to live with their parent(s).”

The 2004/05 NDCA data notes that as young people get older there is a decreasing chance that they will return to the family home and that a high proportion of 14 -17 year olds are living with friends or other unrelated people before they entered SAAP.

ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

The Queensland Youth Housing Coalition agrees that consideration should be given to age, support needs and skill levels when developing responses to young people’s accommodation and housing needs.

QYHC recently wrote a paper that explored the importance of considering the adolescent development needs of young people in youth work practice. The paper explained that program and program guidelines must have built into them flexibility that acknowledges the nature of adolescent development and does not request outcomes that neither young people nor services can attain. Adolescent development is generally seen to be in three stages:

- ⊕ Early adolescence: 12-14 years
- ⊕ Middle adolescence: 15 -16 years
- ⊕ Late adolescence: 17 - 19 years

Adolescence is a time for great change for young people and their families. In the main these changes occur between the ages of 12-15 years and generally young women mature earlier than young men. These changes for young people are at a number of levels:

- ⊕ Biological – physical
- ⊕ Psychological – thinking and feeling
- ⊕ Social – how they relate to the world around them

Therefore the response to homeless young people changes as they grow older both due to their changed circumstances and their own development changes –ie the younger age groups tend to return home, were still at school and had no income, while the older young people tend to rotate through SAAP, or find independent accommodation, do not go to school and had income support from government. The extended level of stay in SAAP did improve the chances of having better outcomes for young people.

There are also a number of legislative frameworks that guide accommodation and housing responses to young people. In generally the Coalition breaks down the age group into three sub groups: 12–15, 16-18 and 19-25.

For young people between the ages of 12 – 18 there are a number of understandings that form the basis of QYHC position;

- ⊕ Young people aged 12-18 have needs that are observably different to those under 12.
- ⊕ Young people aged 12-18 who are unable to live with their family and have protective needs are clearly the responsibility of the statutory child protection authority;
- ⊕ Young people aged 12-18 who are unable to live with their family, whether in care and protection or not access SAAP services.

For young people aged 12-18 the provision of accommodation options outside a statutory framework (ie residential care, foster care) should not preclude linkages with existing intervention services and the funding of new intervention services. For this age group

the discussion about service delivery needs to move beyond a question of 'in or not in care' to a discussion about how statutory and non-statutory responses to young people's protective needs can compliment one another.

For young people aged 16 to 25 years there are a range of accommodation and housing models across tenures (located in the 'crisis intervention and ongoing support' and 'post crisis housing' continuum of service delivery framework) that have been developed that meet a range of needs. The Queensland Youth Housing Coalition supports the need for a variety of tenures that provide young people with a choice of their housing. In doing so the Coalition believes that the diversification of housing choices should not be done at the expense of a particular tenure (in the current context this being public housing).

As stated earlier the following groups face particular disadvantage due to cultural and social impacts, these include:

- ⊕ Young people with intellectual disability or learning difficulty;
- ⊕ Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander young people;
- ⊕ Young people from diverse cultural backgrounds;
- ⊕ Young people with psychiatric illness;
- ⊕ Gay/lesbian/bisexual and transgender young people;
- ⊕ Young people with substance abuse issues.

RELATIONAL MODELS OF PRACTICE

In our paper on adolescent development¹² QYHC explored the roles and functions of workers; in particular we examined 'relational practice', and the need to consider the adolescent development issues.

The paper discussed the importance of a youth worker as a key support person for the young person and articulates that *"Supportive family relationships are critical for many young people. For young people who are independent the role of the 'caring' adult is often undertaken by a key support person. In many cases the key support person for a homeless young person is a youth worker located in a SAAP service."*

The discussion on relational practice has been examined in a number of papers including an article by Bruun and Hynan on "Guiding for mental health for young people with complex needs".¹³ They refer to a range of research evidence on the therapeutic nature of relational practice and go on to write that *"...the development of trust between practitioners and young people, along with the provision of accessible and reliable support, have long been the cornerstones on which working relationships have been built."*

Lorraine Dupree in her paper¹⁴ presented at the 4th National Homelessness conference outlines the key principles and elements of relational practice. The key principles include:

- ⊕ Personal frameworks (matched at the time of interview)
- ⊕ Organisational philosophy
- ⊕ Strength based practice
- ⊕ A belief that young people have capacity and are working towards self determination
- ⊕ The central belief that the core to human growth and well being is connectedness

¹² M. Leebeek, Adolescent Development and the role of SAAP, QYHC March 2006

¹³ Youth Studies Australia Volume 25 No 1 March 2006, Andrew Bruun and Christopher Hynan, Where to from here? Guiding for mental health for young people with complex needs

If the role and function of youth workers is to be a key support person, and to have a relational practice, should we not also consider what impact the service size and “intimacy” of the service means for young people? For some young people a service may be the only place that they will call “home” for many years, where people accept them for who they are and who are significant adults that assist them to leap into their adulthood.

Therefore it is essential when exploring the range of interventions that relational practice and service size should be key considerations.

¹⁴ <http://afho.org.au/conference/2006conferencepapers.htm>

RESPONSES: PROGRAMS, MODELS AND GAPS

The responses to young people need to be focussed on a holistic model that is flexible enough to meet a range of young people's needs without being too prescriptive as to how young people use the services.

The National Youth Coalition for Housing has developed a framework for a Commonwealth Homelessness Strategy. NYCH has also attempted to provide a diagrammatical funding model that maps out youth homelessness, current responses and gaps in service delivery. This model is currently a work in progress but it is hoped that it will enable a long term plan to be developed and to gauge the levels of homelessness, where it occurs, what responses need to be developed including where the service system is adequate in meeting need.

PROGRAM RESPONSES

There are currently a range of services that focuses on young people who are at risk of homelessness and who are homeless.

In terms of early intervention services there is the federally funded Reconnect Program. In Queensland the State funds the Youth Support Coordinator Program which is funded out of the Department of Education, Training and the Arts and managed through the Department of Communities.

At the crisis level the main program that focuses on homeless young people is the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) and its capital arm program—Crisis Accommodation Program (CAP). There is also the Innovative Youth Health Service for Homeless Young People and the Job Placement Employment Training (JPET) program guidelines, although there has been a decrease in focus on homeless young people in the JPET program.

In Queensland there has been a focus on a whole of government response to homelessness and funding within this initiative has included;

- ⊕ Specialist mental health outreach services
- ⊕ State Penalties Enforcement Registry

- ⊕ Public space responses such as Police Liaison Officers
- ⊕ Volatile Substance Misuse responses for young people
- ⊕ Additional support for people in Boarding houses

HOUSING/ACCOMMODATION MODELS

In responding to youth homelessness at the crisis end of the continuum of care spectrum there are four main models of youth services in Queensland. These are the crisis youth shelter (crisis fully supported), the share house with 24 hour youth work workers rostered on (medium term fully supported), 'units of housing' either flats or houses located in the community where youth workers visit and provide support (externally supported models) and outreach models where youth workers meet young people outside of the service. A full list of services and descriptions of the models are on the Queensland Youth Housing Coalition website (www.qyhc.org.au).

All four models are provided within an understanding of the continuum of care required by young people and with the goal of transitioning young people to live independently in the community.

Some of these models are stand alone operations in the community and others may be part of larger organisations providing multiple responses to community need.

It must be noted that with the exception of Mt Isa there are no youth specific SAAP funded services west of the Great Dividing Range.

GAPS AND AREAS FOR IMMEDIATE INVESTMENT

Fundamentally there is a lack of beds for young people within all parts of the homeless service system. At a base level we need to:

1. Increase the funding for existing services to be able to cope with demand and the presenting needs of young people.
2. Increase bed numbers across the system but in particular in the medium to long term supported models. Young people find it hard to move out of a youth shelter if they do not have the living skills to live independently.
3. Fund follow up support services from externally supported models of housing. If young people have acquired the necessary skill to move to independent living in many cases they immediately lose support, this can be linked to pressure by government to have a greater “throughput” of young people. Unlike young people who move out of home, find that they are out of their depth and have the ability to move back home, young people moving out of a SAAP funded service cannot return there due to the high levels of demand. Unfortunately this creates a situation of “sink or swim” for many young people, rather than a more graduated move. The idea of a graduated transition can be linked to the concepts of interdependence.
4. Funding for housing models for young people in rural and regional Queensland.
5. As with the general homeless population there is a need for more beds for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, especially in a State such as Queensland.
6. There needs to be a greater focus on funding for outreach support models that are linked to brokerage funding for young people living in public spaces.

7. Expansion of community based models of support for young people on bail and other juvenile justice orders that prevents the detention of young people including being in detention on remand.
8. Increase in funding and expansion of the Innovative Youth Health Service for Homeless Young People. As health is such a key issue for young people primary health care models need to be part of the equation and QYHC would support the expansion of the Innovative Youth Health Service for Homeless Young People.
9. Realigning JPET to its original terms of reference. In terms of supporting young people in employment, the JPET program guidelines need to be revised and the original intent of the program that had a greater focus on supporting homeless young people needs to be re-established.
10. There is an argument that there needs to be a greater focus on early intervention. The Queensland Youth Housing Coalition agrees that this is a critical area of work to stop young people entering into homelessness wherever possible. However we must remember that this will not stop all young people from becoming homeless and according to research by Chamberlain and Mackenzie half of the young people aged 19 -24 who are homeless become chronically homeless. In terms of early intervention models there are no funded or programmatic responses that include accommodation as a core component. Our critique of this is that young people and their families may find it difficult to participate in family mediation and support if the young person is constantly moving. Sometimes the instability of accommodation may also include risk taking behaviour which continues to undermine the therapeutic counselling. As a result the Queensland Youth Housing Coalition continues to advocate for the development of a Community Placement Model that supports young people and their families however ensures that young people have a place to stay whilst family counselling is occurring. However there are a range of other service models that can be expanded or developed in this area.

SOME BASIC STATISTICS – QYHC REGIONS & FEDERAL ELECTORATES

There are 29 Federal Electoral Division in the State of Queensland. For more information on each electoral area you can click the electoral division name.

In the list below we have cross correlated the QYHC regions with federal electoral boundaries and listed the SAAP funded youth services. We have also provided basic data on unmet demand for some service to give a snapshot across the State—for more information please contact the services directly. There is a range of variable as why different turn-away, which could include:

- model
- regions – how many other services there are in the region.

What is the most important information to draw from the data below is while there is a 61.8% daily turn away rate for young people nationally (NDCA), in most cases the proportion of young people being turned away from services is much higher. This turn-away rate is due to the system working to capacity (ie the numbers entering the system is the same as the numbers exiting the system) and the AIWH has documented this issue consistently.

Far North

Leichhardt

1. Anglicare St Johns

- ⊕ During the 06/07 financial year the turn away rate was 55%.

2. Anglicare St Margarets

- ⊕ During the 06/07 financial year the turn away rate was 74%.

3. Youthlink

- ⊕ Data not supplied at the time of writing report – contact service directly

North

Herbert

4. Sharehouse Townsville

⊕ Data not supplied at the time of writing report – contact service directly

5. Iona Crisis Accommodation for Young Women

⊕ Data not supplied at the time of writing report – contact service directly

Kennedy

6. Innisfail Youth and Family Care Inc

⊕ Data not supplied at the time of writing report – contact service directly

Dawson

7. Kalyan Youth Service

⊕ Data not supplied at the time of writing report – contact service directly

North West

Kennedy

8. Mt Isa Youth Shelter

⊕ Data not supplied at the time of writing report – contact service directly

9. Ngurri Ngurri Shelter

⊕ Data not supplied at the time of writing report – contact service directly

Central

Capricornia

10. Darumbal Youth Service

- ⊕ Data not supplied at the time of writing report – contact service directly

11. Central Queensland Youth Link

- ⊕ Data not supplied at the time of writing report – contact service directly

12. Girls Time Out

- ⊕ During the 2007 calendar year 350 young people were assisted with 1068 contacts.

Flynn

13. Roseberry Youth Service

- ⊕ Data not supplied at the time of writing report – contact service directly

South West

Maranoa

14. CTC Youth Service

- ⊕ During their collection period only 39% or just 7 requests were able to be met. The requests not met are broken down in to four reasons as follows:
 - 37% were unsuitable for the volunteer model in which our Hostel is based
 - 9% were outside of our age range
 - 36% there was insufficient supervised accommodation available
 - 18% there was a more appropriate form of accommodation available

Sunshine Coast

Dickson – no youth accommodation service in this electorate

Fisher

15. Caloundra Youth Focus

- ⊕ For the 2007 calendar year was a 92% turn away rate

Longman

16. IFYS Caboolture Shelter

- ⊕ During the 06/07 financial year the Shelter consistently had about a 75% turn away rate and their occupancy rate was between 84% to 100%.

Fairfax

17. IFYS

- ⊕ During the 06/07 financial year there Shelter had a consistent turnaway rate around 65%

Wide Bay

18. United Synergies

- ⊕ Data not supplied at the time of writing report – contact service directly

19. Cooloola Youth Service

- ⊕ Data not supplied at the time of writing report – contact service directly

Hinkler

20. Bundaberg Youth Service

- ⊕ During the 06/07 financial year there was a 53% turnaway rate.

21. Youthcare Hervey Bay

- ⊕ Data not supplied at the time of writing report – contact service directly

Darling Downs

Groom

22. Toowoomba Youth Service

⊕ Data not supplied at the time of writing report – contact service directly

23. Young Womens Place

⊕ Data not supplied at the time of writing report – contact service directly

24. The Haven

⊕ Data not supplied at the time of writing report – contact service directly

Gold Coast

McPherson

25. Gold Coast Youth Service

⊕ 06/07 financial year there was a 86% turn away rate. There were also 3482 contacts through the outreach program with the major presenting issue being housing.

Moncrieff

26. Gold Coast Project for Homeless Youth

⊕ For the 2007 calendar year there were 524 young people who were turned away from the crisis service and 138 young people from the medium/long term supported service.

Beenleigh/Logan-Beaudesert

Fadden – no youth accommodation service in this electorate

Forde

27. Beenleigh Adult Youth Service

⊕ Data not supplied at the time of writing report – contact service directly

28. Spiritus – Beenleigh Youth Accommodation and Support Service

⊕ Data not supplied at the time of writing report – contact service directly

Brisbane

Lilley

29. Youth Housing Project

⊕ 06/07 financial year there were 326 enquiries made, 203 were for young people in crisis. There were 286 young people on the wait-list for the year – with a waitlist timeframe at 8-10 months.

30. The Lodge

⊕ During the 06/07 financial there was a 93% turn away rate.

31. Youth Emergency Services

⊕ 06/07 financial year unmet demand for services by eligible clients was 1187 young people

32. North West Youth Accommodation Service

⊕ During the 06/07 financial year 108 young people were unable to be accommodated.

33. Young Parents Program

⊕ Data not supplied at the time of writing report – contact service directly

Brisbane

34. Brisbane Youth Service

⊕ Data not supplied at the time of writing report – contact service directly

35. Hebron house

- ⊕ Data not supplied at the time of writing report – contact service directly

Ryan

36. St Mary's

- ⊕ Data not supplied at the time of writing report – contact service directly

Griffith

37. Bahloo

- ⊕ Data not supplied at the time of writing report – contact service directly

38. Othilas

- ⊕ 06/07 financial year was an 88% turn away rate.

39. Zig Zag

- ⊕ During the 2007 calendar year there was a 19% turn away rate (the lower rate of return is due to the specific nature of the service)

40. Carina Youth Agency

- ⊕ 06/07 financial year there was a 94% turn away rate.

Bonner

41. Bayside Adolescent Boarding Inc

- ⊕ 06/07 financial year there was a 92.5% turn away rate

42. Nathaneal House

- ⊕ For the 2007 calendar year there were 898 (approx) young people who were turned away from the crisis service.

Bowman

43. In Sync

- ⊕ Data not supplied at the time of writing report – contact service directly

Moreton

44. Kyabra

- ⊕ Data not supplied at the time of writing report – contact service directly

Oxley

45. Inala Youth Service

- ⊕ 06/07 financial year there was a 93% turn away rate

46. Community Action in Carole Park

- ⊕ Data not supplied at the time of writing report

Blair

47. Goodna Youth Service

- ⊕ During the 06/07 financial year the unmet needs for the service was:
 - In Target Group Single = 556
 - Sole parents = 155
 - Couples no children = 57
 - Families = 135
 - Outside target Group = 372

48. Lewis Street shelter

- ⊕ Data not supplied at the time of writing report

49. Ipswich Independent Youth Service

- ⊕ IIYS had a 90 % turn away rate – 94 were under 16 PLUS an average of 3 families per month.

50. Ipswich Community Youth Service

- ⊕ During the 06/07 financial year the service the service was unable to meet requests for services due to the lack of supply of accommodation:
 - 55% (approx) of unmet requests due to insufficient accommodation available
 - 41% (approx) due to the type of accommodation requested not provided

Rankin

51. Youth and Family Services

- ⊕ Data not supplied at the time of writing report

52. Interlink

- ⊕ During the 06/07 financial year 67% of young people were unable to be assisted into housing.

Petrie

53. Orana Youth Shelter

- ⊕ Data not supplied at the time of writing report

54. Chameleon House

- ⊕ 3 month July – September 2007 84 young people turned away and they 93% occupancy rate.

APPENDIX ONE: NYCH COMMONWEALTH HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

COMMONWEALTH / STATE HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY – YOUTH DYNAMIC MODEL VERSION
DECEMBER 2007

NOW

