

ANNUAL REPORT



Queensland
YOUTH
Housing
Coalition inc.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

About QYHC	3
The Year in Retrospect	
First Time Renter Video and Resources for young people by young people.	5
Hindsight is 2020 What young people said about being young and homeless in Queensland. Their insights on 2020 and what they need moving forward.	6
Sector engagement	7
COVID-19 The Game Changer	9
QYHC Projects	14
QYHC Communications	20
AGM Reports:	
Management Committee's Report	22
Executive Director's Report	24
Treasurer's Report	26

about QYHC

The Queensland Youth Housing Coalition Inc. (QYHC) was established in 1984. We have evolved since that time to become a significant voice for the issues impacting marginalised young people with a focus on addressing the underlying causes of youth homelessness, including poverty and social disadvantage.

**The vision of the Queensland Youth Housing Coalition is:
All Young People Safely Housed.**

We accept the plethora of life issues that lead young people to homelessness but reject any notion that such issues need negatively impact their life trajectory. The experience of homelessness for young people can be short lived and rapidly resolved. There is no reason for young people to experience chronic homelessness and the associated myriad of problematic life outcomes.

QYHC acknowledges that social connection and relationships are key for all young people and underpin our collective work.

QYHC is a not-for-profit state-wide coalition of organisations and individuals engaged across projects and campaigns. QYHC is intent on conducting projects, engaging in advocacy, informing policy and enhancing community education as well as working on workforce development activities to ensure a robust sector and community able to address homelessness and the associated issues that impact young people.

QYHC is committed to improving the life opportunities and wellbeing of young people impacted by homelessness by working collaboratively across government and non-government organisations to address homelessness, through the provision of appropriate housing solutions as well as addressing the multitude of associated issues.

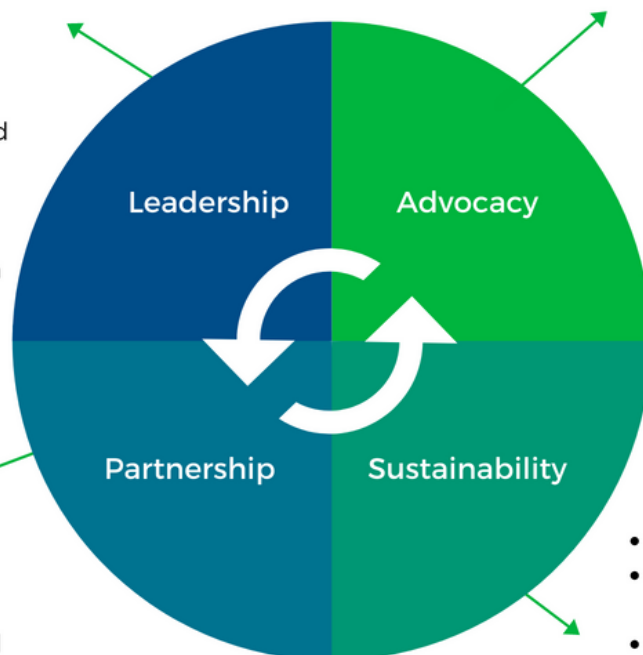


We further recognise that access to safety, education, health and income is key in responding to young people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. QYHC is proud to partner with Department of Housing and Public Works (DHPW) in realising the intent and actions particularised within the Queensland Housing Strategy 2017-2027.

As key players in this important strategy, all members of our organisation are committed to our core work and this strategy.

QYHC STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2024

- Sustaining a constructive and respected profile in the sector
- Recognised and sought out for our expertise
- Positively influence and contribute to policies and programs that impact upon the sector
- Promoting and leading sector development with courage & innovation

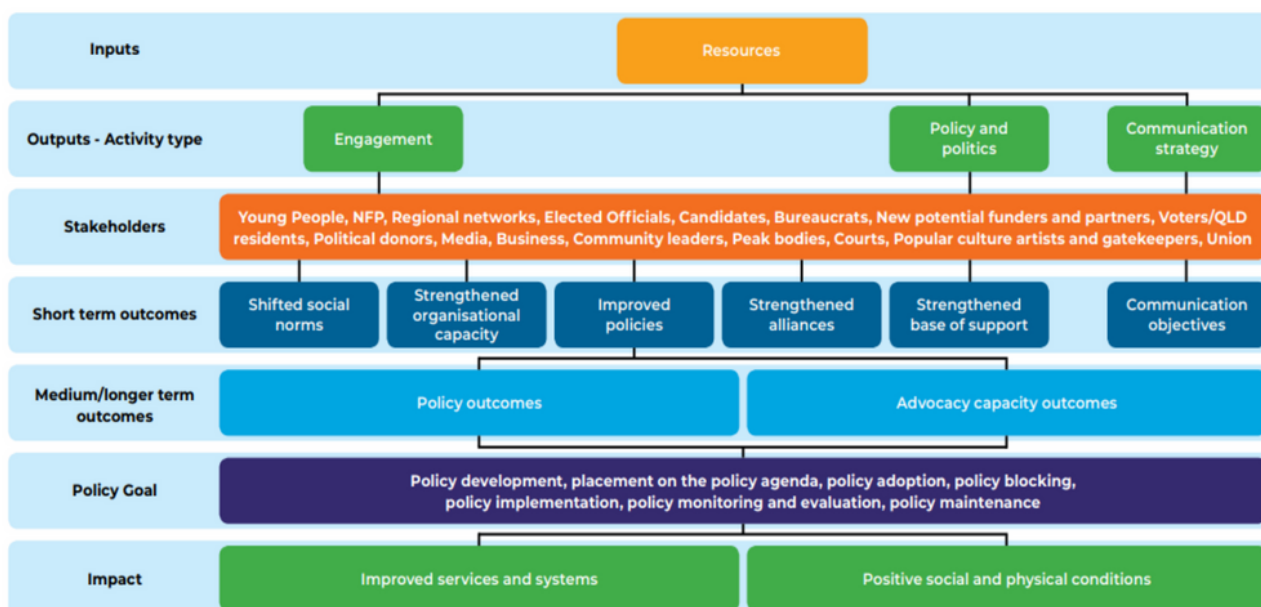


- Working with young people to tell their stories
- Engaging in diverse pathways to advocate for young people and the sector

- Develop strong, collegial, and strategic relationships with all stakeholders
- Partnering with integrity

- Effective governance
- Positive organisational culture
- Maintain our strong identity and reputation
- Financial security

QYHC conducts our work in line with our Vision and Strategic Plan with the aim to impact policy, program and organisational outcomes that benefit homeless and at risk young people in Queensland.



THE YEAR IN RETROSPECT

FIRST TIME RENTER - A STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO GETTING A RENTAL PROPERTY



The First Time Renter project is a collaboration between Queensland Youth Housing Coalition (QYHC), Community Connections (CLA Inc.), Tenants Queensland (TQ), and Youth Advocacy Centre (YAC). The collaboration was established to meet the gap in information for young people regarding steps to accessing tenancies in either private rental or public housing. The resources produced through the collaboration give young people and vulnerable first-time renters the foundational “how to” information required to successfully complete private rental applications and commence tenancies.

It was our aim to launch this video at Platform 1225 2020. However, COVID-19 thwarted that endeavour. We’ve had soft launches through the QYHC Chat Newsletter, Tenants Queensland International Tenants Day events and via mail outs. Today we officially launch First Time Renter – a step by step guide for all young people aiming to rent a property in Queensland.

The First Time Renter project was initiated by CLA in response to Action Research undertaken with young people.



The project’s purpose was to provide easily accessible information for young people and their support persons, including educators, to navigate access to secure tenancies.

These resources are targeted to all young people in Queensland aged 15 to 25 in need of access to a rental property. The project contains accessible information regarding rental processes, understanding the expectations of lessors and agents, as well as thoughts from young people on obtaining private leases. It is hoped through this that young people and vulnerable first time renters will have more success and greater dignity in the application process.

“All the anxiety, fear and nerve racking emotions came about when contacting the real estate agents and viewing the properties as I personally felt I had to portray myself in a way that would break the stereotypes of young people.”

Caitlin

THE YEAR IN RETROSPECT

HINDSIGHT IS 2020 - YOUNG QUEENSLANDERS' THOUGHTS ON BEING YOUNG, HOMELESS AND VULNERABLE IN 2020.



Through this video presentation, young people offer their advice to other young people and share their thoughts about 2020 as well as their hopes for the future.

This project was a highlight for QYHC this year. We had worked with young people in preparation for the Platform 1225 Forum in April and then once we held that over until November, we continued to hope that we could hear from young people, especially after such a complex year.

When we made the decision to hold the Platform 1225 Forum on 28th April, 2021 we realised we needed another way to hear from young people in 2020. The Specialist Youth Homelessness Sector (SYHS) and young people responded instantly to our requests for their feedback and insights.

This video is a small snapshot of the tenacity and resilience of the young people the SYHS work with and the high respect in which they hold their workers and the organisations that support them.

SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

A SNAPSHOT FROM OUR SPECIALIST YOUTH HOMELESSNESS SERVICES

QYHC conducted several Regional and Southeast Queensland Specialist Youth Homelessness meetings throughout the year. Several topics of conversation arose which continue to lead to additional projects.

This year QYHC also undertook a sector feed back project seeking to capture current issues and emerging trends within both Regional and South East Queensland's specialist youth homelessness services (SYHS).

A series of one-on-one phone conversations between SYHS staff & QYHC representatives informed this project. Although many localised nuances were captured the following is a broad overview of the issues raised.

The most common issue was the lack of accessible and affordable housing options for young Queenslanders.

The waiting list for public housing remains too long. Private rentals are also difficult to access for reasons that vary across the state and include issues such as: rise in cost due to tourism, gentrification, and fly-in-fly-out (FIFO) mining workers; age discrimination; risk averse real estate agents; technological barriers preventing young people accessing listings and submitting applications; a mismatch between Youth Allowance income and rental prices; no rental history; a lack of tenancy support options to help maintain tenancy.

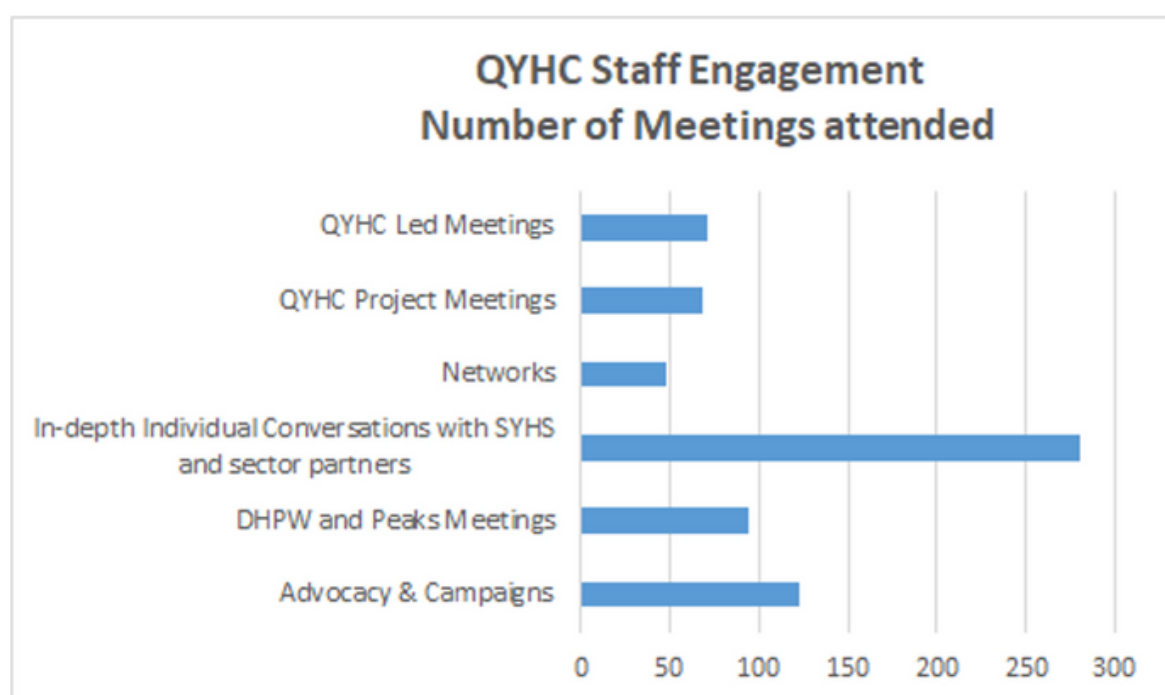
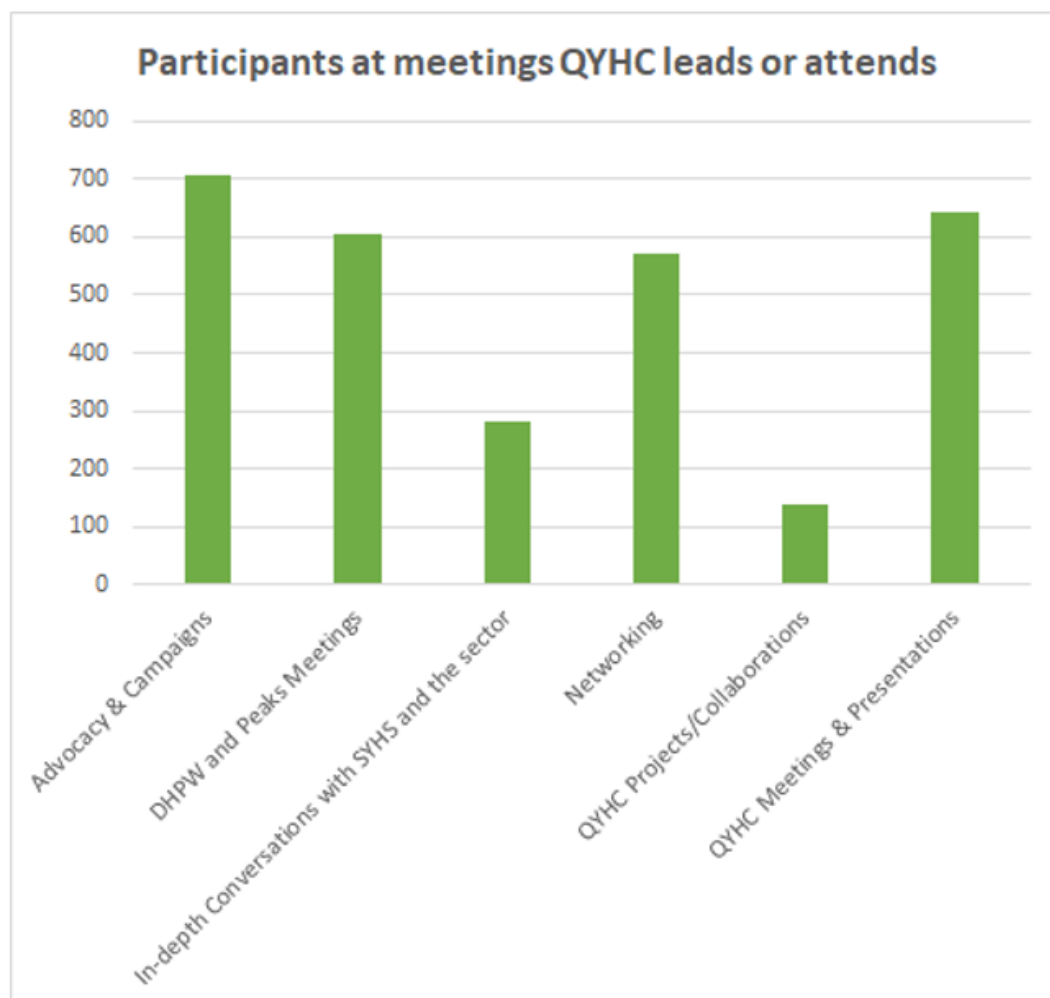
When asked what were the housing needs for young Queenslanders are, SYHS broadly reported that affordable in-community housing was needed, this included the gamut from supported to unsupported, there appears to be a particular need for more 1-bedroom homes and appropriate housing for very young families.



Breakdowns in mental health, and alcohol and other drugs (AOD) misuse was also widely reported across all regions as was domestic violence. Depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), trauma, and psychosis were commonly reported. These issues were exacerbated by the pressures exerted by the first and second waves of COVID-19. A number of services reported suicidality as an ongoing issue for the young people they support, with some regional areas reporting multiple recent suicides.

SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

CONT.



COVID-19 THE GAMECHANGER

From March through to April 2020, we talked with Specialist Youth Homelessness Services (SYHS) about their work with young people and the impact of COVID-19 on their services. This included asking what services needed to support their young people, workforce and organisations. These conversations continued throughout the pandemic and further in-depth conversations occurred later in the year.

The clear feedback from these conversations was that services had initially moved quickly to respond to the changing environment and were adapting their service delivery to reduce the health risks to young people, their workforce and the communities in which they worked.

Primarily, we heard from services about their concerns for young people who were homeless. We were told repeatedly that young people generally hadn't been watching the news and were unaware of the health risks and social distancing requirements.

SYHS's undertook to provide information and education to young people, both in terms of their health and also with regard to the restrictions on movement and social gatherings, whilst at the same time endeavouring to avoid young people being overwhelmed or overly anxious.

As restrictions on movement were introduced, services delivering immediate or crisis accommodation were busily determining approaches to freedom of movement for young people.

If young people wanted to leave the house and return, would this put other residents at risk? In many cases, restrictions on visitors were introduced.

There were concerns about what would happen if there was a case of the virus in the communal housing/shelters. In particular, where and how could young people self-isolate? How could the workforce be safe and protected? Organisations came up with a variety of solutions to this dilemma with some noting a particular property to be utilised for isolation.

As the broader community were told to wash their hands often, crisis shelters struggled to secure enough soap or hand sanitiser to enable this, with up to six young people in a share house environment and restrictions on purchases, this often proved to be a challenge.

Household necessities provided to shelters by way of donations dried up. Shortages in grocery shops and limitations on numbers of items that could be purchased at one time also meant these items were unavailable or in short supply.



COVID-19 THE GAMECHANGER CONT.

Providers were required to shift to online shopping, once they had negotiated the application process for priority access with supermarkets.

The organisations we spoke to described responses to the emerging situation that prioritised the health and safety of their clients and staff while continuing to deliver accommodation and support to young people who are homeless.

Many SYHS had reduced their physical contact with young people whilst others noted business as usual.

Transportation by workers was often replaced with access to taxi vouchers or the use of social distancing in larger vehicles, drop in spaces were restricted in the number of people that could be in the space at one time. Services provided by volunteer organisations (such as food vans) reduced due to restrictions and a lack of available volunteers.

The majority of organisations transitioned to some form of remote service delivery with staff working from home wherever possible.

Concern for rough sleepers was expressed by many services. If people were required to stay at home, but didn't have one, what would this mean for them? It was suggested that access to brokerage and partnerships with hotels could be a solution.

We heard how those from regional areas felt confident that their experiences in floods and bushfires would hold them in good stead to respond to this new 'disaster'. They had been required to think on their feet before – and for some, only recently.

There was a benefit to being far away from the cities in that there were no confirmed cases in some areas, giving them time to prepare.

Services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were considering the additional issues of the heightened vulnerability of Indigenous people to COVID-19, most notably staff involved in direct service delivery. The high proportion of Indigenous families living in overcrowded accommodation was a concern, particularly in the event that a family member became unwell and needed a place to self-isolate.

Across the board, services told us of their concern about the increased pressure on families at this time of "staying at home".

Some young people had returned to family in search of safety, only to be looking for somewhere to stay a short while later when tensions became too high.

Services heard of young people remaining in unsafe situations for fear of having nowhere else to go.



COVID-19 THE GAMECHANGER CONT.

Young people without homes who spend large amounts of time in public spaces were facing increased risk of contact with the justice system for failing to comply with shifting directives regarding movement and social gatherings.

In these early stages of the COVID response in Queensland there was a consistent sense that there was a significant amount of information being received by services. There was so much information that it was difficult not to become overwhelmed. Many organisations expressed concern that they had been unable to get assurances regarding their funding agreements.

Whilst they were adopting flexible approaches to service delivery, they were unsure about whether they would still be required to meet their existing output measures.

QYHC, alongside other sector peaks worked with DHPW colleagues and contract managers to address these concerns.

Services suggested that an online service directory would assist them greatly in being able to determine what services were still operating and how they could be accessed. This idea was raised but difficult to actualise in the time required.

As a result organisations rallied together with peak organisations and sent regular emails updating service availability.

COVID-19 presented multilayered issues for services, staff, and to young people. SYHS have had to move quickly in response to health directives, this placed resource pressure from an organisational perspective. Staff had to adjust to working from home, for some this posed boundary issues especially when dealing with sensitive issues within the home space.

A great amount of flexibility, creative thinking and determination was evidenced in meeting the needs of young people within the shifting health directives.

The digital divide was a prominent issue for many young people during this period with a lack of access to technology and data meaning that many found staying connected socially, as well as accessing their professional supports was compromised thus further contributing to a break down in wellbeing.



STUDENTS

STUDENTS

For QYHC, students have brought us various thoughts, fresh perspectives, optimism and critical analysis. They continue to remind us of the importance of reflection and remaining focused on our core aim of valuing young people and advocating for their holistic wellbeing.

They also dig deep and encourage us to do so too as we navigate all of the complexities we encounter to achieve the goal of ensuring young people are safely housed and experiencing wellbeing.

This year we engaged with 4 students, all of whom were impacted by COVID-19. The first 3 students came to us in the midst of the pandemic when their previous placements ended due to the direct impacts on the organisations they'd been placed with.

The three students worked with QYHC and their University Supervisor to engage in a project that would enhance their learning and contribute to our organisation.

Over the ensuing weeks they familiarised themselves with the draft Under 16s Guidelines for Practice, developed draft training modules, researched podcast options and prepared a power point presentation of the key information required for training.

If you want one year of prosperity, grow grain. If you want 10 years of prosperity, grow trees. If you want 100 years of prosperity, grow people.

- Chinese Proverb.

This group will be presenting their experiences alongside their University Supervisor and QYHC at the 2020 Australian & New Zealand Social Work & Welfare Education & Research Virtual Symposium with the presentation title: Sorry your placement has ended due to COVID-19 - Now what?

The 4th student came to us at the 11th hour for her entire placement and effortlessly became part of our QYHC team. The reflection on the following page is from Jess Geron, our recent Masters of Social Work student.

This is her final reflection on her placement.



STUDENTS

GOOD TROUBLE

Endings are not easy things and wrapping up a placement is emotional business! This placement has been very moving for me. I've had so many really powerful conversations and have really felt like QYHC is a place where human rights and social justice is fought for in a way that I have not yet encountered in any other workplace.

When I first landed here I turned up to a QYHC strategic planning meeting to a room filled with new faces, talking about a context (youth homelessness) I had very little prior professional connection to, with an in-house jargon which comes of teams who have spent time working in the same patch for some time.

Even though I felt quite a keen sense of unfamiliar ground and the nerves that brings, from the moment I arrived I was included and asked to contribute my thoughts. This was in hindsight a signpost.

QYHC. as I have come to realise, is a place that does a couple of things really well. It listens deeply and it fosters connection.

Those two things from my vantage are the agents of change. We listen to the grassroots stories and through our relationships, the networks, the connections that have been built over time carefully, respectfully and mindfully – change (if we are lucky) starts to happen.

The change I have come to realise is not always quick and this has been my other big learning. I've grappled with my own anger at the ongoing nature of these issues and all those that interconnect (poverty, homelessness, welfare, health systems, domestic violence, among many more). I've felt bad at times for pressing tired services for information but always surprised with the generosity with which they shared their thoughts and stories with me.

I've come to the point now where a new element has become apparent. Patience. Patience, because we are not going for quick fixes, patience because we are working within systems which have been built over a long time. Patience, because we work to move politicians, and government departments to change policy, and god knows red tape and bureaucracy takes time to influence, needing data, meetings, and then coming and going with election cycles.

"Do not get lost in a sea of despair. Be hopeful, be optimistic. Our struggle is not the struggle of a day, a week, a month, or a year, it is the struggle of a lifetime. Never, ever be afraid to make some noise and get in good trouble, necessary trouble."

**- John Lewis,
American civil rights legend**

PLATFORM 1225

Platform 1225 is our annual QYHC Forum.

Having a safe place to call home is a fundamental right for young people and we are clear that homelessness and social exclusion is about poverty and disadvantage.

These are factors that impact young people and others in our society and can be changed.

As an organisation, we aim for holistic responses with regard to the wellbeing of all in our society and systems.

This is particularly so for children and young people who experience life and our systems through a specific developmental and experiential lens.

Platform 1225 is a Forum for all to come together across government and non-government sectors to address these vital issues.

We spent from November until April planning the 2020 Platform 1225 Forum with the intent to hold it on 28th April 2020. The theme being – Truth, advocacy and systemic reform.

We aimed to unpack all the conundrums and complexities that truth and advocacy entails when addressing complexities in organisations, relationships, systems and reform agendas.

The great news is that in spite of COVID–19 all our keynote speakers and Corey White, our MC, will be turning up exactly one year later in 2021 to share their wisdom with us.

This is what we planned this year to come to fruition in 2021:



Our home-grown talent, Comedian and Author Corey White, will headline then MC our 2021 Platform 1225 Forum on April 28th.

Corey is an inspiration to all young people and those of all ages. He reminds us that hanging in there and being yourself whilst being true to your story really matters!

In a very short time he has won the respect and acclaim of many in Australia, including our comedy greats.

His comedy and political satire is loved, as is his autobiographical book; The Prettiest Horse in the Glue Factory.



Dr Lindy Annakin

The Complexities of Speaking Truth to Power

What happens in a system that is intent on client centred service delivery and does so within a large bureaucratic environment that often adds layers of complexity to client centred practice?

What happens when we are intent on implementing the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and the environments noted for causing the harm have similar impediments in current circumstances to those in place when atrocities occurred?



Professor Kerry Arabena

Reimagining Indigenous Housing, Health and Wealth

It is widely recognised that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (hereon Indigenous) peoples have a holistic conception of physical and mental health and wellbeing underpinned by core cultural values and perspectives, healing practices and traditions designed to strengthen collective identity and cultural continuity, and that have sustained Indigenous peoples for millennia.

It is less widely recognised that Australia's Indigenous peoples have an equally long tradition of architecture, urban design and related economic activity that cannot be meaningfully separated from this, and that have provided a platform for culturally continuity lasting tens of thousands of years.

While taking contemporary standards of 'housing for health' and construction standards and overcrowding as a starting point, and fully recognising their important physical and mental health and wellbeing implications, this presentation also considers the 'housing for culture' and 'housing for wealth' dimensions to housing and community. As such it adopts an empowerment-based approach and requires Indigenous people, families and communities to be at the centre of the co-design of contemporary Indigenous housing, and urban or community settings within the context of any entirely new way of 'doing business' in this space.

**Dr Kristy Muir****What else might it take to end homelessness? Leadership, power and moral courage**

At any moment, most of us are only a few small steps away from homelessness. Natural disasters, financial stress, a job loss, accidents, disability, health, relationship breakdowns or other unplanned life events put many of us on a precipice. Yet, society often forgets about, doesn't prioritise or blames our most vulnerable individuals who end up in this situation.

**Dr Alistair Ping****Human behaviour and the slippery slope of accepting justification**

Dr Ping will talk to the complexities of human behaviour and the need to stay true to ethics, advocacy, truth and decency and what it takes to do so. Strategies for ensuring organisations and systems that are focused on holistic wellbeing and positive outcomes remain true to their vision whilst recognising risk, without being risk averse, will be discussed.

MAKING TRACKS

We're especially looking forward to the young person's panel – Making Tracks.



PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION PROJECT (PEIP)

QYHC submitted the PEIP report and recommendations to DHPW early in the financial year.

Given the vital importance of early intervention and prevention we're hoping to re-invigorate this project that has been both COVID-19 impacted and delayed due to budget decisions and the need for joint decision making across various government departments.

ANTI-CYBERBULLYING FACT SHEET

QYHC prepared an anti-cyberbullying fact sheet to assist specialist homelessness services across Queensland in their response to young people using the internet and experiencing difficulties. This was a project to align with the Queensland government's agenda on addressing cyber bullying.

The anti-cyber bullying is a fact sheet for all Specialist Youth Homelessness Services outlining key factors to consider in developing policy for cyberbullying in their organisations

UNDER 16s GUIDELINES FOR PRACTICE

Last year we began the task of reviewing the guidelines that inform the practice of Specialist Youth Homelessness Services with young people under 16 years of age who are seeking assistance.

We worked with our partners in government and SYHS to draft an up-to-date version of the guidelines that reflect the evolution of the systems and capacities of all of us to work with this vulnerable cohort of young people.

This year we continued our work on the development of the guidelines by finalising the document, writing the training resources and preparing for implementation.

COVID-19 significantly impacted the ability of all stakeholders to progress this piece of work. However, the new guidelines approved by three government departments (DHPW, DCSYW and YJ) are close to being released.

A program of training to be delivered by QYHC to introduce and discuss the new guidelines has been developed.



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE (PILOT)

Mentoring workers in our sector has always been key to the wellbeing of the workforce. Most of us have benefitted from mentors, either in a formal or informal capacity.

This year QYHC has partnered with The Services Union (TSU) to develop a pilot project aimed at providing a professional development opportunity that includes mentoring to strengthen the capacity of those working with young people who are homeless to identify and respond to issues affecting organisations and young people.

This piece of work is driven by the Future Workforce Project which sits within the Queensland Homelessness Compact Workplan 2018-2020. Participants can expect to gain leadership skills and knowledge to assist them to identify and respond to issues affecting their organisations and young people they support.

Participants will engage in face to face learning about the history of change in our sector and how to identify issues and achieve change. Elective units will be offered via modules of online learning in content areas including leadership, managing yourself in the workplace and communication and conflict.

A mentoring element to the training will enable participating organisations to consolidate and translate the learnings into the workplace.

FOYERS COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

QYHC runs monthly meetings with Youth Foyers providers, current and emerging, and the National Foyers CEO.

This is an ongoing collaboration of stakeholders committed to Youth Foyers and practice improvement. Logan Youth Foyer shares many learnings with the Gold Coast and Townsville colleagues in development.



YOUTH HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS DESIGN, MAPPING AND MODELLING PROJECT

Meeting the needs of Young People 15-25 years of age.

The Queensland Youth Housing Coalition in collaboration with Specialist Youth Homelessness Services (SYHS) and the Department of Housing and Public Works (DHPW) has identified the need to work with services across Queensland in order to improve the ways in which organisations and communities respond to homeless and at risk young people.

Our intent is to be young person centred, break down silos in service delivery and work across the sector and government departments to ensure that what young people need is offered in a holistic way that meets their wellbeing indicators – these include:

- being part of a community
- having social supports
- access to schooling, work or training
- access to income support
- building or strengthening relationships with family, Kin and culture

alongside many other key wellbeing indicators.

This means thinking differently about how we describe and deliver specific services. Within that, stability of housing and longer term options for young people are key.

QYHC is currently undertaking this piece of work to ascertain what is needed for young people across the housing and homelessness system alongside associated service systems that support young people in their wellbeing, particularly in terms of housing options and support and issues that lead to homelessness.

This involves mapping what is in place and recommending what is needed. We're also looking at various Australian and international models and examples that underpin this work QYHC met regularly with SYHS throughout the year to discuss this work.

The DHPW have been updating their data to assist us with the mapping process. Our next step is a focus on region by region processes to enhance the relevance of this work.

In considering what is needed for this work we're collectively looking at overarching philosophies and processes, identifying key principles that underpin the process as well as identifying types of accommodation and agreed terminology/definitions:

For example the term crisis is to be replaced with - immediate housing and support response.

We look forward to working with SYHS, DHPW and key stakeholders to further develop this essential project.

COMMUNICATIONS

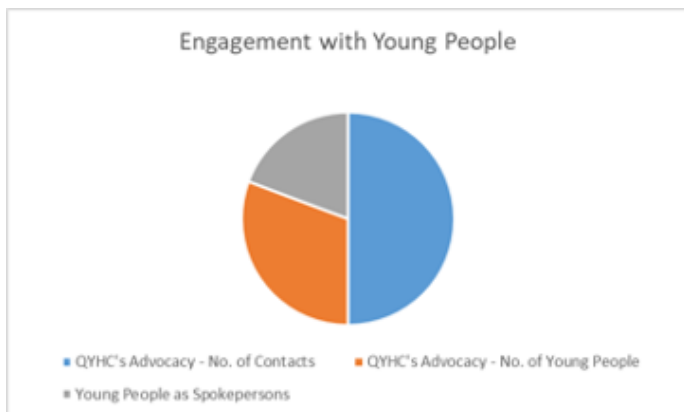
ENGAGING YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people are at the heart of youth housing and homelessness issues, ensuring the voices of young people by building relationships and networks in which they are directly included is key to our work.

This occurred through the First Time Renters video and is the focus of our Platform 1225 forums.

The Hindsight is 2020 video also engaged young people across the State.

We have a team of valued young people who engage with QYHC and we're aiming to expand our regular communications with young people further to continue to include those in more remote and regional areas.

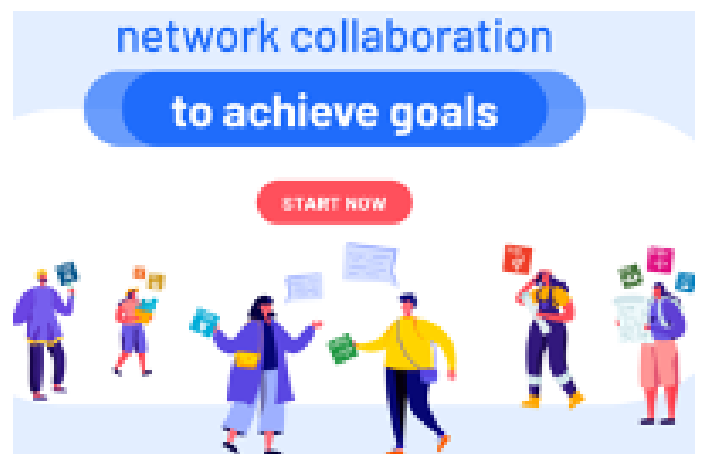


UBEGIN PLATFORM

uBegin is a network and collaboration platform to engage all stakeholders across Queensland and those further afield who share common goals and interests.

This year we worked closely with the founder and director of uBegin, collaborating on the relaunch of this digital platform. It was designed to engage people in projects locally, regionally or more globally. It also offers an opportunity to network with likeminded people, organisations and projects.

We showcased the QYHC Blast at last year's Platform1225 and have continued to develop the platform since.



uBegin is a great networking tool that has everything in the one place. It has a chat function, video call options, warehousing of videos, minutes and documents. It's an innovative way to collaborate throughout Queensland and beyond.

Join us now on <https://ubegin.com/>

COMMUNICATIONS

ALLIANCES, CAMPAIGNS AND NETWORKS

As an organisation we are pleased to be part of the Queensland Community Services Peaks Alliance, the Make Renting Fair Queensland (MRFQ) Alliance led by Tenants Queensland, Queensland Child Protection Week, the Housing Strategy steering group and many networks that work across various content areas and engage in campaigns.

Throughout this year we've benefitted from our relationship with many organisations and peak bodies. The wisdom and generosity of QDN, in particular their work around supporting young people with disabilities accessing the NDIS has been significant.

The many peaks in our arena such as: CSIA, QShelter, QCOSS, CHIA, CHPQ, TQ and QDN we engage with regularly enrich our work and challenge us to work together to do better collaboratively. QYHC is also a member of the Youth Justice Strategy Reference group.

The Reference Group provides advice in relation to the Youth Justice Action Plan which identifies whole-of-government and community actions required to reduce youth offending (particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people), reduce re-offending, reduce remand in custody and deliver more cost-effective community based options.

QYHC CHAT NEWSLETTER AND BLOG POSTS

Each month our QYHC Chat Newsletter offers sector updates, shares training and employment opportunities and notes key events and research. The newsletters and blog posts can be viewed on our website <https://www.qyhc.org.au/media/>

SUBMISSIONS AND PUBLICATIONS

Throughout this year QYHC prepared submissions to relevant Inquiries and prepared three articles to the April Youth Edition of the Parity Magazine as well as being a sponsor. The publications are:

APRIL YOUTH EDITION OF THE PARITY MAGAZINE:

- **Being young and homeless in the midst of a pandemic:** Queensland's youth homelessness response.
- **Being Just in Youth Justice:** Early Intervention and Prevention in Queensland Youth Justice
- **Queensland's Innovative Government and Non-Government Sector Alliance:** A joint article by QYHC and DHPW

SUBMISSIONS:

- Submission to the Council of Attorneys-General Age of Criminal Responsibility Working Group
- Submission to the Standing committee Inquiry on Homelessness in Australia.

FROM THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

We started this year believing it was full steam ahead, continuing the Partnership Approach with the Department of Housing and Public Works and strengthening connections with our members, young people and stakeholders across the state. Alas, like so many 2019-2020 annual reports around the world will undoubtedly reference, we quickly found ourselves thrust into a COVID-19 pandemic response. I am proud to acknowledge the professional and responsive way the QYHC team engaged with the challenges of this game changing situation and thank Lorraine Dupree as Executive Director for her leadership across this time.

Digital connections for all transformed our work practices to work from home arrangements, yet, brought our regional partners closer. Yes, it is true that it took a pandemic for online meetings to become an accessible norm, however the south east corner is forever changed and now knows the possibilities.

The QYHC team eagerly joined efforts with Queensland's breadth of peak bodies and government stakeholders to ensure young people experiencing homelessness were not left behind by policy responses.

As the extraordinary experience unfolded, we were humbled to learn the practical ways youth services and young people worked together to keep each other and their communities safe.

Communities adapted alongside government departments, both demonstrating leadership at different ends to flatten the curve with distanced and hygienic social interactions. Importantly, COVID19 does not tell the only story of the 2019-20 year. Much work was carried out alongside the responsive changes for housing and safety in the pandemic.

The Prevention and Early Intervention Project tabled the final scoping study findings and recommendations for trial implementation, the Making Renting Fair campaign continued, as did development of uBegin and the delivery of the First Time Renter information on the QYHC website were part of the many strategic actions to address policy and practice issues to reduce youth homelessness.

The Committee thanks all our project partners for inviting or joining these collaborations and we encourage you to review the details of the QYHC Team's hard work throughout this report. We also thank the Department of Housing and Public Works for valuing our Strategic Alliance with the funding that makes these projects a reality.

The strength of the team is
each individual member.
The strength of each
member is the team.

FROM THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Internally, the Management Committee also embarked on a review of QYHC's strategic vision and direction for the next 3 years. We thank Penny Gordon for guiding our process and our workers for informing the process with on the ground expertise.

To the team, Lorraine, Tanya, Mel and June – thank you for your sustained commitment throughout the year. A thank you too to the university students who joined us to complete your practical placements. Each one of you makes what QYHC achieves possible and we appreciate your dedication.

And now, to thank my fellow committee members for volunteering their time to progress QYHC's vision for all young people to have a safe and secure home. Megan, Brett, Allan, Fotina, Christine and Alice – thank you for the skills, knowledge and experience you bring to the table. Reducing youth homelessness cannot happen in a vacuum and your energy and focus makes a difference.

A special thank must be extended to our two retiring management committee members Christine Hastwell and Alice Thompson. Christine, you have been our stalwart Treasurer for several years and always did an excellent job to make the

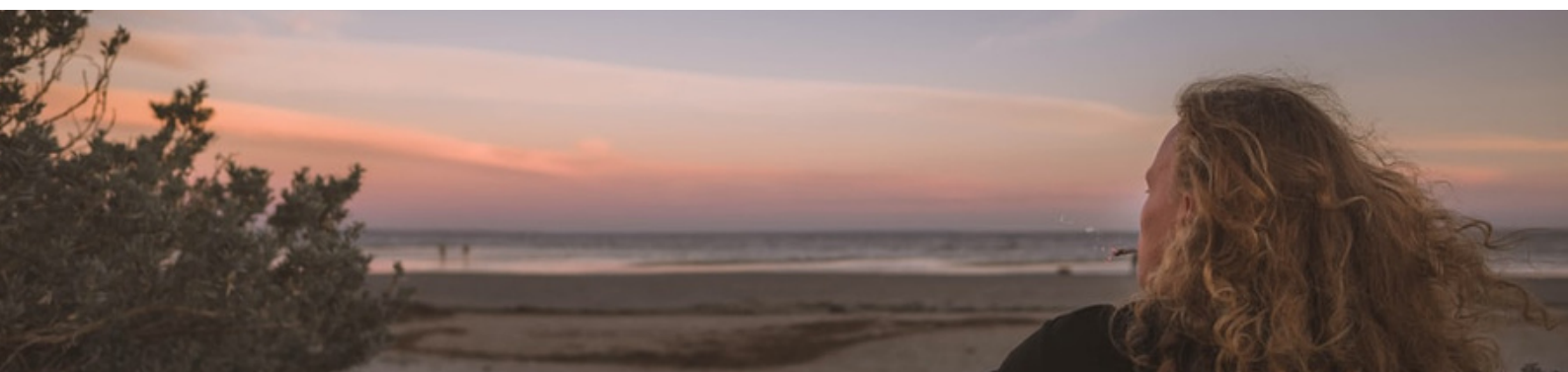
financial reports clear for the varying skills in the room. Thank you and all the best for your next endeavours. Alice, after many years of service to QYHC it is time to hang up the pen.

What more can we say than thank you, thank you, thank you for your unwavering time and dedication to advocating for quality youth housing policy. It is difficult to recall a time when you were not at the QYHC table and we will miss your discerning presence, leadership and vast understanding of the housing and homelessness system.

We are all richer for your contributions. It has been an honour to Chair our group through 2019-20. It is easy to see how the membership, partners, young people and government relationships make QYHC more than an organisation, rather, creating a community that works for a common goal.

As I head off for my next adventure into parenthood, I welcome the incoming Chair and invite them into the rich experience of this incredible network.

Cate Ryan
Chairperson



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

What a year to summarise in a succinct report!

After taking the helm of QYHC in early November 2019, I was just finding my feet as COVID-19 came along and offered further challenges and learnings. I acknowledge that this pandemic has been a game changer in many ways for our sector and in doing so I note both the heartache caused to many, most notably our young people who are homeless and marginalised, as well as the opportunities it created.

Most of all it brought us together as we all scrambled for answers to questions largely unasked and therefore new to us.

We saw what could be achieved with the collective will to make it so and we saw what happens when everyone works cooperatively towards a common goal. In this case – the health and wellbeing of all Queenslanders – most notably the vulnerable and homeless who either lived in communal dwellings or on the streets.

I don't need to recant all that occurred, other than to say: The endeavour was sound, the processes well intended and the outcome was most Queenslanders in safe housing.

It showed what we can do when we need to and reminds us that we can make profound inroads within weeks. Our capacity to eradicate homelessness in a more considered, thorough and planned way is possible and it needn't take decades.

On a personal note, I'm loving being back in the youth housing and homelessness sector. This is where I began my human services career. So much has changed in the decade or so in between and yet so much has stayed the same.

In spite of the changes, growth and stagnation, this sector is filled with a generosity towards uplifting young people and organisations and a commitment to the holistic wellbeing of young people that inspires me daily.

Our services are not well funded. Nor have they ever been. They have consistently learned to do more with less over the years and they aim for further innovation and collaboration to fill the gaps.

It has been a pleasure getting to know service providers across Queensland and a frustration seeing that youth homelessness services still struggle to offer basic needs to young people, an issue exacerbated in specific regions of the state.

I've noted the pandemic and I have to say that I think our work load doubled during that time. However, as overextended as we were, we like most were grateful to be working and continuing to contribute to the work we are passionate about whilst supporting the youth sector that we so admire.

I would like to recognise that we relied heavily on Department of Housing and Public Works for regular updates throughout the pandemic.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

QShelter also provided key information and meeting opportunities. Whilst our work increased, I can't begin to imagine their workloads as they delivered regular updates, weekly, fortnightly and monthly meetings to various stakeholders.

Similarly, QCOSS, CSIA and QDN offered regular updates and innovations across the wider social services sector and offered significant benefit to the sector.

Queensland's peaks played a vital role and worked tirelessly in updating their members, organisations and clients. It was gratifying that we connected regularly and worked together to go above and beyond during such extraordinary times.

QHYC is a very small team of passionate and committed individuals across our staff and management committee. Our entire staff team during the last year consisted of 2.6 FTE positions.

It is an absolute privilege to work with such like-minded colleagues who continue to hold young people front and centre in all the work we do and the decisions we make. The debates we have, the capacity to agree and disagree often in equal measures whilst working towards a common goal is enriching and inspiring.

Whilst we connect via the shared goals and visions, we grow most from our differences. Endeavouring for sound process alongside frenetic work and the need for solid outcomes can be a challenge.

I'd like to thank Tanya Turrell, Meloney Menerey, Caitlin King and June Darvill, our fabulous staff team, as well as our Management Committee members led by Chairperson Cate Ryan who are all as committed as we are and they offer their tireless commitment voluntarily.

I'd also like to note Maria Leebeek who had been the ED of QYHC for many years prior to leaving late last year to take the position of CEO of Gold Coast Youth Service. Maria was one of my mentors when I first joined the youth housing and homelessness sector in 1996. It was both a privilege and a daunting prospect to take the helm of an organisation she, the Management Committee and staff had nurtured so well over the years.

We've recently welcomed Jess Geron, our new Project Officer, to the fold. We're delighted to welcome another team member to work with our Specialist Youth Homelessness Services and engage in the many projects and future plans we are committed to.

If 2020 has taught us anything it is that with challenges comes the capacity for growth, learning and added tenacity. Let's call 2020 and COVID-19 the litmus test.

In doing so, I'm certain our QYHC team and our Specialist Youth Homelessness services and our colleagues in government and across peak bodies will continue to rise to all the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead.

Lorraine Dupree
Executive Director

FINANCIAL REPORT

Queensland Youth Housing Coalition Inc. (QYHC) continues to grow as a state-wide advocacy organisation. We continue also to engage in our strategic alliance with the Department of Housing and Public Works (DHPW). We would like to thank the Department of Housing and Public Works for their commitment to young people in Queensland, in particular those who experience homelessness and disadvantage.

It's of mutual benefit that we continue to work side by side to deliver projects and services across Queensland to ensure that young people are safely housed and experience wellbeing. I feel privileged to have worked alongside my colleagues on the Management Committee and I'd like to thank them and the QYHC staff for their diligence and hard work this year. QYHC has continued to benefit from their collective endeavours. Income for the 2019 -2020 Financial Year was \$421,391.45. Total expenses for this year's projects and activities were \$393,541.00, leaving a surplus of \$27,850.45.

The generated surplus is made up of interest earned on QYHC organisational funds and a very significant growth in membership fees received. Additionally, there was income from the Australian Taxation Office's Cash Flow Boost scheme. Also, we were once again successful in receiving a \$1,000 grant from StreetSmart and would like to thank them for their ongoing support of QYHC to explore avenues to engage with young people.

QYHC organisation funds

We opened the Financial Year with a balance of \$84,297.65. We have closed the 2019 -2020 Financial Year at \$112,148.10, an increase of \$27,850.45. QYHC holds \$81,161.83 of these funds in an interest bearing fixed account that has accumulated over many years.

Audited Financial Statement

Our Audited Financial Statement has been prepared by Haywards Chartered Accountants who have declared that Queensland Youth Housing Coalition Inc. is in a viable financial position.

Appointment of Auditor

I propose that Hayward Chartered Accounts be appointed as the auditors for the 2020 - 2021 financial year.

Finally, I have made the decision to step down from my duties on the Management Committee this year. I leave having learnt so many valuable things over the last five years.

To all staff and committee members past and present, I am glad to have shared this QYHC journey with you.

Christine Hastwell
Treasurer

