

# Youth homelessness – the Foyer Model for the South Morang Civic Precinct

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**Whittlesea Community Futures is seeking State and Federal Government support to help alleviate local youth homelessness by providing funding for local housing and services based on the Foyer model.**

## **What is happening right now?**

Specialist Homelessness Services report that they cannot keep up with the demand for housing and support services for young people in the Municipality (City of Whittlesea Human Services Needs Analysis 2013). The Specialist Homelessness Service system provides statewide services to people who are homeless, including youth aged 16 – 24 years.

The full local extent of young people's homelessness has not been thoroughly determined. However all specialist Homelessness Services report that they cannot keep up with demand for housing and support services for young people in the Municipality<sup>i</sup>. Local housing for young people is difficult to obtain in the private rental market due to a lack of affordable housing and high competition for rental properties. Young people who are homeless are usually living below the poverty line on Centrelink benefits as they do not have families to support them. While the Homelessness Service System does its best to respond to the needs of homeless young people, longer term housing and support models are required to reduce reliance on service systems into adulthood.

## **What is the Foyer model?**

Foyer is a successful model of housing and support for young people with an employment, education and training focus. The Foyer model is being implemented across Australia. Approximately ten are currently operating in Victoria. The model, developed in France and the UK, typically comprises a number of semi-detached units with on-site support for residents from professional staff. The units are located close to transport, schools, shops and community services. The model works with young people aged 16 – 24 years who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, to keep them in their local communities. It has a focus on employment, education and training, living skills development, maintaining sustainable tenancies and citizen participation. Young people can stay in the units for up to two years and receive outreach support for a further 12 months if needed.

## **Why locate a Foyer model in the South Morang Civic Precinct?**

The social housing development in the South Morang Civic Precinct offers an excellent opportunity to locate a Foyer model of ten units (seven one-bedroom and three two-bedroom) in the outer area of the City of Whittlesea, centrally located to social support services, education services and recreation opportunities for young people. The new Super Clinic at South Morang (located in close proximity to the Civic Precinct) provides an excellent opportunity to develop coordinated youth mental health responses that align with a housing and employment pathway, so young homeless people in the area can remain connected to their communities.

### How much will it cost?

We propose ten units (seven one-bedroom for singles and three two-bedroom for young families) at a cost of \$100K each for the singles and \$125K each for the two bedroom properties, a total of \$950K for the build. The project would also require establishment funds of 50K and recurrent annual funding of \$330K. Partners in the development would include specialist homelessness services, mental health services, education and employment services.

Project Elements	Per annum	TOTAL
Building Unit Costs 1BR x 7 @ \$100,00 each = \$700,000 2BR x 3 @ \$125,00 each = \$250,000	\$950,000	\$950,000
Establishment (one off cost)	\$50,000	\$50,000
Program (recurrent for three years) \$330,000 x 3 years = \$990,000	\$330,000	\$990,000
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$1,330,000</b>	<b>\$1,990,000</b>

### How does the community benefit?

Young people participating in the program who were once homeless could become highly functioning members of the local community with the support of the program and housing, through gaining employment, secure housing and help towards achieving their individual longer term goals.

The Foyer model blends into the constructed and physical landscape of its surroundings. It will help to meet the local housing need for low income single youths and reduce longer term reliance on service systems. This will create a housing pathway that is supported by a public-private partnership together with education and employment services as well as access to youth mental health services.

### What objectives does this help us achieve?

#### Federal Government

- National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness
- Access to Allied Psychological Services (ATAPS) Department of Health

#### State Government

- Victorian Homelessness Action Plan
- Services Connect: Better Services for Victorians in Need
- Victorian Service System Reform Project

## **City of Whittlesea**

- Whittlesea Community Futures Youth Cluster – Homelessness
- Whittlesea Community Futures Youth Cluster – Mental Health
- Social and Affordable Housing Policy and Strategy 2012-2016
- Housing Diversity Strategy
- Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2009-2013
- Connect – The municipal plan for children and young people and their families in the City of Whittlesea 2013-2018

## **Key Messages**

- Foyer is a successful model of housing and support for young people with an employment, education and training focus.
- Meets housing need for low income single youths and reduces longer term reliance on service systems.
- Whittlesea Community Futures Partner Agencies are willing to explore a public-private partnership for a Foyer model in the South Morang Precinct.

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<sup>i</sup> City of Whittlesea Human Services Needs Analysis 2013