



FUTURE WITH *hope*

HOPE STREET YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES — APRIL 2020

Dear Friends of Hope Street,

Firstly, I wish to congratulate our young people and young families for their strength and resilience in adjusting to changes in their lives as a part of keeping safe during the Coronavirus pandemic. This is yet another demonstration of young people’s abilities to move through different and difficult situations. As with any other time, it is crucial that young people and young families, who do not have a safe place to call home, have the full support of the community. I am proud that Hope Street is a member of the community and is there for young people and young families, providing stability and an environment in which they can work towards their goals. With change, there can also be a level of uncertainty which may trigger certain emotions and behaviours. Our teams are reassuring and assisting young people to understand what is happening, and teaching young people how to protect themselves and others.

Hope Street is preparing for an anticipated increase in the number of young people and young families who will be requiring emergency accommodation when couch surfing at friend’s houses, in cars and rough sleeping become less viable options.

The unprecedented Australian bushfires and COVID-19 global health crisis have reinforced Hope Street’s commitment to providing responsive services to vulnerable young people and our local community. In this issue of our partners eNewsletter we launch our new vision, purpose and values; we update you on the construction of the First Response Youth Refuge in Melton; we share our submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Homelessness in Victoria; and much more.

Hope Street values the collaboration and support of each partner who makes our work possible. From our major partners, the Victorian Government, local governments, and philanthropic organisations to our corporate partners, and community and individual donors, we express our gratitude to you.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition of our partners eNewsletter. Thank you for always being a part of Hope Street.

Yours sincerely,

Donna Bennett
Chief Executive Officer



In this issue

- Hope Street Highlights
- Program Updates
- Client Impact Story
- In the Spotlight

Supporting young people and young families experiencing homelessness.



Youth Homelessness Matters Day

PHOTO: HILARY FAYE

Wednesday 15 April was [Youth Homelessness Matters Day](#).

To the almost 28,000 young Australians aged 12-24 years old who don't have a safe place to call home...

You matter. Your dreams for your future matter.

We wish your journey hadn't been this hard.

We know you never chose this path.

We hope you find the support you need and that things get easier up ahead.

Know that your experience of homelessness does not need to define you or your future. You can leave it in the past and go on to achieve your dreams.

You are strong, you are resilient, you are capable. You've got this.

We're here for you and with you and we can't wait to watch you shine.

With warmest wishes from the team at Hope Street Youth and Family Services.

[#YHMD2020](#)

[Make a tax-deductible donation today](#)

COVID-19 response

Housing and homelessness services, including Hope Street, are deemed essential services and are therefore continuing to operate during the Coronavirus stage 3 shutdown. Our front-line teams in the Cities of Melton, Moreland and Whittlesea continue to provide 24/7 services, support and accommodation to young people who don't have a safe place to call home.

Our priority is continuing our essential services, whilst protecting young people and their children, our team members and their families, and those who are most vulnerable in the community. To this end, we have implemented some changes to the way we work — [read our full COVID-19 statement](#) for further information.

An appeal for your support

If you're able to support young people and young families who are experiencing homelessness during this time, we welcome contributions to our COVID-19 appeal. With donated funds we're hoping to purchase:

- Safe emergency accommodation

- Food vouchers
- Clothing vouchers
- Essential self-care items such as toiletries, towels, soap and hand sanitiser
- Arts, crafts, sports and other activities to help young people and children pass the time in self-isolation

➤ [Read more about our appeal](#)



We are Hope Street

PHOTOS: SHANNYN HIGGINS

We're thrilled to reveal our new organisational vision, purpose and values statements approved by our Board of Directors in March. These statements guide who we are and where we're heading as an organisation:

OUR VISION

A society in which all young people and young families have a safe place to call home.

OUR PURPOSE

To influence change to end youth homelessness and empower young people and young families to achieve their full potential.

OUR VALUES

FAIRNESS

We treat people with impartiality and dignity.

COLLABORATION

We work with young people, young families, local communities and our partners – believing that together we achieve more.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

We believe that all people have the right to be equal citizens in society and we will strive to achieve this within our purpose.

INTEGRITY

We are true to ourselves and each other in all of our interactions.

DIVERSITY

We create inclusive cultures that celebrate differences and similarities.

HOPE

We draw on our strengths to build a better future.

Parliamentary Inquiry into Homelessness

On 30 January, Hope Street made a submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Homelessness in Victoria. To prepare for this submission, we interviewed and consulted with current and previous Hope Street clients, and our team members who work directly with them, to capture their voices and opinions on how Victoria can best respond to youth homelessness.

The most pressing feedback we received from young people is that youth homelessness requires a specialist response that is different to the response required by the general homeless population. In the absence of youth-specific responses, young people are often missing out on resources and falling through the gaps. Young people also require homelessness services to be available in their own communities.

Following this, Hope Street's CEO Donna Bennett and Operations Manager Jennifer McAughtrie presented at a public hearing as part of the Parliamentary Inquiry, hosted by the Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee in the City of Whittlesea on 27 February.

➤ [Download our submission](#)



Corporate Committee and Millennial Advisory Group 2020 planning day

On 8 February Hope Street's incredible [Corporate Committee](#) and [Millennial Advisory Group](#) spent the day deep in planning for the year ahead. These two external stakeholder groups work to raise the profile and fundraising efforts of Hope Street so that we can increase our dent on youth homelessness. They have some exciting plans for 2020 and beyond! Did we mention they're all volunteers?! Big shout out too to [Sofitel Melbourne on Collins](#) for hosting us in kind for the day.

If you're interested in getting involved with one of these groups, drop an email to olivia.myeza@hopest.org.

The faces of youth homelessness

PHOTOS: HILARY FAYE

On 13 March some of the young people who are residing in Hope Street's supported transitional housing units in Melton participated in a photography shoot. Working creatively with photographer Hilary Faye, they set up photographs that represented their lived experiences with homelessness, and also portrayed the hope they now feel for their futures. The images will be used throughout the year to communicate Hope Street's impact. Here's what photographer Hilary Faye had to say about the experience...

Tell us about your experience taking photos at Hope Street's Melton site.

As a photographer my job is to put my subject at ease and help them feel relaxed in front of the camera. I still remember how self-conscious it felt being a teenager, so I wanted to make sure the clients were comfortable. Luckily there was time for me to have a chat with them and hear about their daily lives before taking their photos. I was surprised at how confident and relaxed they were, with lots of ideas and often directing the shoot! This collaborative process made it fun for everyone involved and empowering for the young people.

What struck you about the young people you photographed?

I was struck by their sheer resilience. Their stories and challenges they've faced are difficult to comprehend as an adult, let alone lived through as a teenager. It reminded me of what an absolute privilege and head start it is to simply have a safe home to grow up in. Supporting Hope Street is supporting young people when they need it at such a crucial point in their lives.

How can people find you/get in touch with you?

My work can be seen at hilaryfaye.com and my instagram is [@hilary_faye](https://www.instagram.com/hilary_faye).





COVID-19's impact

ALL HOPE STREET SITES

Hope Street is home to young people (aged 16 to 25 years old) who are experiencing homelessness and staying in our youth refuges and supported transitional housing units. Some also have dependent children staying with us. Most have a childhood history of family violence, trauma and/or neglect, along with existing struggles with anxiety and depression that are heightened now. Some have lost their casual jobs in recent weeks. Our team of residential support workers and case managers are doing everything possible to help the young people understand the COVID-19 pandemic and the lock-down restrictions. To calm their concerns there's lots of soothing activity going on with mindful colouring; art and crafts; and listening to music.



Bathrooms upgrade

YOUTH REFUGE, BRUNSWICK

At any one time, the refuge is home to eight young people from 17 to 24 years old for a period of up to eight weeks. The refuge building was constructed in the 1920s with our bathrooms last refurbished 30 years ago, therefore in much need of an upgrade. Thanks to a grant from [The Marian and E.H. Flack Trust](#), and a contribution from [StreetSmart Australia](#), we are overhauling the male and female toilets and bathrooms. Whilst the female toilet and bathroom and the male toilet upgrades are now complete, the male bathroom upgrade has had to be put on hold as we have postponed all non-essential visitors and labour at all Hope Street sites in response to COVID-19 restrictions. We look forward to completing the final stage of the upgrade as soon as it's safe to do so.



Upgraded female bathroom



Before



After



New bikes for young people

YOUTH REFUGE, BRUNSWICK

In March the Brunswick refuge received a generous donation of six new bikes, including a child's bike. The donation was from [Back 2 Bikes](#), a social enterprise located in Port Melbourne that specialises in recycling bikes and providing low-cost and special needs bikes, servicing and training to those who may not otherwise be able to afford it. Young people are loving using the bikes, with helmets provided by Hope Street and especially since the COVID-19 lock-downs, as they are a free way to exercise, have some independence and get some fresh air.

Jordy McGauran, one of our casual support workers, is pictured here with one of the bikes.

With gratitude

HOPE TO HOME, WHITTLESEA

[Hope to Home in Whittlesea](#), Hope Street's youth-specific private rental transition program, has supported eight young people aged 18-25 years old and five of their dependent children to transition from homelessness into private rental accommodation between October 2019 and March 2020. Of the eight clients, three are male and five are female. The dependent children, who all reside with single mums, are aged between 18 months and six years old. An additional six clients who were supported into private rental accommodation in 2019 continue to receive ongoing case management, rental support and tenancy support. All clients have sustained their tenancies.

We are grateful to [ALH Group](#) who is our corporate partner providing funding for this program, and [Ray White Real Estate in Thomastown](#) for their ongoing support in identifying rental properties for our clients.





First Response

IMAGES: BRAND ARCHITECTS YOUTH REFUGE, MELTON

We are excited to report that the completion of construction will be late May. Our priority is to move young people and young families from our interim refuge into this purpose-designed centre as soon as possible. Given the COVID-19 restrictions, we are considering how we can celebrate this momentous occasion with our wonderful partners and supporters who have made this project come to life.

The builder, WP Contractors, along with our architects, Brand Architects, are working hard to finalise the project so young people and their children have a safe place to call home within their local community.

See our [partner shout outs](#) for this project on page 10.



YOUTH MOBILE OUTREACH SERVICE, MELTON

The [First Response Youth Mobile Outreach Service in Melton](#) has supported 42 young people who are experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness in the period from January to March 2020. This brings the total for the 2019-2020 financial year to 103 young people – already more than our annual target of 100 young people. With one quarter still to come, no doubt this program will once again demonstrate that the need is greater than originally anticipated.

The young people have been provided with emergency accommodation, food vouchers, clothing and clothing vouchers, referrals to other supports, and short-term case management to get them through their immediate crisis and transition them into

longer-term accommodation options.

The team have also commenced distributing Emergency Backpacks to young people, after funding for these was provided by [Australian Communities Foundation](#) and Youth in Philanthropy, an initiative of the [Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation](#). The backpacks contain:

- A towel and face-cloth
- Essential toiletry items such as deodorant, soap, shampoo and conditioner
- A clothing voucher
- A food voucher
- A phone credit/data voucher
- A USB stick for storing important documents and photographs

The backpacks with essential supplies help young people to feel supported and to know that they will be okay.



Layla's story – International Women's Day

PHOTO: SHANNYN HIGGINS

Sunday 8 March was International Women's Day. A day where we celebrate women's achievements, raise awareness against bias, and take action for equality. To mark this occasion, we shared Layla's story on [our Facebook page](#).

Layla is courageous and resilient, and she knows all too well about the inequalities and injustices faced by women, particularly those who are vulnerable due to their experiences of homelessness. She is a survivor, and she's determined to give her son the loving and supported childhood that she never had access to.

Layla was in primary school when she first experienced homelessness. At the age of 11, she was living with her mother, who was struggling with substance abuse, and was unable to provide a stable home for her. "Due to my mother's behaviour I did not feel safe in the house as my mum would kick me out of home and then let me back, I never knew what to expect, so I started couch surfing at friends' places, telling my friends' parents that Mum was working late so they did not ask questions."

When Layla was 14, child protective services sent her to live with her father, but sadly this home was also unsafe for her. As a young person, she had no money, no job, and no family support network to rely on, so homelessness posed very real and unique challenges. The government system had failed her. Layla described how homelessness forced her to learn to live as an adult while she was still just a teenager. "I tried to keep going to school however the unstable housing and lack of appropriate supports made it really hard, I eventually could no longer attend. Due to my age I was excluded from the private rental market and I couldn't get a job. I had to rely on the building of relationships with other adults to assist me to access the things I needed. Having to rely on other people made me vulnerable and made me have to navigate complex relationships to ensure I had a roof over my head and access to basics such as food."

Layla first heard of Hope Street when she was 15 years old and pregnant with her son...

➤ [Read more about Layla and how Hope Street assisted this incredible young woman](#)



THANK YOU

Partner shout outs

Construction of the First Response Youth Refuge in Melton has been enabled by more than 30 businesses who have partnered with us to provide building supplies either completely free of charge or heavily discounted. The value of their contributions exceeds \$500,000. It is the generosity of these partner organisations that has, quite literally, got this project off the ground.

We're highlighting a handful of the incredible businesses to whom we are so grateful.

Bloom Interior Design and Decoration are providing pro-bono interior design services for the project, assisting us to create a warm and inviting space for the young people who will stay in the refuge.

Terri Shannon, Bloom's Director (pictured here), said:

"Everyone should be able to have a warm bed, clothing and a shelter where they feel safe. If we can help by supporting Hope Street by making a space for homeless people to stay and feel comfortable, then we have achieved our goal. We're particularly passionate about ensuring women and children have a comfortable inviting place to stay while they get the help they need."



Johnson Tiles have donated all the ceramic wall tiles we needed for the refuge.

"Johnson Tiles is privileged to be involved in Hope Street's vision to build a youth refuge in Melton, as it brings us closer to the community and their needs. We strive to build long lasting bridges between organisations such as Hope Street as we too reap the rewards of fulfilling people's desires. We are more than a tiling company – we inspire and educate like-minded people about lifestyle trends and we believe in Hope Street's vision of supporting young people who are experiencing homelessness. If you are experiencing homelessness, remember you are not alone. Don't be afraid to ask for help and reach out to organisations such as Hope Street. And most importantly, never give up."



Rondo have donated finishing sections / plastering beads for the construction of the youth refuge.

"Rondo was only too happy to support the youth refuge project at Melton. Upon learning more about the services being provided to the local community by Hope Street and the value and support they provide the community, we wanted to do what we could to support."



Hand Rail Industries are providing sanitary fittings and accessories at a sizeable discount.

"Hand Rail Industries are delighted to be part of an organisation that offers assistance to youth and families that have fallen on hard times. Hope Street Youth and Family Services have a dedicated group of people that share common values with Hand Rail Industries and it is for this reason we proudly support the work they do."



THANK YOU

Partner shout outs continued

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Where there is light, there is hope. [Australian EcoTech Solutions \(AES\)](http://www.aes.com.au) are providing all of the lighting for the refuge at a significant discount.

"We are very pleased to be involved with the Hope Street project as it has enabled us to provide tangible support (in the form of a complete lighting solution) to a much-needed facility that provides vital support services to our community."

Haymes Paint have provided all the paint for the refuge at a hefty discount.

"The challenges surrounding homelessness have immense effects on both individuals and families, especially in the current environment where options for assistance and accommodation are even more scarce. As an Australian family-owned manufacturer, Haymes Paint feels for the plight of those affected and we were keen to assist with paint materials for the Hope Street First Response Youth Refuge project. We encourage all who are in a position to help, please support organisations such as Hope Street as the vulnerable need our help more than ever."



Australia's first family of paint.



RBA Group have provided a significant discount on sanitary fittings and accessories for the refuge.

"RBA Group are honoured to be supporting such a great initiative; bringing hope to many young Australians who are homeless. Hope Street's mission is inspiring, and we are proud to contribute to this project, everyone deserves the feeling of a home."



Meet Dinesh

Millennial Advisory Group member

Dinesh Kumar is a volunteer member of Hope Street's [Millennial Advisory Group](#). We sat down with him (at a safe distance, of course) to hear more about his journey with Hope Street.

What have you been working on with Hope Street so far?

I'm working with the group to diversify Hope Street's funding, including through social entrepreneurship. We've been developing a partnership with a local café and coffee roaster, [Wide Open Road](#), who have generously offered to sell a special Hope Street Coffee Blend and contribute all profits to support young people to access safe accommodation. They are run by amazing people and I couldn't recommend their café more. Watch this space for more on this in the future!

Where can we find you during the working week?

I work in wealth management, advising private investors, business owners and trusts on investment and wealth strategies. Alongside this I manage and mentor a small team of amazing staff members which keeps me busy.

Why are you passionate about being part of the response to youth homelessness in Melbourne?

Unfortunately, youth homelessness is often an 'invisible issue.' When thinking of homelessness, commonly an image of an adult pops into mind and not a picture of a young person. The work of Hope Street is so important in providing support to young people who are slipping through the cracks and are grappling with the complex circumstances of homelessness. I am proud to be part of the group at Hope Street helping to achieve this and also to build more awareness around the challenges young people face to be safe and secure.

What's something surprising or new that you've learnt since joining Hope Street?

I'm really impressed by the dedication and resilience of the staff at Hope Street. Even though the issue of youth homelessness is so huge and sometimes seems insurmountable, the staff just get on with the job and do whatever it takes. It's a privilege for me to be supporting an organisation with such a capable workforce so committed to improving the lives of young people.

When you're not working or volunteering for Hope Street, what keeps you busy?

In my spare time, I learn and play the African drums, plan my next travel adventures and escape into nature any chance I get.





Hope Street Youth and Family Services

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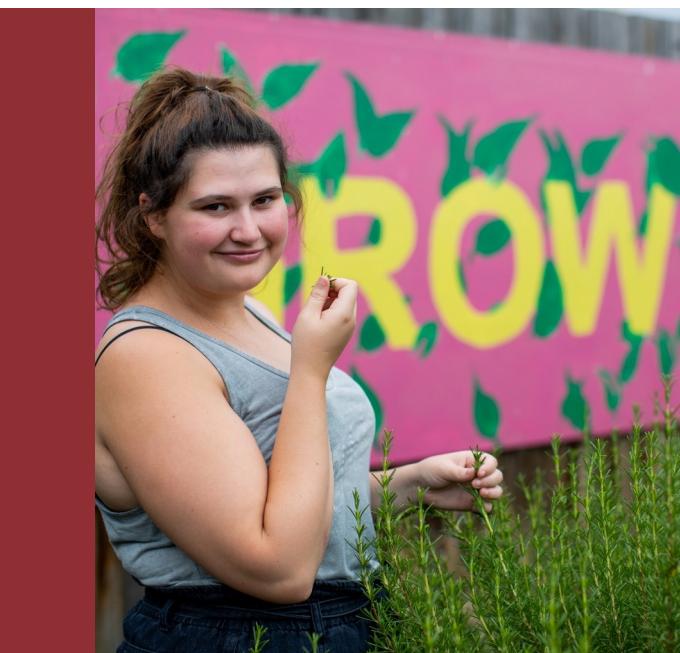
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About us

Hope Street Youth and Family Services Limited ("Hope Street"), based in the northern and western regions of Melbourne, is one of the longest established specialist youth homelessness services in Victoria.

As a leading player with over 40 years' experience in delivering responsive services to young people in local communities, Hope Street provides both strategically targeted and holistic programs for young people including young families.

➤ [Read more](#)