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5 June 2020

**To: The House of Representatives Standing Committee on  
Social Policy and Legal Affairs**

**Submission by Young People Ahead Youth and Community Services Inc.**

**YOUNG PEOPLE AHEAD  
Youth & Community  
Services Incorporated**

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## **Inquiry into homelessness in Australia**

Dear Committee Secretary to The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs, our organisation Young People Ahead Youth and Community Services Inc. based in Mount Isa, North West Queensland, would like to place a submission as part of the Inquiry into Homelessness in Australia.

As one of the longest operational Not-for-Profit community-controlled organisation in Mount Isa, we feel it important to add our voice to the inquiry and provide insight to the current success and barrier to addressing homelessness in our city.

As a city of around 20,000 residents Mount Isa is not isolated in terms of having people who experience levels of overcrowding and those who are homeless and or at risk of homelessness. A large percentage of the people that the organisation is in contact with that are homeless or at risk of homelessness are young people from the ages of 16 to 30 years of age. Due mostly to the affects of Domestic and Family Violence, and those escaping over-crowded living conditions.

As an organisation, our core business is to support young people 8-25 years in the areas of Crisis Accommodation, Youth Support, and assistance with Victims Counselling and Support.

In the past 5 years our organisation has been heavily advocating to the relevant State funding bodies to assist with semi-independent living accommodation for our young people/adults, especially in respect to alleviating pressures from being the only Youth Shelter in the city. The provision of this type of transitional accommodation will allow an opportunity for young people/adults to transition into more suitable accommodation after accessing crisis accommodation but still be supported within a case worker model to acquire strong and sustainable life skills required for independent living and tenancy.

Supplementation of CAP Homelessness funding we feel will go along way for non registered NRSCH entities, such as ours to better respond and assist in supporting young people/adults into semi-independent living arrangements.

Further to this, statistical data collected by our organisation sees many individuals seeking crisis accommodation have complex and or high needs in terms of underlying mental health and alcohol issues, which places a great deal of stressors to our organisations capacity to meet those discreet issues as we are not a specialised service to address these issues.

There is a great need in our city and region, to be provided with capacity to support young people who have complex mental health and alcohol/drug related issues and needs, as the city and region has one of the highest rates of Domestic and Family Violence in the Nation.

As a means of innovative practice that could be explored is the provision of a mixed tenancy arrangement termed in most European countries as Intergenerational Living program, which involves young people and the Elderly suitably matched to support one another and address critical issues that Australia is encountering, such as Youth Homelessness, High Youth Unemployment and a rising Ageing Population who require support and connection to thrive.

Our organisation is very keen and motivated to trial such an innovative program that will see young people enter meaningful work to enter the Aged Care sector, and be employed as co-residents in a tailored facility that can house them for no rent, whilst assisting the Elderly to remain longer in community, rather than placing added pressures to an ever expanding aged care sector, which in most cases is not financially feasible to most older Australians.

Similar models of Intergenerational Living program are working well in countries such as Germany, see links;

<https://www.france24.com/en/20190516-intergenerational-living-french-programmes-pair-young-old-roomates>

<https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Europe/2016/1230/How-adding-youth-to-a-Dutch-old-age-home-is-improving-life-for-all>

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/jun/21/young-people-renting-rooms-helsinki-care-home>

To see success of this Intergenerational Living Program, young people must first be trained in the Aged Care sector, and progress in levels of specialised care to assist those Elderly persons with more complex health issues and or physical impairments. Aged care persons and their families are then part of a screening / interview process to then engage these young people as lived in carers, and which could involve 2 young people living in residence working in rotational shifts, overseen by a community based organisation such as ourselves.

Should you require further information in regard to this submission, please do not hesitate to contact me at your convenience.

Kind regards

  
Alvin Hava

General Manager

Young People Ahead Youth and Community Services Inc.  
