

## **Inquiry into Homeless Legislation**

### **Terms of Reference**

#### **1. The principles:**

The number one principle should be that prevention and early intervention are a priority for all service providers. This is proven to be more cost effective and far less damaging to the client group. See Kids Under Cover model below

Number two principle should be that everyone deserves the basic human right of an appropriate, safe and secure permanent place to reside

#### **2. The Scope**

The SAAP client base to be reduced to include 12- 14 year olds. In all literature 12- 25 year olds are considered young people (0-12 children). Not only does it provide consistency but it captures a target group which are at times largely overlooked.

#### **3. Role of Legislation**

To develop a national platform and create a consistent approach across ALL States and Territories. Greater clarity on an operational level eg: are SAAP operated Community Service Organisations the same as those which operate under SAAP?

### **Kids Under Cover Model**

Kids Under Cover (KUC) is a not-for-profit organisation, established in 1989 as a direct response to a Senate National Inquiry into Youth Homelessness (the Burdekin Report ). KUC believes that 'every young person has the right to a safe and secure home and a sound education' (KUC mission) and works to realise its mission by raising funds to:

- provide accommodation for young people who are homeless or 'at risk' of becoming homeless through accommodation programs; and
- provide young people in KUC accommodation programs the opportunity to access scholarship funds for year 11 & year 12 secondary school studies and tertiary study.

KUC programs focus on early intervention and prevention of homelessness. Through these programs, KUC delivers a service that provides young people with the opportunity to experience family life, complete education and maintain a sense of community.

The bungalows are one or two bedroom with bathroom units constructed in the back yard using an environmentally sustainable product. They are connected to plumbing and electricity and are demountable thus can be relocated to where the need is next.

KUC informs Community Service Organisations to identify families in need at an early stage and apply and monitor the bungalow on behalf of the family.

In August 2007, KUC engaged 'The Nous Group' (Nous) to assist them to complete a comprehensive evaluation of their bungalow program. The purpose of this evaluation was to ascertain whether the KUC bungalow program is delivering the anticipated benefits to its participants and to identify opportunities for improvement.

The evaluation found that KUC's program, delivers against the core assumptions that underpin its mission. Based on current size and evaluation results, the bungalow program proved highly beneficial, delivering an estimated \$5.6 mill per annum in economic benefits to the Australian economy and providing positive social outcomes to the majority of its participants.

The scholarship scheme, which is still in its development phase, was found to have significant potential to deliver promising economic and social outcomes.

The KUC programs provide assistance and support to young people up to the age of 25. These young people have been divided into four main categories: Support Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP), 'At Risk', Child Protection and Disability.

The KUC bungalow program seeks to prevent homelessness by supplying additional, temporary living accommodation separate from the young person's family's or carer's main house. This independent living space provides relief to families or carers with insufficient housing to support the needs of the young person, while providing a semi-independent living space for the young person to live and study. In a number of cases the increase in space the bungalow provides for the family is removing the family from the public housing wait list.

At 30 June 2008 there are 184 bungalows in Victoria at an average establishment cost of between \$33,500 (1 bedroom with bathroom) and \$41,500 (2 bedrooms and 1 bathroom). In addition to the establishment cost, a maintenance cost of \$180 per bungalow is incurred per annum over an average life span of 20 years.

The average bungalow delivers \$36,975 p.a. in economic benefits to the Australian economy. This equates to a 279% rate of return on investment or \$5.6 mill p.a. based on the size of the bungalow program in 2007. The break even return on investment (ROI) is achieved before the end of year one of a participant using a bungalow.

In March 2004, KUC launched its 'Kids Under Cover Scholarship Scheme'. This scheme is designed to support young people who have the passion and motivation to pursue higher education but are not adequately resourced. The scholarships relieve the economic burden of educational fees (excluding Higher Education Contribution Scheme), incidental study costs (text books and/or equipment) and travel or living expenses for the duration of their course so the students are free to focus on their academic pursuits. The average scholarship per application is \$1,600 per annum with an increase of participants from 4 in 2004 to 30 in 2008. Every past or present bungalow resident automatically qualifies to apply for a scholarship.

With the positive outcomes and the proven ROI, this program needs to be funded to expand nationally so we can help prevent family breakdown and the growing rate of homelessness in the 15-25 y.o. age group.