



PREVENTING YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

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EVERY DAY IN AUSTRALIA, DISADVANTAGED YOUNG PEOPLE AS YOUNG AS 12 BECOME HOMELESS.

It's a grave misconception that young people become homeless by choice. The reality is vastly different.

The issues that lead someone to become homeless are complex and varied. For at-risk young people, their lives have become emotionally and often, physically unbearable.

Their home life may be burdened by the disadvantages of poverty, neglect, abuse, unemployment, substance abuse, health complications, disability and mental illness.¹

This cycle of events cause some young people to feel there is no other option, but to leave. They are not ready, have nowhere to go and become isolated from mainstream society.



Around 44,000 young Australians under 25 are homeless on any given night.²

A figure that increased by
17%

OUR WORK

THE PROBLEM:

A young person may have many harmful experiences in their life, such as the breakdown of family relationships, mental illness, domestic violence, unemployment and parental drug and alcohol abuse.

When this is combined with a severely overcrowded home it leaves young people without the physical and emotional space needed to deal with the effects of their experiences.

HOW WE SOLVE IT:

Kids Under Cover is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to preventing youth homelessness. Our early intervention approach is simple, unique and effective.

At the heart of our work are the relocatable studios that provide stable and secure accommodation for young people at risk of homelessness. We complement this with scholarships for education or job training to empower young people to achieve their goals.

This combination is proven to prevent young people from becoming homeless and keep families together.

"We firmly believe the most effective way to reduce the number of young people experiencing homelessness is through prevention. Without such interventions, young people will increasingly become the face of homelessness in Australia."

Jo Swift, CEO

STUDIO PROGRAM



Trauma, combined with severe overcrowding, is one of the triggers of youth homelessness. Our program relieves this by creating space for all family members. One- and two-bedroom studios, with bathroom, are installed in the backyard of a family or carer's home.

The extra room relieves overcrowding, eases tension and provides young people with a secure and stable environment.

It is also society that benefits, as an independent study showed that for every dollar invested in a Kids Under Cover Studio, on average \$3.30 is saved in the form of reduce health and justice costs, and flow on economic benefits.³

SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM



Many young people have the passion and motivation to complete their education and job training but do not have the resources.

The Scholarship Program is designed to encourage young people residing in our studios and their siblings to remain engaged with education and training.

We help with their educational expenses, such as travel costs, textbooks and equipment.



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"The future was a bit bleak. I didn't know what I was going to do. We couldn't afford a lot of stuff and I didn't know if I was going to be able to pursue studies. It was really hard."

BRITTNIE'S STORY

"When Australian Catholic University offered me a place in the Diploma of Nursing, it was the best day of my life. I was so happy."

Her career is a result of the 21-year-old's strength and determination. But it wasn't easy. Brittnie takes us back to life before the studio:

"My aunty, my nan, my brother and I were living on top of each other in the two-bedroom house with one bathroom. Three of us shared one bedroom and relationships were really tense."

Brittnie is a caregiver to her brother, Jesse, who needs to be looked after 24 hours a day.

"He has cerebral palsy and developmental delay. I'd get up early, shower him, feed him, put him on bus, then head to school. We all chipped in, but it was still hard."

Before moving in with their grandmother and aunt, both Brittnie and Jesse lived in an unstable and unhealthy home environment. They were in a better situation at their aunt's house, but finances were severely strained.

Things turned around immediately after the studio was installed in the backyard of the main house. The studio gave Brittnie space to be herself. *"I could be who I wanted to be, in my own space, and study in my own room,"* says Brittnie.

The studio gave her the space to remain at home with her family and become the person she is today.

Kids Under Cover scholarships also helped Brittnie reach her career goals.

"It helped pay for essential school materials – textbooks, pens, calculator, my uniform. They wouldn't have gotten paid for. Finding the money was next to impossible."

Brittnie continues to work hard to build a brighter future for herself while still caring for her brother.

"I'm working as a Division 2 nurse in an aged-care facility just across the road from my house. I'm loving it. It's so rewarding – knowing I'm making a difference in someone else's life."

What Brittnie has achieved in her personal life and within the community is quite simply, inspirational.

OUR REACH

ACTIVITY DURING 2014–15



young people awarded scholarships for education or job training



studios on the ground

MANHEIM & KIDS UNDER COVER

As Kids Under Cover's Official Auction Partner, Manheim has been helping raise vital funds for the charity since 2006. Collecting and auctioning vehicles donated via their 'Donate Your Car' (DYC) program, we have sold over 10,000 vehicles on their behalf.

Anyone can donate a vehicle to KUC through the program which will see your unwanted vehicle collected for free. You can even claim a tax deduction on the sale price. We are proud to be a supporter of KUC and donated vehicles sold by Manheim at all of our locations help raise funds for their much needed work.

To donate a vehicle fill out the donation form online at donateyourcar.org.au or call KUC on 1800 801 633



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1 Dept. of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Literature Review: Effective interventions for working with young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, 2012.
2 Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of population and housing: Estimating Homelessness, 2011.
3 Independent program evaluation report by The Nous Group, 2012.