

Media Release

The Hon Richard Wynne MP

Minister for Planning

Minister for Housing



Tuesday, 1 December 2020

SUPPORTING VICTORIAN YOUTH AT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS

Young Victorians who may have struggled to find a home, will now have the support they need to live independently thanks to a \$1.2 million pilot program funded by the Andrews Labor Government.

Minister for Housing Richard Wynne today opened Village 21, a Victorian first accommodation program in Preston assisting at-risk young people aged 18 to 21 who are leaving out-of-home care.

Village 21 is designed to help prevent young people leaving out-of-home care falling into homelessness by providing stable accommodation with wrap around support, designed to assist them into independence and thrive in the broader community.

Delivered in partnership with Anglicare Victoria and Kids Under Cover, the pilot program will provide a home to six young people for two to three years, with a live-in mentor, in one- and two-bedroom studios.

The four studios are fitted out with furniture, soft furnishings and kitchenette appliances to create a calming, welcoming environment and a feeling of semi-independence for the young residents.

A case worker will support each of the young people to develop education and employment opportunities, living skills and to re-establish ties with family so that an exit at the end of their stay is well supported and a successful transition can be made.

Based around a village concept, Village 21 will support communal activities such as cooking together, maintaining shared gardens and learning new life skills. A local real estate agent will provide the residents tenancy advice and rental references when they move out of the program.

As part of the more than \$1 billion being invested in children and families through the *Victorian Budget 2020/21*, more than \$74 million will be spent to support young people as they transition from out-of-home care.

This includes \$10 million for the successful Better Futures program and in an Australian first, \$64.7 million will extend universal state supports for young people from 18 to 21 years through the Home Stretch program.

The landmark Home Stretch program provides an accommodation allowance so a young person can remain living with their kinship or foster carer if they wish, or transition to supported independent living arrangements.

The Village 21 pilot program is funded through Accommodation for the Homeless Phase 2, which is part of the Labor Government's \$109 million homelessness support investment.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Housing Richard Wynne

"This game-changing new project is not just housing young people – it's giving them important life skills and direction to help them pursue education and employment opportunities."

"Everyone deserves the safety and security of a roof over their head. The stability and safety of a home will help these young Victorians to get ahead and thrive."

Quote attributable to Minister for Child Protection Luke Donnellan

"We know young people aren't always ready to leave home as soon as they turn 18. This program will help them transition safely and with the universal expansion of Home Stretch all young people in care can make that choice."

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