

LET'S OPEN DOORS FOR AT-RISK YOUNG PEOPLE THE CASE FOR SUPPORT



EVERY NIGHT, VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE ARE BEING SHUT OUT AND REFUSED OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATION.

We have the commitment, experience and an evidence-based model to open doors for them and stop the cycle of homelessness.

Our Passages Youth Engagement Hubs in Perth and Peel provide daytime support to hundreds of at-risk young people every year. But after we close our doors, many are shut out of the system and refused overnight accommodation because they have complex needs. There are children as young as 12 without vital help at a crucial stage in their personal development. There are teenagers and young people being turned away at a critical point that could condemn them to a lifetime of chronic homelessness.

It doesn't have to be this way.



5,000+
daytime visits from more than
670 homeless young people,
seeking help from Passages in 2019.

THE SOLUTION IS RIGHT HERE, READY TO GO,
WITH A TEAM THAT'S BEST PLACED TO DELIVER



20+ years' specialised experience delivering the Low Threshold and Change model.



We operate two successful youth hubs that change lives every day. Passages Youth Engagement Hub Perth est.1999 and Peel est. 2012.



In 2019, 672 of Perth's most vulnerable young people came through Passages' doors to receive our support.



Since opening Vinnies Tom Fisher House in 2014, we've provided accommodation and intensive intervention support for 3,000+ adults experiencing chronic homelessness.



We actively collaborate with more than 50 community organisations to provide a fully integrated service that delivers optimum outcomes.

The longer young people are exposed to homelessness, the more likely they are to develop severe and persistent states of mental illness and challenging behaviours.



1,900+
children and young people (aged 12 to 24) experience homelessness on any given night in WA.*



48.5%
of adults who are homeless in WA were homeless for the first time before the age of 25.^

WHO ARE THEY?

5%	under 18 years~
22%	16-18 years~
36.5%	19-21 years~
36.5%	22-24 years~
23%	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander~

WHERE DO THEY ALL GO?

40%	sleep rough~
35.5%	couch surf (often in strangers' homes)~
24.5%	live in 'severely' crowded dwellings~

WHAT'S THE RISK?

The children and young people who are shut out from the system are at the highest risk of suicide, self-harm or experiencing further trauma in their lives. Even those who couch surf to stay off the streets at night are still at high risk of being abused or exploited and their mental health may be worse than other young people sleeping rough.

We know, from the YACWA Youth Action Plan and our own experience here at Vinnies, that the longer young people are exposed to homelessness, the more likely they are to develop severe and persistent states of mental illness and challenging behaviours. And sadly, many homeless young people who develop a mental illness are shut out from mainstream youth services because of their complex needs. It's a downward spiral that so often leads to long-term and even life-long homelessness. But we can stop it.

By removing barriers to youth services and overnight accommodation for at risk young people, the more likely we are to reduce their exposure to homelessness and further trauma. They are also more likely to succeed in rewriting their own story with positive outcomes.

"I AM NUMBING MY MIND WITH DRUGS BECAUSE IT NUMBS MY REALITY. I'M SCARED OF CHANGING. THIS IS MY LIFE NOW. IT'S WHAT I KNOW. AND AS UNSAFE AS IT IS, IT FEELS SAFE TO ME."

Lara, aged 18, visited Passages in October 2019

* Australian Bureau of Statistics (2016). Census of Population and Housing, Estimating Homelessness.
~ Percentages based on data from Passages Youth Engagement Hubs in Perth and Peel.
^ Youth Homeless Action Plan 2019

IT'S COMPLICATED FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH COMPLEX NEEDS, ESPECIALLY WITH SO MANY BARRIERS TO ENTRY.

Young people with active addiction or unstable mental health are refused entry to most youth services and overnight accommodation.

They are denied tenancy because they don't meet the admission criteria or haven't developed an understanding of rental responsibilities.

Breaches of rules results in expulsion and can lead to service restrictions or even long-term bans.

WE CAN SEE THE PERSON STANDING BEFORE US

Every one of us is a culmination of our own life-experiences. The good, the bad and especially the experiences in our formative years. And when repeated trauma from abuse, poverty and/or domestic family violence occurs between childhood and early adulthood, normal development can be severely diminished.

These are the young people whose behaviours are often referred to as "difficult" and "challenging", who are seen by mainstream youth services as "too hard to help". They're most likely to be living from day to day – just surviving. They struggle to identify personal needs, get easily overwhelmed with anxiety and have severe difficulty in navigating the system and engaging with services. They're the ones in most need of help.

Growing up is difficult enough for every young person. But without the support, guidance, choice and self-determination they desperately seek, it's a huge struggle. They need a safe space and trusting relationships where they can develop plans and be supported to make them a reality. With this vital support, day and night, they can become independent.

"I DON'T KNOW IF MY FAMILY DIDN'T WANT TO SUPPORT ME, OR IF THEY DIDN'T KNOW HOW."

Mia, aged 15, visited Passages in August 2019

Sources: Dr P Baker and Dr M White McMahon (2014) The Hopeful Brain: NeuroRelational Repair for Disconnected Children and Youth. P Flatau, M Thielking, D MacKenzie and A Steen.(2015) The cost of Youth Homelessness in Australia Study.

OUR MODEL IS PROVEN AND READY TO GO.

Our proven approach implements as few requirements as practicable to minimise barriers and maximise accessibility for this hard to reach population. We call it our intensive intervention Low Threshold and Change approach to service delivery at Passages Youth Engagement Hubs and Vinnies Tom Fisher House. And it's working for young people with a variety of complex needs.



Increasing capacity to engage in daily life and community.



Reducing alcohol and other drug use through harm minimization approaches.



Increasing hopefulness and independence.



Increasing access to higher threshold services.



Improving ability to respond productively to crisis and managing emotions.



Delivering a strengths-based philosophy that's culturally relevant and compassionate.



Building positive experiences and memories.



Providing a solution-based and seamlessly integrated service model for enhanced outcomes.

"SUPPORT IS ALWAYS 'FUTURE FOCUSED' ON HOUSING AND JOBS. WHAT I NEED MOST URGENTLY IS HELP TO GET OFF DRUGS AND GET MY HEAD SORTED. THAT'S A BATTLE I MUST FIGHT, BUT I NEED SOMETHING TO INSPIRE AND SUPPORT ME IN FINDING THAT FIGHTING STRENGTH."

Lara, aged 18, visited Passages in October 2019

WE HAVE A CLEAR VISION FOR VINNIES TOM FISHER HOUSE FOR YOUTH.



Overnight accommodation for children and young people aged 12-24.



Continuous, round-the-clock support. Open during the hours that Passages is closed.



Up to 12 single rooms with ensuites. Shared kitchen/dining. Recreation space. Free wifi.



Low Threshold and Change model, trauma informed care and therapeutic crisis interventions.

CAN WE COUNT ON YOUR HELP TO OPEN THE DOORS TO MORE CHOICE AND POSITIVE OUTCOMES FOR WA'S MOST VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE?

We invite you to discuss your interest in this proposal for Vinnies Tom Fisher House for Youth by contacting Susan Rooney, CEO of St Vincent de Paul Society (WA) Inc.

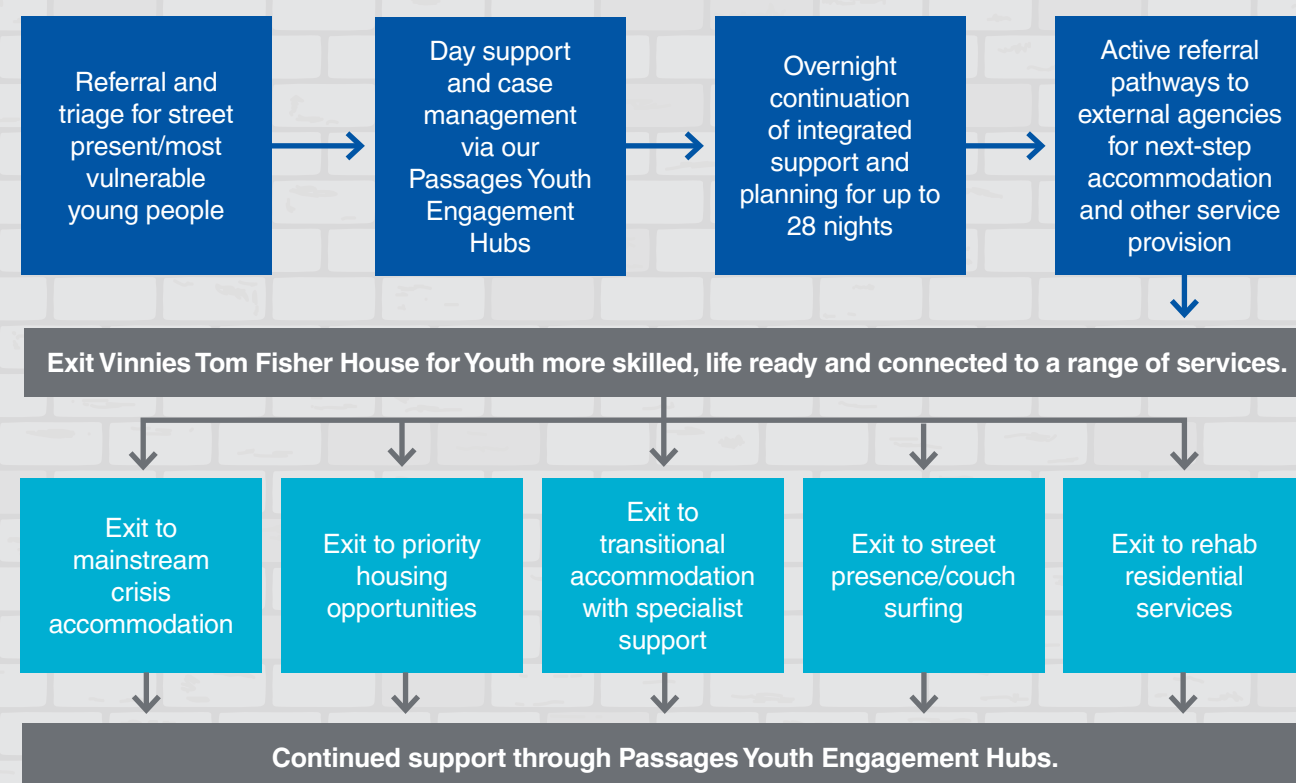
Susan Rooney
Chief Executive Officer

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A DOORWAY TO MORE CHOICE AND POSITIVE OUTCOMES.



"SOMEWHERE TO STAY EARLY ON IN MY HOMELESS JOURNEY WOULD HAVE MADE ALL THE DIFFERENCE. THE LONGER YOU'RE OUT THERE ON THE STREET, THE HARDER IT IS TO BREAK THE CYCLE OF HOMELESSNESS."

Rob, aged 20, visited Passages in May 2019



vinnieswa.org.au



To respect the privacy of the people we assist, some of the names and images may have been changed.