

Homelessness: the Victorian Perspective



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Persons

Definitions

- Young people aged between 15-25 (SAAP Act)
- Homelessness
 - ◆ Rough sleepers
 - ◆ Staying temporarily with friends and family/homelessness assistance
 - ◆ Rooming houses/caravan parks

Who are homeless young people?

- In 2001, 7,064 young people aged 12-25 counted as homeless
- 35% of total homeless population
- 5% of SAAP clients identified as Indigenous
- 13% of Victorian SAAP clients born overseas – 11% from NESB
- Young women 59%
- Young men 41%
- 5.3% aged 12-15 years (578 yp)

Reasons for Seeking Assistance

- Relationship/family breakdown
18.6%
- Eviction/previous accommodation ended/asked to leave
17%
- Usual accommodation unavailable
13.2%

Source: AIHW (2003), Young homeless people in Australia,
Chamberlain and MacKenzie (2004), Counting the Homeless

Circumstances before support

- Significant proportion of young people living rent free (couch surfing)
- At least 31% of young people not living with their parents had no income prior to SAAP support

Support Issues

- Mental Health
- Drug and Alcohol issues
- Intellectual disability
- Financial assistance
- Sexual and physical abuse
- Housing
- General counseling

Responses to Youth Homelessness in Vic.

- SAAP and THM
- Includes 18 youth refuges, 83 agencies providing transitional support and accommodation
- Strong reliance on public housing and private rental market for long-term outcomes
- Problematic

Policy Context

- YHAP
- 'Protecting Children' review of Child Protection
- Redevelopment of Homelessness Service System (Front Doors)
- Housing Associations
- ICEP Taskforce
- 'A Fairer Victoria'
- Senate Select Committee on Mental Health Issues
- SAAP V renegotiations

Youth Homelessness Action Plan

- Part of Brack's governments' commitment to disadvantage
- \$8.8 million over 4 years
- Key projects
 - ◆ Youth employment, education, training initiative
 - ◆ Family reconciliation mediation project
 - ◆ Singles housing project

What's Needed

- More strategic framework reflecting changing life patterns
- More targeted responses for 15-18 year olds
- Youth specific housing response
- Practice of working with young people
- Improving linkages
- Growth corridors
- Youth specific services for young people