

MEDIA RELEASE

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2018-19 Annual Report shows growing need to support vulnerable and at-risk young people in Brisbane

Brisbane Youth Service (BYS) is supporting more young people more often who have ongoing complex needs, with annual data showing a 13 per cent increase in the number of young people assisted by BYS in the past three years.

In 2018-19, 1453 young people experiencing homelessness and disadvantage in Brisbane accessed support from BYS and we provided 32,030 occasions of support to young people, including 144 children of young parents. 80 per cent of the young people BYS assisted were living in unsafe, unsuitable or unaffordable housing.

The data is highlighted in BYS's 2018-19 Annual Report which was released earlier this month. The report highlights our commitment to creating new futures for young people and the ongoing delivery of quality services through a focus on strong governance, continuous improvement and innovation.

BYS CEO Annemaree Callander said despite growing demand for support, the Annual Report demonstrates the organisation's progress towards enabling vulnerable young people and young families to navigate life challenges and thrive in the community.

"There was a seven per cent increase in the number of young people assisted by BYS in the last year. This is no surprise given the critical lack of safe and affordable housing, unemployment levels and the high number of young people in our community living in poverty," Ms Callander said.

"Vulnerable and at-risk young people have complex and intersecting support needs, and high rates of experiences of violence and mental illness which both closely intersect with homelessness.

"The last year was challenging but productive—just over half of the young people who sought support at BYS were homeless when we met them, but our Annual Report highlights the positive work the team has undertaken and the outcomes we've achieved. BYS support makes a real difference in the lives of young people experiencing homelessness and disadvantage in Brisbane."

BYS Highlights in 2018-19:

- The proportion of young people in stable and suitable housing increased from 18% to 71% after BYS support.
- The number of young people experiencing serious or crisis level violence decreased by 67%.

- BYS created an early intervention domestic violence and healthy relationship program for vulnerable and at-risk young people.
- We attracted national media attention for couch surfing research undertaken in partnership with Griffith University and secured grants to conduct further qualitative research and establish a trial Couch Surfing Hotline.
- Increased engagement with First Australians with 31.4 per cent of the young people we assisted identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. We also proudly launched our *Reconciliation Action Plan 2019–21*.
- In partnership with Property Industry Foundation (PIF), we continued to progress plans for construction of urgently needed housing in Brisbane for young people and young families.
- Hosted several events for Queer young people including our first ever Queer Prom and secured a grant from Brisbane City Council for *The Sunshine Project* to develop tailored resources for queer young people.
- Partnered with Community and Toowong Private Hospital and others to deliver a new Mental Health Hub. The Recovery and Discovery Centre will provide support for people with severe mental illness by integrating a range of clinical and non-clinical supports.
- Held our biggest and most successful awareness raising campaign to date. Burpees for BYS brought together more than 400 people, raising around \$10,000. Plans are already in the works for Burpees for BYS 2020!

Discover the personal and inspiring stories of the young people BYS supports in the 2018-19 Annual Report at brisyouth.org. BYS has been creating new futures for homeless and vulnerable young people in Brisbane since 1977. With the support of our donors, funders and partners, we look forward to the opportunities that lay ahead in 2020.

For more information on how you can help support young people and young families to navigate life challenges and thrive in the community visit brisyouth.org or follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

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