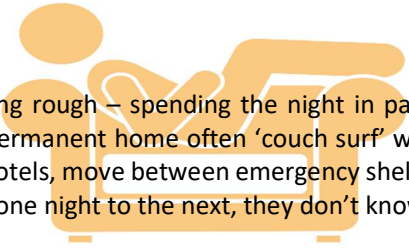


WHAT IS HOMELESSNESS?

Homelessness is not just sleeping rough – spending the night in parks, bus shelters or shopfronts. Young people living without a permanent home often 'couch surf' with friends and relatives, stay in overcrowded rooms or cheap motels, move between emergency shelters and hostels, or sleep in cars and make-shift dwellings. From one night to the next, they don't know where they will sleep.



HOW MANY ARE HOMELESS?

There are 116,427 people homeless in Australia on any given night. This includes 43,552 children and young people under the age of 25.



There are **4,454 young people aged 12-24 years homeless in Queensland** on any given night. They make up nearly 21% of all the people who are experiencing homelessness in Queensland.

[ABS Census 2016]

WHY ARE THEY HOMELESS?

Some of the most common reasons for young people experiencing homelessness are:

- housing crisis
- domestic and family violence
- relationship/family breakdown

[AIHW 2015]



Earning an income is essential for young people to break cycles of poverty and housing instability, yet housing stability is necessary to be able to get a job.

There are also several structural factors which contribute to youth homelessness including:

- poverty
- social inequality
- youth unemployment

WHY IS EARLY INTERVENTION IMPORTANT?

Young people who experience homelessness are more likely to disengage with education and employment and to be exposed to factors which are detrimental to their health, such as drug use, inadequate nutrition, limited access to medical care and school, unsafe sexual encounters and violence.

[FaHCSIA]

Intervening early in a young person's experience of homelessness is vital to reduce their exposure to violence and trauma and prevent them losing hope for the future. In some cases, with early intervention, it's possible to prevent homelessness or end it before it becomes entrenched.



USEFUL LINKS FOR MORE INFORMATION

- [Homelessness Australia](#)
- [Council to Homeless Persons](#)
- [Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute](#)
- [Queensland Youth Housing Coalition Inc.](#)

WHAT DOES BRISBANE YOUTH SERVICE DO?

Brisbane Youth Service provides free, confidential services to over 2,000 vulnerable and homeless young people (12-25 yrs) annually, including:

- Crisis and transitional housing
- Medical clinic
- Mental health and drug and alcohol programs
- Specialist young women's services
- Parenting and family assistance
- Emergency relief



WHO DOES BRISBANE YOUTH SERVICE SUPPORT?

Of the young people accessing these services in 2017-2018:

- 55% were experiencing homelessness
- 1 in 5 had no source of income
- 14% had barriers preventing their regular attendance at school or training
- 1 in 3 had been sexually or physically assaulted
- 72% had been exposed to family/relationship violence
- 47% already had a diagnosed mental health issue ... 1 in 3 were at risk of suicide
- 80% were living in unsafe/unsuitable or unaffordable housing
- 28% identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- 56% were female, 41% were male and 4% identified as a gender that is not male or female
- 241 were parents with 150 children under the age of 12
- 40% had a critical lack of family, community and professional support in their lives



[BYS Data 2017-2018]

IS BRISBANE YOUTH SERVICE MAKING A DIFFERENCE?

Among the young people who received support from Brisbane Youth Service during 2017-2018, we recorded:

- 71% reduction in homelessness
- 60% fewer at risk of suicide
- 75% reduction in self-harming behaviours
- 71% reduction in exposure to a serious or crisis level of violence
- 30% increase in participation in school and training
- Increase in rates of employment from 1 in 25 to 1 in 5
- 54% had improved income
- 58% reduction in the proportion of those dealing with serious legal issues
- 66% of parents felt their parenting improved



"I just moved from my sexually abusive household when I started going to BYS. I was having a panic attack. The workers helped me and supported me. They showed me some breathing exercises and for the first time, that someone cared. The workers gave me the confidence, the self-esteem, they showed me what was already within myself. I've started overcoming challenges, pushing myself past my comfort zone, and not always thinking the worst. I used to never depend on anyone besides myself. BYS raised me better than my own parents did. I was nurtured. My god, does it feel like home, and I've never had a home before."

Kylie, 16 yrs*

"I came to BYS in crisis as an anxious, depressed, homeless and unemployed "adult" at 20 years old. I had no idea how to 'solve' any of my issues. BYS supported me in finding housing and got me into Uni. It helped me to relearn how to interact with people and get me a job. Due to BYS, I am now someone that I don't hate. I feel like I am contributing to society. For the first time that I can remember, I feel like life is something I can manage and enjoy. BYS has been a huge help in supporting me as a person and making me feel safe and accepted. The help from the awesome team is invaluable."

Jason, 18 yrs*



** At Brisbane Youth Service we respect everyone who comes to us for help – and many are working toward a fresh start in life. So, while their stories are true, client names, ages and images have been changed to protect their privacy.*