

Rotary Tiny Home Project

The Need

Around 23% of people experiencing homelessness are children and young people between 12 and 24 (ABS Census 2021). Once homeless it is very difficult for a young person to get back to normal independent living, and a lifetime of homelessness and misery beckons. A major factor in child homelessness is the transition out of “out of home care” (foster care, group homes and transitional high needs care). Children and young people who enter this care system have often experienced high levels of harm and trauma.

At age 18, the young people are required to transition out of OOHC, at a time when they lack substantial support and are at increased risk of homelessness. As a result nearly half of young people leaving care are homeless within a year. WA State Government has recently committed to the Home Stretch program to support young people aged 18-21 transitioning out of OOHC. The program provides the young person with support, funds and the opportunity to stay on with their carer during this transitional period, under the supervision of a Provider. The program is keen to deploy innovative housing solutions to help prevent youth homelessness.

Rotary Tiny Home Project

The Tiny Home approach to address the problem is to house these young people for a period of years in their own small home on the same property as foster families, with appropriate support from the family, Rotarians and a professional organisation. This model has been proven by Melbourne organization Kids Under Cover (KUC) who have housed a total of 940 young people in this way). Their model has an impressive record of success in preventing youth homelessness.

The Unit

This will be a 4m x 6m unit with bedroom, bathroom, room for storage of personal items and study space, and space for a small fridge, tea & coffee facilities.

An initial supplier will be Buildtech Solutions who can produce kits for the units in their Kewdale factory. Buildtech provides all the documentation approvals and certification for the unit.



Finances

Capital cost of the unit is \$110,000 (plus GST) installed, with furnishings. Capital funding is planned from an initial Rotary Donation (\$25,000) and a loan (\$85,000 at 7%). Recurrent costs for the Project are \$395 per fortnight including repayment of loan principal and interest. Recurrent income is \$465 per fortnight rent, paid by the Young Person.

The Young Person receives \$1,291 per fortnight in the 1st year, comprising Home Stretch housing allowance, Centrelink youth allowance and federal rent assistance. Of this they pay \$465 rent and \$300 to the foster family for meals laundry etc. The Home Stretch housing allowance decreases from year 2 onwards, so the Young Person will have to find work to augment their income. Rotary will work with the Home Stretch provider to train young people and connect them with flexible part-time work and training.

Governance

The project is governed by a Project Board consisting of 5 Rotarians, Andy Kazim (Anglicare, who is also in charge of “Home Stretch”) as adviser on the social world, and a KUC representative.