

Housing, Disability and Community Services

# **CONSULTATION REPORT**

## New Youth Supported Accommodation Projects

February 2020

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## I. Executive summary

Housing Tasmania is delivering five new capital projects to address the needs of young people who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of becoming homeless. Underpinning the delivery of the five new capital projects as outlined in *Tasmania's Affordable Housing Action 2019-2023 (Action Plan 2)* is Government Action 13.4, which requires Housing Programs to 'work with Anglicare Tasmania to transition Tasmanian's three current youth supported accommodation facilities into Education First Youth Foyers based on 'advantage thinking' models of best practice'.

As part of its commitment to work with key stakeholders and end user groups, Housing Tasmania undertook a consultation program between September and November 2019 including staff, senior management and residents of youth facilities in Hobart, Devonport and Launceston, and representatives of other state and local agencies. The focus of the consultation process was to investigate and verify specific design requirements that will inform the delivery of new, best practice youth accommodation assets over the next three years. New capital projects for identified groups other than young people, such as men with children are outside the scope of the consultation report.

Those young people currently residing in Supported Accommodation Facilities (SAFs) who participated in the consultations expressed their overall satisfaction with their living conditions. They felt supported by staff and that they had more opportunity to pursue their personal goals once they settled into their new homes. A sense of independence and security were the major themes of young residents' positive experience at their respective SAFs. Nevertheless, young residents expressed their struggle with mental health conditions, and this was a consistent theme of their lived experience. In this context, young people provided valuable feedback and insights about the design and service supports that will best facilitate positive outcomes for young residents and that will inform the development of new youth accommodation projects.

Management and staff were generally very satisfied with the physical aspects of the youth facilities, although improvements were suggested at some sites. Overall, managers and staff who participated in the consultation believed that strong, positive social outcomes were achieved for most young people in their care. They stressed the importance for young residents of a smooth transition process to the Education First Youth Foyer model that is underway for both existing SAFs and two new youth foyers in Hobart and Burnie. They also described opportunities for improvement to the service models and the building design that will inform the development of the new youth facilities.

There was a general concurrence among all participants for the necessity for more transitional and long-term supported accommodation for young people, as opposed to any additional crisis facilities. The conversation with staff, management and other government agency representatives revealed ongoing focus on meeting young people's complex needs and housing disadvantage and a strong preference for early intervention programs for children under 12.

The consultation program captured the views and insights of the participants, which are highlighted in this report, along with suggestions for the new facilities. Housing Tasmania greatly values the participation of young residents, staff, management and colleagues in other government agencies. This qualitative feedback will inform the development of detailed project briefs and tenders for the new youth facilities in Burnie, Hobart and Launceston to ensure that Housing Tasmania delivers best-practice, fit-for-purpose accommodation that will meet the diverse needs and aspirations of young Tasmanians.

## 2. Key findings and highlights

There are two categories of findings from the consultation program with management and residents; facility design and service conditions. Within each of these categories are several highlights derived from the stakeholders, specific to aspects of the facility or insights into the communal living environment. Both highlights and findings will be disseminated to broader stakeholder groups to inform other projects. These will inform the project briefs, business cases and ongoing engagement with the sector for reference by relevant interagency and steering group members and peak bodies.

### **Young Residents' Perspectives**

Young residents who currently live in SAFs in Devonport, Launceston and Hobart reported their satisfaction with their circumstances in a communal living environment. When asked about what they liked best about living at their SAF, they typically commented as follows:

*The best thing about living at Trinity Hill having a place on your own terms – Trinity Hill Resident*

*Privacy within the support structure – Eveline House Resident*

*Full independence with support available as needed but not forced – Trinity Hill Resident*

*My favourite experience is definitely the communion and connections that have been made possible, such as TAFE, Mentorship and Devonport Chaplaincy. Also, I've got a bed now... – Eveline House Resident*

Generally, the feedback from young residents across the regions is that they are grateful for the opportunity to live in stable housing while they get their lives back on track:

*It took months of settling in.... - Eveline House Resident*

*Motivation to work and not be on Centrelink anymore - Trinity Hill Resident*

*We have amazing staff that you can talk to and getting advice on things in life – Trinity Hill Resident*

*Placing individual wellness and mental health before studying pressure - Trinity Hill Resident*

The most common issues that young residents had about their accommodation was in relation to noise, privacy, storage and communal laundries and barriers in relation to mental health:

*I think a greater emphasis should be placed on mental health support... - Trinity Hill Resident*

*There's barely any cupboard space in my unit – Thyne House Resident*

*More parking - Eveline House Resident*

*I'd like more grassy areas and space to spend time outside - Trinity Hill Resident*

*More washing machines – Thyne House Resident*

*Bigger wardrobe, too many self-contained communal areas - Eveline House Resident*

*A bath would be wonderful - Trinity Hill Resident*



*Security, Community, Independence, Learning, Work – Trinity Hill Resident*

Most of the young people who participated felt more positive about their futures as a direct result of the services and supports they received in their respective facilities. They reported feeling supported and cared for by residential staff and able to achieve their goals.

*I have been tenderly and compassionately attended to since arriving at Eveline House and I believe this place is saving and transforming lives – Eveline House Resident*

*I didn't feel ready studying or training, however I found confidence from the support of both my support worker and the staff at Trinity Hill - Trinity Hill Resident*

### **Practitioners' Perspectives**

Generally, the feedback from management and staff of supported and crisis accommodation is that the facilities operate very well. Residents respond well to services and programs and staff are very dedicated to their work and to young people. Notwithstanding this, there are areas for improvement in the service system that can be addressed to facilitate better outcomes for management, residents, families, sector organisations and funding agencies.

The advice received from practitioners, management and government agency representatives regarding housing needs of young people was consistent and adamant – children and young people need more medium and long-term housing options. Management from various services advocated strongly for Housing Tasmania to continue to focus on early intervention housing programs and to invest in medium and long-term supported accommodation.

Continued investment in transitional and long-term facilities would help alleviate the demand on existing crisis accommodation services, allowing referral pathways into stable supported housing following crisis episodes that would enhance young people's wellbeing over the long-term. Furthermore, supported long term accommodation options for at-risk primary aged children is in demand. Continued early intervention measures help relieve pressure and demand from clients who are 13 years and older entering the housing system.

There is widespread interest and support for the Education First Youth Foyers, although there were specific queries regarding the transition process and the eligibility of current residents. Some staff wanted to ensure residents with disabilities will receive the support to participate in education and training as required, as not all residents are capable of undertaking study or training without support.

Most of the feedback received by staff and management and other government agencies was in relation to services relating to the housing support services and accommodation options for young people and children at risk. See the Qualitative Data Log in the Appendix for more detailed comments and suggestions.

### 3. Strategic Context

Housing Tasmania drives outcomes set out in *Tasmania's Affordable Housing Action Plan 2019-2023* (Action Plan 2). Action Plan 2 incorporates initiatives to increase the supply of social housing and supported accommodation for Tasmanians who experience homelessness or who are at risk of becoming homeless. Housing Programs manages existing and future housing and homelessness services to ensure that the state's housing system is appropriately designed and operates effectively and efficiently.

In order to achieve strong social outcomes for Tasmanians in need of affordable housing, Action Plan 2 sets out the necessary strategic interventions and key priorities, as follows:

- Prevent housing stress
- Early intervention
- Rapid response and recovery.

The three key priorities are:

- New Supply
- Improved Access
- Responsive Services.

According to Action Plan 2 there is a total of 18 new capital investment projects to be completed by 2023. Housing Programs is currently progressing work on five youth facilities earmarked for the South, North and North West of Tasmania. These are outlined in Action Plan 2 as follows:

#### **Priority- New Supply**

- Action 6.2 - Work with Youth Family and Community Connections to replace their site for homeless youth accommodation at Cooee to be co-located at the site of the new purpose-built Burnie Youth Foyer, thereby improving service delivery and capacity
- Action 7.2 - A Youth at Risk Centre in the North like Colville Place in Moonah will be introduced to provide short term accommodation for vulnerable children and young people aged under 16 years-old.

#### **Priority- Improved Access**

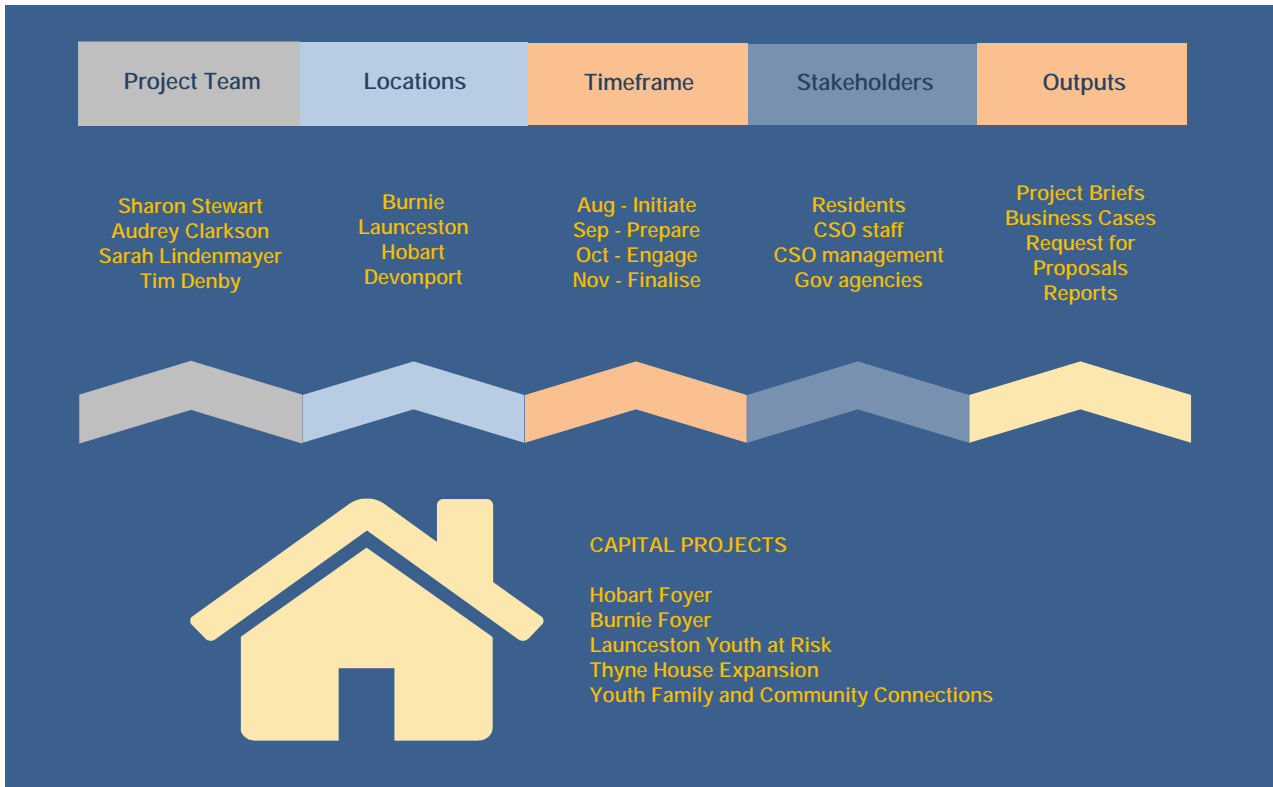
- Action 13.1- Deliver new supply by constructing an additional Youth Foyer in the North West in Burnie
- Action 13.2 - Deliver new supply by working with Anglicare Tasmanian to complete the expansion of Thyne House in Launceston
- Action 13.3 - Deliver new supply by constructing an additional Youth Foyer in the South in Hobart.

These new assets will supply new affordable housing options for homeless people or those at risk of homelessness, as well as improve accessibility to appropriate accommodation across the state.



## 4. The Consultation Program

As part of its commitment to collaborate with key sector stakeholders, Housing Programs undertook a consultation program between September and November 2019 with service providers of youth facilities in the South, North and North West regions. An overview of the program is provided below:



Residents and service providers of existing SAFs were identified as the ‘experts’ and therefore consultation with the public was unnecessary. Managers and staff were invited to participate alongside residents at their respective facilities. Other government agencies were also invited to provide their perspective on the proposed capital projects in their respective regions. The target audiences for the consultation report include service providers, community organisations, youth peak bodies, other government agencies and internal stakeholders within Housing Tasmania.

The primary purpose of the consultation was to verify the optimum design and service features for purpose-built, supported accommodation for young people at risk of homelessness, who require support to sustain long-term stable tenancy. The secondary purpose was to collect ‘primary source’ feedback, that is direct input from residents and practitioners with which to inform the capital project briefs, business cases and tender documentation leading to the appointment of an architect and construction of each facility.

## 5. SWOT Analysis

A SWOT method (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) was applied to the qualitative feedback, which facilitates a rapid appraisal of the participants’ responses. In this way, there is a direct link between the evidence base and the advice provided to decision makers. For the Qualitative Data Log see the Appendix. The SWOT table below is organised into two core themes - Facility Design Requirements and Facility Service Requirements. The data in this report has been made anonymous to respect the identity of each participant.

## STRENGTHS

- Natural light throughout all buildings
- Caretaker/Live in Unit – 1 bedroom
- Security features, including Closed Circuit Television (CCTV)
- Office Space for clinical and specialist meetings
- Multiple living /lounge rooms
- Workshop for arts, techno or construction and training area
- Commercial style kitchen for training
- Lots of storage for personal and facility gear
- Gardens, lawn, landscaped spaces
- Gymnasium
- 2 bed unit for overnight staff or full-time and casual staff
- Games Room.

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Standardised light globes throughout
- More power points in units
- Car parking for clients and guests
- WIFI throughout the buildings
- 2 bed unit for overnight staff or full-time and casual staff
- Gardens, lawn, landscaped spaces
- Better WIFI for the whole facility
- More diverse gym equipment such as free weights
- A workshop area for woodwork and other art or technical or construction projects
- Better blinds for privacy
- More natural light everywhere, especially in units
- A larger cement outdoor recreation area for competitive games, not just practice sport
- A community garden - place to grow vegetables
- Air con in summer would be great
- More storage in our units
- A house pet that belongs to the facility.

## WEAKNESSES

- Contemporary design not always 'youth' décor
- Large common spaces are not always used and may not be necessary
- Adequate outdoor grassed and garden areas with trees and shade
- More storage space for individual and common goods and equipment
- Blinds for privacy
- Insulation for improved amenity, sustainability and reduced power costs
- Insulation for soundproofing of rooms.

## THREATS

- Underutilised communal computer rooms
- Would like more washing machines per resident in communal laundry
- Would like more provision for privacy – more blinds that do not block light
- Improved sound proofing
- Identified importance of insulation– heating and cooling
- Need for both personal and communal storage spaces
- Need to avoid having hiding spots re safety
- Important to have safety features in entire complex, including outdoor areas.





## 6. Facility Design

The following suggestions were provided by participants for the five capital projects based on the SWOT analysis and key findings of the consultation program in relation to new youth accommodation facilities in Devonport, Launceston and Hobart.

Facility Design	
Indoor Features	Outdoor Features
Natural light throughout building	Landscaped, lawn garden
Caretaker/Live in Unit – 1 bedroom	Outdoor shaded entertainment area
Small group study areas, not communal computer rooms	Security features, including CCTV
Office Space for clinical & specialist meetings	Multiple commercial washing machines in communal laundry
Multiple living areas/lounge rooms	Storage for garden and sports equipment
Privacy – blinds for privacy need to block light and sound proofing or insulation	Car parking for clients and guests
Workshop for arts, techno or construction and training area.	Standardised light globes throughout
Commercial style kitchen for training	WIFI throughout the buildings
2 bed unit for o/n staff for F/T & casual staff	Outdoor clothes line
Contemporary design to be 'youth' decor	Storage cages in car park
Lots of storage for personal and facility gear	Bike hoops for securing bicycles
WIFI throughout the buildings	Community gardens.
Gym and games area	
Standardised light globes throughout	
Security features, including CCTV	
More power points in units.	

## Service Design

During the consultation program, stakeholders raised key concerns and issues regarding the design and functionality of social services wrapped around youth facilities. Several suggestions were raised regarding service improvement and upgrade with a view to achieving better outcomes for young residents in Devonport, Burnie, Hobart and Launceston. For more details, see Appendix – Qualitative Data Log.

Service Design
Mental Health services for young residents – referrals and outreach provided on site
Focus on Early Intervention. Investigate successful housing models for children aged 5 – 12 years such as the Geelong Project to stem pressure on youth housing and prevent the cyclical movement of children at risk into crisis accommodation
Provide appropriate overnight ‘triage’ space where service workers and Tasmania Police can take children and young people who are at risk, on the street and homeless
Deliver the planned medium and long term supported accommodation to alleviate pressure on existing crisis accommodation and services and create more placements for young people into stable housing
Provide more social programs and activities and classes for young residents.
Consider a communal ‘house’ pet for the benefit of residents, such as a therapy dog
Mutual Obligations – young people support the implementation of obligations and boundaries in their facilities
Access to Chaplaincy services and engage with local community organisations and appropriate volunteer opportunities
Educational engagement – support to process tertiary administration requirements, enrolling in courses and induction programs, sourcing scholarships and funding
Job searching – support to access employment and related administration
Exit Planning – early support for residents exiting their units into independent living, such as house hunting, removals, bonds, leases, legal advice, agents etc
Use local sector expertise and engage with young people to improve existing services and assist with the development of new social services in supported settings.



## Appendix

### Stakeholder Engagement

The most effective method for this consultation was a questionnaire, considering multiple stakeholder groups across various sites and the distances between the facilities. The purpose of the consultation was to facilitate feedback about the physical buildings, design features and configuration of the facility, as well as the services and other supports provided by organisations to residents. The questionnaire was therefore based on a standard SWOT Analysis with questions addressing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats or risks.

The residents' questionnaire was provided to management for approval. All stakeholders, including young residents at facilities, participated voluntarily and with the approval of management, and residential participants were guaranteed anonymity. The residents' questionnaire was focussed on eliciting feedback about their lived experience in the facility. Questionnaires for management were designed to elicit information about their usual work practice and professional insights about the facility and services available for residents. Stakeholder consultations were conducted as follows:

Consultation Method Table

Consultation Methods				
Site	Stakeholder	Method	Feedback	Asset
Trinity Hill, Hobart	Management	Meeting & Questionnaire	Service profile, design/ functionality	Related to transition to Education First Youth Foyer Model and new Hobart Youth Foyer
Trinity Hill, Hobart	Residents	Face-to-Face Questionnaire	Design/ functionality/ readiness	Hobart Youth Foyer
Colville Place, Hobart	Management	Meeting & Questionnaire	Service profile, design/ functionality	Related to Crisis/ Transitional Accommodation and Youth at Risk Centre
Eveline House, Devonport	Management Residents	Face to Face Questionnaire – 10 residents Site Tour	Design/ functionality/ readiness	Burnie Youth Foyer
Youth Family & Community Care Youth Crisis Young Men & Women, Devonport	Management	Meeting	Service system functionality	Education First Youth Foyer Model and Youth at Risk Centre in the North
Karinya Youth Crisis – Young Women Launceston	Management	Meeting	Service system functionality specific to Launceston region.	Related to Education First Youth Foyer Model and Crisis Accommodation.

Thyne House, Launceston	Residents and Management	Face to Face Questionnaire - 12 residents.  Site tour	Design/ functionality/ readiness	Youth Foyer, Education First Youth Foyer Model and Youth at Risk Centre in the North, Expansion of Thyne House
Youth Futures Youth Crisis - Young Men, Launceston	Management	Meeting and site tour	Service system functionality	Youth at Risk Centre in the North
Orana House Crisis Accommodation Men 21Yrs +  Launceston	Management	Meeting and site tour	Design and service functionality	Men in the North West
Department of Communities Launceston Office	Multiple state and local government agencies.	Structured meeting	Service system functionality specific to Launceston region.	Related to Education First Youth Foyer Model and Crisis Accommodation and Youth at Risk Centre.

### Consultation Program Schedule

Consultation Program Schedule		
Phase	Task	Timeframe
Definition and Planning	Research models Stakeholder Identification Communications Prepare Project Briefs	September
Stakeholder Engagement	Coordinate meetings Develop engagement material Conduct site visits Conduct workshops Stakeholder meetings	October - November
Review and Report	Collate feedback Update Project Briefs Draft Consultation Report	November
Handover and Closeout	Handover Project Briefs Circulate Consultation Report Close out with participants	Mid-late November



## Housing Tasmania – Capital Projects Questionnaire for Management/Staff

<b>How does the building design and layout support service delivery?</b>
<b>What staff facilities do you use and which are essential to the service you provide? (such as office space, accommodation, meeting rooms, parking, security etc).</b>
<b>What changes would you make to the facilities to improve your service?</b>
<b>Which aspects of the facility have not worked well and why?</b>
<b>Is there enough parking space and how much parking is required at this facility?</b>
<b>What spaces and features are essential to residents' comfort?</b>
<b>What spaces and features inspire residents to study/train/socialise?</b>
<b>What services best facilitate positive health and wellbeing?</b>
<b>Are there any barriers to residents participating in the Foyer model and how can these be overcome?</b>
<b>Are residents comfortable with the concept of mutual obligations/the deal?</b>
<b>What would you recommend as the essential design features and service offering that would optimise a new Youth Foyer?</b>

## Housing Tasmania Capital Projects - Questionnaire for Young Residents

<b>What is the best part about your life here?</b>
<b>Are there any parts of the facility that you would like to change and why?</b>
<b>Which communal areas are of most benefit and why? Are there any spaces you don't use and why?</b>
<b>Do you have enough storage space for personal belongings?</b>
<b>If you could design a facility for young people from the ground up what features would it have?</b> <b>What services and spaces would it have?</b>
<b>Are you comfortable with your mutual obligations with the facility (such as house rules around guests/drinking/parties etc)?</b>
<b>Do you have enough spaces to study and socialise?</b>
<b>Do you feel inspired/motivated to study?</b> <b>If not, what are the barriers to you achieving those goals?</b>
<b>Were you ready to undertake study or training when you entered the youth accommodation facility?</b> <b>What helped you get ready to engage with these services?</b>
<b>Is there any other feedback you wish to provide about your experience here?</b>

## **Qualitative Data Log**

The material in this Data Log is based on verbatim records from questionnaires and interviews conducted with management, staff and residents of various Housing Tasmania facilities who participated on a voluntary basis with Housing Tasmania staff.

### ***Trinity Hill Management Feedback***

#### **Physical Building**

The physical building improves the service because it is bright, light and airy. There are plenty of large open spaces including green outdoor areas for residents to enjoy. These features make the place feel like home. The open areas also help to minimise any feelings of confinement in a high-density living space.

#### **Security**

There is relatively good security in terms of who can access the property. Residents can bring guests onto the site at their discretion. This approach has positives and negatives, however it seems to be working well at Trinity Hill because it helps residents to develop independence. This skill prepares residents for their transition to independent living outside of the facility, such as in the private rental market.

#### **Staff Space**

The staff accommodation at Trinity Hill is ideal – the facility includes one unit for a permanent caretaker and a separate two-bedroom unit – one bedroom for a casual staff member to live and one spare staff unit for casual workers to sleep in at short notice.

It is essential to have a spare office space in which various services can occupy at different times in the week to provide services to residents. Services which use this space include Centrelink, health professionals, career guidance mentors, educators, parents/family meetings etc. This space allows residents to meet with professionals in a private space, outside of their own unit.

#### **Learning Facilities**

It is useful to have an IT room with multiple computers for residents to access. WIFI access across the facility is essential. A commercial kitchen is also essential for education and training. A gymnasium is also essential for physical recreation and to provide pathways into work – such as personal training. A lounge room area with presenting facilities and computer access with a kitchen is essential for meeting space, functions, learning events and seminars.

#### **Balance of Cohort**

It is important to ensure there is a diverse range of residents based on gender, age, cultural background, ability for instance.

#### **Exit Planning**

Approximately one resident exits Trinity Hill each month. For NDIS residents, the number of exits is much lower. Some NDIS residents may wish to stay longer than two years.



### **Room for Improvement:**

- Standardisation of light globes
- More storage for both residents and staff to store large items of furniture such as beds and mattresses
- Potentially less multi-purpose common rooms (recreational hall, lounge and outdoor spaces are enough for social activity and learning space)

### **Foyer Model**

The Foyer model should be relatively applicable to the current service model at Trinity Hill. Trinity Hill already provides access to education and training to residents and supports residents to transition to independent living.

There are some queries about the applicability of the Foyer model to all residents. For example, students who are enrolled in University and are managing study/home life may not have time to engage in all components of the EFYF model. More information is needed to better understand how many hours of volunteer work and training the Foyer model requires.

There are also queries about the applicability of Foyer learning modules for people from diverse cultural backgrounds. For example, learning about sexual health will need to be suitable for people from a range of cultural backgrounds.

More information is necessary to better understand the outcomes of the Foyer model and where participants can expect to go after being in the Foyer for two years.

Finally, current resident of YSAF's will need to understand how their obligations will change when the new Foyer model is operational.

### **NDIS Residents**

There are queries about the level of 'readiness' some NDIS residents might have/not have for the Foyer model. Some NDIS clients have serious mental health issues and it may be difficult for some NDIS residents to meet the same obligations as other residents in the Foyer. More work is needed to better understand the expectations of NDIS residents in the Foyer model and how accessible the Foyer model is for people living with disability. It may be necessary for a designated NDIS specialist support worker to live on site to assist with NDIS residents.

It is important to better understand the differing obligations, if any, between residents and NDIS residents and how this will be managed. It is important not to embed a culture of 'difference' between residents.

The facility has 8 fully accessible and modifiable units for NDIS residents. Approximately just 50 per cent of NDIS residents have exited Trinity Hill since it opened.

## **Trinity Hill Residents' Feedback**

The **best things** about life at Trinity Hill are:

- Location and proximity to everything we need – fast food, work, transport and college
- Having a place on your own terms and making it your own place with your own furnishings
- Independence with supports
- Amazing staff who are casual and give advice on things in life
- Privacy
- Support from others around you
- The garden is excellent
- Communal areas are excellent especially the recreation hall because of all the fun games.
- The laundry

## **Areas for improvement:**

Residents think the facility would be improved if the following features were present:

- Better WIFI for the whole facility
- More diverse gym equipment such as free weights
- A workshop area for woodwork and other art or technical or construction projects.
- Better blinds for privacy
- More natural light everywhere, especially in units
- A larger cement outdoor recreation area for competitive games, not just practice sport
- A community garden - place to grow vegetables
- Air con in summer would be great
- More storage in our units
- A house pet that belongs to the facility.

## **Health, Well Being and Communal Life:**

The number one barrier to residents undertaking study or training or work is the status of their mental health. They said that whether they feel like engaging depends upon their mental health.

Residents commented that the proximity of TAFE motivated them to choose a course, while others felt motivated or obliged to finish their study because it was paid by someone else. Most residents said that a strong social network was vital for getting through their study.

Most residents love having their own unit but with the option to socialise and mingle with others when they feel they want to.

All residents agreed that there is an excess of the amount of common space, which is not fully utilised and may not get used very much. They made specific reference to the library and computer room, which are very nice but would be better used for something else.

Residents really liked the kitchen facilities, the community garden, the gym and the common room. Some would like to do more outdoor social activities.





### **Storage facilities:**

Most residents agreed that the individual storage units outside each of their apartments are sufficient, but more storage in the apartment kitchen and bathrooms would be better, such as a larger vanity, pantry.

### **Mutual obligations:**

Residents regarded the mutual obligations and standards as good and fair. They were comfortable with 'mutual obligations' and house rules. Residents agreed that these are beneficial for everyone.

### **Study and Training:**

Residents who wanted to study felt that they received the support they needed whilst at Trinity Hill. Study and training were perceived to be great opportunities to become independent down the track. Those who are currently studying said they received the advice and assistance they required to complete their courses from staff at TH or TAFE staff and student counsellors.

Residents also said that the study hub with access to computers and WIFI is an excellent feature, but a large communal study area was a disincentive because it could be distracting and felt isolated when studying alone. All residents described the size of the communal computer room as being too large for multiple reasons; all young people use their own devices to study and can do so in their own units, communal study areas are distracting, smaller study rooms situated on each level of the building would be better, and everyone believed that their study would be facilitated by better WIFI.

### **The ideal youth facility**

Residents noted the following essential features:

- More mental health support services and referral
- Community garden
- Large outdoor sports and activity areas
- Green space, lawn to relax on, natural landscaping
- More power points in the units
- Communal laundries
- Communal clothes lines
- Air con
- WIFI
- Contemporary décor and design
- Don't design or decorate for 'Youth' i.e. highly coloured walls or décor
- Gym and recreation rooms
- Pets – a shared house pet, such as a therapy dog
- Natural light
- Swimming pool
- Bath tub

### **Other feedback:**

Female residents said that they felt security and safety were very important both in their own units and at Trinity Hill grounds and common areas. Although CCTV can be intrusive, they felt that it was necessary and made them feel safe. Others said that safety and security was essential for their families

and guests when visiting because they liked to know that their mums or other children would be safe and secure at Trinity Hill. This is an important aspect of their enjoyment in their own space as well as their mental health. Security and privacy were integral to the overall sense of feeling at ease and at home.

### ***Eveline House Residents' Feedback***

The **best things** about life at Eveline House are:

- Security
- Location - the proximity to services and shops which make life at Eveline so convenient
- Vibrant colours which make them feel happy and relaxed
- Privacy within a support service model (independent living units with access to support workers 24/7; regular counselling etc).
- Access to public transport and education facilities
- Chaplaincy services.

### **Areas for improvement:**

Residents think the facility would be improved if the following features were present:

- More parking for themselves and for guests
- A workshop area for woodwork and other construction projects
- An art space may also be beneficial
- Better blinds for privacy and security that allow for natural light but maintain privacy
- A cement outdoor recreation area for sport
- A place to grow vegetables
- Sound proofing – all residents agreed that sound proofing is very important
- Loud music can be a distraction and prevents people from sleeping well.

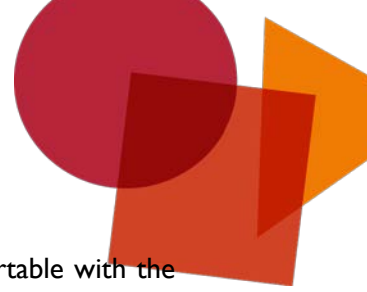
### **Health, Well Being and Communal Life:**

The gym and games room are used often and are essential for health and wellbeing – they relieve stress and boredom. Residents made comment that they can get bored and would like to do more activities outdoors.

All residents made specific reference to the new study room which has computer and WIFI access. The study room is used by all residents and helps residents to complete study, search for jobs and contact services. The residents agreed that there is an excess of common areas which could be better used for another function or purpose. Residents also referenced the excellent kitchen facilities which help residents learn about nutrition and how to cook and prepare healthy meals.

### **Storage facilities:**

Most residents agreed that the individual storage units outside each of their apartments are sufficient. A garden shed could be useful for storing bikes, donations and other personal items such as furniture.



### **Mutual obligations:**

Residents regarded the mutual obligations and standards as good. They were comfortable with the concept of 'mutual obligations' and rules in relation to guests, parties, drinking alcohol etc. Residents agreed that these rules keep the accommodation facility harmonious and enjoyable for everyone.

### **Readiness - Study and Training:**

All residents felt supported to engage in education and training whilst at Eveline. Most residents said that whether they feel like engaging depends upon their mental health, however they do feel supported to pursue their goals. Residents commented that the proximity of TAFE (situated next door) is a big incentive to enrol in and complete courses. Residents also said that the study hub with access to computers and WIFI is essential and motivated many of them to search for education and employment opportunities. One resident stated that it took many months to settle in and commit to studying but with support from Eveline House staff this is achievable.

### **Engagement**

Some residents said they took months to settle into Eveline before being ready to engage in education and training. Other residents were already engaged in education and employment at the time they arrived at Eveline. Overall, most residents said that despite their individual challenges, Eveline provided the necessary support and environment for them to thrive.

Transportation to work remains a big issue for young people, as getting a licence can be a long and expensive process. Hence the need for youth facilities to be close to public transport and services.

Some residents commented that the simple act of talking to a support worker and developing a case plan helped them to re-engage with education and employment opportunities. Proximity and engagement with community services is benefiting all residents.

### **Other feedback:**

One resident wrote "I have been tenderly and compassionately attended to since arriving at Eveline House and I believe this place is saving and transforming lives". Another resident stated that the levels of privacy and security within a communal, support structure was excellent. Other residents said that they feel ready to study and can get the help they need.

### ***Thyne House – Residents' Feedback:***

#### **The best things about life at Thyne House:**

- Residents can make it their own place
- Security
- Convenient location in the CBD, close to public transport, education and employment, services, supermarkets
- The service is of a more permanent nature (as opposed to a shelter) and makes residents feel at home
- The feature walls
- Insulation
- Residents expressed thanks for the security they felt at Thyne as well as the ability to develop their independent living skills in a supportive, community environment.

### **The most beneficial communal areas are:**

- Study room – with computer and WIFI access
- Gym and Games Room – for health and wellbeing, to stay active and relieve stress.

Residents advised that the commercial kitchen is a great place to meet other residents and learn how to cook and develop basic living skills. Cooking skills helps residents to develop their independence. Some residents said that a coffee machine could help them learn how to become a barista.

### **Amenity**

Residents said more washing machines are required. Residents also need fans or reverse cycle air conditioning to stay cool in summer. Some units had full sun North facing windows and no fan or air conditioner.

### **Mutual Obligations**

Residents generally accepted the rules and standards of Thyne House and understood that these were in place for their own benefit and security. For example, three guests were a sensible, agreed limit.

In their **ideal facility**, residents expressed a wish for the following features:

- Air conditioning and insulation
- Sound Proofing or double-glazed windows for privacy
- Free WIFI – more data is a must for educational purposes, downloading and on-line study
- Adequate washing machines and dryers
- Free weights and yoga equipment
- Coffee Machine in the kitchen
- more grass and outdoor areas to relax in. Residents would like places to play sport. Residents would like more weights to use in the gym.
- Storage Space – more general and more personal storage space for equipment and private belongings.

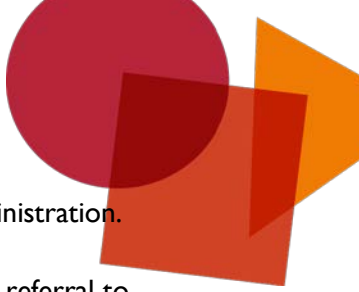
Residents and management generally concurred that more storage was an absolute must, although for some it was adequate. Storage is necessary for facility equipment, such as cleaning equipment, gardening equipment etc, also for sports equipment and outdoor entertainment, such as large umbrella, seating, as well as private storage.

Personal storage lockers or cages were suggested by residents. This is an important design feature because it facilitates their preparation for living independently. When residents can begin acquiring and buying their own household goods and chattels, there is limited space to store them. This means that often personal belongings are not stored securely or that they don't have adequate belongings to fit out their own home once they leave the facility. Personal storage is very important.

### **Readiness**

Residents explained that the main barriers to their motivations and capability to undertake formal study and training were related to:

- Personal and mental health issues
- Availability of suitable classes and courses – impacted by the shift to Allanvale TAFE.

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- Needed support and direction to change schools when necessary, such as administration.
  - Bulk billing at college for medical prescriptions was very helpful
  - Service system – waiting lists for mental health services such as Headspace and referral to psychologists.

### **Other feedback:**

One resident stated that staff and management should be trained to better respect residents' privacy because they felt that staff were sometimes intrusive. Other residents stated that their motivation to participate in study, training or other activities is entirely dependent on their headspace on any given day, as a result of depression, anxiety and social skills.

### **Colville Place Management Feedback**

Consultation with Colville Place coordinator and staff occurred on 7 November 2019. The focus of discussion ranged between operational and functional issues to resourcing of services related to the running of this crisis accommodation facility for young people aged 13-16 years.

### **Generic Service System**

'Shelter shopping' is an issue for Colville Place staff, management and residents. This dynamic occurs in the greater Hobart area whereby young people will approach a range of services. Colville residents are expected to transition from the facility around 16 years, after which they can apply through Housing Connect for appropriate accommodation.

Whilst the primary focus of Colville staff is family reunification, this is not always achievable, especially for young people with pronounced behavioural issues. This creates a 'churn' of young people in this age cohort through the crisis accommodation network, which in turn results in reduced fewer options for young people in the network that reduces movement and supply of vacancies in crisis accommodation facilities in Hobart.

Management recorded several substantive ideas for solving the systemic problem of 'shelter shopping'.

### **Early Intervention**

Colville Place believes it is important to focus on early intervention and prevention.

It provides services and supports to young residents to reunify and reconnect with their families. It is important to have specialist staff who can undertake family intervention and intensive family support programs. This reduces the numbers of young people entering crisis accommodation, as well as reduces numbers of young people 'shelter shopping'. It is important to focus on successful outcomes regarding family reunification rates.

### **Systemic Improvements for Young People in Crisis**

Colville staff were adamant about several key ideas and improvements that would greatly benefit young people in crisis, their families and practitioners working in the field, particularly housing and mental health. Suggested methods are:

- Colony 47 Reconnect Unit –family workers assist across the shelters.

- Transport Service – a reliable transport service for all young people in residential facilities who are attending school, college, TAFE or training. A minibus could do a circuit of all the SAFS and crisis facilities to deliver young people to educational destinations each morning and afternoon.
- The Geelong Project – Early Intervention Project. Consider implementing a Tasmanian version of this service based in Geelong. It's a partnership between Time for Youth, Barwon Youth, Swinburn University and Geelong Local Learning and Employment Network. The results and outcomes being achieved there for primary aged children focussed on early intervention assessment is outstanding and should be made available in Tasmania.

### **Continuous Improvement**

Via continuous improvement process, Colville management implemented successful policies and policy adaptations that have improved the lives of residents and the operation of the facility since doors opened 18 months ago. Examples of successful policy implementation are:

- Responding to Behaviour - a focus that shifted away from behaviour management to a more responsive method that lays down clear boundaries and expectations.
- Intimate Relationships Policy – this prohibits public displays of affection and responds to the development of intimate relationships between residents.
- Advantage Thinking and the 'deal' based on the Education First Foyer model work very well with residents.

### **Building Design**

Colville Place is fully equipped and designed to accommodate young people with disabilities, however, no one with physical disabilities has required the services to date but it is available if required. The configuration of the disability suite important and should be fully integrated into the service. Rooms for residents with disabilities in crisis accommodation should be integrated and located in proximity to utilities, such as kitchen and bathroom, as well as to staff office areas.

The two large lounge rooms have proven an excellent feature of the facility because it allows residents to do undertake activities at different times and with varying interests.

Design should always eliminate hiding spots and inappropriate safety points i.e. stairwell cupboards, storage cages, overhead beams.

### **Health and Wellbeing**

Colville staff have been successful with recent grant submissions, allowing for some new health and wellbeing programs to be delivered on site including:

- Cooking classes
- Dance Program
- Art classes.

A vegetable garden has been installed and the gym is well used.



## **Staffing**

Adequate staffing is critical for young people's wellbeing in crisis accommodation. A range of qualified, experienced, trained staff is necessary to provide the suite of services to support young people effectively.

Social work or mental health or allied health outreach service are important. Staff may not be equipped with relevant specialised training or qualifications to undertake assessments in escalated incidents or emergencies, such as suicidal ideation or psychotic episode. Mental health clinicians that can provide outreach services to the whole crisis accommodation network in Hobart are important.

Adequate staffing is necessary to have workable rosters and rotations for wake shift workers. Sleep shifts are routinely broken for minor causes whereby staff have sleep broken numerous times during the night for a resident exiting their room to use the bathroom. Incentives to recruit good staff is important when wake shifts can be stressful. This would allow best quality care and reduce staff burn out.

Invest in services that are already demonstrating consistently high-level outcomes. Support continuous improvement in existing quality services rather than change for the sake of change or funding of pilots.



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