

Young People's Housing Issues

South East Queensland Brisbane

Background – determinants/factors

- Recognition of body of work done on these issues in policy platform
- Definition of young people is very wide – 12-25 years
- Many different needs and development levels within this range – QYHC has done research on age/needs response
- Limited choices for young men 17-26
- Under 15 have specific issues
- Young parents – loss of services
- There are additional security and responsibility issues for some young people in share housing.
- Income – young people's income is limited
 - Paid less under awards
 - Paid less by Centrelink yet still have same living costs
- Youth unemployment rate has not changed regardless of low rates of unemployment across country
- Child Protection and child safety – YANQ has been working and researching this area
- YP right to be adequate housing Article 29 Rights of a Child
- Low wages paid to YP
- Lack of independence/income from Centrelink
- Family breakdown/lack of a safe place at home

Supply, affordability Issue

- 75% of market rent for affordable housing is unworkable for young people
- Not enough public housing
- Increase supply of housing across the board
- Housing stock and models need to change to be appropriate and suitable
- Cheaper models of housing

One Social Housing System

- Different access to OSHS
- Limited CRS intake
- Transitional housing different procedures
- Under centralised system and CIAP there are lost relationships with DoH area offices, CRS and transitional providers
- Confusion with messages being given regarding eligibility
- Department of Housing have changed the age barrier to access social housing however still requires independent income. There is not benefit for YP under 16 years of age.
- Bad rental tenancy history to access Public housing
- Single people – low priority in being housed under CIAP with DoH
- CIAP process and eligibility requirements

- Mining community areas young people earning above Do H requirements but cannot afford any rental properties within area. Keen competition from high earning miners for limited amount of housing.
- YP not applying to DoH because of long wait list times and very long forms to fill in – there are also advocacy and literacy issues
- Mismatch of what people are offered to what they can use – location of services and towns etc suitable for YP

Students

- Hard to measure student housing stress/disadvantage
- Location of education facilities in expensive areas to rent e.g. around UQ St Lucia
- Change of BCC City Plan is a reduction of number of unrelated people in a house from 6 to 5 people affects the affordability of a property
- Increase in international students requiring accommodation places greater pressure and competition for accommodation
- Need increased provision of housing at higher end of scale to accommodate wealthier students and free up accommodation at lower end of market
- Educational institutions to take greater responsibility for housing students and attracting international students especially in a tight rental market

YP Knowledge/Awareness of Renting

- Lack of rental history
- Lack of ID or relevant paperwork
- Limited income history
- High expectations with some young people as to standard of accommodation
- Personal presentation/ what's expected when renting and paperwork required to rent in private rental

Private rental

- Real estate have a lack of recognition of what is required to house young people now – change in housing models so YP can afford high rents
- Discrimination/racism faced by YP in accessing housing
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Young people
 - CALD young people
 - Complex process to show discrimination
- Have a learning experience without lifetime consequence – TICA listing etc
- TICA listing – people not automatically taken off database

Support

- Support includes living skills, budgeting, cleaning, health, hygiene, education, legal, very broad range services
- SAAP Service provide support, accommodation but who feeds etc
- Support required to sustain tenancies
- Range of transitional housing to suit life stage
- Multiple entry points
- Increased support needs to learn life skills

- Lack of suitable interactive resources for YP on housing expectations and responsibilities. Require central /multiple distribution points
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Other Issues/Models

- UQ accommodation has a low cost housing database
- YHP follow up service to see YP in housing after being placed
- Prison/youth detention centres being used as housing with large numbers of YP in prisons at a high cost
- RTA Grants available for people to produce training materials
- Legislation does not recognise share housing models? (Need clarification of this)
- Bridge gap in terms of affordable housing stock
- 2% level on developers
- Youth worker in RTA
- Target of youth in OSHS

Mackay Meeting

Supply/ access

- Very tight rental market with limited properties available and overcrowding
- Lack of supply – top percentile live in share accommodation
- Rural areas have limited housing to rent e.g. Clermont only has 1 property listed to rent at present
- Regional – knowledge of local issues and problems that has occurred remembered past 3 years
- Limited number of services to try to gain access to once have a bad history with another service in area
- Mackay/Whitsunday region – 20 registered housing providers, with 8 SAAP/CAP some have all services
- Confidentiality issues and sharing of private information within private rental market e.g. Clermont only 2 real estate agencies in town
- YP may carry history of family i.e. family has bad reputation and this is inter-generationally carried by young people
- No single female accommodation in Mackay there is a male boarding house but nothing for women
- No caravan vacancies – have heard of extremely long wait list times
- 3 caravan parks closed in Mackay region
- Limited motel accommodation available – pub in Calen charges \$200/wk for a room; difficulty in booking a room with 6 weeks' notice in mining regions
- YP single income too low to cover rent

Transport issues

- Public transport is limited with rigid timetables
- Cheaper housing available further out however there are increased petrol price issues

Discrimination

- People asked where they work – miners have preference over other occupations

Students

- Only 1 service with student accommodation which has 8 rooms
- JCU has teaching arrangements with Mackay Hospital but doesn't provide accommodation

Support

- Lack of exit points for YP leaving SAAP – 0 available in Mackay however some available in Clermont but only suit those with transport willing to move to another town and live in single accommodation
- Hard to Place – decision is not made within DoH Area Office – sent to Brisbane for final decision – no local buy-in in decision making

Boom Town Economic Climate

- Federal award and youth wages can't afford to live in local economy
- Mining wages for YP too high to qualify for DoH housing which is identified as the only affordable option
- YP hard to gain access to mining jobs with training courses high costs for YP
- False economy in mining/boom towns

Sustainable tenancy for young people

- Accommodation suitable/appropriate and safe (different requirements for diff ages)
- Employment or education
- Support required for some age levels
- Access to independent income
- Positive relationships – families and/or other networks
- Life skills
- Respect/role models/ mentors
- Transitioned/staged care to independent

Toowoomba

Determinants/Factors

- High levels of YP choosing to couch surf due to their choice of where to stay without 7pm curfew
- Limited options for young men in Toowoomba
- Increased levels of YP with low level cognitive or intellectual disability presenting at services
- Referrals from DSQ to HACC to modify homes to suit YP with a disability to stay at home e.g. fence yard this has been done on an ad hoc basis
- Additional extended families involved with YP due to family breakdown

Supply

- Lack of supply
- Limited options for young people who are not ready – independent
- Loss of Kynoch Village leaving gap for affordable short term accommodation
- Lack of after hours and at home services
- Lack of mental health services NSW runs a Mental Health Crisis service which is a central service and run through Dept of Health
- Under 18 males have limited service options in Toowoomba
- YP with children face additional levels of scrutiny and hardship to find accommodation – both from the accommodation providers and government departments and services
- ISHE – no money
- Zero emergency accommodation for young women

Affordability

- Low income of young people
- High cost of rent
- First year apprentice and trainee wages are very low – rates set centrally (State/Fed level)

OSHS

- Lower levels of CRS in Toowoomba
- Other accommodation available through YWCA apply through DoH

Students

- Short term accommodation required for students on block training running from 1 to 4 weeks
- TAFE has put together register of people providing board however opportunistic landlords have been known to offer inappropriate e.g. sheds
- Older apprentices stay at motels some charging \$400-500 per week without food
- Parents are coming to stay with YP during block training as there is no suitable accommodation
- Uni Village offers accommodation however not cheap
- Public transport – limited service to not at all and limits where students can stay e.g. early classes not suitable for public transport timetable
- School based trainees short term accommodation in another city

- Training or education is not based where the students are requiring travel and accommodation issues
- Expensive to fund training for YP

Private Rental

- Success with private market when offer HEI support package

Support

- Red Cross Early Intervention (HEI) referrals from Toowoomba, Warwick and other prosing providers
- Across the board referrals from many levels of govt and departments
- Real estate agents with sustaining tenancies
- Independent YP
- Continued support to focus on issues as they crop up
- Outreach support is expensive with services stretched for resources to provide in house support.
- HEI and Reconnect and Pathways are used as outreach services
- Restricted case load limits how many and who are housed – complexity of issue may not work in the accommodation available or suit mix of current clients

Sunshine Coast – Maroochydore 25/9/08

Homelessness

- Hard to measure homelessness in YP
- Lack of data
- YP do not ring HPIQ due to high costs from mobile
- Couch surfing goes uncounted
- YP leave home at 15 and couch surf until wear out welcome and then present at services
- Increased family breakdown
- Social disconnection – due to life factors and then this is entrenched
- Difference between houselessness and homelessness
- Resource 'Out on Your Own' Handbook from IFYS \$200.00

System

- Currently penalty based system being used not strength based approaches to YP
- Current systems based on old paradigms and communication methods and not evolving with technology as YP have
- Increased demands placed on YP in schools, home and society
- Lack of community involvement in YP
- Society needs to decide what it wants for YP
- Lack of mentoring or outer circle for external connection for YP i.e. beyond direct family

Income/Affordability

- Centrelink/Interlink support cannot support independent living
- YP choosing to leave home due to family breakdown but income for YP under 16 year old
- Due to lack of education find documentation intimidating – Centrelink and housing
- Centrelink breaches and policies affect YP income
- YP lack of knowledge and confidence to ask right questions
- Centrelink staff training and varying advice
- Centrepay
 - Breach reduced income and rent goes unpaid
 - If YP cancel Centrepay rent goes unpaid

OSHS

- Eligibility – daunting process for YP especially with low literacy skills
- Referrals – every 6 moths update details – issues with being able to contact YP – physical address are out of date however SMS would be cheaper and YP maintain mobile ownership
- Access to system is limited
- Not classed as high needs – under new CIAP process may not be housed due to lower assessed needs
- YP do not consider themselves homeless if they are couch surfing – re eligibility process

- DoH expectation of support in regional housing networks with Segment 1 and 2 without resources
- Exit points – mixed responses as to whether there are enough dependent on service/target
- Systems not set up to reward e.g. pay \$80 per week in DoH or SAAP and when out of crisis or back on track face paying \$240 in private market no incentive to improve circumstances
- YP stay in SAAP a long time as they can't afford market rent
- Breakdown of extended family networks further isolating YP

YP Knowledge/ Awareness of Renting

- Money has little value – lack of budgeting skills
- Presentation lacking - different ideas of what is an acceptable way to present themselves

Private Market/Rental

- Won't rent to YP even when they have income
- TICA
 - Huge barriers for YP
 - Costly to remove name from database if they even know that they are listed on it – REA do not always inform YP they are listed
- Reality investors in private market are precious of investment and also involved in tenant decision
- Rent Start – DoH pilot works with YP however YP still lack life skills
- YP require support to effectively manage transition
- No money in YP in real estate terms

Support

- Lack of support for families – prevention and during issues
- Lack of positive role modelling to learn sustained tenancy skills e.g. budgeting and cleaning
- Need to address life skills as well as housing to achieve maximum outcomes
- Wrap around support with appropriate case management
- Need to assess each YP and address individual need - not a one size fits all solution

Government/Department

- Government moved from risk management to risk aversion
- Huge amount of risk shifting from government to community organisations
- Externalising issue seen as a risk aversion method

Models/Ideas

- Youth council model is Europe advocating for YP on many issues community and government e.g. Netherlands every council has a YP council

- YP buy in to where and what type of housing they want to live in e.g. SHDL
- YP need to have choices that also involve the life experiences that goes with them

Young People Housing – to be successful need

- Communication
- YP need purpose – do something with life
- Skills to present selves and be taken seriously
- Connection to community
- Role models/ mentoring
- Life skills
- Different housing choices and right to choose
- Sense of connection/ love to family/peers

YP Peer session

- YP to participate in issues faced by YP is accessing housing
- Genuine engagement
- Respect
- Open YP accessible environment
- Empowerment from being involved in the process

Southern Downs - Warwick – 26 September 2008

Determinants/Factors

- Faulty information/processes at Centrelink
- Family cycle of housing issues without support
- Rural restrictions and hard to escape 'old ties' or destructive networks/influences

Supply

- Total Lack of Affordable Housing
- No Shelters
- No Supported accommodation
- Limited disability housing although none youth specific
- St Vincent de Paul has Men's Hostel and 2 crisis short term housing for families
- Stanthorpe
- No YP accommodation etc at all
- There is low cost housing available in region (limited) however it is in remote areas or areas that have limited transport, no access to town water supply and may have power access issues.
- Lack of student hostels/ or boarding houses in Warwick and Stanthorpe
- Strong need for emergency housing
- High need for transitioned care
- Survey conducted by Pam Burley WCC re homelessness in Warwick YP done 2004 and 2008
- Frustration at lack of places and accommodation within the community

Affordability

- Centrelink - breaching leads to no income which leads to black listing
- Limited accommodation in Southern Downs less than \$180 per week with 2% vacancy rate

OSHS

- YP and families move to area to access affordable accommodation without being properly advised to the lack of services or how to live in rural area.
- Stanthorpe - wait list is short
- Referrals from other urban communities unprepared and no connection to rural community
- People informed if they do not take house they will be taken off the list
- Felt problems are just moved from one area to another
- Lack of communication between State departments – very siloed approach
- Education and health should be part of conversation with housing locations and allocations
- Minimal referrals to rural community housing i.e. not given 3 names as they do not have 3 names to give so organisation not receiving full picture or choice of who to house
- Match for success with community and towns needs to be worked on
- Support from government agencies get from departments is vital along with corporate memory

Students

- Lose YP students to major education institutions

YP Knowledge or Tenancy skills

- YP lack good tenancy skills

Private Rental

- Real estate agents reluctant to rent to YP
- Lack of respect experienced by YP from REA
- REA discriminates due to family reputation and YP at mercy of family history
- Indigenous
- Shown discrimination when applying for places – cases where not even shown properties
- Discrimination
- Blind YP volunteer worker from WCC told she could not rent a property because she had a guide dog. REA ordered by ADCQ to participate in education program.
- Council and Community feeling that housing YP is problematic
- Strong fear of being sued and risk aversion

Support

- YP with mental illness
 - No DSQ in Southern Downs region
 - Respite house
- Accommodation issues during picking season at expense of community families and YP
- YP policy needs to address human support
- Limited in some rural communities
- Share housing requires level of functionality of life skills
- Takes a village to raise a child approach

North Western Queensland - Mount Isa – 4th November 2008

Background

- Young people are down the list of people with issues
- MT Isa census was not done correctly – it has now been redone with the figures changing. This data would still not accurately reflect true population of Indigenous people and especially young people.
- Family violence is high
- Positive in Mt Isa
 - Small enough to have groups know where to sleep the night
 - More services now
 - Community awareness of the issues
- Reconnect indentified 12-15 year old as most in risk

Indigenous

- Transiency among YP especially indigenous in Mt Isa region
- Over-crowding in some properties e.g. 40+people.
- Family dynamic – YP have low status especially with YP who are parents
- Lack of permanency – starts at a very young age with the pattern set by adolescence

Supply

- Lack of housing opportunities with housing for YP
- YP shelter in Mt Isa but there are limited exit points
- No shelter for Young Indigenous men – there is one for YP and one for women
- Shelters do not have young men come in with mothers who are presenting with family
- Youth Shelter – unmet needs 3-11 per month (this is only the people who have presented at the shelter)

OSHS

- CIAP – seen as having little success for YP

Homelessness

- Definition of who is homeless is difficult.
- Many people couch surf and have always had a transient housing situation.
- Many cannot name a permanent home or have ever had one.

Life Skills

- Very large lack of life skills – this goes right through to people aged in 30s.
- YP might get accommodation but then everyone comes over and they leave or lose their tenancy. This leaves them with a bad tenancy record and difficulty in access alternate accommodation.
- Lack of knowledge to access services or what services are available for them.
- Lack of planning – live day to day. This is reflected in financial budgeting skills and other areas of the tenancy situation. Have not had parental/role model doing this and need to learn these skills.

Education

- Lack confidence to approach services for help as they cannot read or fill out the forms.
- No knowledge of what is happening as all communication is done via a hard copy letter sent to the last known address.
- No collection of mail or knowledge of what it is or do not want to know.
- Bank statements arrive and if they get them do not understand what is happening. Bank charges for the poor and people are losing even more money and do not understand why.

Child safety

- Should have people younger than 12 year old (many are presenting and live in very unsafe ways – sleeping under cars, in sheds, in car yards away from risk factors)
- Child safety will not make 12yr+ safety a priority even though they are within the catchment of this department's responsibility.
- Biggest issue is lack of guardianship – YP not receiving appropriate care while in foster care or care of family. Dept unaware that YP has left that person's care or where they have been living.

Key to success

- Need earlier intervention prior to tenancy breach - Department of Housing @ 3rd breach too late for service to be able to help. Earlier notification would address situation and
- Wrap services for the services needed
- Need 1 person flats needed
- Shared accommodation with support
- Individual approach ATSI – not everyone is the same or should be all treated that way.