



UNDERCOVER NEWS

AUTUMN 2017



Australia's
Best Cubby
Fights Homelessness



4 A DREAM
COME TRUE



5 A BRIGHT
FUTURE
IN FILM



10 LIP BALMS
RAISING
AWARENESS

**WHO
WE
ARE**

OUR VISION Where no young person in our community is homeless.
OUR MISSION Providing young people at risk of homelessness the foundations to strengthen their connection to family, community and education, and make a lasting difference.

PREVENTION STRATEGIES IMPERATIVE IN FIGHT

Summer is usually a wonderful time of year in Melbourne. The city is flooded by visitors, many of us enjoy the balmy nights at restaurants or one of the great events that contribute to the vibrancy of our beautiful city.

Sadly, 2017 began with confronting images of the 'Homeless Camp' on Flinders Street along with violent scenes as the City of Melbourne attempted to move people on.

Would we, as a community not be better placed to act in providing greater services to assist these people in finding long-term housing and develop and fund greater preventative strategies? We have the capacity to heal and look after our community. We should be wrapping our arms around people who need help, not treat them as criminals.

The homelessness crisis gripping our nation will not disappear but will increase rapidly if more is not done to prevent people from becoming homeless, and it starts with young people. Early intervention strategies, like our Studio Program, are imperative in the fight.

There is an incredible need for more conversation about providing a constructive solution to the damaging problem of homelessness, a conversation that personally I wish we did not have a need for, but I believe one that is well and truly overdue.

On a lighter note, I was delighted to be a part of another successful Cubby House Challenge®. We are incredibly grateful to the Melbourne International Flower & Garden Show, without this ongoing support and that of our partners, supporters and sponsors the event would not be such a terrific success. I encourage you to read about the event and look at the photos from the night on pages 6 and 7.

IN THIS ISSUE

YOUNG PEOPLE'S HOMELESSNESS TOO OFTEN HIDDEN	3
STUDIO RECIPIENT KICKING GOALS	4
SCHOLARSHIP TAKES CREATIVE DIRECTION	5
CUBBY HOUSE CHALLENGE WRAP UP	6
MORELAND CITY COUNCIL PARTNERSHIP	8
LIP BALMS RAISING AWARENESS	10

I would like to make special mention of our Philanthropic Partner, Gandel Philanthropy, who supported this year's event again with a matching grant of up to \$70,000. We are incredibly grateful for this vital support which will have a huge impact on the crucial work we can undertake through our Studio Program during 2017/18.

Finally, I would like to extend my personal thanks to the many generous donors who supported our end of year appeal. It's heart-warming to know that you care as much as we do about keeping young people from becoming homeless.

Thank you for your ongoing support of Kids Under Cover, I hope you find this edition of *Undercover News* to be informative and inspiring.



Jo Swift
CEO, Kids Under Cover

Front cover: Glowb cubby with The Hon, Martin Foley MP, Jo Swift and Rory Costelloe from Villawood Properties.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S HOMELESSNESS TOO OFTEN HIDDEN

Homelessness has once again been thrust into the spotlight, suddenly this crisis appears to be greater than ever before.

But what about homeless young people who usually don't fit the stereotype of homelessness? Rarely seen sleeping on city streets, camped out in tents in a public park, or forced into refuges and shelters.

Many young people are couch-surfing with friends or extended family, or cram into overcrowded accommodation. They may not be sleeping rough, but they're no less homeless.

To mark Youth Homelessness Matters Day, on 5 April this year, Victorian youth homelessness organisations and peak bodies called on the Federal Government to commit to a national plan to tackle rising homelessness among young Australians.

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare data shows 38,402 Victorians under the age of 25 sought assistance from homelessness services last financial year, over 600 more than the previous year. Nearly 40% of Victorians who sought homelessness help were under the age of 25.

Youth homelessness Census figures are widely understood to be conservative, due to the high likelihood of young people living in hidden forms of homelessness such as couch-surfing and overcrowded dwellings. Often young people don't identify they are living in a homeless situation.

Over 6,000 young Victorians who sought homelessness assistance last year were couch-surfing.¹

Early intervention strategies (like our Studio Program) are imperative in the fight against youth homelessness. As a community, we need to develop and fund effective preventative strategies that assist people in finding long-term housing.

The recent report released by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute; 'The funding and delivery of programs to reduce homelessness: the case study evidence' found that early intervention and postvention strategies have remained under-developed since the 2008 Australian Government's White

Paper, stating that; There is clear evidence that additional cost savings are associated with early intervention that reduces the flow of people into homelessness.²

Housing affordability also plays a significant role in homelessness.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) housing affordability figures show that Australia is now the ninth most unaffordable country in the world, so if people cannot afford a place to live where are they to go?

We need a national plan to end youth homelessness which addresses the systemic issues underlying it, including family violence, access to affordable housing, youth justice, young people leaving out of home care and unemployment.

The Home Stretch campaign calls for the age at which young people are exited from out-of-home care to be raised from 18 to 21, is also imperative in the fight against youth homelessness. Currently, around 50% of care leavers will end up homeless, unemployed or involved with the law within the first 12 months of exiting care. In Victoria, 400 young people exit care every year on their 18th birthday.

A national plan to tackle youth homelessness must include measures which specifically target young people leaving care, who are some of our most vulnerable citizens.

As a community, it will always make sense to shine a light on the greater need for prevention.

Youth Homelessness Matters Day (YHMD) is a national campaign, held annually since 1990, aimed at raising awareness of youth homelessness among decision makers and the wider community.

¹ council to homeless persons'

² Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute - 'The funding and delivery of programs to reduce homelessness: the case study evidence'

STUDIO RECIPIENT KICKING GOALS

When Aliesha Newman decided to tag along with a friend to the Melbourne Football Club women's rookie trials, never in her wildest dreams did she think she would be running out onto Casey Fields for the historic first round of AFL Women's.

Footy has always been part of family life for Aliesha, her sister Teagan and their Mum, who are huge fans of the Western Bulldogs. They are also great supporters of Kids Under Cover having received a two-bedroom studio back in 2015.

Aliesha and Teagan were at risk of leaving home due to severe overcrowding in their three-bedroom office of housing home after their Mum took on the care of three younger extended family members aged 9, 7 and 3. Often faced with chaotic conditions within the home and a great deal of conflict stemming from behavioural issues of the younger children the sisters had nowhere quiet to retreat to, study or simply be teenagers.

Since the installation of the studio, Aliesha and Teagan have completed year 12 and are now both working full-time. The studio provided the girls with the space and peace and quiet they needed to study and sleep, improving their

wellbeing whilst keeping them connected to family, education and the wider community.

Both girls have continued to excel with their sporting endeavours, Teagan is now enjoying success with her weightlifting and Aliesha now focussed on the AFLW.

"I had never played AFL footy before, Mum always said I was "too small" so steered me towards soccer. I played soccer for seven years and have always been involved with athletics and other team sports. I know a lot about footy, but haven't played a lot, so that is my focus now."

"My friend actually barracks for Melbourne, so we decided to go along for a laugh," says Aliesha. "Then the coach asked me to come back and have a kick, and well, the rest is history" she laughs.

Running out on that wet and windy Sunday in February for her first game with "The Dees" was certainly a surreal experience for Aliesha. "Until I got my first touch of the ball it didn't seem real. I was overwhelmed, running out in front of such a crowd, I had a million things running through my head. Even after the game when my family and friends came up to me and kids were asking for my autograph, it all seemed like a dream."

A dream come true that's for sure!



ALIESHA IS FOCUSED ON THE FOOTY FIELD



BEN WITH MUM JEN, AUNT KATH AND KEN AND LENKA

2017 KEN AND LENKA MORGAN SCHOLARSHIP TAKES A CREATIVE DIRECTION

Announced in November at the Kids Under Cover annual supporter event, the recipient of the 2017 Ken and Lenka Morgan Scholarship is now able to follow his dream of working in the film industry.

Ben Borrelli completed year 12 at the end of 2016 and with the support of the scholarship is now enrolled at Qantm College to study film, screen-writing, directing and producing.

"It's a huge honour I am very grateful for this opportunity. My dream is to one day become a movie director and this will be a great help, thank you," Ben told guests at the event in November, where his Mum Jen and Auntie Kath were present to celebrate the award.

Ben is so passionate about films one referee on his scholarship application form commented on how he "talks non-stop about being a director." He discusses movies in fine detail often commenting on how he would have made

certain scenes in the film differently to better portray the essence.

In April 2008, Kids Under Cover supported Ben and his family with a two-bedroom studio, providing additional space which was desperately needed to ease overcrowding and alleviate tension. With six young people in the family home, four of which are foster care placements, having two additional bedrooms and an extra bathroom has made an enormous difference for the entire family.

Ben is an inspirational young man who has demonstrated incredible resilience having overcome some significant personal challenges. Having the space of a Kids Under Cover studio has enabled him to face these challenges head on, develop and grow into a well-equipped young adult, destined for a bright future.

Kids Under Cover and Ken and Lenka Morgan were delighted to award Ben with the scholarship and we look forward to seeing where Ben's journey takes him.



9th ANNUAL CUBBY HOUSE CHALLENGE® BREAKS AUCTION RECORDS

The Cubby House Challenge®, our largest and most high-profile event is one we always look forward to. This year marked our third as the official charity of the Melbourne International Flower & Garden Show (MIFGS), and we are incredibly thankful to have been part of the spectacular show once again.

Proving to be more popular than ever the 9th Cubby House Challenge® showed no signs of disappointing. With an expert judging panel consisting of Architect and *Grand Designs Australia* host, Peter Maddison; Architect and host of *House Rules*, Joe Snell; Lucy Feigans, Editor of *The Design Files*; Alice Stolz, National Managing Editor of *Domain*; Interior Designer Fiona Lynch and parenting expert Dr Justin Coulson, this year's event delivered one of the most exciting and ground-breaking so far.

Set within the picturesque Carlton Gardens, five architecturally designed and custom built cubby houses were displayed attracting a large crowd to the Cubby House Village across the five days. The highlight of the Cubby House Challenge® was the special twilight auction

event held on Thursday 30 March. Each cubby house was auctioned during the event creating great excitement and anticipation as guests bid on their favourite cubby, eventuating in the awarding of *Australia's Best Cubby*.

The cubbies – all built and donated by leading members of the Australian building and design industry – really broke the mould this year delivering the most creative, innovative and unique cubbies yet. Showcasing never-before seen techniques and features, including 3D printed wall panels, interactive facades, multi-level interactive spaces, Lego like movable blocks, a periscope, and even a turret!

The judging panel had a tough job deciding on the award winners who were announced at the twilight event attended by The Hon. Martin Foley MP, event sponsors, our corporate partners, and generous supporters. Andy and Ben from 2016's *The Block* even made an appearance, helping out onstage.

Kids Under Cover CEO, Jo Swift has been part of the Cubby House Challenge® since the beginning and has seen the event evolve first hand. "Each year the cubbies look completely different, it's amazing to see what happens when designers get creative *carte blanche*."

There has been a greater shift towards innovation but this year is a great blend of both with some cubbies going back to basics with climbing blocks and blackboards", says Jo.

The auctioneers, some of Melbourne's best real estate agents, also volunteered their time. Sam Riggopoulos from Jellis Craig involved for the 7th time, set an impressive record with the sale of his cubby taking his total raised to \$119,550 in those seven years.

Together, the auctioneers helped raise a record total of \$92,500 from the auction. Title of Australia's Best Cubby went to Glowb by Playce and Agency of Sculpture. Glen Coutinho, auctioned the winning cubby for a record-breaking \$26,000, taking home this year's 'Top Auctioneer' award.

The colourful cubby houses provide the perfect platform for us to promote our cause. "At grass-roots level, the Cubby House Village is a great place for us to engage with adults and their children. It's an important opportunity to spread awareness about our work," says Jo Swift.

The event further enabled us to raise vital funds to support our work through the sale of pins, raffle tickets, and merchandise, whilst at the same time offering a fun-filled space for children, young and old, to play and explore.

Jo is also incredibly thankful to the 120 plus people who volunteered their time at the 2017 Cubby House Challenge®, saying "we simply couldn't have done it without you, our dedicated volunteers – thank you so much for your support."

The 2017 Cubby House Challenge® not only set new records but will make an enormous difference. "Exceeding our target was exciting, the funds raised will be directly invested into preventing youth homelessness. It means we can cover our annual scholarship disbursement or the cost of two or even three relocatable studios, which is just an amazing and heartening result," said Jo.

Long term supporters, Gandel Philanthropy supported this year's event with a matching grant of up to \$70,000, almost doubling their \$40,000 contribution in 2016. We are incredibly grateful for this vital support which will have a huge impact on the work we are able to undertake.

We are still tallying the total funds raised across the whole event as we go to print on



STUDENTS AND JUDGES – MYSPACE WINNER, KIDS CHOICE AND MOST INTERACTIVE/IMAGINATIVE AWARD



ANDY & BEN FROM THE BLOCK 2016 WITH DEAN WARRICK, NEIL STONELL AND MATT HUTTON FROM GRIMSHAW ARCHITECTURE



KOOKY CUBBY BY FMSA ARCHITECTURE & RMIT, WINNER BEST ARCHITECTURE AWARD

this edition of *Undercover News*, but we estimate through the sale of the cubbies, merchandise, raffle tickets, together with the matching grant from Gandel Philanthropy, we'll exceed \$180,000! A record for the Cubby House Challenge® and Kids Under Cover! Thank you to all involved.

We would like to thank the following builders and designers for generously donating their time, expertise and of course the incredible cubby houses for the event;

FMSA Architecture; RMIT; Playce; Agency of Sculpture; Grimshaw Architecture; Warrick Home Builders; Porter Davis; and Probuild.

Visit cubbyhousechallenge.org.au for full results and photos.

MORELAND CITY COUNCIL STRENGTHENING THEIR COMMITMENT TO SUPPORT AT-RISK YOUNG PEOPLE

In partnership with Kids Under Cover, Moreland City Council is helping to keep families together and ensure young people do not become the face of homelessness in Australia.

Demonstrating their commitment to support at-risk young people in the community and raise awareness of the issue of youth homelessness Moreland City Council work hard to promote Donate Your Car® to residents by encouraging them to donate their unwanted vehicles.

In addition to promoting the program the council show their support by diverting any abandoned vehicles processed through council as donations to Kids Under Cover.

The impact of this partnership has been significant since it began in 2013, to date raising

almost \$315,000 by removing over 800 unwanted vehicles from the area, including 394 abandoned vehicles. That's the equivalent of funding required to build five new studios and provide funds to support our scholarship program - enabling young people to continue their education or training.

We are extremely grateful for the support we receive from Moreland City Council and residents. We look forward to the partnership continuing into the future.

If you would like to see your local council support our work in this way, why not send an email to their local laws team? Your council can contact us to find out about Donate Your Car® by calling 1800 801 633 or sending an email to donateyourcar@kuc.org.au



SHIRLEY'S CAR MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Shirley, 50, was thrilled to find out that her local council, Moreland City Council, was a partner of Kids Under Cover. With a new car, she had left her old car sitting on the street where it eventually received an impoundment notice.

"I didn't actually notice that the sticker said Kids Under Cover so I was really surprised when I called the number and realised you were a charity. It was a great outcome," said Shirley.

Having lived in Moreland City Council for more than ten years, Shirley couldn't be happier to call it home. "I think it's a great place to be and a good council, they will always hear you out and there is always something on in my community. I always look at the notice board at the local library to keep up to date."

Working as an Operating Theatre Technician, doing good is close to Shirley's heart.

"I worked at the Royal Children's Hospital for ten years and would donate a few dollars from my wages to charity to help the kids there. The more I can do to help people the better," says Shirley, who has been through hardship herself: "15-20 years ago, I was in a situation where I didn't have a safe home so it feels great to be able to give back, especially for young people."

Proud of her council's support of Kids Under Cover, Shirley thinks Donate Your Car® is a great way to make a difference. "I would much rather see my car go to Kids Under Cover than sell it to the wreckers. It was easy, the tow truck driver was sweet and helpful, and I was able to do something meaningful with my car so I would definitely recommend the program and Kids Under Cover to others", said Shirley.

COUNCIL TRANSFORMING A YOUNG MUM'S LIFE

We've built 12 studios in the City of Moreland, including one recently completed for a young mum at risk of homelessness.

Kate* and her baby, who were residing in an overcrowded two-bedroom house with other family members, were in desperate need of their own space, thanks to a Kids Under Cover studio they now have the room they need to bond.

Having to set-up a bedroom in the dining room of the house for herself and her baby the severe lack of space within the home was having a very negative effect on all members of the family.

Kate and her baby had no privacy, sleep was constantly interrupted, the room was cramped and noise from the baby also disrupted the other adults. Concerns for the development of the baby in such a cramped environment also increased.

With the added complications of mental health issues, arguments within the home became more frequent increasing tension for everyone.

The pressure on Kate was enormous. With nowhere else to go and a baby to support the prospect of homelessness was very likely.

A two-bedroom studio was installed in the backyard of the family home in late February 2017, giving Kate her own bedroom and another for her baby. Having their own space to bond, a quiet place for the baby to sleep and mum to retreat to, has not only aided Kate's capacity to study but given the rest of the family peace of mind and relieved a great deal of pressure.

Now that the studio is in place Kate will be eligible to apply for a Kids Under Cover mid-year scholarship in May which will assist with the expenses associated with her studies, ensuring she remains connected to education.

The support we receive from the City of Moreland delivers much more than just cars for our Donate Your Car® program, it ensures we can continue to provide for the local community.

*name has been changed

LIP BALMS HELPING TO PREVENT YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

When Ella, Courtney, Eve, Isabella, Mia and Sarah contacted Kids Under Cover about a fundraising idea, we were humbled by their enthusiasm, maturity and genuine desire to do something to help prevent youth homelessness.



The group, all year 11 students from Melbourne Girls College, joined YMCA's *Youth for Causes* program to learn about social entrepreneurship, community leadership and environmental responsibility. The program provided the funding, training and mentorship to create a social enterprise. Who they chose to support with the funds raised was entirely up to them.

"Seeing someone your own age homeless is really upsetting so we wanted to support the prevention of youth homelessness. We really wanted to get behind something we find close to our hearts and have a real passion for, so choosing Kids Under Cover was easy" says Ella.

Having decided on the charity, they then needed a great product. "After some consideration and advice from our mentor we came up with the idea of creating lip balms

that were vegan, cruelty free, handmade and completely natural, so 'Sheltered Lip Balms' were born," explains Ella.

The lip balms were an overnight success. "There was huge demand from Facebook that we didn't expect -we sold a lot very quickly." Ella credits their success to their passion for the cause and the product, "and we had really great people supporting us too."

With the lip balms selling out, the group raised \$4,680, but more importantly helped raise awareness of the issue of youth homelessness.

"We are all incredibly proud of what we achieved and feel really invested in the product we created. We can't wait to see how far we can take the project so will definitely be picking it up again once our exams are over," said Ella.

We are overwhelmed by the group's commitment and thank all six students for choosing to support our work. In a community where so many young Australians are at risk of or are already homeless, it's inspiring to see young people work together as young leaders to make a real difference.





YES I WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Please make a donation by completing this form and returning it in the reply paid envelope provided.

Please accept my gift of My own choice \$ _____ \$35 \$70 \$105

I enclose a Cheque Money Order (please make your gift payable to KIDS UNDER COVER)

- OR -

Credit card - please debit this card: Mastercard Visa Amex Diners

Card No:

Expiry: / CSC No.

Name on Card: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Contact Telephone: _____ Email: _____

- Send your donation form in the enclosed reply paid envelope or mail to **Kids Under Cover, PO Box 5141, Burnley VIC 3121**
- Call us on **1800 801 633**
- Visit our website **kuc.org.au**

Gifts of \$2 or more are tax deductible. Personal information is collected to process donations, issue tax receipts and to send you updates. For these purposes, your information may be shared with trusted third parties and our service providers (and their directors, servants and agents), either in Australia or overseas. Failure to provide personal information may result in Kids Under Cover being unable to provide you with certain information and updates. Our Privacy Policy - kuc.org.au/privacywhistleblowingfeedback/ - contains information about: (i) how you can access and correct your personal information; (ii) how you can lodge a complaint regarding the handling of your personal information; and (iii) how any complaint will be handled by Kids Under Cover. You may contact our privacy officer with any queries via email: kuc@kuc.org.au or mail: Kids Under Cover GPO Box 5141 Burnley VIC 3121 or telephone: 1800 801 633.

Please tick here if you do NOT want to receive future communications from Kids Under Cover

Occasionally we allow like-minded organisations to contact you with information that may be of interest to you, including some organisations located outside Australia. Those organisations allow us to do the same and this way we can reach more people with vital information.

Please tick here if you do NOT want to receive communications from organisations we trust



Please update your address details if the information we have is incorrect.

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Address: _____

Thank you for your support!



**IF UNDELIVERED
PLEASE RETURN TO**

PO Box 5141
Burnley Vic 3121

POSTAGE
PAID
AUSTRALIA

**kuc.org.au
1800 801 633**

THIS SPACE IS BROUGHT TO YOU BY KIDS UNDER COVER.

By providing living space to young people at risk of homelessness, Kids Under Cover gives them the opportunity to pursue a better life.

**READ HOW OUR SPACES PREVENT
YOUNG PEOPLE BECOMING HOMELESS.**

KUC.ORG.AU

