



UNDERCOVER NEWS

SPRING 2018

8

The New Kids on The Block



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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 in their lives.

A NOTE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD...

Welcome to spring and what generally marks the beginning of the race to the end of the year, a busy time for many. For Kids Under Cover it seems we have been racing since January.

As I look back on my first year as Chairman of the Kids Under Cover Board, I'm reminded what an exciting time the last 12 months has been with great progress achieved on several projects.

Earlier in the year we announced our intent to pilot a new program aimed at filling the gap in emergency crisis accommodation for young people. Our Short Stays Studio Program was successfully launched in August during Homelessness Week.

Joining forces with Child & Family Services Ballarat the first of two studios was constructed and handed over to approved foster carers, Paul and Maria Baldwin on 9 August.

All going well we may look to expand the pilot program into other geographical areas to gain a greater idea of the potential for making a significant impact in this space.

I am also pleased to see our social enterprise, Nestd go from strength to strength. As many of you know, our compact homes launched in March with just two product offerings. Six months down the track with the support of our friends at Grimshaw Architects, Peter Maddison Architects and Ravida Homes, Nestd now has five compact homes available to purchase.

Of course, none of the work we do would be possible without your continued support and dedication to at-risk young people.

I extend my deepest gratitude to every individual and organisation who shares our vision. Your commitment really does make an enormous difference in the lives of the young people and families we support.

On a final note, the Kids Under Cover Annual General Meeting is quickly approaching. I welcome the opportunity to speak with you then and extend a warm invitation to join us on Wednesday, 21 November (see more on page 10).

I hope you enjoy this edition of Undercover News and wish you a successful race to the finish line of 2018.



Colin Radford

Colin Radford
Chairman
Kids Under Cover

SOUTH EAST WATER ASSIST WITH BUSHFIRE MANAGEMENT OVERLAYS

In response to the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission, Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO) mapping was introduced in an effort to make new homes, our communities and the environment safer and more resilient to bushfire.

The BMO triggers the need for new developments to include appropriate bushfire protection measures. For Kids Under Cover this means any new studio builds in affected areas need to adhere to the regulations.

Building a studio in certain areas of Victoria now requires consideration of a range of bushfire issues such as siting of the building, providing defensible space, on-site water availability and emergency vehicle access.

In recent times we have faced challenges when building studios in areas of Victoria which are affected by the BMO. This has resulted in some studio builds being placed on hold as we worked on ways to meet the requirements.

In the true spirit of community, our friends at South East Water answered our call for

help. The South East Water team have been working with us as we figure out the bushfire protection measures we needed to implement.

Back in July, our CEO, Jo Swift was joined by the South East Water team onsite in Melbourne's South East to see if they could help. The build of a two-bedroom studio for a young mum and her toddler had been on hold for almost 12 months while a solution to address the BMO requirements was pursued.

A result of our discussions with South East Water has seen those builds put on hold finally released after they donated 10x 5,000L water tanks and pumps for us to install in affected studio locations. And, like the families awaiting studios in these areas we couldn't be more grateful to have received this support.

South East Water really understand the value in early intervention initiatives like our Studio Program and are genuinely excited to be able to make a difference in the lives of vulnerable young people.

Thank you, South East Water.



Sharon Young from South East Water with Marcia (carer of studio recipient) and Kids Under Cover's National Programs Manager, Pete Zwiers

ENDING HOMELESSNESS TOGETHER

'You can't have Housing First...without housing...first' – it's quite a powerful statement and a solution which Australian and International evidence strongly supports.

To kick start Homelessness Week the National Homelessness Conference was held in Melbourne 6-7 August. International Guest Speaker Juha Kaakinen shared Finland's secrets to ending homelessness.

Juha left attendees with this undeniable truth. A housing first model works.

It seems a no brainer really, yet despite the great success of the Housing First model in Finland, here in Australia we are still trying to convince our leaders that *homes fix homelessness*.

Across Australia, Homelessness Week was a terrific opportunity for the sector to call on our leaders to urgently address the factors which have contributed to 116,000 Australians being counted as homeless¹.

For many reasons the number of people experiencing homelessness continues to surge. One contributing factor is a lack of affordable housing.



Maria and Paul outside the newly constructed one-bedroom studio

¹ ABS Census 2016 data

Homelessness Australia, together with The Council to Homeless Persons have been campaigning for the government to fix the housing system in Australia.

The Everybody's Home campaign featured heavily during Homelessness Week with sector partners all joining in the call for more affordable housing options for renters, first homebuyers and people who just need a safe roof over their heads.

The Everybody's home campaign focuses on five simple things our government can do to fix the housing system;

1. Support for first home buyers;
2. A national housing strategy;
3. A better deal for renters;
4. Immediate relief for Australians in chronic rental stress, and
5. A plan to end homelessness by 2030.

Nationally, homelessness has increased 14% in five years. "Shockingly, two in every five-people counted as homeless on Census night are under the age of 25. Prevention and early intervention is the key to tackling our homelessness crisis," says Kids Under Cover CEO, Jo Swift.

During Homelessness Week we were excited to complete the first of two studios as part of the Short Stays Studio Program pilot.

Long-time foster carers Maria and Paul have since welcomed into the studio a 15-year-old girl who contacted Child & Family Services Ballarat (CAFS) seeking emergency accommodation. The young person will stay in the studio while CAFS work towards arranging longer-term housing and connect her to other support services.

Homelessness Week is a great time to start conversations and raise awareness of people experiencing homelessness, the issues they face & the action needed to achieve enduring solutions. But, it is important we keep the conversations going throughout the year to ensure real action is taken to end homelessness.

WELCOME GEORGE

In August we welcomed a new Director to the Kids Under Cover Board. It is with a great deal of excitement we introduce you to George Liacos.

George is the founder and chief strategist of Spark Strategy. With over 25 years of strategy, innovation and industry experience, he has become a highly sought after public speaker and writer, sharing his insights and lessons-learned to audiences and readers around the world.

George works across sectors to bring people and organisations together around their purpose and for massive social impact. He has helped more than 200 not-for-profits innovate for financial resilience, dozens of corporates through change, developing more impactful stakeholder engagement and partnerships. He also works with national and local governments undertaking social system reform.

We are delighted to have George join the Kids Under Cover family, we anticipate his skills and experience will be an enormous asset to our board.

We look forward to working with George and thank him for making this commitment and his belief in our work.



INNOVATION FOR GROWTH THE NEXT THREE YEARS

In January, with the support of our friends at Deloitte, the Kids Under Cover Board and Senior Management team developed a new three year strategic plan. To ensure we are all working toward common goals input from staff was also sought.

After a great deal of evaluation and examining the external environment, what we do and where we do it, the Board were pleased to conclude with a clear three year vision.

Innovation for Growth is the focus for our new three year strategy. Our priority remains to build studios and award scholarships.

To do this we must utilise our key strengths to both innovate and grow our impact.

To expand our unique Studio and Scholarship Programs to reduce youth homelessness it is essential we work on achieving financial independence and stability by diversifying our revenue streams.

Our current Donate Your Car® program along with the new social enterprise, Nestd are now leading this charge, along with the broadening of our funding through stronger philanthropic and corporate partnerships.

Whilst our geographic focus will remain in Victoria in year one, we will expand our unique offerings to further develop additional support for young people.

Our Short Stays Studio Program and the Village 21 project will be the focus of expansion whilst we continue to deliver our Studio and Scholarship Programs business as usual.

In year one we will not actively seek expansion outside of Victoria, but plan for this in year two and possibly pursue interstate expansion in year three.

Our energy and resources are better focussed on improving the cost-effectiveness of our programs while assuring the quality of the studios and ongoing maintenance.

To achieve our strategic priorities building a strong workforce is imperative. Maintaining a positive workplace culture by recruiting and developing highly skilled and motivated employees while recognising and acknowledging their performance is essential.

Ensuring our team can perform at their best while feeling supported and valued will continue to be the secret to our success.

Read more at kuc.org.au



The Peak on display at the Melbourne Home Show as part of the "Street of Houses" exhibition

NESTD SIX MONTHS ON

Launching our social enterprise, Nestd in March seems like a life-time ago. Since then the product offering has expanded from two, the studio design and The Loft, to five.

Thanks to Grimshaw Architects, *The Peak*, a single story compact home was released in June, followed by the release of *The Maquette* by Ravid Homes in August, and the highly anticipated design by Peter Maddison Architects.

Nestd homes are Australian made and designed. They are sustainable with a small footprint, affordable and creatively designed by leading architectural firms.

And they are creating quite a stir in the market, attracting a variety of media attention.

Featuring on Channel 9's A Current Affair program, The Herald Sun and Domain Magazine, along with a variety of online publications, Nestd has generated huge interest in a short period of time.

And a focus of that interest is the social purpose of these homes. For purchasers seeking to make a greater difference, a Nestd home is certainly ticking the box.

In a move to reach our target market and raise the profile of Nestd the team recently attended the Melbourne Home Show held at the Convention Centre.

With an estimated 30,000 visitors to the show several discussions with potential buyers were had, many of whom are now in the process of having site surveys conducted to assess the viability of purchase.

Across the four days of the show our display home, *The Peak* proved to be a star attraction. Those who ventured in for a closer look were blown away by the smart use of space, quality and of course the aesthetically pleasing grandness captured within the 32.5sqm footprint.

We look forward to sharing more of the journey of Nestd by keeping you up to date with the progress as we embark further with this venture.



Challenge winners Kerry and Spence with Aliesha and Teagan, Shelley Craft and Kids Under Cover CEO Jo Swift

A COLLABORATION LIKE NO OTHER SAW THE BLOCK VISIT BENDIGO FOR A VERY SPECIAL CHALLENGE

A project long on our wish list and months in the making came to fruition in March this year in the gold rush boom town of Bendigo.

In late 2017 we received a call from Channel 9 to say, after many years, a partnership between Kids Under Cover and *The Block* was about to bloom.

We were going to be on *The Block*! Did we hear right? We were going to be on *The Block*? Aligning what we do with a reality show focussed on renovation was a dream come true, but one with such a significantly high profile nationally was hard to believe.

Featuring in week three as the "Charity Challenge" meant our work would feature on almost one million television sets around the

country. Money can't buy that kind of exposure and we are eternally grateful to Channel 9 for their belief in our programs.

Contestants had their work cut out for them at the Bendigo Showgrounds as they faced a Kids Under Cover Studio Challenge, shining a light on the issue of youth homelessness.

All five teams were forced from The Gatwick when the site was shut down and sent on a road trip to Bendigo for a mystery challenge. Upon arrival at the Showgrounds, they were greeted by our very own CEO, Jo Swift alongside the show's hosts Scotty Cam and Shelley Craft.

After an introduction to our work from Jo, teams slept in the studios before taking on the challenge to style and fit-out their one-bedroom studios.

With just eight hours to shop, paint, install flooring, window coverings and furnish the studios the BLOCKheads certainly had their work cut out for them.

Each team were given a client profile for the young person receiving the studio. Keeping to this brief influenced many of the final design decisions. Making for some very specific and special purchases.

True to the challenging circumstances of reality TV the BLOCKheads raced to the finish line, with all hands on deck to complete the studios before "Tools down" was called. The studios were then critiqued by guest judges, Aliesha and Teagan Newman.

And who better to judge the studio challenge than two young people who know what it's like to live in a Kids Under Cover studio? These sisters know only too well the difference a studio can make.

After inspecting the five studios alongside Jo and host of *The Block*, Shelley Craft, Aliesha and Teagan had the tough decision of deciding who would win the Kids Under Cover Challenge.

South Australian couple Kerrie and Spence were crowned the winners, having created a beautiful space for a 17-year old girl in desperate need of some privacy and stability, her own space to feel safe and belong.

A project of this magnitude doesn't happen without the support of a community that cares and shares our vision.

There are many people to thank. Firstly, to *The Block* and all contestants, thank you for raising awareness of our work and the issue of youth homelessness.



The winning studio being craned into place



Inside the winning studio

We would also sincerely like to thank Gandel Philanthropy who continue to support our vision of a community where no young person is homeless. Gandel Philanthropy generously funded four of the five studios used for the project.

Our very own Studio Program team worked tirelessly to match approved studio applicants with these five studios and coordinate the complicated installations to finalise the project.

Not a simple task considering each studio needed to be craned into place after the challenge in Bendigo.

Big thanks to long-time friends Harris HMC and the team at Ortech Industries who provided an enormous amount of support leading up to the project and on site in Bendigo. The team at Harris HMC also lending a hand to ensure each studio was installed safely at its final destination.

And the collaboration didn't end there.

Our friends from Sensum put us in contact with the The Grove Group, knowing we needed a bit of help to put the studios in place. The team at Grove Group generously stored the five studios and donated their time & services to install them. We couldn't have done it without you.

Support from organisations like these makes it possible for us to provide studios for young people at risk of homelessness. Everyone involved went above and beyond to ensure this project was delivered without a hitch, and for that we will be forever grateful.

All five studios are now supporting five at-risk young people and their families. And they are already making a significant difference.

The studio challenge episode aired across two nights on *The Block* – Tuesday 21 and Wednesday 22 August. Read more at kuc.org.au

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Kids Under Cover Annual General Meeting

Fenix Events, 680 Victoria Street, Richmond
5.30pm, Wednesday, 21 November 2018
Contact Sheryn Cooper on 03 9429 7444
if you wish to attend.

2019 – Kids Under Cover celebrates 30 years!

Stay tuned for details.

World Homeless Day

Wednesday, 10 October 2018

Nestd Display Home and Feature Garden at Melbourne International Flower & Garden Show

27-31 March 2019

SCHOLARSHIP CEREMONY CELEBRATES VICTORIAN YOUNG PEOPLE

Joined by family members, friends and teachers, 290 young Victorians were celebrated at the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Student Scholarship Program Ceremony in Melbourne on 3 September 2018.

Funded by the Victorian Government and administered by Kids Under Cover, the program supports students living in public or community housing, or those at risk of homelessness. Scholarships of \$1,100 are awarded to year 11 and 12 students to cover the cost of things like textbooks, computer equipment, public transport, disability aids or other specialist equipment.

More importantly, the program acknowledges students for their effort and attendance and supports them in building a solid foundation for their future.

Year 12 student Cassie addressed her peers talking about the difference receiving the scholarship last year has made to her life, and how continuing with her education has enabled her to take control of her future.



Jo Swift with student Cassie and Danny Pearson MP

Danny Pearson MP also spoke at the ceremony. He recognised the commitment of the young people, their families and teachers, encouraging all scholarship recipients to concentrate on what is important – finishing your education and making the most of the opportunities presented to you.

Receiving a scholarship not only assists financially, it also gives young people a sense of purpose, encouragement and a commitment to continue with their schooling, paving the way for a brighter future.



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WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE BUT NEED SOME INSPIRATION?

This is our good friend Radley, from the Master Builders Association of Victoria, recently Radley tackled the Kokoda trail in support of young people at risk of homelessness.

No easy feat, and certainly not for everyone but gets you thinking outside the square about ways in which you can show you care.

Thanks to the generosity of Radley's family and friends he raised close to \$7,000 in support of our early intervention programs.

Kokoda not your thing? That's ok, there are many other ways to fundraise for Kids Under Cover and raise awareness of the issue of youth homelessness. Without the support of like-minded people, we could not continue to pursue our vision of *a community where no young person is homeless*.

Contact fundraise@kuc.org.au to organise your own fundraising event.