

UNDERCOVER NEWS

AUTUMN 2021



CEO MESSAGE

I have a number of exciting pieces of news to share with you about Kids Under Cover and the homelessness sector.



JO SWIFT WITH THE HON. RICHARD WYNNE AND KIDS UNDER COVER CHAIRMAN GEORGE LIACOS AT THE VILLAGE 21 LAUNCH.

I'm delighted to announce that Kids Under Cover's youth homelessness prevention program is expanding to South Australia. We have received \$2.3 million in funding through the Marshall Liberal Government's Homelessness Prevention Fund. With the support of the South Australian Government and generous philanthropic donors, we will build 51 studios in South Australia over three years, preventing 78 young people from experiencing homelessness. We are so excited to be able to provide our life changing studio program to young people and families in South Australia.

There has also been some big news for the homelessness sector this year, benefiting the most vulnerable in our community. Over the past 21 months a Parliamentary Inquiry has been conducted into homelessness in Victoria. Last month the final report was tabled, with the committee making 51 recommendations to the Victorian Government.

There is a significant focus on early intervention of homelessness in the report, and I am very proud to share with you that Kids Under Cover was specifically named in one of the recommendations. I would like to acknowledge the significant contribution Brittne

“We are so excited to be able to provide our life changing studio program to young people and families in South Australia.”

(a former studio and scholarship recipient) has made as part of our submission to this inquiry. Brittne bravely shared her experience with being at-risk of homelessness and the impact Kids Under Cover has had in her life at the in-person presentation at Parliament House. We look forward to the Victorian Government's response to the report.

As you may be aware, last May we made the difficult decision to temporarily close applications for our studio program due to insufficient funding. Since then we have received more than 600 enquiries for our studios in Victoria and at this stage we are still unable to re-open applications. We are hoping to increase our available funding soon to be able to provide our studios to the young people and their families who desperately need them.

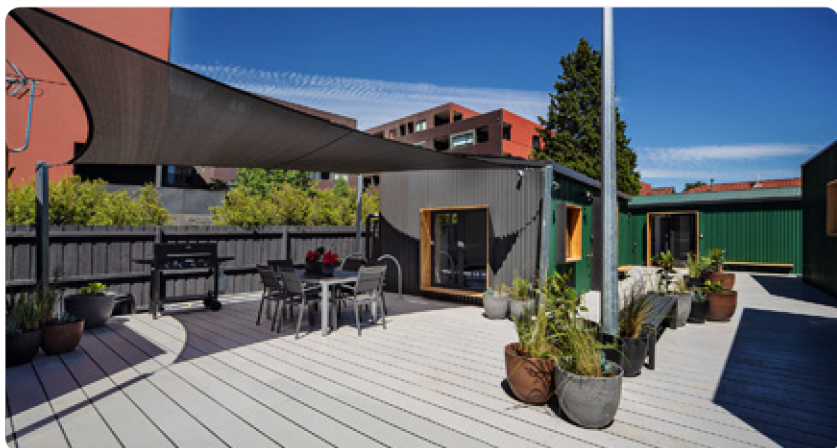
As we approach the end of the financial year, I am reflecting on the impact we have had over the past 12 months. While we have all faced uncertainty and change, the one thing that has remained consistent has been our shared commitment to preventing youth homelessness. I am so grateful for kind and generous supporters like you that are as dedicated to our mission as we are. Thank you for your ongoing support, it is making a life changing difference to hundreds of vulnerable young people and their families.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jo Swift'.

Jo Swift
Chief Executive Officer

VILLAGE 21 LAUNCH

The launch of Village 21 in Preston is giving young people exiting care the chance of a brighter future.



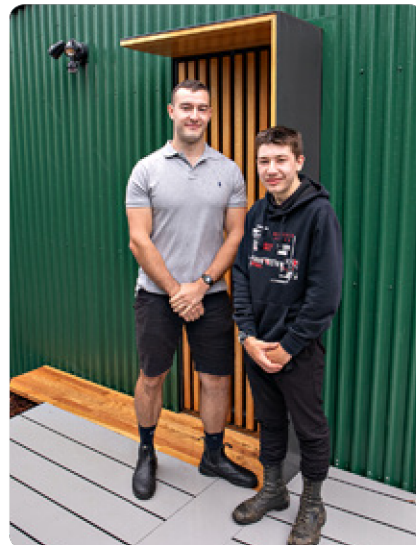
VILLAGE 21'S COMMUNAL OUTDOOR AREA.

A first-of-its-kind, Village 21 provides studios for six young people, giving them a stable home, wrap around supports and communal living elements for up to three years.

Funded by the Victorian Government and delivered in partnership with Anglicare Victoria, Village 21 is designed to interrupt the spiral of homelessness young people leaving Out of Home Care (OoHC) often find themselves on.

18-year-old Kiren was one of the first young people to move into Village 21, having spent most of his life in OoHC. For young people like Kiren, the village will provide an opportunity to successfully transition to independence.

"I've been living at Village 21 for a few months now. Before this I was sleeping on my mate's couch for a month," Kiren said.



LIVE IN MENTOR MORGAN WITH TENANT KIREN.

“Places like Village 21 give people like me a place to stay and study and learn and go out into the future – a way to get back onto your feet.”

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We were honoured to have The Hon. Richard Wynne, Minister for Housing, officially launch Village 21.

“There's nothing more important we can do than to provide people in need with safe, secure and affordable housing, and Village 21 is a wonderful example of that,” Minister Wynne said at the launch.

“This wonderful partnership between Anglicare Victoria and Kids Under Cover is not just about housing. We understand the fundamental importance of housing, but it's also about the wrap-around services to support young people through their transition from out-of-home care to independent living.”

To take a virtual tour of Village 21 and watch the launch video visit kuc.org.au/village21

ARISTEA'S STORY

For Aristeia, receiving a Kids Under Cover studio and scholarships changed the course of her life. She shares her journey with us, and her plans as this year's Ken & Lenka Morgan scholarship recipient.

Before our family received the studio, I was struggling at school and was regularly refusing to attend. I shared a room with my mother and my sisters shared a room with each other — an arrangement that led to constant arguments, mostly about space and conflicting study/sleep schedules. Our family relations were breaking down, and there were many times where someone left the home and slept elsewhere to get away from it. Unfortunately, there was a long time where I was considering leaving home entirely due to feeling unwanted and like a burden, which I now know couldn't be farther from the truth. When looking back, it's hard to believe how at risk I was of homelessness and leaving school.

“When looking back, it's hard to believe how at risk I was of homelessness and leaving school.”

Receiving the Kids Under Cover studio when I was 15 changed the direction of my life and enabled me to pursue dreams I never thought were possible.

It allowed me to create a study schedule away from the disruptions in the main house and encouraged me to become self-motivated in my studies. Over time, my situation improved, and I fell back in love with education. My studio continues to provide me with a haven away from the rest of the world when times are tough, a place where I only have to focus on myself. Having this space has been invaluable in the pursuit of my law degree, and I don't believe I would have ever gotten here had we not received the studio.

The studio allowed me and my family to repair our relationships. When we received the studio, it wasn't



ARISTEIA IN THE OFFICE WHERE SHE WORKS AS A PARALEGAL.

just me and my sister who benefited, everyone in the family suddenly had their own space. This greatly reduced arguments and meant we were spending quality time with each other. I started seeking out conversations with my mum again. My close



ARISTEA WITH HER DOG DAKOTA OUTSIDE HER STUDIO.

relationship with her is one I treasure, and I'm not sure it would have been possible to get here without the studio. We're now a very tight knit family and support each other through everything.

Further, without the annual scholarships I don't know if I ever would have pursued law. Law can be prohibitively expensive to study, and requires a large time commitment, which can be difficult if you have limited financial support. The scholarships allowed me to purchase the textbooks and equipment I need without having to worry about where the money will come from.

When I found out I was this year's Ken & Lenka Morgan scholarship recipient I was really excited and a bit shocked. I was immensely grateful to have been offered this opportunity, a feeling that has remained even after the surprise wore off!

With the support of this scholarship, I'm aiming to participate in an Internship Program overseas, with a focus on international crime. Travel restrictions pending! It will be the first time I've travelled anywhere alone, which is very intimidating, but I know it will give me a newfound independence and confidence in my abilities. The scholarship is enabling me to seek out an opportunity for progression in

my education and career that I never believed I had access to.

It can be difficult looking ahead at your future career and knowing that you may struggle to get ahead due to the lack of financial support in your studying years. However, with the support of Kids Under Cover I have been able to seize opportunities to gain experience, knowing that I don't have to worry about their impact financially.

“It can be difficult looking ahead at your future career and knowing that you may struggle to get ahead due to the lack of financial support in your studying years.”

To the donors and supporters of Kids Under Cover, I am so grateful. Your support has shown me that we are capable of improving ourselves and the world around us if we are kind, empathetic and willing to put in the work. I know I have personally changed for the better because of the support from Kids Under Cover, and so has my world. I cannot thank you all enough.

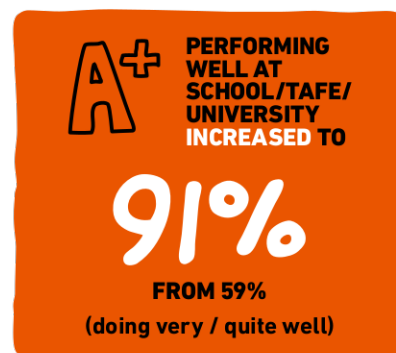
YOUR IMPACT

By supporting Kids Under Cover you are making a life changing difference for kids and young people at risk of homelessness.

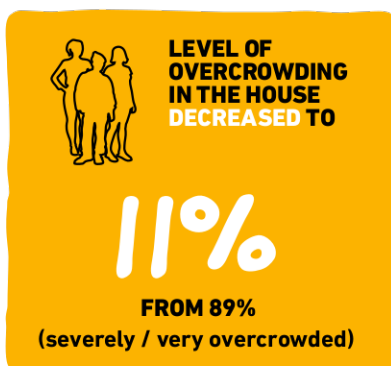
This impact is clearly demonstrated through our annual program evaluation. Every year we speak with carers who have a studio in their backyard to find out what difference a Kids Under Cover studio and scholarship have made for their family.

Thanks to your support, we are able to improve family harmony, reduce conflict and increase educational attendance and performance. And this is just the beginning. Some of the results from our most recent survey are shared below.

“It was life changing for us, really brought us all together and got her off the streets.”



“It's made a huge difference in our household. It's almost stopped all the negativity, the fighting and the yelling... everyone seems to be happier because they have their own space.”



“Having the studio has given her a strong sense of security, she has her space and it is safe, it's given her a strong foundation to be able to prosper.”

PEOPLE OF KIDS UNDER COVER

Elaine Forde AM is a long-term supporter of Kids Under Cover. She was recently appointed a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for her significant service to the commercial retail sector, and to the community. Elaine shares her experience of supporting Kids Under Cover and leaving a gift in her Will to continue her legacy.

How did you first hear about Kids Under Cover?

I met Jo Swift (Kids Under Cover's CEO) at a business women's luncheon and she shared details about Kids Under Cover and the work they were doing. I was aware of youth homelessness in Australia, but I wasn't aware that Kids Under Cover were out there and doing something about it.

What drew you to support Kids Under Cover?

The work really resonated with me because it was so different. I was really impressed with the model of the programs – keeping kids and young people at home and connected with their families. It really appealed to me to do something to help. I love knowing that I am helping to keep families together and giving young people the space they need to grow.

What is your approach to giving?

It's important to me to take the time to get to know the organisation I am supporting. I learnt so much the day I visited a Kids Under Cover studio. It gave me great insight and brought home the importance



ELAINE FORDE.

of the work that Kids Under Cover are doing in preventing youth homelessness. Also the difference it makes, and how important it is for the young person to have their own space whilst still being able to stay directly connected to their family. It was a magic day.

Why did you decide to leave a gift in your Will to Kids Under Cover?

While I don't have children or a family of my own, it is really important to me that Kids Under Cover's work in keeping families together continues. It is my hope that the contribution from my Will helps Kids Under Cover reach their goal of preventing youth homelessness in the future.

What would you say to others considering a lasting gift?

If you are able to leave a gift in your Will to a charity, just do it. Everyone is in a different situation, but if you are able to support people in life, why wouldn't you continue to support them through a gift in your Will. You may not have the satisfaction of seeing the impact of your gift today, but it's wonderful to know that the people who need your help will continue to get it through your legacy.

If you're considering leaving a gift to Kids Under Cover we would love to talk to you about the best way we can honour your wishes. You can get in touch with us at bequests@kuc.org.au or 1800 801 633

A PLACE TO CALL HOME

You may remember reading Dorothy and Tilly's story with our urgent plea for support in December. We're so pleased to share that thanks to your support the family have finally felt the relief of a Kids Under Cover studio and scholarships.

Dorothy took in her three grandchildren, Tilly, Jack and Ben, when their mother was no longer able to care for them. The overcrowding in Dorothy's small home was pushing the family to breaking point, and it was getting harder every year as the kids grew.

When Tilly and her brothers saw the studio in their Grandma Dorothy's yard, they were very excited.

"I thought it was cool and nice, because I'd be able to put my belongings in and not have them scattered all around... I was able to make it the space that I wanted it to be," said Tilly.

For her brother Jack, the studio made a big difference in his ability to study for school, and to connect with his friends. "Having the space has helped a lot, I can concentrate and focus more on my studies now which is good. Plus, I can have mates over to watch the footy!"

“I thought it was cool and nice... I was able to make it the space that I wanted it to be.”

Thinking about the impact of the studio, Dorothy reflects, "the kids used to get quite cross at me and my husband, because things were hard, and we were the ones there, you know, they didn't have their mum and dad to take out their frustrations with, so I used to just say to them 'Nan and pop are doing the best we can'".



DOROTHY AND TILLY.

Now Dorothy says, "the kids are much happier within themselves, much more content."

And it's even given Dorothy's family back some quality time and space. Dorothy says, "It's given us all space to spread out. I don't have to be making and folding away sleeping spaces each day. And now every time someone comes to visit, I don't have say, 'I'm sorry about the mattress on the floor, but the grandkids sleep there.'"

"The studio has been an absolute godsend" says Dorothy.

*Names have been changed to protect identities.
The models pictured are not connected to this story.