

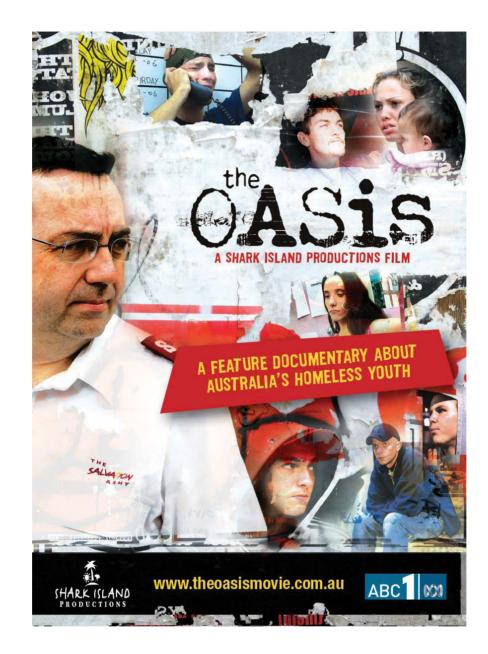


A SHARK ISLAND PRODUCTIONS FILM

Teaching Resource for Health and Physical Education

STORIES OF YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

WWW.THEOASISMOVIE.COM.AU



This resource is based on THE OASIS documentary, produced by Shark Island Productions (2008).

The documentary can be viewed online at: (*http://theoasismovie.com.au*), or it can be downloaded from the iTunes store: (*https://itunes.apple.com. au/movie/the-oasis/id774208893*)

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FOREWORD

Since commencing my role as a Schools Liaison Consultant in 2011, I've had the privilege of working with over 300 schools and 30,000 students with the aim to educate, equip and empower young people to tackle social injustice in their communities.

After becoming aware of the alarming rates of youth homelessness in Australia, the reasons why it happens and the potential opportunity we have to prevent this issue altogether, I became compelled to work with high school students who play a big part in the solution.

However with so much going on in the world, it can be overwhelming deciding where my time, resource and energy is best placed and sometimes I wonder if youth homelessness really is the issue that needs my support the most.

Then I remember the teacher who spent six weeks sleeping in their car and showering at the school they taught at due to financial hardship and relationship breakdown.

I remember the Year 9 student who lived with her mum, dad and two siblings but her dad beat only her when he was drunk. Besides a friend, I was the only other person she'd told because she didn't want to ruin her family's reputation.

I remember the male student whose girlfriend was self-harming due to family breakdown and mental health issues but I was the only one he'd told because she threatened to take her life if he told anyone they knew.

I remember facilitating a workshop for twelve students and three of them shared personal experiences of homelessness – one who had grown up in foster care, one who had autism and one whose brother experienced homelessness for years. These are just a few of the people I've encountered over the past three years. It isn't always in our control to influence what happens at home but what we can influence is the support network we provide young people.

Through these teaching resources and our workshops, I've seen students explore what it means to build resilience and overcome adversity, develop their empathy and social conscience, enhance their communication skills, learn how to better support themselves and others and be motivated to be positive contributors of their community for a purpose bigger than themselves. I've seen young people slowly chip away at the barriers of stigmas; fear and shame that hold them back and ultimately redefine what it means to seek help and the issue of youth homelessness itself.

I want to personally thank you from the bottom of my heart for picking up this resource. I experienced the care and support I truly needed after being homeless for twelve months and I know that a future where every young person gets the care and support they need is within our reach so I hope that you will join me in making it a reality.



Bee Orsini

School Liaison Consultant – Salvos Schools



WHY USE THIS RESOURCE

On any given night in Australia over 100,000 people are homeless. Of these 44,083, according to the 2011 ABC Census, are under 25 years old. These young people rarely become homeless due to their own fault. Most young people experience, or are at risk of homelessness, due to their family circumstance. It is likely their home environment is unsupportive, abusive, violent or they have experienced a relationship or family breakdown.

While this is devastating when you're young it does not have to dictate a young person's future. The life of someone who has been raised in a supportive and loving family and that of someone who has left home at 14 does not have to be so different. But it is, and it is up to us to address this issue and help change a young person's life.

Homelessness has large costs to the Australian community in terms of health, justice and community services and this cost increases the longer a person has been homeless. Specific strategies to address youth homelessness are critical to the overall reduction of homelessness in Australia.

This resource's overarching objective is to raise awareness of the issue and to motivate Australian Secondary Schools to work towards the alleviation of youth homelessness within their local community.

USING THIS RESOURCE

THE OASIS resource for Year 9 and 10 Health and Physical Education is focused on raising awareness of youth homelessness, celebrating the resilience of young people who are experiencing homelessness in Australia and empowering young people to take action to prevent youth homelessness in their local community.

This resource is a revision of the original ActNow: Youth Homelessness Matters teaching resource originally published in 2008. The modules within this revised resource have been developed to explicitly link to the Australian Curriculum for Health and Physical Education and provide contemporary opportunities for exploring resilience, applying strategies for dealing with challenges, providing support for peers and developing advocacy and action skills.

The resource was produced to accompany THE OASIS documentary and accompanying study guide in schools. THE OASIS documentary (https://sharkisland.com.au/store/ products/) followed Captain Paul Moulds from the Oasis Youth Service in his day-to-day work with young homeless people in Sydney, Australia. This raw observational documentary, filmed over two years, is a tribute to the power of one man's persistence in the face of seemingly unrelenting darkness. As time unfolds, some of the homeless youth pull themselves out of misfortune and aspire to greater things, while others sink deeper into addiction and desperation.

In the midst of all the chaos Paul battles unflinchingly to save these lost young people, and reflects on his own past along the way. THE OASIS documentary provides a rare insight into the lives of homeless youth and will change attitudes towards youth homeless issues.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Homelessness is not just the result of too few houses. Its causes are many and varied. Domestic violence, a shortage of affordable housing, unemployment, mental illness, family breakdown and drug and alcohol abuse all contribute to the level of homelessness in Australia (FaHCSIA, 2008). Homelessness is not a choice. Homelessness is one of the most potent examples of disadvantage in the community, and one of the most important markers of social exclusion (Department of Human Services, 2002).

Young people become homeless because of family breakdown, often stemming from parental conflicts or a collapse of their relationship with a husband/wife or partner. Some young people who are living independently become homeless because they can't afford living expenses including rent.

Being homeless is unsafe, unhealthy and very stressful. Young people experiencing homelessness are not a homogeneous group. They come from a range of family backgrounds, have diverse dispositions, expectations and desires, and they encounter services of varying quality. Their common needs are to have a stable home; friends; healthy nutrition; to be cared about as individuals; to have adequate educational support; help when they need help; and reliable adults in their lives.

Family breakdown is a broad term that includes such issues as mental illness, domestic violence, neglect, overcrowding, and generational poverty. Young people whose family support has broken down, leading to them going into state care, are particularly vulnerable to becoming homeless. However, when young people first become homeless, their friends and their friends' families often provide shelter and support. This is referred to as 'couch-surfing'. This can also include where young people have extended family members, grandmothers or aunts and uncles who often try to help. Without resources and support, these informal social support networks typically break down.

Mental health issues are more prevalent among homeless youth than the overall population of young people in Australia. In some cases, mental health is implicated in a young person becoming homeless, although it may be the case that the deterioration in the mental health of other family members tips young people into homelessness. However, becoming homeless is also an unhealthy lifestyle.

There is evidence that psychological and psychiatric problems may result from homelessness. When young people with mental health issues also develop substance use problems, the situation of co-morbidity (or dual diagnosis) presents major difficulties for supported accommodation services, as well as for specialist services that deal with mental health and drug and alcohol issues. Mental health is a major issue amongst chronically homeless youth with high and complex needs.

Source: Australia's Homeless Youth: a report of the National Youth Commission Inquiry into Youth Homelessness, National Youth Commission, 2008 can be accessed at (http://www.theoasismovie. com.au/report/report.php)

SOME KEY MESSAGES ABOUT YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

1. Youth homelessness is invisible

We often hear the reference to 'street kids' but in fact most homeless young people are invisible to us. The data tells us that most homeless young people are 'couch surfing' and living in other unstable situations. This generally means that they are temporarily staying with friends, relatives, family and sometimes with complete strangers. These young people will often be sleeping on couches or on the floors of these people's houses until they outstay their welcome and move on to the next place - hence the term 'couch surfing'. This is contrary to what the general public might assume, as the stereotypical homeless people are generally thought to live on the streets.

You don't have to be houseless to be homeless. These young people are not visible to the public yet they are a large proportion of the homeless youth population.

Key message for action:

Young homeless people do not need rough sleeping initiatives alone, but rather they need effective access to supported accommodation, family reconciliation services and community support and education programs to prevent homelessness in the first place.

2. Nearly half of all homeless Australians are children and young people under the age of 25

Under the ABS definition, a person is homeless if they do not have suitable accommodation alternatives and their current living arrangement:

- is in a dwelling that is inadequate, or
- has no tenure, or if their initial tenure is short and not extendable, or
- does not allow them to have control of, and access to, space for social relations.

Most of the homeless youth aged 12-18 years in 2011 were in 'severely' crowded dwellings (56%) or in supported accommodation for the homeless (28%). While 8% of homeless people aged 12-18 years were staying temporarily with other households, this proportion increases to 14% for youth aged 19-24 years.

Although youth are over-represented in the homeless population, homeless estimates for youth are likely to have been underestimated in the Census due to a usual address being reported for some homeless youth.

For some young people who are homeless and 'couch surfing', a usual residence may still be reported in the Census. Their homelessness is masked because their characteristics look no different to other youth who are not homeless but are simply visiting on Census night. A usual address may be reported for 'couch surfers' either because the young person doesn't want to disclose to the people they are staying with that they are unable to go home, or the person who fills out the Census form on behalf of the young person staying with them assumes that the youth will return to their home.

Key message for action:

Specific strategies to address child and youth homelessness are critical to the overall reduction and elimination of homelessness in Australia. There were 44,547 children and young people aged 0-25 who were homeless on census night in 2011. Broken down, there were 12,133 children under 12; 10,913 young people aged 12-18; and 15,325 young adults aged 19-25 who were homeless on census night in 2011.

3. Homelessness can affect any young person

There are a variety of reasons why children and young people become homeless that are often outside of the control of the young person. The general public often has a view that young homeless people are runaways and could return home if they wanted to. In reality many young people become homeless due to family breakdown, family violence and child abuse.

Statistics report that 45% of homeless young people identify interpersonal relationship problems including family violence and conflict with parents as the primary reason for becoming homeless. The next most common reasons are accommodation issues (18%) such as being evicted or unable to find suitable accommodation and financial reasons (14%) such as unable to pay rent or other financial difficulty.

Many young people find it difficult to be approved for leases due to the high demand on rental properties and discrimination against young people. There are also issues around overcrowding and the cost of housing that cause young people to become homeless.

Homelessness affects all groups of people however, we know that young people who are Indigenous, are from a single or blended family, have been homeless as a child or have been in statutory care, are at greater risk of homelessness.

Key message for action:

The wider community needs to understand the issues behind their homelessness and avoid judging homeless youth as 'delinquent' and 'street kids'.

4. A job alone is not the solution for youth homelessness

Can you imagine trying to maintain or find work when you have no stable living arrangement? Many young people are expected to secure and maintain a job without stable accommodation and support. Some people also believe that getting a job will resolve homelessness by providing an income, but this does not acknowledge the underlying causes of homelessness in young people.

Young people require safety and security, trust, and an appropriate support network for them to succeed at anything. The Australian Government has taken steps to reform the employment services sector to ensure that greater support is provided to young people who are homeless and job seeking, however we must ensure that homelessness intervention is not simplified to finding a job as there are other reasons why young people are homeless.

Key message for action:

It is important that young people are able to access support to address the underlying causes of their homelessness whilst they are supported to secure appropriate education and/or employment.

5. How would you cope with school if you were homeless?

There are nearly 10,000 homeless school students in Australia aged between 12 and 18 years old. In the Federal Government's White Paper on Homelessness the government commits to the following:

- Provide additional specialist support to children including brokerage funds to assist them to return to home and school.
- Deliver additional services for up to 9,000 12–18 year olds at risk of homelessness to remain connected with their families, where it is safe and appropriate, as well as access to education, training and employment.

Traditionally, homeless youth and those at risk of family breakdown have struggled to fit into the usual school environment. Their attendance usually suffers along with their level of concentration. Many students struggle to maintain positive friendships and others become withdrawn or their behaviour becomes disruptive to other students. Some students will drop out of school and may need assistance to re-enter school once their accommodation becomes stable. In some cases this may mean additional tuition or temporary breaks from their education.

Schools provide an excellent environment for early detection of risk factors that lead to homelessness and family breakdown. Therefore schools also provide an excellent avenue to assist families and young people to access appropriate support services to prevent homelessness.

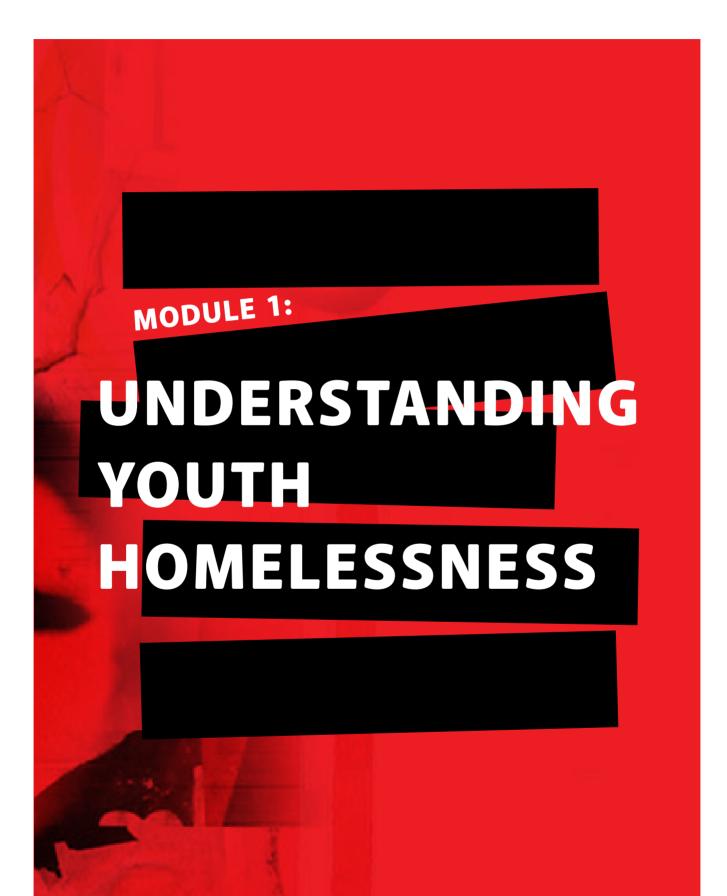
Key message for action:

Specific strategies are needed to support homeless children and young people to maintain or re-engage with their education. Strategies are also needed to provide effective early intervention and prevention services to children at risk of homelessness.

Accessed from the Youth Homelessness Matters website (www.youthhomelessnessmatters.info)

Sources: The Road Home: A National Approach to Reducing Homelessness, Dec 2008; 2006/07 AIHW National SAAP Data Report published in 2008; Chamberlain and MacKenzie 2008 Counting the Homeless Report 2006, ABS

TEACHING AND LEARNING MODULES



Overview

This module of the resource will guide students through an exploration of the issue of youth homelessness in Australia. The investigation will begin at the national level in preparation for narrowing the focus to the issue of homelessness in the local community. This module also includes activities for undertaking an in-depth exploration of the issue of urban youth homelessness by viewing THE OASIS documentary.

Australian Curriculum links

Elements of the Year 9 and 10 achievement standard addressed:

Students critically analyse contextual factors that influence their identities, relationships, decisions and behaviours. They analyse the impact attitudes and beliefs about diversity have on community connection and wellbeing. They evaluate the outcomes of emotional responses to different situations.

Year 9 and 10 Content descriptions addressed:

- Evaluate factors that shape identities, and analyse how individuals impact the identities of others (ACPPS089)
- Examine the impact of changes and transitions on relationships (ACPPS090)
- Evaluate situations and propose appropriate emotional responses and then reflect on possible outcomes of different responses (ACPPS094)
- Critique behaviours and contextual factors that influence the health and wellbeing of their communities (ACPPS098)

Source: Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), downloaded from the Australian Curriculum website on (28 July 2014).

M1: UNDERSTANDING YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

TEACHING AND LEARNING MODULES

Activity 1 UNDERSTANDING YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

Ask students to brainstorm what the word "home" means to them. Students can write a list of words or draw images to represent what means home to them. Ask students to share their words/images with a partner and to discuss the difference between a "shelter", a "house" and a "home".

Combine pairs of students into groups of four and ask groups to discuss whether having a home is more than just having a roof over your head.

Provide groups with butcher's paper and ask them to draw a Venn diagram with three circles overlapping (*see Figure 1*).

House Home Shelter

Share group responses and discuss the factors that could make a house NOT a home (e.g. family violence, conflict, feeling unsafe, etc).

Ask the class to explore the idea that homelessness is not just about being houseless. (*See Figure 2 for the different types of homelessness*).

Figure 1: What makes a house a home?

Figure 2: Types of homelessness

Homelessness does not just mean sleeping rough on the streets. There are three different types of homelessness that are used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics as the standard cultural definition of homelessness in Australia.

Primary homelessness includes all people without a 'roof over their head'. This means people who are living on the streets, sleeping in parks, squatting in derelict buildings or using cars or trains as temporary shelter.

Secondary homelessness includes people who frequently move from one type of shelter to another. This includes people living in homeless services, hostels, people staying with other households who have no home of their own and people staying in boarding houses for 12 weeks or less.

Tertiary homelessness refers to people who live in boarding houses on a medium to long term basis (more than 13 weeks), who live in accommodation that does not have 'self-contained facilities' for example they do not have their own bathroom or kitchen and who don't have the security provided by a lease. They are homeless because their accommodation does not have the characteristics identified in the minimum community standard for housing.

Source: Chamberlain and MacKenzie 2008 Counting the Homeless Report 2006, Australian Bureau of Statistics

The information in Figure 2 can be downloaded as a handout from (http://www. youthhomelessnessmatters.info/sites/default/files/ documents/NYCH-Factsheet_Homelessness-ismore-than-homelessness.pdf) **Show** the class the short film "Couch for rent" (https://www.youtube.com/ watch?v=0aseUWSOnc0#t=211)

Ask students whether they have heard of the term "couch surfing" and what they think it means. Discuss the statement "It's not a sleep over if you can't go home". Debate as a class or in small groups whether couch surfing is a form of homelessness.

FACT:

Many people don't realise that couch surfing is the first step in the cycle of youth homelessness.

When a young person thinks that their home is no longer a safe place, they tend to go and stay at a mate's place. While it's a little less scary than sleeping rough on the streets, it's just as dangerous. Eventually they will run out of couches to sleep on, and end up sleeping on the couches of friends of friends, dealers, or even worse.

This is the way for many of the 44,083 homeless young Australians (12–24 years of age). It's hidden homelessness and it's a downward spiral of instability.

Source: Salvos The Couch Project (http://www.thecouchproject.com.au/)

M1: UNDERSTANDING YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

TEACHING AND LEARNING MODULES

Activity 2 THE CAUSES AND EXTENT OF YOUTH HOMELESSNESS IN AUSTRALIA

Introduce the lesson by displaying the following three infographics from the Homelessness Australia website

Link to (http://homelessnessaustralia.org.au/ index.php/about-homelessness/homeless-statistics) (Figures 3, 4 and 5).

Explain to students that they are going to be working in groups to develop their own infographics about the causes and extent of youth homelessness in Australia.

Divide students into six groups and allocate each group one of the following questions to research about youth homelessness in Australia.

- What are the demographics of young homeless people in Australia?
- How does being homeless affect a young person?
- What are some of the causes of the rise in youth homelessness in Australia?
- What aspects of the current welfare system can inhibit a young homeless person from finding a stable place to live?
- What long-term effects could rising levels of youth homelessness have on Australian society?
- What are the demographics for young Indigenous people and how are they different from the rest of the youth population?



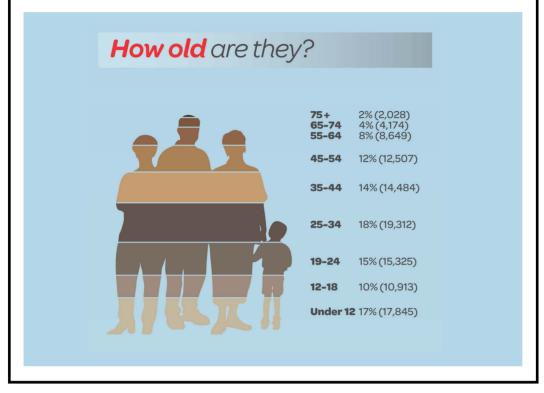


Figure 3: Homelessness rates by age in Australia

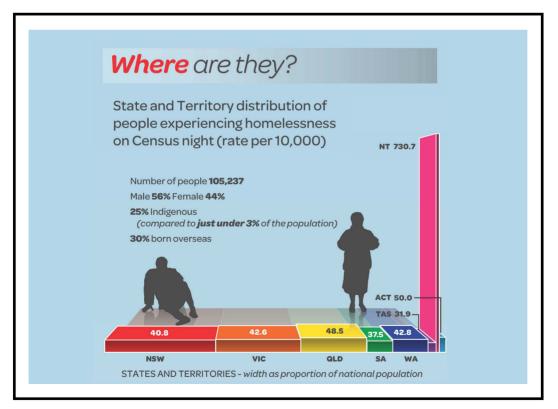


Figure 4: Homelessness rates by location

M1: UNDERSTANDING YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

TEACHING AND LEARNING MODULES



Figure 5: Where homeless people are staying

Provide each group with access to the following reports and websites to be used for their research.

 Australia's Homeless Youth Report (http://www.theoasismovie.com.au /report/report.php)

The National Youth Commission's report, Australia's Homeless Youth, is the result of the first national independent inquiry into youth homelessness since the Burdekin Human Rights inquiry in 1989. Funding was provided by The Caledonia Foundation.

 The Road Home: A National Approach to Reducing Homelessness

(http://www.homelessnessinfo. net.au/index.php?option=com_ content&view=category&id=419&Itemid=47) The Federal Government's White Paper on Homelessness, The Road Home: A National Approach to Reducing Homelessness was released on December 21, 2008.



- Youth homelessness matters website (http://www.youthhomelessnessmatters.info)
- Homelessness Australia website (http://www.homelessnessaustralia.org.au/ index.php/about-homelessness/homelessstatistics)
- Australian Bureau of Statistics Estimating homelessness, 2011 (http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/ Lookup/2049.0Main+Features 12011?OpenDocument)
- Fact Sheets on Minority groups (http://www.homelessnessaustralia.org.au/ index.php/about-homelessness/fact-sheets)

After groups have completed their research, ask each group to design and create an infographic that illustrates their findings.

TEACHER NOTE

There are a number of apps that students can use to design their infographics including:

- Piktochart: (http://piktochart.com/)
- Easelly: (http://www.easel.ly/)
- Infogram: (http://infogr.am/)
- Venngage: (https://venngage.com/)

Once groups have completed their infographics, students are going to participate in a gallery walk with each group moving around to view the other groups' infographics.

To run the gallery walk, ask each group to nominate a spokesperson. The spokesperson remains at the group table with the infographic for round one of the gallery walk to present their group's findings to the visiting group. After the group findings are presented, a new spokesperson is nominated from this group to stay behind for round 2 and they present the findings that they have just learnt to the next group whilst the rest of their group move on to the next table. **Continue** for another four rounds so that students have had the opportunity to hear responses from all six groups.

Reconvene as a class and ask students which facts or findings surprised them most and why.

Compare the statistics in the Australia's Homeless Youth Report and the latest data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011 Census (Estimating homelessness, 2011) and discuss:

- Why might the official data on youth homelessness under-estimate the numbers of young homeless people?
- What difference in the data can you see from 2008 to 2011?
- What reasons can you give for the change in homelessness rates during this period?

Exploring local youth homelessness issues

Students analyse and synthesise the information they have gathered so far as well as state and territory breakdowns available on the Australian Bureau of Statistics and Homelessness Australia websites (see links given previously) to propose factors that may lead to young people in their local area becoming at risk of homelessness.

Discuss the statement: Young people in our local area may be the invisible side of homelessness. Explore what this statement means in relation to the statistics, types of homelessness and causes of youth homelessness in their local area.

M1: UNDERSTANDING YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

TEACHING AND LEARNING MODULES

Activity 3 STEREOTYPES

Ask students to brainstorm words that come to mind when they think of a homeless person. Record these on the board.

As you are recording them on the board divide them into positive, negative and neutral descriptors.

Discuss as a class how these stereotypes of homeless people have developed in society. Ask some of the following questions to stimulate discussion:

- How are characters who are homeless portrayed in movies and on television?
- How does the media report stories about homeless people?
- Do you think that these portrayals are accurate, and why?
- Do the same stereotypes apply to young people who are homeless? Why or why not?
- How appropriate are these stereotypes given what we have learnt about the different types of homelessness? (see Figure 2 in Activity 1)

The following links provide access to selected stories from young people of their experiences of homelessness:

Bee's Journey

(http://vimeo.com/40278222)

Commissioned for Youth Homelessness Matters Day 2012. With thanks to YFoundations and The Salvation Army by Anna Zhu (www.annazhu.com). Bee's journey explores a period in Bee's life where she was homeless (6:34)

Alex's Story

(http://www.abc.net.au/triplej/ media/s2391053.htm.) Interview with Alex from triple j's Hack show about his experience of homelessness (6:21)

Everybody has a story-Rebecca

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Nq-yq15TWE) Rebecca left home because of her father. Rebecca is fortunate enough to have friends who allow her to sleep on their couch until their patience runs out. Produced by Salvo Studios (3:09).

Homelessness Myths and memories – Natalie

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-L8CTfKg8Nk) This short film chronicles Natalie's life and her experience of an unstable and unsafe home that lead her to leave with nowhere to go (6:43).

Allocate one story for each student to watch and ask them to identify the words they would use to describe Bee, Alex, Rebecca or Natalie.

Refer back to the original list of words collated on the board and compare similarities and differences.

Discuss some of the reasons each of the young people spoke about that lead them to being homeless.

Discuss how each of their experiences compare to those of homeless people portrayed in the media and movies.

Discuss how the videos may have changed students' perceptions about what homeless people are like and what situations lead to them becoming homeless.



Activity 4 THE REAL FACES OF YOUTH HOMELESSNESS – VIEWING OF THE OASIS DOCUMENTARY

Note: THE OASIS documentary is M rated. The film can be watched online for free at (http://www. theoasismovie.com.au/watch/watch-film.php) Copies of the DVD can be obtained from Shark Island Productions by emailing (admin@sharkisland.com. au) Purchase for download from the iTunes store: (https://itunes.apple.com/au/movie/the-oasis/ id774208893)

Prior to viewing THE OASIS documentary allocate each student a character to follow as they watch the movie (Haley, Beau, Emma, Trent, Owen, Darren, Chris).

Ask students to record the following information for their allocated character:

- factors leading to them becoming homeless
- the challenges they have faced
- how they ended up at Oasis Youth Support network.

Watch THE OASIS documentary (88 minutes). If time doesn't permit viewing the full documentary, watch from the DVD by character to see one person's story or ask students to view the short films from THE OASIS website at

(http://www.theoasismovie.com.au/short_films/ shortFilms_char/_characters.php).

TEACHER NOTE

Alternatively, if you would prefer not to show THE OASIS movie due to the M rating, you could complete the following activities using the stories and characters in Activity 3: Stereotypes as the reference. **Discuss** as a class the reasons given by the characters for becoming homeless. Identify some of the key themes that are common across all of the stories.

Compare the challenges facing THE OASIS characters to those talked about by Bee, Alex, Rebecca and Natalie in the previous activity.

Get students to play the simulation game Spent (*www.playspent.org*). This game illustrates how financial hardship can be a cause of homelessness. Discuss how financial stress could be affecting people in their local community e.g. shortage of jobs, distance to travel to work, cost of child care, education, university etc.

Ask students to select one of the young people from the stories they have watched. Inform students they are going to create a compilation of a "day in the life" of that young person. The compilation could be in the form of Facebook or Twitter newsfeeds, diary or journal entries, audio sound recordings, video recordings or a collage of photos.

Explain to students that their compilation should illustrate the things that the young person would see, hear and feel in their everyday activities, as well as some of the scenarios that they may encounter during that day.

Ask students to share their compilations with the class or in small groups.



Overview

This module will support students to explore practical ideas that they can use to help a friend who is going through a tough time. The module will build on the learning from Module 1 where students identified the causes of youth homelessness so that they are able to pick up on the early warning signs that a friend may display if they are at risk of becoming homeless. The activities will also support them to think about how they could help a friend who might be doing it tough.

Australian Curriculum links

Elements of the Year 9 and 10 achievement standard addressed:

Students critically analyse contextual factors that influence their identities, relationships, decisions and behaviours. They evaluate the outcomes of emotional responses to different situations. Students access, synthesise and apply health information from credible sources to propose and justify responses to health situations. Students apply decision-making and problem-solving skills when taking action to enhance their own and others' health, safety and wellbeing.

Year 9 and 10 Content descriptions addressed:

- Evaluate factors that shape identities, and analyse how individuals impact the identities of others (ACPPS089)
- Examine the impact of changes and transitions on relationships (ACPPS090)
- Plan, rehearse and evaluate options for managing situations where their own or others' health, safety and wellbeing may be at risk (ACPPS091)
- Propose, practice and evaluate responses in situations where external influences may impact on their ability to make healthy and safe choices (ACPPS092)
- Investigate how empathy and ethical decision making contribute to respectful relationships (ACPPS093)
- Evaluate situations and propose appropriate emotional responses and then reflect on possible outcomes of different responses (ACPPS094)
- Evaluate and apply health information from a range of sources to health decisions and situations (ACPPS095)

Source: Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), downloaded from the Australian Curriculum website on (28 July 2014).

Activity 1 WARNING SIGNS – HOW DO YOU KNOW WHEN A FRIEND NEEDS YOUR HELP?

Brainstorm the range of factors that can influence health decision-making and behaviours such as education, peer influence, media, access to money, family relationships and cultural beliefs.

Categorise each of these influences under the headings of Individual, Sociocultural, Economic, Environmental or Political. Add any additional influencing factors to each of the columns to ensure that there is a range of influences recorded.

Ask students to access the Geelong Project website to investigate some of the warning signs for youth homelessness at: (http://www.thegeelongproject.com.au/ early-intervention/warning-signs/.)

Allocate one of the short films previously viewed (see web links below) to each student.

Oasis short films: (www.theoasismovie.com.au/short_films/ shortFilms_char/_characters.php)

Bee's Journey: (http://vimeo.com/40278222)

Alex's Story: (http://www.abc.net.au/triplej/media/s2391053.htm.)

Everybody has a story – Rebecca: (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Nq-yq15TWE)

Homelessness Myths and memories – Natalie: (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-L8CTfKg8Nk)

Ask students to watch their allocated film and identify which warning signs and influences recorded above are impacting on the young person's decisions and actions in the film.

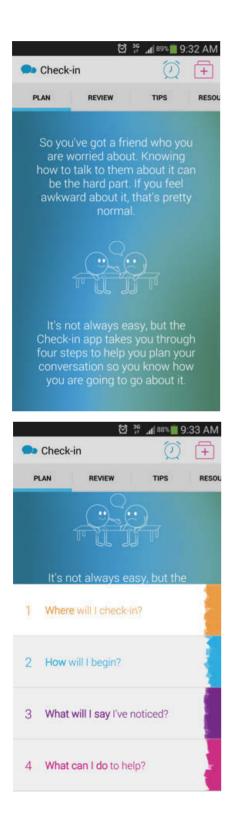
Discuss some strategies they might use to react to the warning signs or counteract the negative influences and help the young person make safer and healthier choices.

TEACHER NOTE

It is important to recognise that health decisions and risk behaviours are not simply an individual responsibility. Recognising the range of influences on health decisions and behaviours is important when dealing with situations that may be placing a friend at risk of harm.







Activity 2 GIVING ADVICE AND SUPPORT TO A FRIEND

Discuss as a class how giving advice to friends when you are worried that they might be in a risky or unsafe situation can be difficult. Brainstorm different ways that friends may react if you approach them with your worries. Discuss some of the strategies that could be used to start a conversation about the issue.

Ask students to explore the Reach Out website (*http://au.reachout.com*) to find advice on how to help and support friends who they think might be struggling or getting themselves into risky situations.

Ask students to imagine that the young person in the film that they watched in Activity 1 was one of their friends. Combine students into groups who watched the same film and ask the groups to discuss the following questions:

- What factors may be influencing the "friend's" behaviours and decisions in the film?
- How might the situation affect the "friend's" health and wellbeing?
- How might your "friend's" current mental state affect the way they deal with different situations?
- How might your "friend's" home and school life affect the way they deal with different situations?
- How might your "friend's" relationships with their friends and family affect the way they deal with different situations?
- What can your "friend" do to deal with the situation?
- What strategies could you use to support your "friend" in this situation?

One of the strategies that can be effective in helping friends going through a tough time is to talk to them and let them know that you care about them and want to help them however you can.



Ask students to access and read the ReachOut.com fact sheet on how to ask a friend if they are OK (*http://au.reachout.com/ how-to-ask-a-friend-if-theyre-okay*).

Ask students to download "The Check In app" developed by beyondblue from the App Store or Play Store (http://www.beyondblue. org.au/about-us/programs/youth-programyouthbeyondblue/the-check-in-app). Using the app ask groups to plan their "check in" conversation.

Divide students into groups of 3 and allocate each group member with a role, either "concerned friend", "friend needing support" or "observer coach". Ask the student playing the "concerned friend" to role play the conversation they planned on The Check In app with the student playing the role of "friend needing support". The "observer coach" watches the conversation taking note of the responses and identifying elements that worked and what they might do differently. As a group debrief after the role play about how each member felt in the conversation.

Discuss:

- which responses made them feel comfortable?
- which responses made them uncomfortable?
- what they would do differently next time?

Ask students to change into a different role and act out another Check in app plan, taking into account the feedback from the first role play. Again debrief after the conversation to identify what worked and what didn't.

TEACHER NOTE

It is imperative to emphasise to students the importance of not taking on their friends' problems as their own. The best support they can offer their friends is to help them to find their own way of dealing with the situation. **Allow** students to access the following websites to create a list of other strategies they can use to support their "friend" in this particular situation.

- Reach Out website (http://au.reachout.com)
- 1 hour online suicide prevention course: (http://suicideprevention.salvos.org.au/training/ qpr-suicide-prevention)
- Leaving Home resource (http://www.burstingthebubble.com/ leavehome.htm)

Share the strategies as a group and identify some of the similarities and differences between the strategies. For example, some may involve encouraging the friend to seek professional help, others may involve using the Internet to find out information, or going to parents or family members for help.

Discuss the idea that each person will have different ways of coping with tough times.

Explain that it is important for students to recognise the ways that work best for them when coping with tough times.

TEACHER NOTE

When it comes to supporting a friend going through a tough time, students sometimes believe that they can do it all themselves or their friend will make them promise to keep their secret. A key message in this activity is reminding students not to take on their friend's problems as their own responsibility and that sometimes even though they have made a promise to their friend, they must tell their "secret" to a trusted adult if they think their friend is at risk.

Activity 3 YOU CAN'T SOLVE ALL OF YOUR FRIEND'S PROBLEMS, ON YOUR OWN, ALL OF THE TIME

Introduce the activity by explaining to students that often if a friend asks them for help when they are having a tough time, they will make them promise not to tell anyone what's going on. Discuss with the class that sometimes they will need to ask advice from a trusted adult so that they can be sure that the advice they give to their friend is the right advice.

Emphasise to students that even if they've made a promise to their friend, if they think that their friend may be at risk of harm it is important to tell a trusted adult about the situation.

Discuss as a class the range of adults that students would consider to be trusted adults e.g. parents, teachers, sports coach, church minister. Discuss the characteristics and qualities that make them a trusted adult.

Explain to students the importance of having a network of trusted adults who they can go to for advice or support about their health and wellbeing. These people are also the people who can give advice about how to help a friend who is going through a tough time.

Ask students to answer the following questions:

- Who might you include in your personal support network? Why?
- How can your support network help you through tough times?
- How can you help friends through tough times?
- Who can help you support friends in need?



Ask each student to think back to the scenarios that they worked on in the previous activity based on the short films they watched.

Explain to students that they are going to ask a trusted adult for advice about the strategies they proposed to support their "friend".

Ask students to identify a trusted adult from their personal support network who they could talk to about this situation. Ask students to write a script of a conversation they might have with this adult to ask them for advice. Share all of the strategies the class proposed for helping their "friends" and make a list on the board. Ask students to add any additional strategies that they can think of that could also be used to help a friend or that they might use themselves if they were in a risky or unsafe situation.

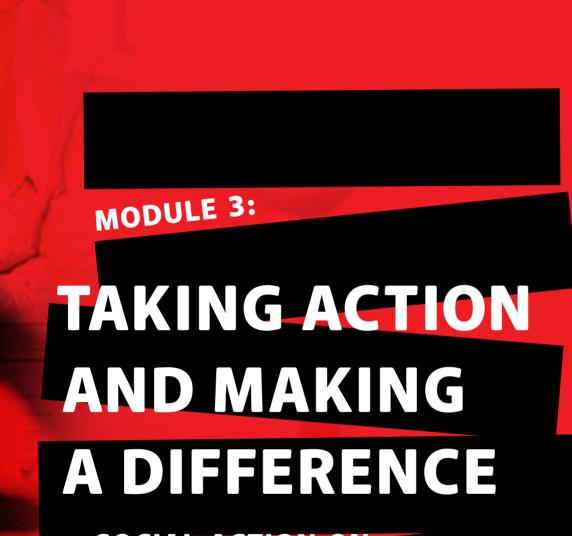
In small groups ask students to evaluate the possible success of each of these proposed strategies in different situations.

Provide students with the following questions to scaffold their discussions:

- How effective was the support strategies proposed?
- What impact could using these strategies have on the relationships within your friendship group?
- What strategies would work best? Why?
- Would the strategy still be successful if it was a different friend involved in the scenario? Why? Why not?
- How did the strategies that you proposed differ from those strategies that other people proposed? Why do you think they differed?
- Are all strategies transferable to different people, contexts and situations?

Ask students to identify three to four strategies from the class list that they could use if they found themselves in a situation similar to the scenarios explored. Ask students to provide reasons why they would feel comfortable using these strategies. **Ask** students to now identify strategies that they would not be able to use themselves and provide reasons why they would not use them. For example, I would not go to my local doctor for advice about sexual health issues as I live in a small rural community and the doctor is a friend of the family.

Invite students to share their responses with the rest of the class.



SOCIAL ACTION ON YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

Overview

This module will support students to explore the different types of social action initiatives that exist in the area of youth homelessness. After exploring some of the initiatives that are available, students in small groups will develop their own plan for taking action to raise awareness about the issue of youth homelessness in their local school or community.

Australian Curriculum links

Elements of the Year 9 and 10 achievement standard addressed:

Students analyse the impact attitudes and beliefs about diversity have on community connection and wellbeing. Students access, synthesise and apply health information from credible sources to propose and justify responses to health situations. Students apply decision-making and problem-solving skills when taking action to enhance their own and others' health, safety and wellbeing.

Year 9 and 10 Content descriptions addressed:

- Evaluate and apply health information from a range of sources to health decisions and situations (ACPPS095)
- Plan, implement and critique strategies to enhance the health, safety and wellbeing of their communities (ACPPS096)
- Plan and evaluate new and creative interventions that promote their own and others' connection to community (ACPPS097)
- Critique behaviours and contextual factors that influence the health and wellbeing of their communities (ACPPS098)

Source: Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), downloaded from the Australian Curriculum website on (28 July 2014).

Activity 1 WHAT IS SOCIAL ACTION AND WHY IS IT NEEDED?

Explain to the class that this module of work will support them to develop the skills, knowledge and resources to take action on issues that they feel passionate about.

Explain to students there are many different reasons why people take action and many different ways that people take action. Give each student a stack of post-it notes and ask them to write down what taking action means to them on a post-it (they can write as many post-its as they like). Figure 6 provides some ideas of ways to take action. Place some flip chart paper on the wall and ask them to add their post-its to it. As students are adding their post-its, begin grouping them into themes as they emerge. Cluster similar responses into categories (e.g. awareness raising, lobbying and advocacy, fundraising, support services, protests).

Once all the post-its have been added and grouped, examine and discuss the key themes.

Discuss the reasons why people might take action on social issues. Explore whether the reasons are different for young people as compared to older people.

Discuss how social action over the last decade has changed with the advent of social media and the impact this has had on global social action initiatives.

Explain to students that they are now going to undertake an evaluation of the effectiveness of social action initiatives that have been undertaken in relation to youth homelessness.

Divide the class into 10-12 groups and allocate one of the initiatives from *Appendix 1: Youth homelessness initiatives* at the back of this resource to each group.



Ask groups to assess the effectiveness of their allocated initiative on youth homelessness. Direct groups to use the website addresses listed in Appendix 1 to gather information to make their judgements.

Ask each group to develop a short presentation or report that outlines the effectiveness of their allocated initiative based on the following questions:

- which strategies and actions do you think were most effective and why?
- which strategies were less effective and why?
- what lessons can be learnt to inform your own action?

Ask each group to present their findings and conclusions to the class.

	~	
123 Brown Street,		
TOWN, 2000		
April 13th 2016		
Dear Local MP,		
I am writing to ex	press my	
concern about yo	uth homelessness	
in my community.		

Figure 6: Ways to take action

- Educate other people/ raise awareness
- Sign or write a petition
- Write a letter to a member of parliament (or someone else in a position of power)
- Write a letter to your local newspaper
- Donate something or raise money to support a cause
- Start a community group
- Do less or more of something (e.g. stop buying things from unethical companies or drive less)
- Organise a meeting or information session
- Volunteer your skills or time
- Participate in an existing action or event.

TEACHER NOTE

The action statement should begin with "I am/We are going to ..."

e.g. "We are going to participate in a couch surfing sleepout to raise funds and make a short film about our experience to share with our school community"

Activity 2 FOCUSING IN... WHAT ACTION, WHEN AND HOW?

This activity will be completed over a number of lessons and could include students working on tasks outside of class. It will be up to teachers to determine how long will be spent on group action planning and implementation and this will in turn determine the scale of the social action initiative that groups undertake.

Step 1: Developing a vision for action

Instruct students to individually think about what they would want to change in order to address youth homelessness – it could be on a national level or in their local community. Ask students to share their ideas either in pairs, small groups or with the whole class depending on time available.

Generate a list of common themes from the responses and record these somewhere visible. Ask the class to nominate which themes or areas for change that most resonate with them. Divide the class into groups based on these themes.

Ask groups to create a shared vision statement for what their change would look like, feel like and be like once it had taken place. Ask them to visualise it and describe it in as much detail as possible.

Explain to students that now they have a vision they need to refine their vision into a positive action statement. This statement needs to represent exactly what they are going to do to take action and make change.

Step 2: Planning for action

Instruct students that the next step in the process of taking action is to take their action statement and plan out the key steps in order to make sure it happens.

Explain to the class that the planning stage is, as it sounds, about thinking through all the key steps involved in each action and organising everything beforehand.

Emphasise to students that the more thorough the plan, the easier it is to get the action off the ground. Explain that key parts of planning involve working out roles and responsibilities and identifying potential problems and ways to address them.

Distribute copies of Handout 1: Action planning table (*See Appendix 2 at back of resource*) to groups and ask them to record details about the key steps that need to be undertaken to complete their action and who will be responsible for each of the steps being completed.

Explain to the class that one of the best ways to test if you are on the right track with your planning is to seek feedback from others.

Ask groups to partner up with another group and spend 5-10 minutes exchanging action planning tables with one another.

Ask each group to consider whether their action plans are realistic based on the following questions:

- Can it be achieved in the time available?
- Will the action be a step toward making the change that was part of the vision?
- Are the resources needed to take the action available? E.g. video equipment, venues, etc.
- Do any of the key steps in the action plan need revising or do they need additional steps included?

Encourage students to ask questions about the other group's plans and provide feedback on the plan by writing their comments on post-it notes and leaving them with the group for reference later.

Ask students to return to their original teams and discuss the feedback that they gathered from the discussion and allow time for each team to make changes to their plans.

Step 3: Taking action

This step of the activity involves groups working independently on their tasks within their action plan. Some of the group tasks may have to be completed outside of lesson times. It is important to ensure that all students stay motivated and on-track with their activities. In order to maintain motivation it is important to build in time to planned lessons for students to report back on their progress and to make adjustments to their action plans where necessary.

Activity 3 HOW DID IT GO? LESSONS LEARNT AND NEXT STEPS

Explain to the class that the final step when taking action is critically reflecting on the journey, celebrating and sharing the experience with others.

Introduce students to the concept of writing (or videoing) a reflection story.

Suggest the following questions to help students prepare their reflection story:

- Did you achieve your goals?
- Were the results as you expected?
- What did you learn? (About yourself, about others, about taking action?)
- What are the 3 best things about doing what you did?
- What 3 things would you do differently next time?
- What advice would you give to others that want to take action and make change?

Ask groups to prepare their reflection story of the journey that they have been on and what lessons they learnt along the way. The reflection stories can be a group submission or each individual group member's story.

Encourage groups to publish their reflection stories as a school blog, in the school newsletter or on YouTube so that other people can be inspired by their action and learn from their journey.



Appendix 1: Youth homelessness initiatives

Community awareness raising initiatives

- Invisible people (http://invisiblepeople.tv/blog/)
- Youth homelessness matters day (http://www.youthhomelessnessmatters.info/)
- Homeless persons week (http://www.homelessnessaustralia.org.au/ index.php/events/hpw/homeless-personsweek-2014)

Direct impact initiatives

- Streat (http://www.streat.com.au/about)
- StreetSmart: Action against homelessness (http://www.streetsmartaustralia.org/)
- Swags for homeless (http://swags.org.au/)
- Street Swags (http://www.streetswaqs.org/index.php)

Fundraising initiatives

The Couch Project (http://salvos.org.au/oasis/events/previousevents/all-events/2012/06/08/the-couchproject/)

- Mission Australia Winter Sleepout (http://wintersleepout.gofundraise.com.au)
- The Red Shield Appeal (http://salvos.org.au/get-involved/help-usfundraise/red-shield-appeal/information-forschools/)
- Bail Out (http://www.whitelionbailout.org.au)
- Vinnies Community Sleepout (https://www.vinnies.org.au/events)

Fundraising toolkit

 Homelessness Community Fundraising Toolkit

(http://communitydoor.org.au/news/ homelessness-community-fundraising-toolkit)

Fundraising platforms

- Chuffed
 - (https://www.chuffed.org/about/)

Chuffed is a crowdfunding platform for socially-conscious, Australian projects. They support individuals, not-for-profits, social enterprises and community groups to run awesome crowdfunding campaigns, all 100% free.

• Pozible

(http://www.pozible.com)

Pozible was designed to help people raise funds, realise their aspirations, and make great things possible.

• Go Fundraise

(http://www.gofundraise.com.au) Online fundraising community connecting charities and causes.

Education initiatives

- Salvos school tours City of Melbourne (http://www.salvationarmy.org.au /schoolsvic/tours)
- Salvos Education and Outreach (NSW, QLD and ACT) (http://salvos.org.au/edu)
- SA/TAS/VIC/WA: (http://www.salvationarmy.org.au/schools)
- Salvos Ambassador Movement (http://salvos.org.au/get-involved/youth-andschools/salvos-ambassador-movement/)
- The Big Issue (http://www.thebigissue.org.au/the-big-issueclassroom-about/)



Appendix 2: Handout 1 – Action Planning

Key things to do	Materials	Costs	Who	When	How will you know it's don		

Appendix 3: Support materials and resources

Information and publications on homelessness

 Australia's Homeless Youth Report (http://www.theoasismovie.com.au/ report/report.php)

The National Youth Commission's report, Australia's Homeless Youth, is the result of the first national independent inquiry into youth homelessness since the Burdekin Human Rights inquiry in 1989. Funding provided by The Caledonia Foundation.

The Road Home: A National Approach to Reducing Homelessness

(http://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/ housing-support/programs-services/ homelessness/the-road-home-the-australiangovernment-white-paper-on-homelessness-0) The Federal Government's White Paper on Homelessness, The Road Home: A National Approach to Reducing Homelessness, was released on December 21, 2008.

• **THE OASIS Documentary impact study** (http://www.theoasismovie.com.au/ education/documents/THE_OASIS_Impact_ Statement 2008-2013-FINAL.pdf)

More than twelve months after the screening of the documentary on ABC Television, THE OASIS has demonstrated its enduring impact. THE OASIS Documentary Impact Study details the outcomes of the screening of the documentary and associated education and outreach activities.

• Australian Homelessness Clearinghouse (http://homelessnessclearinghouse. govspace.gov.au)

Homelessness peak bodies – National

- Homelessness Australia (http://www.homelessnessaustralia.org.au) National Peak Body for Homelessness
- Australia Council of Social Services (http://www.acoss.org.au) Peak council of Community & Welfare Sector
- Australian Youth Affairs Coalition (http://www.ayac.org.au/) National Youth Affairs Peak Body

State Youth Housing / Homelessness Peak Bodies

- Australian Capital Territory (http://www.youthcoalition.net/) Youth Coalition of the ACT
- New South Wales (http://www.yfoundations.org.au) Yfoundations
- Victoria (http://www.chp.org.au/) Council for Homeless Persons
- Tasmania (http://www.ynot.org.au) Statewide Youth Housing Group
- Western Australia (http://www.yacwa.org.au) Youth Affairs Council of Western Australia
- South Australia (http://www.homelessnesssa.asn.au/) Homelessness South Australia
- Queensland (http://www.qyhc.org.au) Queensland Youth Housing Coalition

Youth action organisations - State

- ACT (http://youth.act.gov.au) Youth InterACT
- NSW (http://www.youth.nsw.gov.au) Youth NSW
- NT (http://www.youth.affairs.nt.gov.au/) Office of Youth Affairs
- **QLD** (http://www.

(http://www.communities.qld.gov.au/ communityservices/youth) Queensland Office for Youth

- SA (http://www.officeforyouth.sa.gov.au/) Office for Youth
- TAS (http://www.linkzone.tas.gov.au) Link Zone
- VIC (http://www.youthcentral.vic.gov.au) Youthcentral
- WA

(http://www.communities.wa.gov.au/ communities-in-focus/youth/Pages/default.aspx) Office for Youth

'How to' info for common actions

- Volunteering Volunteering Australia (http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org)
- Event planning Events NSW (http://www.events.nsw.gov.au/ event-starter-guide/)
- Fundraising Everyday hero (http://www.everydayhero.com.au/)
- Petitioning + Letter writing Oasis campaign page (http://salvos.org.au/oasis/ how-to-help/campaign/)

- **GetUp!** (*http://www.getup.org.au*)
- **Change.org** (https://www.change.org/)
- Amnesty Letter Writing Guide (http://www.amnesty.org.au/hre/ comments/30204/)
- General project planning H2W2: how to do a project and get help (http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au)

Other useful contacts

- Amnesty International (Human Rights) (http://www.amnesty.org.au)
- Australian Red Cross (Social/Health/Community) (http://www.redcross.org.au)
- Foundation for Young Australians (Youth Projects) (http://www.fya.org.au/)
- InfoXchange (community) (http://www.infoxchange.net.au/)
- Kids Under Cover, unique early intervention program (http://www.kuc.org.au/)
- Oxfam (Social Justice) (http://www.oxfam.org.au)
- ReachOut.com

 (Helping young people through tough times)
 (http://au.reachout.com)
- Youth LEAD (Leadership project at OzGreen) (http://www.ozgreen.org.au)



The Caledonia Foundation

For the generous support that made the development of the resource possible. (http://www.caledoniafoundation.com.au)

Shark Island Productions

For use of THE OASIS documentary. (http://sharkisland.com.au)

Bianca Orsini, Jayne Campbell, Lucinda Young and Glonaida Quiapon (Graphic Designer)

From The Salvation Army.

Janice Atkin (Resource Author)

Janice Atkin has worked on numerous resource development projects for education departments, professional associations and other organisations that support Health and Physical Education in Australian schools. (http://janiceatkin.com)









PRODUCTIONS