

MEDIA RELEASE



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Toowoomba's youth haven has a new home

Toowoomba's long-standing residential facility for young people experiencing homelessness is celebrating a new home of its own.

The Haven and its six support staff will join local not-for-profit organisation YellowBridge QLD. The official partnership commenced today.

The merger is a strategic step to secure The Haven's long-term viability by collaborating with a larger organisation that shares similar values and a commitment to youth.

YellowBridge QLD Chief Executive Officer Penny Hamilton said The Haven's youth program would join the organisation's existing programs in community housing, disability support and elderly home services.

"At YellowBridge, our core value is about supporting and connecting people in our community who need a helping hand to lead safe, secure, fulfilling and independent lives," Ms Hamilton said.

"We are thrilled to welcome The Haven into our organisation and be able to offer our robust systems, processes and resources to support its operation."

"So many young people in our community rely on The Haven to be a safe and encouraging place for them during a difficult time in their lives. We want them to always have that option available," she said.

Located on a tranquil rural block west of Toowoomba, The Haven is the city's only dedicated medium-term transitional accommodation for young people aged 16 to 18 years who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness.

Residents are supported by on-site staff who strongly encourage education, employment and independent living skills.

It was established in 1986 by a Toowoomba youth worker and her partner who decided to build a house where young people experiencing homelessness could live while they completed school.

It was an ambitious plan that demanded significant time, resources, volunteers and personal sacrifice to make happen.

Around 1000 young people have called The Haven home and many credit it for helping them finish high school and finding the skills and confidence to lead healthy adult lives.

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“Young people come to The Haven often with not much more than the clothes they are wearing but always with the unwavering determination and resilience to overcome the challenges they are facing,” said YellowBridge QLD General Manager Youth Services Amanda Dalton.

“We are privileged to support them to achieve the best possible outcomes in education, housing, employment and wellness in their personal lives,” she said.

“We respectfully acknowledge that at times, families and young people may find themselves in a difficult situation and we are honoured to be able to offer a safe place, support and understanding.”

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YellowBridge QLD is a local, independent, not-for-profit organisation that provides housing, disability support, home services and youth services across Toowoomba, Southern Downs and Lockyer Valley regions.