



# First Response Youth Service

Hope Street Youth and Family Services operates a place based mobile outreach and youth refuge program in the City of Melton, the **First Response Youth Service**. The program supports young people and families experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Operating since 2018 the integrated service model has delivered 794 support periods to 515 clients.

First Response Youth Service supports young people to build resilience and capacity using relationship based, trauma informed practice. Services are young person centred, flexible and collaborative.

In 2021, the evaluation of the effectiveness of the First Response Youth Service model was led by Lirata Consulting. Comprehensive qualitative and quantitative methodology incorporating an SROI analysis by Think Impact were utilised. Final report was delivered in July 2022.

## Evaluating client outcomes

Data was gathered from young people and First Response staff to assess outcomes across the domains of: housing; employment, education and training; financial security; connectedness and service system engagement; health and wellbeing; and parenting. Analysis identified changes that had occurred for each young person while engaged with the First Response service.

### Data sources

- Excel Outcomes Tool data compiled by staff (n=134)
- Young Person Survey, collecting feedback from clients (n=75)

### Participants

- 67% female
- 66% aged 16-21 years
- 23% from culturally diverse backgrounds

## Housing



Following engagement with First Response Youth Service:

- **63% exited to safe and stable housing**



### HOUSING AT ENTRY



### HOUSING AT EXIT

- Housed
- Interim
- Homeless

Greater access to affordable and appropriate housing would significantly increase the ability of service providers to safely home more young people experiencing crisis or trauma, particularly those under 18 years of age who are unable to sign a lease.

*'I finally got my first ever rental after trying for over a year for myself and my children.'*

## Connectedness and service system engagement



Following engagement with First Response Youth Service:

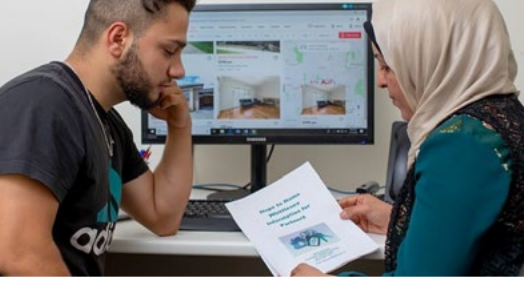
- **94% had improved connections to community services**



- 3 or more services engaged
- 2 services engaged
- 1 service engaged
- No services engaged

- 50% had improved connection to family

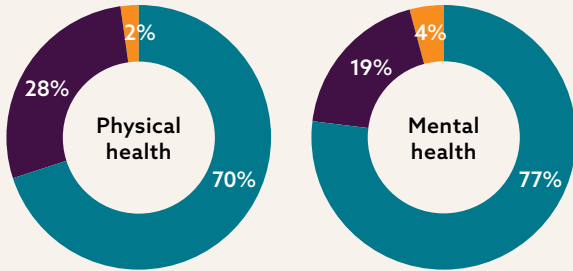
*'They were kind and welcoming, they also explained Centrelink and other services that may be able to help me.'*



## Health and wellbeing

Following engagement with First Response Youth Service:

- 70% had improved physical health
- 77% had improved mental health



■ Improved ■ No change ■ Worsened

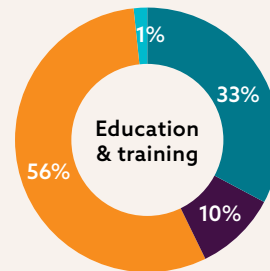
- 86% had improved personal safety
- 82% felt increased optimism about the future
- 40% with problematic substance use had decreased risk

*'I had support I wasn't able to find anywhere else, they got me through the roughest patch... building a foundation so I'm able to sustain a liveable situation long term.'*

## Employment, education and training

Following engagement with First Response Youth Service:

- 33% were able to commence or continue education or training



■ Assisted to engage  
 ■ Engaged without assistance  
 ■ Remained disengaged  
 ■ Became disengaged

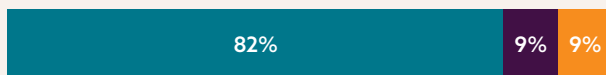
This is a strong result given at risk young people in crisis require stability and security and/or may prioritise parenting of their young children before moving into a position to prioritise their Employment, Education and Training needs.

*'I was able to get a brand new laptop which was so helpful during lockdown last year as I completed two courses using this device and now have a job in one of the fields I studied.'*

## Young parents

Following engagement with First Response Youth Service:

- Over 90% had an increase in the level of safety of their children



■ Positive changes for children/pregnant mother  
 ■ Mixed outcomes / hard to say  
 ■ No changes observed for children/pregnant mother

*'Hope Street helped me navigate through different decisions I had to make. They helped me with baby things, food vouchers and moral support.'*

## Financial Security

Following engagement with First Response Youth Service:

- 47% were assisted to access additional income and entitlements



■ Yes, assisted a lot ■ Yes, assisted a little  
 ■ Did not assist in this area

*'They helped me a lot with funding, I was able to get money on my Myki to travel to my course.'*

These findings provide evidence to support continued funding of the First Response Youth Service in Melton and add strength to establishment of the First Response Youth Service model in other LGA's including the City of Whittlesea.

First Response Youth Service housing outcomes were compared with industry benchmarks in the final report, July 2022.