



MEANINGFUL WAYS OF HELPING

Nearly half of Australia's homeless population is **under 25 years old**. That is **over 40,000 young people** who have **nowhere to call home** tonight. In the face of statistics like this, it can be hard to believe anything we can do as individuals can have an impact. The fact is that **every action counts**, and combined action can affect real change.

Below are a few ways that you (yes, **you!**) can get involved because together we **can** end youth homelessness.

1. Listen and talk

Homelessness is a traumatic and isolating experience. Taking the time to talk with someone, showing compassion, kindness and respect, is a meaningful gesture that can help maintain a sense of dignity. Like all of us, young people who have experienced homelessness need more than just food and shelter to recover, they need love, encouragement and respect to start rebuilding their lives and take their rightful place in our community. You may be surprised at the experiences and emotions that you can relate to, and the powerful impact that a positive relationship can have.

2. Join Made with Love through KIP

Made with love offers people and families an opportunity to cook a home cooked meal, bake goods, or gather products for those in need. Made with Love allows you to sign up on line, <http://kip.org.au/programs/made-with-love/> for a roster where you can deliver goods straight to the centre. Visit the KIP Facebook page for more information.

3. Give clothes, toiletries, and blankets

Imagine trying to keep your bedding and clothing clean and dry during a Melbourne winter if you were sleeping rough. Organisations like Blanket Melbourne collect and distribute clean blankets and jackets to those who need them most. There are plenty of shelters/organisations who also donate bedding, clothes, and toiletries to those in need. We request new, or quality used products for people in need - things that you would like to receive yourself!

For example, Lighthouse give each of the young people their own bed linen when they move in, which they are free to take with them when they leave – so they are always in need of single sheet sets.



Jump online and research the shelters and outreach programs near you and see if there are any items you can donate.

4. Support organisations like Kids Under Cover, Father Bob's and Lighthouse Foundation through donations

Often youth homelessness organisations receive less than 10% government funding, so they rely on the generosity of people like you to keep doing what we're doing. Every dollar counts!

5. Volunteer

One of the most rewarding ways you can help is by volunteering your time to help people experiencing homelessness and the organisations that support them. There are a number of organisations providing breakfast, lunch and dinner around Melbourne where you can help out, or if you have a skill you would like to share, contact us to discuss skilled volunteering such as administration, research, public relations and other professional assistance.

6. Invest in the good

Consider how the things you buy can have a positive social impact. Some examples include:

- **The Big Issue** magazine is a fortnightly, independent magazine that is sold on the streets by homeless, marginalised and disadvantaged people. Vendors buy copies of the magazine for \$3 and sell it for \$6, earning the difference.
- **STREAT** is a social enterprise where every delicious meal or drink you purchase provides funding to support job training and employment services to young people experiencing disadvantage.
- Drop into your local Bakers delight or Brumbies and find out where the bread goes at the end of the day. Usually if you ask you can pick it up and deliver it to your local Homeless shelter.

Click on <http://www.homelessnessaustralia.org.au> for more information on facts, and what you can do to help.