



Response to Shelter WA's policy position statements

Our holistic support to children, young people, and families

Parkerville CYC is a For Purpose organisation that supports children, young people, and their families to build skills and capacity, address the impacts of trauma and adverse childhood experiences, and develop capabilities that will enable them to be the best versions of themselves. We see a future where Western Australia is the safest place in the world and all children, young people, and their families feel safe to dream, to thrive, and to reach their fullest potential. We have been working alongside vulnerable children, young people, and their families for 120 years, and every year, we support more than 13,000 people across WA through our therapeutic, out of home care, youth, and education services. The future of those we serve depends on what we do in the present to support them to reach their potential.

Our Values

	Bold and Courageous We stand up for what is right and assist to amplify the voices of the children, young people, families and communities we support.
	Curious and Humble We search out information and data that will help us remain at the forefront of all that we do.
	Caring and Respectful We acknowledge and embrace the diversity and individuality of everyone we meet and all those we serve.
	Hopeful We believe in the power of positivity and are optimistic about change, having faith that together we can overcome any challenge we may face.
	Truthful and Accountable We are committed to being open, honest and taking responsibility for our actions.

Our Purpose

Our purpose as an organisation is to support children, young people, and their families to build skills and capacity, address the impacts of trauma and adverse childhood experiences, and develop capabilities that will enable them to be the best versions of themselves.

Parkerville CYC's services

Youth Services

- **Support and Community Services (SACS):** service for families with children aged 4-14 that are experiencing homelessness, or at risk of homelessness and living in supported accommodation.
- **Moving Out, Moving On (MOMO):** service for young people aged 15-21 who are experiencing homelessness, or at significant risk of homelessness or transience.
- **Reconnect:** a diversion and early intervention service for families with young people (12-18) at risk of homelessness or family breakdown.
- **Young Women's Program:** medium-term accommodation and support for young women (including those with children) aged 16-25 experiencing or at risk of homelessness, or who need help to live independently.
- **Armada Youth Accommodation Service (AYAS):** short-term crisis accommodation for young people experiencing/at risk of homelessness.

Therapeutic Services

- **Multi-agency Investigation and Support Team (MIST):** co-located, multi-disciplinary, trauma-informed model to reduce harmful impacts of trauma from abuse
- **Therapeutic Services:**
 - CSATS:** We provide a Child Sexual Abuse Therapeutic Service (CSATS) in a regional area of WA.
 - PACTS:** We also provide a Parents and Children's Therapeutic Service (PACTS) in a northern Perth suburb.

Out of Home Care

- Parkerville CYC cares for more than 100 children and young people across foster care, family group homes (FGH) in the Metro area and in the Murchison. We also run an intensive residential program for young people aged 12-17 currently under the care of the Department of Communities (Belmont Youth Program). We are implementing an innovative, award-winning new model (Our Way Home) – radically personalised shared care: focusing on the needs and desires of each child, and deliberately seeking to establish, maintain and deepen connections between children and their families.

Education Services

- **Child and Parent Centres (CPCs):** Parkerville runs two CPCs in Perth, servicing 12 primary schools in vulnerable communities.
- **Education Employment and Training Program (EET):** For young people at extreme educational risk due to trauma, mental health, family issues

Parkerville CYC's headline response

Parkerville CYC welcomes the scope of Shelter WA's policy position statements, to form the basis of sector advocacy. Our key response – and this is a feature and reflection of both policy and sector advocacy related to housing and homelessness more generally - is that none of these position statements recognise young people as a specific and vulnerable group, or discuss issues specific to young people.

Our more specific key points are outlined below.

Affordable housing statement

This position statement should recognise that young people are acutely impacted by the lack of affordable housing. Young people often have lower incomes (Centrelink or waged) than older cohorts, which means that housing that may be affordable for others is often not affordable for young people.

Private rental housing

This position statement should recognise the additional challenges faced by young people in accessing private rentals. These challenges include lower incomes, negative stereotypes and stigma, as well as a lack of experience with renting and renting references. There is a need for programs and strategies that support young people to build their knowledge and skills about how to be good tenants, and strategies to encourage landlords to consider younger tenants.

Ending homelessness

This position statement currently does not include an emphasis on preventing homelessness. Homelessness as a social issue cannot be ended while people continue to *become* homeless. Along with increasing the supply of housing to prevent transitional homelessness from becoming a repeat of chronic homelessness (this is included in the statement), we must also consider prevention strategies that address the causes of homelessness for people.

For young people, one key cause of homelessness is family breakdown. Programs and strategies that support young people and families to address and resolve family conflict and issues that may otherwise lead to homelessness must be included as a strategy to end homelessness. Examples of these types of programs include Reconnect, a diversion and early intervention service for families with young people (12-18) at risk of homelessness or family breakdown, and Ruby's Reunification Program, which aims to keep families together and young people out of the homelessness sector.

Children should not be viewed simply as an extension of their primary carer: they have unique safety, support, and recovery needs. Targeted, specialist support must therefore also be given to the children in families that have experienced homelessness, to address the impacts and prevent future high risk of homelessness. These impacts frequently include social isolation, mental health, and school disengagement. We must prioritise access to early education, school support, and child development services for children experiencing homelessness, given the likelihood of missed early education participation and/or disrupted schooling, resulting developmental impact, and poor provision of treatment options and support. An example of a program achieving this is the Support and Counselling Services (SACS): a service for families with children aged 4-14 who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness and living in supported accommodation.

Contact details

For further enquiries on this response, please contact:

Dr. Sarah Priest
Senior Research, Policy and Project Officer
Sarah.priest@parkerville.org.au
0424 273 663