# Rotary Homeless Projects

Homelessness is a blight on our civilised and prosperous society. There are over 10,000 people homeless in WA every night, and the number is growing rapidly. 21% of homeless are children under 18.

Rental costs are out of control - 98% of rentals in WA are not affordable for a single person on minimum wage, none are affordable for a single person on Jobseeker. At the bottom end more and more people cannot afford a rental – even those with jobs. The homeless agencies are seeing a tsunami of newly homeless and the Domestic Violence refuges are full

Rotary is well equipped to address the problem and indeed many Clubs have been and are working on homelessness projects. Rotary projects address different aspects of the homelessness issue:



For further information see <https://rotarywa9423.org.au/sitepage/homeless-hub> or contact Ken Mullin on [ken.mullin@iinet.net.au](mailto:ken.mullin@iinet.net.au)

**Housing** - *it is now recognized that homeless people need housing first - permanent housing with appropriate ongoing support. It gives them the space and security to address the main issues in their life.*

**My Home project**

Rotary supports the “My Home” Homeless Housing Project (www.myhomehousing.org.au) which builds villages of small houses for homeless people in WA. The project targets women over 55, who are the fastest growing group of homeless people in WA. These women usually have limited work skills as they have been stay-at-home mums, have negligible superannuation, and often find themselves on their own later in life. But they are perfectly capable of looking after the house and themselves.

The first site, a village of 18 one-person homes in North Fremantle was opened in July 2023. Rotary helped lobby for land and funds, and has made these houses into homes by providing the furniture and household items.



**Tiny Homes**

Children who enter foster care have often experienced high levels of harm and trauma. At age 18, they are required to transition out, at a time when they lack skills, substantial support or social networks. 50% of these young people are homeless within 1 year of exiting. Once homeless in this way it is very difficult to get back to normal independent living, and a lifetime of homelessness beckons.

Rotary plans to address this problem by housing these young people for a period of years in their own small home on the same property as their foster families with appropriate support. This model has been successfully developed by Kids Under Cover (www.kuc.org.au) in the Eastern states. The project is to build relocatable one-bedroom studios, with a bathroom, in the backyard of a family or carer’s home. The young person moves in and becomes part of the family, who look after them. The home provides the young person with a secure and stable environment for as long as it takes to enable them to transition to an independent lifestyle.



**Transition -** *transition from homelessness to a normal life integrated into society is critical.*

**Driver Learning Supervision**

For many formerly homeless young people a driving licence is needed for any job for which they apply. Getting a licence requires passing a test and clocking up supervised driving hours. In conjunction with Foyer Oxford, Rotary bought a car and set up a supervised driving scheme for these young people.

**Prevention** - *prevention is way better that cure – the most effective solution for people and most economical for government*

**12 Buckets**

12 Buckets (https://12buckets.org/) is an organisation that supports children who are most at risk of homelessness. Their mentoring program matches volunteer mentors with children who need extra support.

Rotary Clubs provide mentors and funding to help 12 Buckets support these children.

**Community Awareness** - *If the WA community is sympathetic and positive, then their collective support will help get rid of homelessness.*

**Eye Contact Photographic Exhibition**

This is a series of 20 larger than life portraits of homeless Western Australians. The purpose of the portraits is to help viewers recognise the humanity in homeless people.

Rotary has exhibited them in over 20 schools and 30 public places. In March 2023, the portraits were exhibited to Federal politicians in Canberra.

**Support** - *homeless people need food, clothing, medical services, laundry & showering facilities, somewhere to do their admin.*

**Socks in the City**

Homeless people struggle to find clean dry socks to wear. As a result they can develop both trench foot and warm water immersion foot. The best treatment is prevention and the best prevention is to wear clean dry socks.

Rotary Clubs and schools help by donating socks or funds through the website www.socksinthecity.org.au.

**Passages Youth Engagement Hub**

Passages (https://www.passages.org.au/), a joint venture between the Rotary Club of Perth and the St Vincent de Paul Society, helps marginalised homeless and troubled youth. It acts as a referral centre and ensures provision of services: medical, Centrelink, Youthlink, legal assistance and combating drug abuse. It also allows people to use computers, have a shower, wash their clothes and use a kitchen.

**Medical Respite Centre**

When people become homeless their health deteriorates rapidly and if left unchecked condemns them to a short life. When homeless people come out of hospital after a procedure, they go back on the streets and rarely recover properly. As a consequence they are back in hospital in a matter of weeks - homeless people are the “frequent flyers” at emergency departments.

Rotary has worked with Homeless Healthcare to develop a Medical Respite Centre (homelesshealthcare.org.au/medical-respite-centre) to provide pre and post hospital care for homeless people. The MRC was opened in August 2021. It is now up and running with 20 medical beds and 10 non-medical beds.