malleefamilycare

Two proven programs. One region they don't reach.

Victoria has built two of the most effective early intervention programs in the country. One helps families with babies and toddlers. The other gives young people who are homeless a home and a way back into study. Neither reaches the Mallee.

For 47 years, Mallee Family Care has worked with families across north-west Victoria. Every day we see what happens when help that exists elsewhere is out of reach here. This election, we are asking all parties to commit to two things:

1. **A Youth Foyer in Mildura, giving young people a home and a way back into study**
2. **An Early Parenting Centre in Mildura, for families with babies and toddlers**

Young people in Mildura

192

people under 24 homeless in Mildura at the 2021 Census, up from 104

Too many young people in Mildura have nowhere stable to live, and the number is growing. There are no youth refuge beds in town, so young people end up in motels or caravan parks, or move to Melbourne, away from family, school and work. **What's missing is somewhere stable to stay long enough to finish study and build a future here.**

1 A Youth Foyer for Mildura

A young person without a stable place to live rarely stays in school for long. When rent, safety and the next place to sleep take over, study is usually the first thing to go. The longer they're out, the harder the road back.

Education First Youth Foyers give young people the safety to reach their potential. Young people aged 16 to 24 get a home on a TAFE campus for up to two years, with support staff there around the clock. In return, they commit to study, training or work. They leave with qualifications, a rental history and a clear path to the life they want to build.

Victoria has already backed regional Foyers in Shepparton, Wodonga and now Wangaratta. Mildura would be the fourth, on the SuniTAFE campus alongside La Trobe University. A young person could go from a safe bed to a TAFE certificate to a degree, all within walking distance.

IT WORKS

93% of young people leave a Foyer for secure housing

89% are in education, work or both when they finish

9 ongoing local jobs to run it

OUR ASK

We are asking the Victorian Government to back the Foyer and **commit $2.3 million a year to run it for up to 40 young people**, as it does for Victoria's other Foyers. That commitment would allow us to seek Commonwealth funding to build it, through the Housing Australia Future Fund.

The build is costed at $32.5 million. The Foyer itself is $23.7 million. The rest covers the carpark and 12 more homes for young mothers on the same site. Residents pay rent from their own income, which covers about 15 per cent of running costs.

YOUTH FOYER: READY TO GO

Site secured. SuniTAFE is providing the land under a peppercorn lease.

Costed. Concept designs are complete and an independent quantity surveyor has priced them.

Proven partners. The Brotherhood of St Laurence, who developed the model, would train staff and guide practice.

Local delivery. Mallee Family Care would run the Foyer day to day, with support around the clock.

Families in the Mallee

404 km

a Mildura family with a baby has to travel to reach the nearest early parenting centre

More than
1 in 4

Mildura children start school developmentally vulnerable, compared with just over one in five across Victoria

Close to
100,000

people across the four Mallee councils by 2036

2 An Early Parenting Centre for the Mallee

When a baby won't sleep or feed, or a parent is struggling to cope, early parenting centres step in before things reach crisis point. Families stay for several nights, and staff work alongside them, day and night. It is free.

Victoria has eleven of these centres, with another being built at Shepparton. It is one of the most significant investments any state has made in early childhood. But the network stops at Bendigo. For a Mildura family, that is 404 km each way with an unsettled baby, for a four day stay.

In 2022, a planning report looked at where new centres were needed most. It recommended Shepparton, which is 120 km from Bendigo. Mildura is more than three times that distance. But the report set Mildura aside because it expected fewer young children here. That forecast has since turned around. Around 5,450 children under five now live across the Mallee, and their families still have no centre within reach.

IT WORKS

87% of parents felt more confident after their stay

94% better understood their child's sleep

OUR ASK

$16 million to build and $3.85 million a year to run a ten bed centre in Mildura. It would serve families with children up to four across Mildura, Swan Hill, Gannawarra and Buloke. The Queen Elizabeth Centre and Tweddle would deliver the clinical care, with Mallee Family Care as the local partner.

The same support, wherever you live

Mallee families and young people deserve what other Victorians already have. The programs work, the partners are on board and the costings are done. Both services would be built and staffed here, creating local jobs and keeping people connected to their community. For the Foyer, Victoria's support also opens the door to Commonwealth funding to build it.

The need is here, and the solutions are ready. We're asking every party to back an Early Parenting Centre and a Youth Foyer for Mildura this election.

CONTACT

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Mallee Family Care acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters on which we work and pays respect to Elders past and present.

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