Commitment to Socially Excluded Young Australians: An investment in the Future

The notion that it is better to intervene early to help young people before problems have become entrenched has become well-established in the Australian social policy debate.

Young people who are affected by homelessness, drug and alcohol addiction and mental illness may never recover from the effects of disruption to their adolescence which may include lower school attainment and employment prospects, transience and homelessness, dislocation from friends and family, disability, and poor health.

If we had acted early we could have prevented significant costs on welfare budgets at state and federal level. We would also have prevented human suffering.

However, service funding and programs to assist disadvantaged young people currently fail to make early intervention policy a reality.

Therefore we call on our political leaders to:

1. Adopt a bipartisan and long-term commitment to a national early intervention strategy for disadvantaged and marginalised young Australians.
2. Commit to national guidelines and funding to entitle practical support for all young Australians as they transition from state care to independence. This support should be available until at least the age of 25 years.
3. Commit through COAG to national guidelines for how schools and other human service agencies should work together to provide early intervention support to young people and their families.
4. Resource the national rollout of proven early intervention models such as RECONNECT ($60m pa) and HomeAdvice ($90m pa).
5. Fund an expansion of Headspace Centres and develop a national network of Early Psychosis Prevention and Intervention Centres (EPPIC) in the Mental Health field for young people ($1.175b over four years 2010 – 2014).

We ask our Australian Governments and political leaders to do whatever is necessary, not only what is politically expedient.

Name	Address	Email	Signature

Please return signed commitment to PO Box 257, Brunswick Vic 3056

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