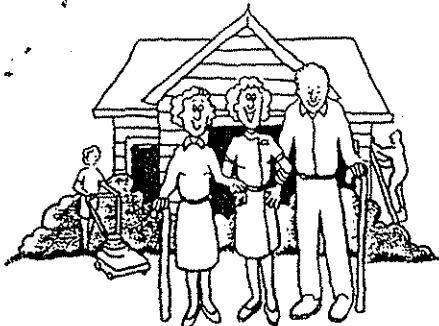


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Minister for Aged, Family and Health Services  
Hon. Peter Staples M.P.

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## NEW PROGRAM TO HELP YOUNG HOMELESS AND 'AT RISK' YOUNG PEOPLE FIND WORK

The Federal Minister for Aged, Family and Health Services, Peter Staples, today announced a new program to assist young homeless people find employment.

The Job Placement and Employment Training Program is part of the Government's response to the youth summit on July 22. It will tackle the task of providing jobs for those young people most disadvantaged in the labour market by their experience of homelessness and its attendant problems.

"The program will build on achievements already made under the Youth Social Justice Strategy," Mr Staples said.

"Homelessness and unemployment are inextricably linked. Young homeless people have been unable to get work or access to training because they do not have adequate and secure housing.

"They fall behind their peers in skills and training and lose the self esteem and confidence needed to gain employment. We need to break that cycle."

The program will provide a total of \$10 million over two years and will fund a series of one or two year pilot projects to provide employment and training assistance linked to accommodation and support, specifically designed to increase the opportunities, skills and independence of young homeless people.

Over 1,000 young people will be helped directly and many thousands of others will benefit from the demonstration effect of the projects.

"Until now finding employment and training opportunities for disadvantaged young people has been difficult to approach in any systematic way," Mr Staples said.

"However, projects like the Body Shop Linked Access Project and the Crossroads program run by the Salvation Army have begun to tackle the problems.

"The Job Placement and Employment Training Program will offer a unique opportunity to build on these and other existing support and accommodation programs to ensure young homeless people get access to the employment and training they are entitled to."

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"Community groups will play a crucial role in managing these pilot projects. They have experience in assisting young homeless people and can tap into the employment and training opportunities in the local area.

"We also need to involve the business sector, to provide opportunities for on-the-job training and work experience as well as support through supervision of young people in employment."

The program will trial a broad range of approaches. Projects will develop a mix of structured or formalised training, work experience, supported job placement and other support and counselling strategies appropriate to the needs of the individual.

The program aims to bring together existing community expertise, local and regional businesses and appropriate Government agencies to create the best opportunities for young homeless people to achieve the self esteem and independence that increased skills and employment experience can bring.

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