

brotherhood action

Brotherhood of St Laurence

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Learning to Survive

A unique project for unemployed, homeless young people has been developed by the Brotherhood.

In early November, a house in Thornbury will become a temporary home for a group of six young people, giving them the combination of a home and the chance to learn survival and work skills.

Nearly \$70 000 has been donated for the Northcote Accommodation Project (N.A.P.): \$50 000 through the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne and the remainder from the Brotherhood's Jubilee Appeal and from the Northcote City Council.

A community committee has been set up to manage the project, including representatives from the Brotherhood, the Diocese of Melbourne, local Anglican, Roman Catholic and Church of Christ parishes and the Northcote City Council.

Committee chairman Canon Barry Smith, vicar of St James, East Thornbury, has welcomed the project. 'There is no refuge or long term accommodation at all for young people in this area,' he said.

'An important feature of NAP is also the way the Brotherhood has helped to establish the project and has then immediately handed it over to the local community to run.'

This procedure follows the



Kathy Ryan, community youth worker for the Northcote Accommodation Project, is pictured at the project's Thornbury house.

Brotherhood's new policy of providing resources to local areas with particular needs.

Kathy Ryan, community youth worker for NAP, is at present setting up house in a large, comfortable weatherboard house in St George's Road, Thornbury. The house has been purchased by the Victorian Ministry of Housing and leased to the project.

'The young people who choose to live in the house will be those who don't have basic survival skills such as budgeting, cooking and homemaking, but wish to learn them,' Kathy said.

'Most teenagers get these skills at home as part of growing up in a family, but the kids who will be referred to us by refugees, the

police or social workers, just haven't had the chance to learn.'

The 5 bedroomed house has a bungalow and can accommodate one staff member and six young people, with room for an emergency.

The first group will be selected by the committee. They will then manage the house themselves, choosing new members as others move on, with staff to help as needed.

The young residents will be at NAP for up to 6 months until they feel they have the skills to live independently, moving when they are ready for more permanent accommodation which Kathy and a second staff member will help them to arrange.