

# media release

14 May 2009



## Homeless youth still seeking help

Rob Foggo and representatives from **ac.care** recently returned from a State Government sector briefing on homelessness reform. New homelessness strategies were discussed, including the funding of three purpose built houses for 12-15 year olds, one of which will be in a regional/rural location.

In 2008, 48 young people (14-17) sought emergency accommodation or longer term accommodation from **ac.care**. Since December **ac.care** had a further 10 young people seek emergency accommodation. Local organisation were not able to adequately support these young people because either there were no accommodation options, no suitable accommodation or no funding to provide the resources. These local children come to **ac.care** for a variety of reasons, which may include family breakdown and lack of both affordable accommodation options and survival skills. These are children that with the right support will be able to become healthy, participating members of our community.

*“ac.care welcomes the opportunity to be involved in the State Government briefings and that there will be new funding to end and prevent homelessness for those at risk. Homelessness is not confined to our capital cities, it occurs in places like Mount Gambier and our community needs the funding to support these children back into stable accommodation, re-engagement with education and reunification with families where possible” said Rob Foggo, CEO, ac.care*

In 2004, a multi-agency reference group, which includes **ac.care**, first raised the issue of local young people at risk of homelessness and since that time the group has actively sought a solution to the problem. If funding were made available the service could provide these children with safe and supported accommodation and work towards resolving conflict with parents and aiming for family reconnection. Whilst working on this goal the service could support the children to continue their

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**ac.care**

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education, participate in safe recreation activities and, in appropriate situations, provide training opportunities in budgeting and independent living skills. In a caring environment such as this, Families SA staff could access the children in order to assess if further supports and possible care orders are appropriate.

## End

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### About ac.care

*ac.care was formed in Mount Gambier in 1985, with one social worker, a part-time administration officer and an accommodation support worker. Today ac.care employs nearly 200 staff with current offices and community centres in Mount Gambier, Millicent, Naracoorte, Bordertown, Murray Bridge, Berri and Waikerie. More than 60,550 (FY07-08) people in the South East, Riverland and Murraylands of South Australia were supported through over 70 different programs and services that fall under one or more of ac.care's 7 goals: **alleviating homelessness | building communities | promoting learning | reducing poverty | sharing cultures | strengthening families | supporting children.***