

MEDIA RELEASE



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Brighter Horizons for vulnerable pregnant women

A unique new service supporting homeless young women prepare for the birth of their baby and make a successful transition to motherhood in a secure home will open in Perth later this month.

Expanding St John of God Health Care's partnership with Hills Community Support Group (HCSG), St John of God Horizon House Dianella is an Australian first which will provide accommodation and care for pregnant women aged 16 to 22 from across the Perth metropolitan area through the perinatal period with a full-time senior social worker, live-in carers and the opportunity to take part in programs such as parent education.

Mike Board, Group Manager for Youth at St John of God Health Care, said: "This new service builds on the Horizon House model of providing care and support in a secure environment, but it is the first to specialise in support for young women during their journey into motherhood."

"We have identified a strong need within the Perth community for a service of this nature with many pregnant young women struggling to find safe, stable accommodation. We are very grateful to Hills Community Support Group and the other agencies that have come together to help make this vital service a reality."

The newest addition to St John of God Social Outreach and Advocacy Services, Horizon House Dianella marks a significant extension to the partnership with HCSG, which already funds a case worker for the Midland-based Kira House project, providing accommodation and support for young women who have been subject to domestic violence.

Justine Colyer, CEO of Hills Community Support Group, said: "Horizon House Dianella will provide essential care to young women and give them the help they need to give their babies the best possible start in life. We are delighted to work with St John of God Health Care to ensure that this service meets the needs of young women when they need support most."

Managed through St John of God Subiaco Hospital, the service consists of two adjacent homes. Residents will first enter Bendat House, providing support to young women during pregnancy, after which they will move into Miriam House with their new baby while they are assisted to find stable, independent living arrangements.

Additional support for the service has come from the Department of Child

MEDIA RELEASE

Protection, Pregnancy Assistance, Lotterywest and a significant financial contribution from the Bendat Family.

St John of God Horizon House now operates ten homes for homeless young people across Western Australia and Victoria and the partnership with HCSG forms an important broadening of expertise in supporting vulnerable, at-risk young people.

The new service will have important links to clinical support including referral pathways to other St John of God Social Outreach and Advocacy Services such as the Raphael Centre (specialising in perinatal and infant mental health) and DAWN (Drug and Alcohol Withdrawal Network), providing additional support to young women.

For more information visit www.sjog.org.au/horizonhouse phone 08 9382 6192 or email hh.dianella@sjog.org.au

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NOTES

St John of God Health Care is a Catholic not-for-profit health care provider. We provide Social Outreach and Advocacy Services which reach out to people experiencing disadvantage to improve health and wellbeing as well as hospitals, home nursing and pathology services.

We strive to serve the common good by providing holistic, ethical and person-centred care and support. We aim to go beyond quality care to provide an experience for people that honours their dignity, is compassionate and affirming and leaves them with a reason to hope.

Social Outreach and Advocacy Services provide significant care and relief for people experiencing disadvantage throughout Australia, New Zealand and the Asia Pacific region, particularly in areas where gaps in health and wellbeing services have been identified. Our Social Outreach and Advocacy services are located in the community and can be accessed free of charge or at minimal cost.

More information is available at www.sjog.org.au/outreach