
Media Release

February 18, 2011

Horizon house set to open its doors

Long-term accommodation and support for Broome's young people

St John of God Health Care will open its doors to young people in Broome needing stable accommodation next month with Horizon House making final preparations to be operational by the beginning of March.

Live-in carers have now been appointed to provide support and care for young people aged 16 to 22, responding to a particular need for long-term stable accommodation options for Aboriginal young men in Broome and The Kimberley.

The realisation of Horizon House in Broome is a proud moment for the Sisters of St John of God, who identified the need for a stable, home-like environment for Aboriginal boys and young men in the area. Horizon House will encourage young people to engage in education and employment through an established model of care and support.

A steering committee has worked alongside St John of God Health Care's Social Outreach and Advocacy services to expand Horizon House into specific care for young Aboriginal men, building on considerable experience in Aboriginal health through the Strong Family, Strong Culture service operating across regional Western Australia.

Broome will be the eighth Horizon House to be opened in Australia, with several indigenous Australians already having benefit from the long-term accommodation and support provided in other locations across WA and Victoria.

Horizon House, located on Weld Street in the town, will be officially opened by the Governor of Western Australia, His Excellency Dr Ken Michael AC, who is patron of Horizon House. The Bishop of Broome, Most Rev. Christopher Saunders will also perform a blessing at the event on March 10.

The new house in Broome will accommodate up to six young people at any one time and is a major step in St John of God Health Care's strategy to dramatically increase its capacity to support young people in need during 2011 with new, specific accommodation services and a national strategy to promote mental health among people aged 12 to 25.

Giving young people a better start to their adult lives is a key objective of Social Outreach and Advocacy services provided by St John of God Health Care.

"We are very excited that Horizon House is nearly ready to open after a thorough planning process which followed the need for an accommodation service being identified by the Sisters of St John of God in Broome," said Mike Board, Manager for Youth at St John of God Health Care.

“We have already taken occupancy of the premises in Weld Street, appointed carers who will live in the house and will be able to accommodate young people who need a stable home environment very soon.

“I would like to thank the Broome community for their outstanding support of Horizon House so far and we look forward to a more rewarding future for young people in The Kimberley. Our ethos in supporting young people is always to give those experiencing disadvantage a brighter future and that is a long-term commitment through our Social Outreach and Advocacy services,” Mr Board added.

Young people looking for stable accommodation in Broome can contact Peter Vanas, WA coordinator for Horizon House on (08) 6103 5587 or email horizonhouse@sjog.org.au

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NOTES

St John of God Health Care is a leading provider of private hospitals, pathology, and Social Outreach and Advocacy services, throughout Australia, New Zealand and the Asia-Pacific region.

We return all profits to the communities we serve by:

- Updating and expanding technology and facilities
- Expanding existing services and acquiring new services
- Providing Social Outreach and Advocacy services to people experiencing disadvantage

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 we have identified gaps in current service provisions.

Through Social Outreach and Advocacy, St John of God Health Care utilises its existing expertise and reputation to help people and communities help themselves improve health and wellbeing outcomes wherever possible. Our dedication to ‘early intervention’ means that we aim to address health issues as early as possible in their life cycle with the intention of preventing long-term or chronic health factors.

More information is available at: <http://www.sjog.org.au/outreach>

Horizon House provides long-term housing, care and intensive support to young people aged 16 to 22, who would otherwise be without a permanent home.

The service provides a model of care and support in a family environment, working towards St John of God Health Care's vision for all young people to have the opportunity to live in a caring family environment that fosters respect and responsibility and enables them to grow and develop trusting relationships, and become contributing members of the community.

Horizon House aims to meet the long-term needs of disadvantaged young people, providing life skills, education, counselling and socialisation, helping to put young people on a positive pathway for a fulfilling life.