

MEDIA RELEASE

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Telstra Foundation commits over \$400,000 for young homeless

Hundreds of homeless and at risk young Victorians will have a greater chance of completing their VCE and building a better future thanks to the Telstra Foundation's support for a customised online tutoring initiative with \$403,000 over the next three years.

Kids Under Cover, who provide much-needed accommodation and education support for homeless and at risk young Victorians, will deliver the online tutoring to the young Victorians they work with on a daily basis.

"Studies have found that of the 100,000 Australians who are homeless every night, almost half are under the age of 25ⁱ. Not only are these children disadvantaged through homelessness, but they lose access to an education with an average of two out of three young people who become homeless leaving school in the same yearⁱⁱ," said Jo Swift, Chief Executive, Kids Under Cover.

"Online tutoring will be an integral part of the success for all young people in our Scholarship Scheme program.

"The Telstra Foundation has embraced the idea of giving young people every opportunity to succeed by endorsing the online tutoring service," Ms Swift said.

"All Australian children deserve the opportunity to complete their secondary education. The Telstra Foundation is incredibly proud to be able to support Kids Under Cover further extend their Scholarship Scheme for youth at risk of homelessness by incorporating one-on-one tailored online tutoring," Telstra Foundation Director, and head of Telstra Country Wide, Geoff Booth said.

"This project is designed to deliver real-time, one-to-one support for disadvantaged and socially isolated students between 13 and 18 years of age, and will help track and measure their academic progress.

"The Telstra Foundation's Social Innovation Grant will help young students increase their ability to study and perform at school. This will help develop their confidence, engage more actively at school, and increase their sense of social inclusion within the school community.

"The online tutoring will also build online communications technology skills which will help the students both today in the classroom, as well as learning additional skills to help with future employment opportunities in the future," Mr Booth said.

-MTC-

**Making a positive and lasting difference to the lives of
Australian children and young people**
www.telstrafoundation.com

Funding from the Telstra Foundation will extent the support offered through the Scholarship Scheme to include a professional tutoring service for up to 200 students over the next three years, provided through Tutoring Australasia.

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About Kids Under Cover

Kids Under Cover was established in 1989 as a direct response to Senate National Inquiry into Youth Homelessness (the Burdekin Report, 1989). Kids Under Cover raises funds to provide accommodation for young people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless and provide the opportunity to access VCE tertiary scholarships so there is hope for them to build a sustainable future. Further information is available at www.kuc.org.au.

About the Telstra Foundation

The Telstra Foundation is a program devoted to enriching the lives of Australian people and the communities in which they live. Since 2002, the Telstra Foundation has provided over \$28 million through more than 4,850 projects to help make a positive and lasting difference to the lives of children and young people.

The Telstra Foundation encourages community-based organisations with dynamic ideas to apply for funding through the Social Innovation Grants program. Further information about the program is available at www.telstrafoundation.com.

ⁱ 2003, Chamberlain & Mackenzie, *Counting the Homeless*, ABC using Census 2001 data

ⁱⁱ 2005, AFHO Facts, *Homelessness and Young People*, Australian Federation of Homelessness Organisations