

MEDIA RELEASE



Art brings hope to Melbourne's homeless

The Youth Projects Living Room will tomorrow unveil *The Living Wall*, a mural created by homeless and disadvantaged individuals, in the heart of Melbourne's street art scene, the iconic Hosier Lane.

Funded under the Arts Victoria Community Partnerships Program, The Living Wall is a culmination of a series of art therapy workshops held at the Living Room, a Primary Health Care service for homeless and disadvantaged individuals.

Youth Projects Chairperson, Melanie Raymond, said the workshops have provided an opportunity for clients to express themselves through an alternative medium.

"The art therapy workshops have empowered our clients and enabled social interaction for individuals who are marginalised and often isolated. It has been a really powerful therapeutic tool.

"The workshops have definitely instilled a sense of hope and strength amongst our clients, and the mural will communicate with the hundreds of Melburnians and tourists alike who frequent this laneway every day.

"It will hopefully create a greater sense of understanding and empathy for marginalised individuals in our community."

The Living Wall incorporates meaningful symbols created by participants and local artists and will add to the ever evolving street art landscape of Hosier Lane.

The powerful image of the phoenix rising is one such symbol featured in The Living Wall.

"This symbol [the phoenix rising] came to me during the art therapy workshops," said a participant.

"It symbolises my new sense of strength and empowerment," he said.

With 10,000 homeless individuals in Melbourne on any given night, the Youth Projects Living Room takes a holistic approach to support.

"We don't do just one thing," Ms Raymond said.

"Imagine being homeless and there's nowhere to take a shower, nowhere to wash your clothes, nowhere to send or receive mail, nowhere to eat or even have a conversation with another human being.

"We provide those sorts of very simple things that can make a big difference but we also do the rest."

The Living Room is located at 7-9 Hosier Lane Melbourne and also provides free access to healthcare, counselling, supported referrals and material aid.

Photo opportunities exist of the mural, clients and workers at the Living Wall launch from 1.30pm on Tuesday 22 July at the Living Room, 7-9 Hosier Lane, Melbourne.

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