

MO 19/6/2

NORTHERN BEACHES

At-risk children hit hard by funding cuts

LARGEST YOUTH HOMELESSNESS SERVICE IN STATE FEARS FOR FUTURE



Justene Gordon and staff fear youth homeless provider the Burdekin Association could close after losing funding.

Picture: VI

Cayla Dengate

AT-RISK children as young as 12 could be without a roof over their heads with funding for northern beaches youth service, the Burdekin Association, in jeopardy.

The Brookvale-based youth homelessness service has run for 30 years and is the largest of its kind in the state, caring for 340 young people aged 12 to 21 annually on government funding of \$700,000 a year.

However, it was not successful in receiving funding allocated by the NSW Department of Family and Community Services last week. The Department had not commented at the time of going to press.

“We are devastated at the impact this could have on vulnerable young people on the northern beaches

- Burdekin Association chairwoman Justene Gordon

Chairwoman Justene Gordon said the future was uncertain for the 42 young northern beaches people currently staying with them as well as hundreds they are working with through mentoring and services.

“If we don’t secure funding, our young people will find themselves facing homelessness,” she said.

The team was shocked to discover they had not been funded.

“Our service alone is the

largest provider of youth accommodation in the state in terms of bed numbers so we were absolutely gobsmacked to learn we were not the preferred agency for funding,” she said.

“We are devastated at the impact that this could have on vulnerable young people on the Northern Beaches.”

The competitive process for funding saw three youth homelessness providers in the region pitching for a contract, including Burdekin

Association, Phoenix House Youth Services in Crows Nest and Taldumande Youth Services in Neutral Bay.

Ms Gordon said the trend was towards fewer contracts being granted, so the association partnered with Phoenix House Youth Services, while Taldumande was approached for partnership by Mission Australia – which received regional funding.

The association had since made a pitch to Taldumande

to become a sub for the northern beaches even if successful would be lost.

“At least six beds and we can’t there will be a shift to someone on the beaches,” she said also require sort down ... and their redundancies.”

Ms Gordon said there would be a hearing tomorrow whether there talks on subcontract

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