



## The Property Industry Foundation **Rebuild-a-Young-Life Program** *incorporating the Greg Paramor Scholarships*

### **Background Information**

The Property Industry Foundation initiated a pilot Rebuild Young Lives (RYL) program in 2009, to create employment opportunities for disadvantaged young people who have been assisted by the Salvation Army's Oasis Support Youth Network.

The purpose of the program is to stabilise the lives of disadvantaged young people, get them ready for work, and have them take a responsible role in our community.

As we all know, none of the kids helped by charities such as Salvation Army deliberately choose life on the streets. Usually, factors beyond their control such as marriage break-downs, inter-generational or unemployment generated poverty, parental alcoholism and drug dependency are catalysts for young people being forced onto the streets and its related hazards.

Those who aren't rescued by organisations such as Salvation Army Oasis, Barnardos, Come In Youth Resource Centre, Ted Noffs Foundation, Open Family and more, drift inevitably towards criminal institutions, suicide or death from a drug over-dose.

The Property Industry Foundation has placed a lot of emphasis on the Rebuild a Young Life (RYL) Program, because the provision of employment opportunities to youth is the most effective way of leading disadvantaged youth back towards financial and emotional stability.

*PIF has prepared a Facts Sheet to help companies develop a better understanding of the issues that may need to be considered regarding the employment of one of these young people.*

### **Opportunities for PIF Corporate Donor to Participate in the RYL Program**

Organisations can participate in the RYL Program either as a work-experience sponsor or as an RYL employer that engages an a student on a permanent basis that is nevertheless conditional on the 90 day probationary period referred to above.

When the program is fully operational, we hope that we might have 50 participating companies that employ one OG every second year.

Feedback from the companies that participated in the pilot program suggests that the employment of an OG can have positive effects on the attitudes and mindsets of the individuals with whom the OG works.

Organisations that have a practical approach to implementing corporate social responsibility policies are also more likely to have good workplace cultures. The current RYL Program is an opportunity for organisations to do something very worthwhile.

### **GREG PARAMOR SCHOLARSHIPS**

The Property Industry Foundation partnered with Salvation Army Oasis program to receive an understanding of who these young disadvantaged people were, where they came from, what their abilities and capabilities were; and what their needs were. We wrote to the industry leaders and sought support via the CEO and HR management.

The journey was long yet deliberate. We needed to get the formula right! so we worked with a **small intake (11 young people)** and learnt a lot from our first attempt. The result of the Foundation's first attempt has been very rewarding.

The first Greg Paramor Scholarship Program has been tailored to suit the needs of the candidates rather than a generic package.

The first three (3) young men who received such an award (and reward) for making substantial changes to their lives during our recent High Level Networking Forum, were:

1. **Patrick: Host Company – Mirvac.**  
\$5,000 to contribute to a Bachelor of Science Degree at UTS.
2. **Damien: Host Company – Mirvac.**  
\$3,000 to contribute to a 3 day industry course in project management administration, plus an up-skilling course in finance.  
Next year it could be considered that the remaining money would be directed to a diploma in project management administration.
3. **Nathan: Host Company – St Hilliers.**  
\$5,000 to contribute to a 3-year TAFE Carpentry Apprenticeship plus tools.  
These amounts and representations have been recommended by their employers and Life-Coach at Oasis.



## Considerations for potential employers

- 1) **Long Term Employment Arrangements** - Each OG will have to be directly employed by a sponsoring company and not a third-party "host employer".
- 2) **Building industry apprenticeships** will only suit about 10% of the Oasis cohort and the majority of the OGs will be seeking entry level jobs.
- 3) **Work experience** is a critical component of the Oasis "work ready" program. It allows OGs to gain a good understanding of the importance of punctuality, responsiveness to organisational priorities and the ability to work co-operatively with others.
- 4) **Who will provide work experience** - The companies that provide work-experience under the RYL program may not necessarily be long term employers, though ideally, work experience might lead to probationary employment for 50% of participants. Organisations that take on an OG for work experience will be better placed to make an informed judgement regarding an OG's suitability for their organisation though providing work experience doesn't imply an obligation to offer permanent employment.
- 5) **The period of work experience should** be two or three days per week for two consecutive weeks.
- 6) **Permanent employment and the probationary period** – An offer of permanent employment to an OG will still be dependent on the completion of a 90 day probationary period. This probationary period will allow the OG to choose a different career path if the OG doesn't ultimately enjoy the working environment and/or the company doesn't believe that the OG's mindset has a good fit with the organisation.

## Considerations for potential employers (continued)

- 7) **The kind of tasks** that could be given to a prospective Oasis sourced employees for work-experience could include, preparation of construction files, photocopying plans and specifications, delivery of documents and plans, general clerical work in accounts payable, etc.
- 8) **Mentors** – Each prospective employer should have a natural “mentor” with whom or to whom an OG can go with their problems both inside and outside the work environment on a reasonably regular basis. Beyond this, John Harris from Oasis will be maintaining regular contact as an external mentor.
- 9) **Good workplace cultures** and a supportive attitude towards the less fortunate will be critical success factors.
- 10) **Organisations that have HR departments** or are owned by small business proprietors that have strong paternal supportive mentoring mindsets are more likely to have the skills and cultures that will permit OGs to be successfully recruited and retained.
- 11) **The expectations** of the next cohort of OGs need to be managed carefully so that they match the realities of workplaces and the likelihood that their first year in the workforce may involve comparatively menial tasks.
- 12) **Stable residential accommodation** is an essential element of the normalisation of the Oasis cohort. PIF intends to provide significant accommodation assistance to OGs when the RYL program is fully operational.

The following people have indicated that they would be happy to provide feedback to any company considering participation in the RYL program, based on their experiences with the OGs who have joined their companies.

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