

# Mental Health Patients 'given their life back' with Accommodation Service

By: Scott Menard / NewsGrio

Ron Boulter has lived with significant mental illness since he was a teenager and was once forced into hospital for three years, but an independent living program is giving him back his life.



Ron Butler says VincentCare has helped him get his life back on track. Photo: Sarah Collard / ABC News

St. Vincent de Paul's program VincentCare provides three-tiered assistance which starts initially with 24-hour support crisis care before moving to share housing and finally independent living.

"It's really helped me with what I have been through for a lot of years ... and [I] was really struggling," Mr. Boulter said.

He said during his three-year stint in hospital he was segregated from day-to-day community living.

"It was a really scary time; I didn't really know what was happening. I'd begun to hear voices and stuff," Mr. Boulter said.

"It was pretty messed up [during the hospital stay]. I've come a long way since then and I am [hoping] to get my own place."

He said he learned to play guitar in hospital and now shares that passion with other residents at the VincentCare village.

"I jam with some of the guys here, we play drums and guitar and I write some material, mostly metal and most of the residents are pretty cool," he said.

"I'd recommend it to any young person who has gone through struggles; they give a lot of support and help."

Ron's mother Tracy has been crucial in finding the support her son needed.

"It took 15, 20 years. I didn't know about it, there isn't much out there... [but] I don't have to worry now, I can go to sleep. Ron is in good hands," Ms. Boulter said.

"Ron has just made such huge progress, that I never believed he would. It's a slow journey but it does happen, it just takes time."

## **‘They gave me back my life’**



**VincentCare client, Sunay Harrington.  
Photo: ABC News**

Sunay Harrington grew up being bounced around in group homes and state care before ending up homeless and suicidal.

She said she owes her life to the VincentCare.

“I was very unwell for at least five or six years in hospitals,” she said.

“They [VincentCare] encouraged me to move out of the hospital into the house.”

“I was very, very unwell ... they gave me my life back. I didn’t want to live. I wasn’t interested in anything anymore.”

Ms. Harrington spent six years in supported living and has now been in supported independent housing for over two years.

“If I need support now, all I have to do is phone up St. VincentCare,” she said.

VincentCare assists more than 50 people in their supported living accommodation in WA and has 17 apartments for people who have moved on from crisis care to independent living.