An innovative service that provides secure accommodation to young people who are either homeless or at risk of homelessness in exchange for a commitment to study and training has been opened by the State Minister for Housing, Wendy Lovell.

Based at Kangan Institute's Broadmeadows campus, the Education First Youth Foyer is collaboration between the Brotherhood of St Laurence, Hanover Welfare Services and the Victorian Government.

Housing up to 40 young people aged 16 - 24, the Kangan Institute Education First Youth Foyer provides student accommodation for up to two years to young people who want to study but can't live at home.

Kangan Institute is home to the second of the three Victorian Government-funded Foyers. Holmesglen Education First Youth Foyer opened last year, while the third is scheduled to be opened at GOTAFE in Shepparton next year. Hanover's CEO Tony Keenan and the Brotherhood's Executive Director Tony Nicholson congratulated the State Government for its vision and financial support, and Kangan Institute for its vital role.

Mr Nicholson said the concept is the first of its kind in Victoria and offers an entirely new approach to assisting young people experiencing homelessness. "Education First Youth Foyers are premised on the idea that the best thing we can do for these young people is to get them educated so that they will be able to build a good life for themselves by having a job. This is the big reforming idea driving the provision of high quality student style accommodation while they undertake studies," Mr Nicholson said.

Hanover's CEO Tony Keenan said the Foyer is a major reform that puts learning and skills as the key pathway out of homelessness and disadvantage. "Already, it is changing lives. We know the Foyers will help many young people who are without family support and are disengaged from education to develop skills, become employed and build productive and good lives for themselves," he said.

Grant Sutherland, Bendigo Kangan Institute's acting chief executive officer said the Institute was proud to be associated with the Education First Youth Foyer. "It is very positive progress that young homeless people who live in Melbourne's north now have access to residential and other support services, as well as to education, training and employment."

Sixteen-year-old Foyer resident Kayla said the living at the site had completely changed her life. "I want to be a doctor," she said. "Here, I have my own room. I can study both for Year 11 and complete my Certificate III in Retail Supervision. I've got a part-time job now. And I have made some great friends. The Foyer has changed my life and given me so much hope again." More than 4000 Victorians aged 15-19 experience homelessness on any given night. Without support, they are at risk of experiencing long-term homelessness and unemployment.