



PARENTS ADVISED TO TURN THEIR KIDS OUT OF HOME BY AGE 20

Empty your nest of adult children

SUSIE O'BRIEN

PARENTS should declare "Independence Day" and turn their children out of the nest by the time they turn 20.

Life skills coach Michele Jones thinks a failure to "set a date for kids to vacate the premises" can lead to major problems down the track.

Ms Jones said a growing number of parents were seeking professional help to persuade their adult children to leave home.

She said children should live independently by age 20.

"Parents convince themselves the child staying at home longer will help them save for the purchase of their own home, some even going as far as building a granny flat to accommodate their child, keeping them safe and tending to their every need," Ms Jones said.

"In reality, parents are simply sending the message to their child that they are not resourceful or capable to live out in the world on their own, and they won't be successful enough to afford a house without their help.

"A recent Household, Income and Labour Dynamics survey of 17,000 found those

who left home after the age of 25 earned \$6000 less than those who fled the nest earlier," Ms Jones said. "Men end up \$20,779 worse off and women \$95,676, leading to further welfare benefit blow-outs by 2020."

Nearly 25 per cent of people aged 20 to 34 continue to live in the parental home.

In Sydney and Melbourne, this figure is 27 per cent.

Ms Jones said parents cited cost of living, university fees, and safety concerns as reasons why their children hadn't left home.

Multigenerational Family Living, a new book by University of New South Wales academics Edgar Liu and Hazel Easthope, said financial problems were the main reason children did not leave home.

This reflected increasing tertiary qualifications, workforce casualisation and the unaffordability of housing.

However, some adult children helped to pay off their parents' mortgages, the authors found.

Anthea Szemeti, 19, who is just about to move out of her parents' comfortable home in Donvale into a college at the

University of Melbourne, said: "Twenty is before most people have finished uni, so it could put a lot of extra pressure on them. It seems unnecessary to say they should move out by then regardless of circumstances."

Her mother, Eleni Szemeti, said 25 was a "more reasonable" age for young people to leave home.

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Anthea Szemeti, 19, is leaving parents Eleni and Darko's home to start university.
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