



Media release

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State and Federal Government action plans needed to end family violence related youth homelessness

This Youth Homelessness Matters Day, social agencies are calling for state and federal governments to develop action plans to end youth homelessness, of which a key driver is family violence.

On any given night, approximately 6,130 Victorians between 12 and 25 have nowhere to call home¹. Of these, 70% were escaping a negative home environment, commonly involving family violence².

Council to Homeless Persons (CHP) is among those calling for further support of this at-risk group, many of whom will go on to experience a lifetime of homelessness if youth-specific housing and support is not provided at the point of crisis.

CHP CEO Jenny Smith explained, "In Victoria there is an absolute lack of suitable accommodation options for young people who are forced to leave their home because of abuse and violence.

"We have known this for a long time, and the Royal Commission into Family Violence (RCFV) reinforces our concerns, and recommends increasing the availability of youth-appropriate accommodation.

"These young people deserve the best opportunity at life, not to be let down when they need our help.

"If a young person's homelessness is not ended swiftly, the lifetime cost per young person can be well over \$700,000 and into the millions³. Homelessness disrupts their education or employment leading to a lifetime of disadvantage and added spending on mental and health services and the justice system.

"It's a no brainer, investment in these young survivors now would not only save thousands of lives, but taxpayers tens of millions of dollars down the track," she added.

To bring the issue to life, four young people who have navigated the youth homelessness system – as a result of violence among other causes – will today share their experiences with a group of 120 youth refuge workers at the Victorian Youth Refuge Forum in South Melbourne.

The Forum's aim is to improve the journey and outcomes for young people experiencing homelessness and accessing crisis accommodation.

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Jenny Smith, CEO Council to Homeless Persons is available for interview

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics 2012, *Census of Population and Housing: Estimating Homelessness, 2011*

² Rosenthal et al. 2006. *Why do homeless young people leave home?*

³ Flatau et al 2015. *The Cost of Youth Homelessness in Australia*