



Media release - Wednesday 5 April 2017

Young people's homelessness too often hidden: Federal Government action needed

To mark [Youth Homelessness Matters Day](#), Victorian youth homelessness organisations and peak bodies are calling on the Federal Government to commit to a national plan to tackle rising homelessness amongst young Australians.

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) data shows that 38,402 Victorians under the age of 25 sought assistance from homelessness services last financial year, over 600 more than the previous year.

Hidden homelessness amongst young people

The Council to Homeless Persons (CHP) cautioned that youth homelessness Census figures were conservative estimates due to the high likelihood of young people living in hidden forms of homelessness such as couchsurfing. Over 6,000 young Victorians who sought homelessness last year were couchsurfing.

"Young people's homelessness is too often hidden, because many young people are experiencing 'invisible homelessness' in the form of couchsurfing or overcrowding," said Jenny Smith, CEO, CHP.

Table: No. of Victorian young people who sought homelessness help 2015-16 (AIHW)

Age	Number of Victorian clients	% of all Victorian homelessness clients
0-9 years	13,536	13%
10-14 years	5,157	5%
15-17 years	4,053	4%
18-24 years	15,656	15%
All clients under 25 years old	38,402	37%

We need a national plan

"A perfect storm of increasing reporting of family violence, decreasing housing affordability for families with kids, a pitifully low Youth Allowance and rising youth unemployment is contributing to the crisis levels of homelessness we're seeing amongst our youth," said Ms Smith.

We need a national plan to end youth homelessness addresses the systemic issues that drive youth homelessness, including family violence, access to affordable housing, youth justice, young people leaving care, education and youth unemployment."

Young people leaving state care

CHP is also [part of The Home Stretch campaign](#) calling for the age at young people are exited from out-of-home care to be raised from 18 to 21. Currently, around 50% of care leavers will end up homeless, unemployed or involved with the law within the first 12 months of exiting care. In Victoria, 400 young people exit care every year on their 18th birthday.



“Too many young people are struggling to cope independently at 18 years after a life in state care. A national plan to tackle homelessness amongst young people must include targeted measures for this very vulnerable group,” said Ms Smith.

Youth Homelessness Matters Day background

Youth Homelessness Matters Day (YHMD) is a national campaign, held annually since 1990, aimed at raising awareness of youth homelessness amongst decision makers and the wider community.

This YHMD in Melbourne, 80 workers from youth refuges will come together to discuss emerging trends in responding to youth homelessness, including responding to the needs of young LGBTIQ people, preventing homelessness among young people leaving state care, eSafety in youth refuges and the connection between family violence.

What: Youth Homelessness Matters Day, Statewide Youth Refuge Forum

Date: Wednesday 5th April, 2017,

Venue: Functions on Chapel (City of Stonington)

Time: 9.45am – 4pm

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