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## New funding will help ease LGBTIQ youth homelessness

*Victoria's peak body for homelessness welcomes Labor's commitment to invest \$6 million over four years to support young LGBTIQ people who are at risk of, or currently experiencing, homelessness.*

Labor's funding promise includes, over four years, \$2.5 million to expand family counselling services for LGBTIQ Victorians and their families, \$500,000 for Switchboard Victoria, a mental health support service, and \$3 million to homelessness services to help address the root causes of LGBTIQ homelessness, and ensure services are equipped to deliver safe and inclusive services.

"We know some young LGBTIQ people end up being forced out of the family home due to rejection. Leaving home young is hard enough, but in our current housing market, and with inadequate social safety nets it can set them on a dark path," said Council to Homeless Persons CEO Jenny Smith.

'Too many young LGBTIQ kids shunned by the family end up homeless or in marginal accommodation where they are exposed to violence, sexual assault, and drugs and alcohol.'

In the last ten years, one in eight heterosexual Australians experienced homelessness at some point. This compares to the homelessness experienced by one in five people who are bisexual, and one in three who identify as gay or lesbian (2014 ABS General Social Survey).

Family rejection is a leading driver of LGBTIQ homelessness: 51% of LGBTIQ young people, and 71% of Gender Diverse young people aged 14 to 21 don't live at home with family (source: LGBTI Health, 2017)

'Anecdotally we know that young LGBTIQ can be reluctant to engage with homelessness services, fearing negative attitudes from staff and other residents, mis-gendering and heterosexist language,' said Ms Smith.

'Homelessness agencies need to be well-prepared to respond to the unique needs of the queer community, and this funding will help with that preparedness' said Ms Smith.

In its [Victorian Homelessness Election Platform](#), CHP has called for more youth refuges for vulnerable young people unable to live at home, including LGBTIQ youth; more family reunification programs to help young people return home if it is safe and appropriate to do so; as well as housing subsidies to enable young people to exit refuges into private housing.

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