Parity

A Call for Contributions
– April 2023

"Towards a New Child and Youth Housing and Homelessness Plan"

Deadline: COB Friday 17 March 2023

Word length: Contributions can be up to 1,600 words. Submissions to be sent to parity@chp.org.au

Introduction

The current policy environment has been ineffective in reducing unaccompanied child and youth homelessness; support systems are fragmented and there are deficits in present service delivery. Public health measures adopted during the pandemic demonstrate that there are practical and workable solutions to rough sleeping and primary homelessness if there is the political will to adopt and enact them. There is every reason for this political will to be extended to preventing and responding to unaccompanied child and youth homelessness, which is a proven pathway to long-term homelessness and social exclusion.

It is time for governments to commit to the highest standards for our children and young people, to give them every opportunity to be safe and free from abuse, trauma and violence; live their best lives; and thrive and enter adulthood equipped with life skills.

This edition of Parity is an opportunity to clearly articulate to the Australian Government the range of outcomes-focused solutions to child and youth homelessness that could be adopted in a standalone National Child and Youth Housing and Homelessness Plan to end homelessness for unaccompanied children and young people in Australia.

We know that:

- to date, unaccompanied children and young people receive minimal attention in national and state/territory homelessness and domestic and family violence (DFV) plans

- while the results of the 2021 Census are yet to be released, we understand, anecdotally, that the number of children and young people at risk of or experiencing homelessness on their own is increasing

- the census fails to accurately capture the numbers of children and young people who are overwhelmingly experiencing couch surfing and overcrowding. The absence of this data prohibits attention and the necessary level of research, design of best practice approaches, and a targeted focus on children and young people in housing and homelessness strategies

- the most recent AIHW SHS annual data (2021–22) indicates that 16% of unaccompanied children and young people identified domestic and family violence (DFV) as the main reason they sought a service. However, youth specialist homelessness services (SHS) advise that these numbers are much higher and more likely to be in the range of 80%. The skewed data could be attributed to the fact that children and young people don't see themselves as victims/survivors of DFV and can also take their time revealing the abuse/violence to their case workers. The absence of refuges and specialist DFV support for unaccompanied children and young people only strengthens this belief that they are not victim/survivors

- the youth SHS sector does not attract the resources it needs to provide the full range of supports required for age appropriate, trauma informed, and good practice responses to unaccompanied children and young people at risk or experiencing homelessness and DFV

- increasing numbers of young people are either experiencing housing stress or finding it difficult to access and/or maintain affordable housing. Youth SHS are unable to meet the demand for their services with some only able to provide tents to young people seeking access to their refuges or other accommodation and support

- the private rental market is often unaffordable for young people, and social housing providers generally do not design programs for young people and rarely quarantine properties for young people.

A framework for discussion

Chapter 1. What are the successes and failures of previous national housing and homelessness strategies and inquiries in responding to unaccompanied children and young people?

The aim of this chapter is to examine and discuss various homelessness strategies that been created by governments over the years to understand why child and youth homelessness continues to persist and grow.

- The Burdekin Report, released over 30 years ago, documented a comprehensive Australian national inquiry into child and youth homelessness. Why have the recommendations from this inquiry been overlooked and are they still relevant today?
- Why have previous strategies failed to appropriately respond to unaccompanied children and young people at risk of or experiencing homelessness?
- Have previous strategies failed to understand that homelessness for unaccompanied children and young people is different to that of adults and different to that of children and young people accompanying adults?
- What approaches or responses in previous strategies have achieved evidenced-based outcomes for unaccompanied children and young people to prevent or respond to their experiences of homelessness?
- Have previous strategies responded effectively to the distinctive pathways into and experiences of homelessness for unaccompanied children and young people?

Chapter 2. How could a standalone national child and youth housing and homelessness plan achieve successful outcomes compared to previous plans/strategies?

The Australian Government has indicated it is committed to developing a new National Housing and Homelessness Plan. This chapter explores how a dedicated standalone focus on unaccompanied children and young people will have positive outcomes compared to previous plans where these cohorts receive minimal attention.

- What was overlooked in previous housing and homelessness strategies for unaccompanied children and young people?

- Can we stop the *'adultification'* of children and young people in our strategies and service responses through a standalone national child and youth housing and homelessness plan? Or is there a better way of achieving outcomes for these cohorts?

- How can a standalone plan respond to the diversity and complexity of children and young people at risk of or experiencing homelessness?

- Recognising that children and young people are in varying developmental stages of their lives and do not have the same coping strategies and resources generally attributed to adults, what breadth of issues and realities must a standalone plan consider for unaccompanied children and young people?

- What types of initiatives could be included in a standalone housing and homelessness plan to support children and young people to transition into a future of self-reliance and wellbeing?

- Should there be a national summit on how we can respond to unaccompanied child and youth homelessness?

Chapter 3. The role of mainstream services and policy – beyond the housing and youth homelessness service system – in responding to child and youth homelessness in Australia

More children and young people with complex needs are falling through the gaps in the mainstream service system and transitioning into the youth homelessness system as a default response. The failure of mainstream systems has a significant impact on the youth homelessness service system, which is neither designed nor resourced to respond to the fragmentation and failures of multiple service systems.

The aim of this chapter is to focus on those issues and identify services sitting outside of the child and youth housing and homelessness service systems that are critical to preventing child and youth homelessness happening in the first place.

- Which mainstream services are effectively responding to the needs of unaccompanied children and young people to prevent escalations into homelessness?

- Which mainstream services and/or responses are contributing to the increase of unaccompanied children and young people who are slipping through the gaps and escalating into homelessness?

- Where can mainstream services be more effective in preventing and/or intervening early to avoid unaccompanied children and young people from experiencing homelessness?

- What mechanisms can governments establish to ensure mainstream services have greater accountability to prevent and respond to unaccompanied children and young people experiencing homelessness when they are entering their service systems?

Chapter 4. What is the extent of the role early intervention can play for unaccompanied children and young people who are at risk of homelessness?

Early intervention has long been championed as the most effective measure to prevent child and youth homelessness. The initial focus of early intervention strategies focused on schools and education. More recently, this has been broadened into the development and implementation of the Community of Schools and Services (COSS) model. Similarly, Youth Foyers have become a favoured service response to education and training for employment and a pathway to independence. Are these models/approaches enough to effectively respond to the increasing issue of unaccompanied child and youth homelessness?

This chapter will explore current early intervention responses both international and within Australia, and the extent to which they can reduce escalations into homelessness for children and young people. Do children and young people who aren't participating in education slip through the gaps of early intervention responses? Where and how can these cohorts be identified and reached beyond an education environment or mainstream avenues?

- What programs are most successful in identifying children and young people at risk of homelessness? Do these programs provide ongoing responses to the child or young person once they have been identified as at risk?

- What resources do we need to improve opportunities for a targeted early intervention focus on children and young people?

- What role, if any, does community play in preventing children and young people from becoming homeless? And what resources will enable services to better tap into and facilitate effective community initiatives?

- What role do mainstream services have in preventing homelessness for unaccompanied children and young people?

- What contribution can allied sectors (health, education, mental health, alcohol and other drug services, justice, etc.) play in the development of a national plan?

- How effective is family reunification in preventing child and youth homelessness?

Chapter 5. Housing responses to youth homelessness

Housing must be at the heart of any national response to homelessness. However, young people are especially disadvantaged – to the point of discrimination – in terms of access to housing, particularly in the private rental market. In addition, social housing providers do not tend to allocate housing for young people, especially those with complex needs. Young people who receive youth allowance are at an extreme disadvantage because they are unable to afford most private rental in Australia.

The aim of this chapter is to explore and articulate the role housing policies in general, and youth housing in particular, can and do play in meeting the housing needs of young people without a home and those at risk of homelessness.

- How can existing policies or future strategies ensure young people are provided with a fair proportion of social housing allocations?
- Is there a need for dedicated youth housing initiatives and what could they look like?
- Can social housing be developed and targeted to meet the needs of young people, particularly those at risk of youth homelessness?
- What innovative responses currently exist to increase housing for young people? How can responses that achieve good outcomes be resourced better?
- What would make it viable for landlords to increase access for young people into their private rental properties?

Chapter 6. Consumer voices and Lived Experience

All relevant services should do as much as possible to facilitate the involvement of those with lived experience of youth homelessness in the various processes that will lead to the development of a new national child and youth housing and homelessness plan. There are many successful models and methods that could be employed to ensure the voice of young people with lived experience is at the forefront.

The aim of this chapter is to make sure the voice of lived experience informs all discussions towards the development of a national child and youth housing and homelessness plan.

- Co-design has become a favoured model for the inclusion of lived experience in the development and design of services and service responses. How can co-design become the basic requirement of service development and delivery?

- What are some examples of successful co-design that could be used for the development of a national housing and homelessness plan?

- How do we avoid consultation and co-design simply becoming a mechanism of co-option, where community input and lived experience is not factored into the final product?

Chapter 7. Developing a national child and youth housing and homelessness plan

This chapter focuses on ideas and suggestions for the processes that could be put in place for developing a national child and youth homelessness plan.

The aim of this chapter is to examine and discuss the best way forward in developing a national child and youth housing homelessness plan.

- How should the Australian Government consult with youth homelessness services and other key youth sector stakeholders in the response to child and youth homelessness?

- What role should research play in the development of a national child and youth housing and homelessness plan?
- What role should the states and territories play, beyond current existing mechanisms such as the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement (NHHA), in developing a national child and youth housing and homelessness plan?

- How can we ensure existing approaches that have achieved successful outcomes, although not yet evidenced based, are considered in the development of a national plan?

- How can we adopt a co-design approach particularly for children who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness?

- What mechanisms or structures already exist that facilitate co-design or the involvement of children and young people in the development of a national child and youth housing and homelessness plan?

Key information

Deadline: The deadline for contributions: COB Friday 17 March 2023. Should additional time be required, please contact the *Parity* Editor.

Submissions format: All contributions should be submitted as Word attachments via email to parity@chp.org.au.

Artwork: Contributors are invited to submit the artwork they would like to accompany their article. Inclusion is dependent on the space being available. If artwork is not provided and is required, it will be selected by the *Parity* Editor.

Word length: Contributions can be up to 1,600 words. This equates to a double page spread in *Parity*. Single page articles can be up to 800 words in length. Contributions of a greater length should be discussed with the *Parity* Editor.

Embedded media: Contributors are able to make suggestions for the placement of relevant hyperlinks, video and other multimedia within their content which can be embedded in the *Parity* online edition. Any suggestions will be reviewed by and decided upon by the *Parity* editor.

Content: By providing your contribution, you confirm and agree that (except where you have referenced or cited any other's work) the contribution is your original work and has not been copied from any other source.

Use of content: If your contribution is accepted, it will be published by or on CHP's behalf in an edition of the *Parity* magazine. *Parity* is available in hard copy and online.

Assistance and questions: Feedback, input and assistance can be provided with drafts if required. The *Parity* editor is available at all stages of the preparation of your contribution to look at drafts and provide input and feedback. The earlier drafts are received for feedback, the better.

Contact: The *Parity* Editor, Noel Murray, can be contacted on:

    e/ parity@chp.org.au
    p/ 0466 619 582

References

All works that are cited or referred to in an article should be referenced. *Parity* does not encourage contributors to list a bibliography of references used in the development of an article but are *not* cited in the article. There is simply insufficient space for the inclusion of extensive bibliographies.

In-text citations

CHP uses numbered-citation for all in-text citations.

- Number references consecutively in the order in which they are first mentioned in the text. The first reference you cite will be numbered (1) in the text, and the second reference you cite will be numbered (2), and so on.
- A number is assigned to each reference as it is used. Even if the author is named in your text, a number must still be used.
- References are listed in numerical order at the end of the document.
- If you use a reference consecutively assign the consecutive number and use Ibid.
- If the same reference elsewhere in your article, assign the consecutive number and use op. cit. For example, Seung S 2012, op cit, p. 34.
- The number can be placed outside the text punctuation to avoid disruption to the flow of the text.
- If a single sentence uses two or more citations, simply identify the references one after the other.

For example:
International research has found that resilience in a homeless youth sample correlates with lower levels of psychological distress, suicide ideation, violent behaviour and substance abuse. (4) (5)

Parity referencing style

All references used in *Parity* articles should be listed using the following guidelines:

Books

Author's surname, initial(s), year of publication, Title of book, Publisher, Place of Publication, Page number**(s).**

For example:
1. Seung S 2012, Connectome: How the Brain's Wiring Makes Us Who We Are, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, Boston, p.90.

Journal Articles

Author's surname, initial(s), year of publication, 'Title of article', *Title of Journal,* volume number, issue number, Page number(s).

For example:
Trevithick P 2003 'Effective Relationship Based Practice', *Journal of Social Work Practice*, vol.17, no.2, pp.163-176.

Newspaper articles

With identified author:
Authors Surname Initial Year of publication, 'Title of article', *Name of publication*, Date and year of publication, Page number(s) or <URL> if applicable.
For example:
Kissane K 2008, 'Brumby calls for tough sentences', *The Age*, 29 October 2017, p. 8.

With no author:
Use 'Unknown'
For example:
Unknown 2008, 'Brumby calls for tough sentences', *The Age*, 29 October 2017, p. 8.

Webpage/document within a website or blog post

Author's surname (if known) Initial, 'Page/Blog/Document Title', *The person or organisation responsible for the website,* Year of Publication (if known) <URL>
For example:
Greenblatt S, 'A special letter from Stephen Greenblatt', Australian Council of Social Services, 2017 <http://acoss.org/media/greenblatt>

Audio podcast

Speaker/Hosts surname Initial, 'Title of episode', *Title of Podcast*, Year and date of Publication, <URL> (if available).
For example:
Todd B 2018, 'What homelessness looks like for women', Stuff Mom Never Told You, 14 March 2018 <https://www.stuffmomnevertoldyou.com/podcasts/what-homelessness- looks-like-for-women.html >

Online video/film or documentary

Title Date of recording, Format, Publisher.

For example:
Indigenous homelessness 1992, video recording, Green Cape Wildlife Films.

Personal communication

Personal communication may include (but are not limited to) email, fax, interview, conversations, lectures, speeches, telephone conversations and letters. Usually personal communications do not appear, as the information is not retrievable. However, due to the numbered citations used in *Parity*, we ask that they be included as follows:

Author's surname First name, Method of communication**,** Date and year of Communication
For example:
Johnson George, Telephone interview, 12 August 2018.

Citing the same reference more than once

When a reference is cited a number of times, use op cit. after the year has been given. If the page number is different from the first use, cite the new page number as well.
For example:
Asante K O and Meyer-Weitz A 2015 op cit. pp. 230-231.

Citing the same reference consecutively

Use Ibid. when the same reference appears consecutively. If the page number is different from the first use, cite the page number as well.
For example:
1. Florn B H 2015, 'The cost of youth homelessness', *Journal of Adolescence*, vol.17, no.2, pp.163-176.
2. Ibid. pp.32-33.

Multiple Authors

For every reference type, give all the authors Surnames and first Initials followed by a comma in the bibliography. The last author listed should be preceded by 'and'.
For example:
Sharp J, Peters J and Howard K 2002, The management of a student research project, Gower, Aldershot, England.