

YOUTH HOMELESSNESS MATTERS

On Youth Homelessness Matters Day, BeyondHousing is calling for urgent action to end youth homelessness. Currently, over 28,000 young people are homeless every night across Australia, and 1 in 4 people experiencing homelessness in our region are unaccompanied young people aged 12 - 24.

According to BeyondHousing's Acting CEO, Penny Hargrave, young people experience multiple and complex pathways into homelessness. The most common forms of youth homelessness are hidden and linked to unstable, unsafe, overcrowded, and short-term housing.

“Almost one-third of young people presenting alone to our homelessness service were couch surfing and another third were in severely overcrowded dwellings at the start of their support. We know from their lived experience, research and decades spent supporting young people that these forms of homelessness leave them vulnerable to exploitation, and to abuse,” Ms. Hargrave said.

Around 1 in 3 young people presenting alone have experienced domestic and family violence, and many are still experiencing it in their intimate relationships. They are turning up to homelessness services when they have nowhere safe to stay but are faced with a lack of safe, supported accommodation options specifically for young people.

Ms. Hargrave emphasized the need for safe and supported accommodation options for children and young people and youth allocated social housing. This includes specialist youth crisis accommodation, transitional housing, specialist domestic, family, and sexual violence support, Youth Foyers, youth social housing, and affordable private rentals. However, there is currently a serious lack of options across this continuum of need.

“Private rentals are often unaffordable, inaccessible, and unattainable for young people. Anglicare’s 2022 Rental Snapshot shows that there was only one affordable rental property in all of Australia for someone on the youth allowance payment. To address this issue, we are calling for an increase in the rate of youth allowance and Commonwealth Rent Assistance.”

Ms. Hargrave highlighted the success of the Shepparton Education First Youth Foyer, which has been operated by BeyondHousing in partnership with Berry Street since 2016.

“The Foyer provides a community environment for 40 residents, who share similar experiences and aspirations to succeed in their studies, careers, and housing. Past residents have become first homeowners, started their own businesses, and are giving back to the Shepparton community through mentoring other young people.

“BeyondHousing is excited to see two new Education First Youth Foyers being built in the Ovens and Murray region, as these facilities have been a proven game-changer in breaking the cycle of youth homelessness.”

MEDIA RELEASE



BeyondHousing is calling on the Federal Government to partner with the states to build more social housing, with at least 5000 new social housing properties for young people needed to meet the number of young people on the priority housing waitlist in Victoria.

- ENDS -

About: BeyondHousing is the largest community housing organisation within the Goulburn and Ovens Murray regions of Victoria. BeyondHousing is the main entry point for the homelessness system and provides a range of supports for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. If you or anyone you know is experiencing or at risk of homelessness, call 1800 825 955.

For more information or to arrange an interview, contact: Chelsea McGrath on 0432 179 178