

MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday 13 April 2016

Family violence and family breakdown main cause of youth homelessness: Australians call for action

Youth Homelessness Matters Day (YHMD) is a national campaign aimed at making youth homelessness a priority for everyone, and calls for action to support our 26,000 young homeless Australians.

This year the National Youth Coalition for Housing (NYCH) who hosts the campaign, together with a groundswell of supporters across the country, are calling for national action by decision makers that recognises the main causes of youth homelessness as family violence and family breakdown.

The numbers are staggering: more than 45% of the young people seeking assistance from homelessness services across Australia need support with family violence and family breakdown.

Joanna Siejka, Co-Chair, NYCH said, "The support for the Youth Homelessness Matters Day campaign shows that the community strongly believes now is the time to act and prevent more young people from experiencing homelessness.

We need a national action plan that addresses the needs of young people who are homeless as a result of family violence and family breakdown, as well as other contributing factors."

This year, YHMD is on Wednesday 13 April, online and at local events across Australia. The online campaign runs for a month in the lead up to the main day of action. In 2015, this led to an online reach of over 5 million people internationally.

How can we end youth homelessness?

We know that ending youth homelessness involves early intervention, prevention, access to safe, secure and affordable housing to minimise how long they are homeless, and support when young people need it most.

A key part of any solution is national plan that clearly articulates how we will end youth homelessness. At the moment there is no such plan.

What can you do to help end youth homelessness?

Everyone in the community needs to be part of the solution. The first step to solving a problem is in understanding it. Support the campaign on social media and follow the #yhmd2016 or by attending an event in your local community.

Make it everybody's business and talk to your family and friends about youth homelessness and how we can end it together.

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Joanna Siejka
Co-Chair, NYCH
Ph 0458 235 511

Michael Coffey
Co-Chair, NYCH
Ph 0425 228 758

NYCH has State and Territory Representatives available for interview

For further information:

www.facebook.com/yhmday

www.youthhomelessnessmatters.net

#yhmd2016

Background Stats:

- In 2015 the Youth Homelessness Matters Day campaign had an online reach of over 5 million people internationally
- There are 26,000 young people who are homeless each night in Australia
- The most common reasons for young people experiencing homelessness include, family breakdown and family violence, relationship breakdown and housing crisis
- Young people experience a higher unemployment rate than other groups, making it more difficult to meet living costs and maintain adequate housing
- Young people under 25 years make up half of the homeless population in Australia
- One of the main factors that prevent young people from seeking help is the stigma associated with experiencing homeless
- One of the main factors in preventing youth homelessness is to recognise young people at risk, and to provide early intervention and support
- Young homeless people need more than just a bed for the night. If they have experienced years of trauma the support required to get them back on their feet is quite complex.

#YHMD2016 Campaign Aims:

- Break the common stereotypes that are associated with youth homelessness, and the young people who experience disadvantage
- Engage government, community and corporate sectors to resource specialist youth homelessness services, also known as youth refuges or shelters, which provide young people with the help they need in order to get back on their feet.
- Ensure that young people have greater access to support and services