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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Do you know the reality of Australia's youth homelessness crisis?**

**Youth Homelessness Matters Day - 16<sup>th</sup> April 2025**

Youth Homelessness Matters Day (YHMD) is April 16 this year. For 19 years, this day has been raising awareness about the issues and realities of children and young people experiencing and at risk of homelessness. We want to ensure it is high on the public agenda.

Yfoundations CEO John Macmillan said "We know what needs to happen to make change for children and young people experiencing homelessness. We need governments and the community to recognise we all need to band together to solve the issue. Much like we have with the property/building and media, marketing and creative industries. It's the time for governments to bring the rhetoric to an end. It's time to plan for and adequately fund solutions to end youth homelessness."

YHMD this year will see the biggest cross sector collaboration Australia has ever seen. For the first time three industries have joined forces to help make a difference in a social issue. Youth homelessness service providers have united and joined forces with the property and building industry and the media and advertising sector to raise awareness of child and youth homelessness. This partnership is representative of the community needing to come together to solve the problem – we all need to come together to drive change.

"The Property Industry Foundation exists to bring the property and construction industry together to have a tangible impact on homeless youth. Collaboration is in our DNA so we are delighted to be able to bring about a bigger collaboration – this time between the property industry, the media industry and the youth homelessness sector – to raise awareness and funds for youth homelessness. It's a tragedy that in a country with 13 million empty bedrooms, there will be over 40,000 young people without a safe and secure place to sleep," said Kate Mills, Property Industry Foundation CEO.

Despite a quarter of the homeless population being between 10-24 years old, child and youth homelessness is a largely invisible issue. Over 43,000 children and young people (under the age of 25) presented alone to specialist homelessness services, but this does not capture the thousands who did not present to services. Those who stayed in alternative arrangements including couch surfing, on the streets, with friends/extended family and improvised dwellings who didn't seek assistance aren't included in this figure.

Specialist homelessness services that support unattended children and young people are severely underfunded so half those 15-24 year-olds presenting to services are turned away every night because they cannot be accommodated. This is traumatic for the young people presenting, front line workers and service providers.

“To truly help homeless young people, services need proper funding and resources. This allows them to create a safe and stable environment where young people can feel secure, valued and build trust. When this foundation is in place, they can begin to rebuild their lives. Ending youth homelessness means investing in services that guide and support them toward a better future,” said Nikki Butterfield from SLH Youth Services in Sydney.

Children and young people experiencing homelessness have different needs to adults that need to be provided for. Placing them into adult services does not cater to these specific needs and can leave them exposed to unsafe environments. It’s time to stop the adultification of young people and fund the services that effectively respond to their experience of homelessness.

Children and young people experiencing homelessness need more than a bed. The majority have been victims of domestic and family violence. Approximately half have mental health concerns. A third of children and young people experiencing homelessness are Indigenous. Young people need living skills development and support, along with a safe place to live to ensure they achieve their full potential.

Young people who reach their full potential are an asset to Australia economically and socially. State, territory and federal governments have a responsibility to invest in solutions to work towards ending youth homelessness and to adequately resource these services on an ongoing basis.

“At 16, I was in a refuge. I didn’t have any parental or family guidance, so my youth workers were the positive influence that I needed. Having that guidance prompted me to become a youth worker myself and to be that positive role model for other young people. I love being an example to young people so they can achieve their goals despite the challenges they might face.”  
Natasha Ransford YHRC council member with lived experience.

We’re calling on national and state governments to make ending child and youth homelessness a national priority by developing a targeted plan and funding the services needed to achieve this objective.

We’re urging the Australian public to donate to child and youth homelessness services, so they have the resources to supply more services.

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Yfoundations can help put you in contact  
with state based organisations who are  
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