



17 April 2023

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Don't turn away from the turn aways Youth Homelessness Matters Day 2023**

**As we head into Youth Homelessness Matters Day on the 19 April, spare a thought for the one in two young people who will be turned away from a youth homelessness service today needing a bed tonight. When these young people are turned away, they are often left in dangerous and vulnerable situations such returning to violent homes, to sleep on the streets or couch surf.**

The recently released 2021 Census data revealed that nearly a quarter of people experiencing homelessness were aged 12–24 years. But the Census doesn't tell us the reasons why these children and young people are experiencing homelessness and whether they are experiencing it on their own. We can only rely on the Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) data to tell us that and in 2021-22, it revealed that almost 40,000 children and young people presented to a service on their own and one of the main reasons being family and/or domestic violence (DFV). Youth homelessness services on the ground tell us that the figure of young people coming through their doors because of DFV is in the range of 80-90%.

Children and young people at risk of or experiencing homelessness and violence are not provided with the level of stability and safety we often take for granted. Without a safe and permanent home, children and young people are denied the right to thrive and enter adulthood equipped with life skills. They are less likely to perform well in school, to develop long-term friendships and secure a stable job. They are at a higher risk of mental ill health, suicide and continuing a trajectory of homelessness into adulthood. How do we expect to support these children and young people facing violence and trauma to get back on track when there is a lack of beds and services to support them?

“We need to face the grim reality that we are failing our most vulnerable children and young people. The trajectories, experiences and needs of this group are different to those of adults and we have to stop assuming that what works to address adult homelessness will also work for children and young people.

“Children and young people experiencing homelessness on their own are consistently overlooked in housing, homelessness and domestic/family violence plans. If we continue to fail to take the issue seriously and overlook these groups, it will have devastating consequences for their futures.” says Trish Connolly, CEO Yfoundations.

Youth Homelessness Matters Day is on 19 April this year and we are calling for the Australian Government to develop a standalone National Child and Youth Homelessness and Housing Strategy. Find out more and sign the petition here: <https://www.yfoundations.org.au/yhmd-2023>

### **About Yfoundations**

For over 40 years, Yfoundations has served as the NSW peak body advocating for children and young people at risk of and experiencing homelessness, and the services that support them. Our members and board comprise highly experienced youth specialist homelessness services (SHS) providers who have direct knowledge of and experience with the issues children and young people experiencing or at risk of homelessness face. We are also the only peak body representing this cohort nationally.

**For further information, contact Trish Connolly at Yfoundations on 02 8306 7901.**