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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Yfoundations 2021-22 NSW Budget Response

The 2021-22 NSW Budget neglects homeless children and young people

The 2021-22 NSW Budget does not include a single new funding measure for young people experiencing homelessness.

There is no new investment in crisis services, no new funding for medium-term and transitional accommodation for young people, and no investment in youth-specific social and community housing.

“Unfortunately, the NSW government has missed a crucial opportunity to support homeless children and young people. Without new funding for affordable, youth-specific housing, young people have nowhere to go. They will continue to cycle in and out of homelessness,” said Pam Barker, CEO of Yfoundations.

The budget does include \$366.5 million, to build 800 new public housing dwellings and upgrade 16,500 existing properties.

“However, these 800 new properties are only a drop in the ocean. There are currently [50,000 people on the public housing waitlist in NSW](#), including young people and their families.”

“Everyone has a right to live in a home they can afford. More public housing is needed urgently to stop young people from becoming homeless.”

The budget also includes \$20.7 million in new funding to expand the Together Home program, which is aimed at reducing rough sleeping across NSW.

“While Yfoundations welcomes any additional funding for homelessness, only 3% of young homeless people are sleeping rough. Much more needs to be done to support the other 97% of homeless children and young people who are not living on the streets.”

The budget has also missed a crucial opportunity to stop children and young people in out-of-home care from becoming homeless. [Recent research](#) has shown that 30% of young people experience homelessness within the first 12 months of leaving care.

The budget does include \$12 million to promote guardianship and adoption for children in out-of-home care but has no new funding for restoration, early intervention, or young people leaving care at age 18.

“The NSW government desperately needs to invest in young people leaving care. Providing funding to raise the leaving care age from 18 to 21 would mean that young people have the same support to transition to independence as their peers living at home. Right now, young people are leaving care only to enter into homelessness.”

Young people in NSW continue to face significant challenges which drive them into homelessness. The average income for young people [has fallen over the past decade](#), while rental prices have become [increasingly unaffordable](#).

In the meantime, crisis accommodation services are over-stretched and [struggle to meet rising demand](#). Even when they can assist, the lack of youth-specific affordable housing means that [between 40 and 50%](#) of young people leave homelessness services only to exit into further homelessness.

We are disappointed that the NSW budget does not include any new targeted funding to address these challenges and end youth homelessness.

Without new investment, vulnerable young people experiencing homelessness will continue to slip through the cracks.

About Yfoundations

For over 40 years, Yfoundations has served as the NSW peak body representing children and young people at risk of and experiencing homelessness, as well as the services that provide direct support to them.

Yfoundations is the peak body for youth homelessness in NSW. It represents young people at risk of and experiencing homelessness and the services that support them.

Working collaboratively with members, NGOs, government departments, and community members, Yfoundations provides policy and advocacy and delivers projects to support the sector.

About Pam Barker, Chief Executive Officer, Yfoundations

Pam Barker is the CEO of Yfoundations. She brings extensive experience across the not-for-profit sector. She sits on the board of NYCH: National Youth Coalition for Housing, My Foundations Youth Housing, WayAhead Mental Health Association, and Australian Youth Affairs Coalition: AYAC. Her experience includes youth services, homelessness prevention, mental health programs, and reform.