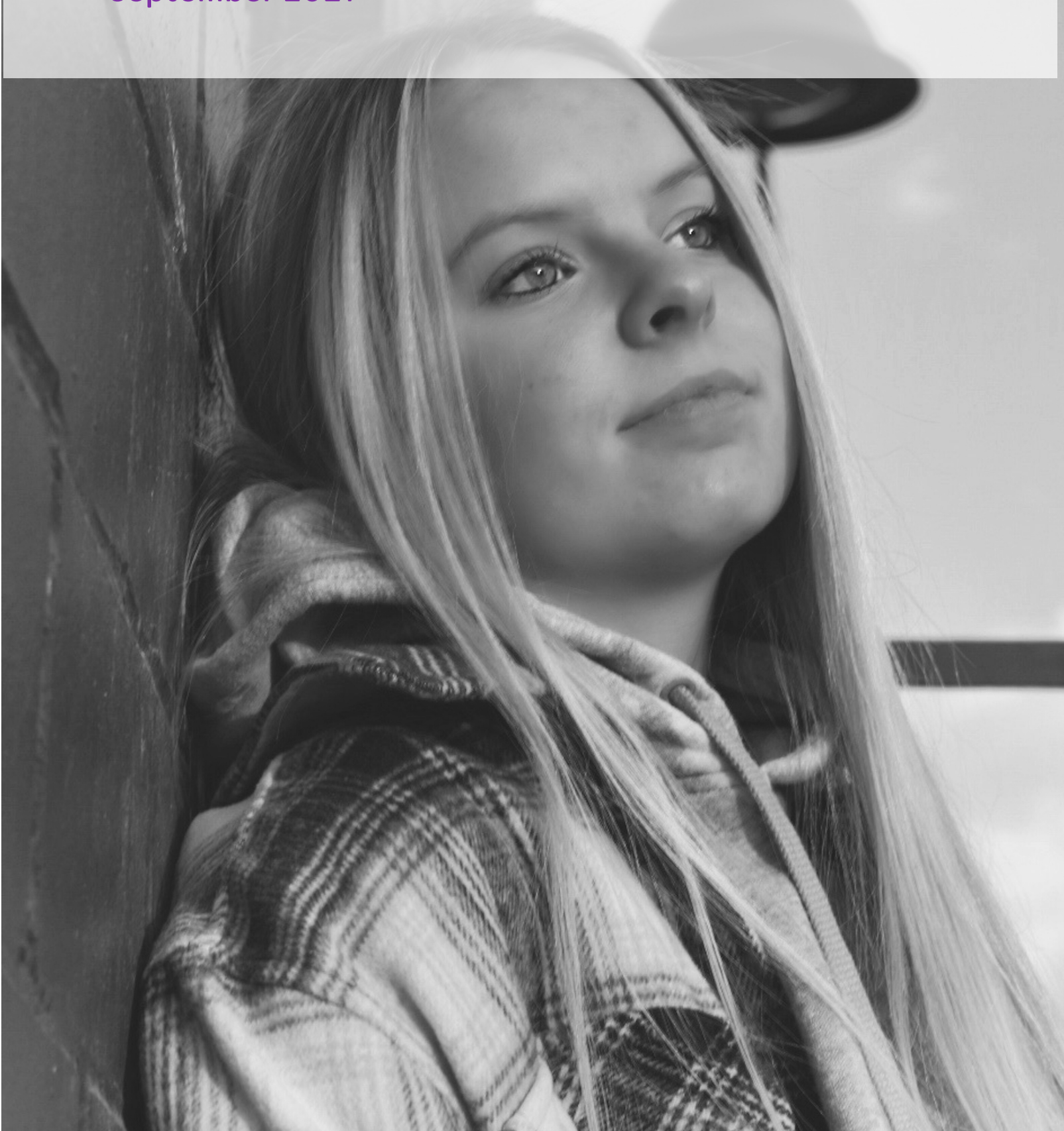




# Annual Membership Survey

September 2021



## Introduction

Each year, we survey our membership and other stakeholders. This annual survey aims to evaluate and improve our advocacy for young people affected by homelessness, and the sector that supports them.

Our Chief Executive Officer first distributed the 2021 Annual Survey via our monthly eNewsletter on 5 July 2021. We received 66 responses by the time the survey closed on 18 August 2021. This report summarises the findings from these responses and outlines steps we could take to improve our membership offerings and guide our organisational priorities in the future.

The first section of this report provides a profile of the survey's respondents, to showcase Yfoundations' reach. The second section provides a summary of the main issues that our members believe are affecting young people experiencing homelessness, to inform our projects and activities in the coming year. The final section outlines how the sector perceives Yfoundations' work, to inform how we can improve our impact and better engage with members.

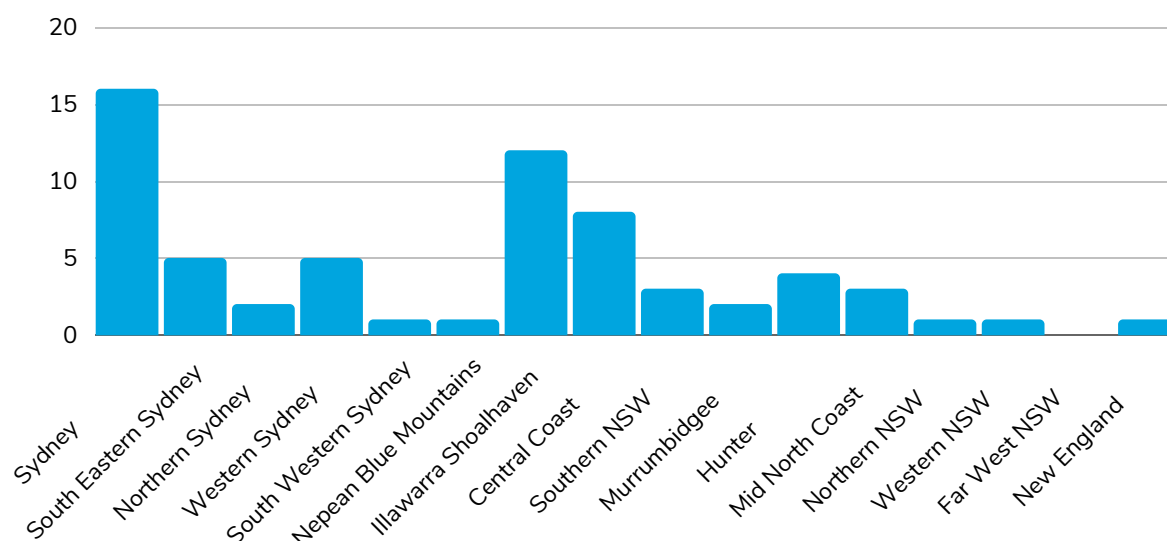
## Profile of respondents

A large proportion of the survey respondents held management and/or senior roles within their organisation (Managers - 26%; CEOs - 12%; Team Leaders - 9%; Executive Managers - 5%). Youth and community workers made up 21% of respondents and young people with lived experience made up 6% of respondents.

In terms of years of experience in the sector, respondents largely fell at either end of the spectrum: just over a third had worked in the sector for less than three years (35%), and just over a third had worked in the sector for more than ten years (35%). The most common age of respondents was between 45-54 years old (36%), with the second most common age being 55-64 years old (21% of respondents). Those aged between 25-34 years and 35-44 accounted for 15% each. A very small number of respondents were under the age of 18 and above the age of 65.

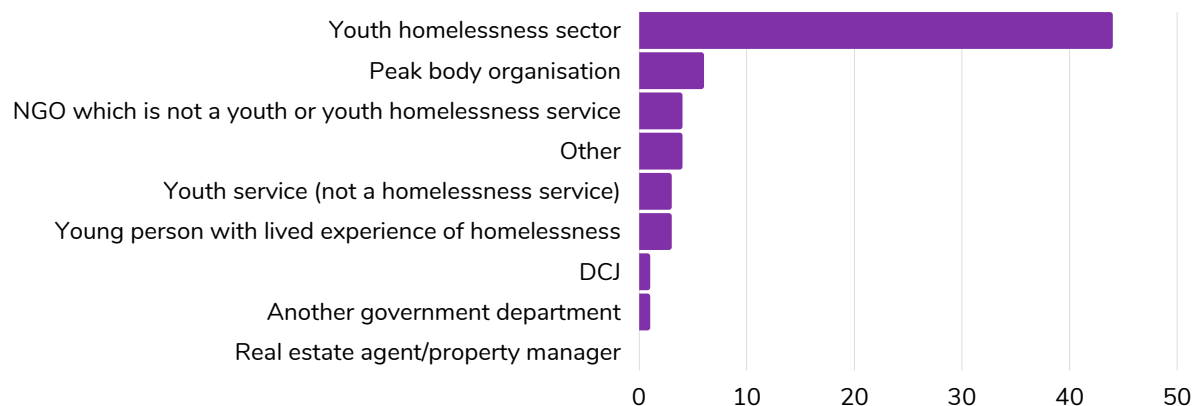
Respondents were asked which of the 15 Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) districts they live and work in. As shown in Figure 1, the most common district was Sydney (24%), closely followed by Illawarra Shoalhaven (18%) and the Central Coast (12%). Unlike last year's survey, respondents were located across NSW, with at least one respondent from every district apart from Far West NSW.

Figure 1: Annual survey total responses to the question: Which district do you work in?



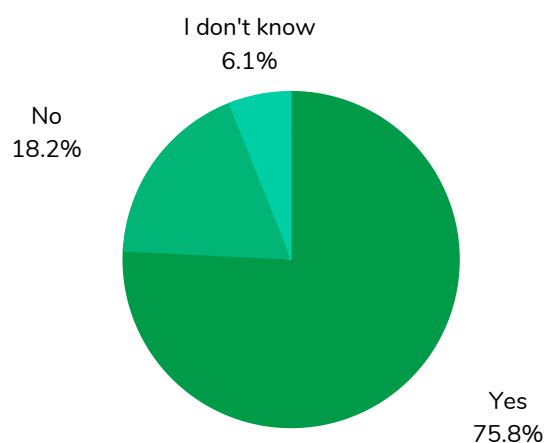
As shown in Figure 2, the majority of survey respondents worked in the youth homelessness sector (66%), followed by six respondents (9%) who worked for a peak body organisation. Three respondents were young people with lived experience and four respondents identified themselves as 'other,' which included community housing providers and multidisciplinary services. There were a small number of respondents who worked for youth services, NGOs who are not youth or youth homelessness service, and government departments (including the Department of Communities and Justice).

**Figure 2: Annual survey total responses to the question: Which of the following best describes the sector you work in?**



Of the 66 survey respondents, 50 (76%) reported that their organisation is a member of Yfoundations, as shown in Figure 3. Another 12 respondents (18%) reported that their organisation was not a member, and four were unsure. The reasons that these respondents were not members are discussed further in the 'Membership Promotion' section later in this paper.

**Figure 3: Annual survey total responses to the question: Is your organisation a member of Yfoundations?**



### Sector concerns and priorities

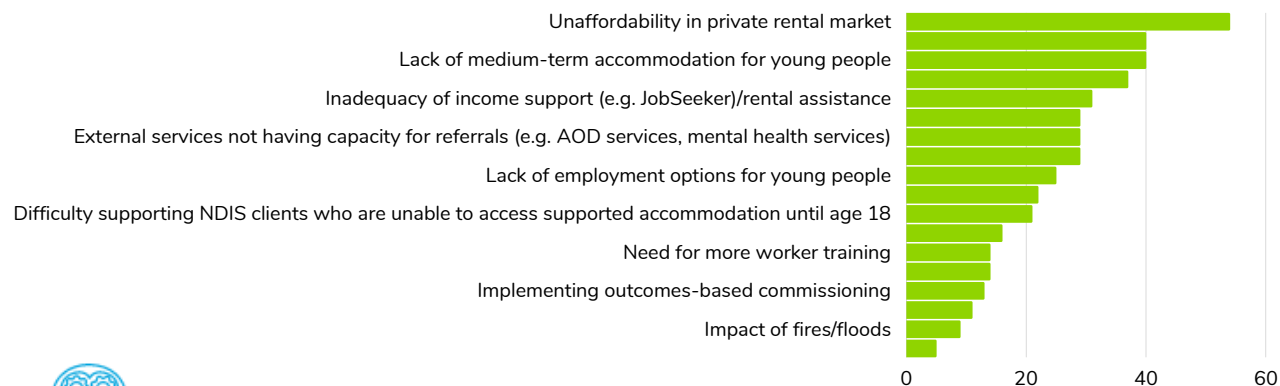
To understand the sector's key concerns and inform our work over the next year, we asked a series of targeted questions about youth homelessness in NSW.

One question asked respondents what they considered to be the biggest issues affecting the homelessness sector. As indicated in Figure 4, an overwhelming 90% of respondents rated 'unaffordability in the private rental market' as the biggest issue affecting the homelessness sector. This response is in line with feedback from many consultations we have conducted this year.

**90%**  stated 'unaffordability in the private rental market' as the biggest issue

The other major concerns felt by respondents were the high demand for crisis accommodation (67% of respondents), the lack of medium-term accommodation for young people (67%), difficulty accessing social/community housing (62%), the inadequacy of income support (52%), the difficulty in meeting high and/or complex needs of clients (48%), external services not having the capacity for referrals (48%), and the lack of early intervention and prevention programs (48%).

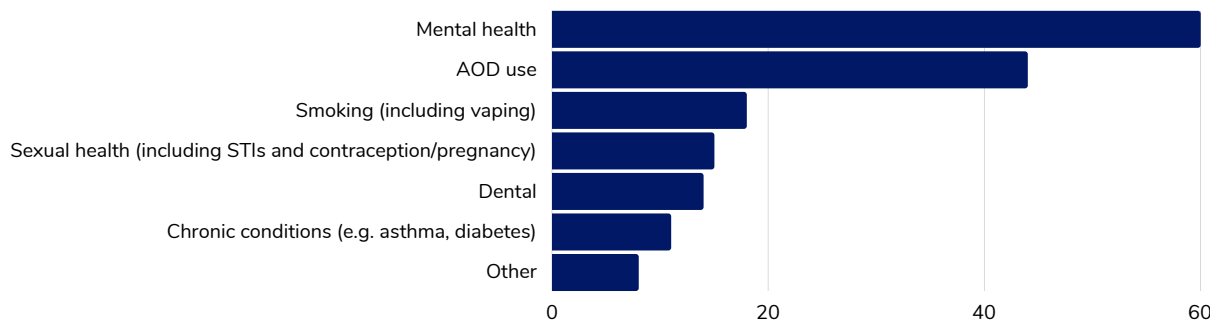
**Figure 4: Annual survey total responses to the question: What do you think are the biggest issues affecting the homelessness sector?**



 **100%**  
of respondents felt that mental health was the key health issue affecting homeless young people

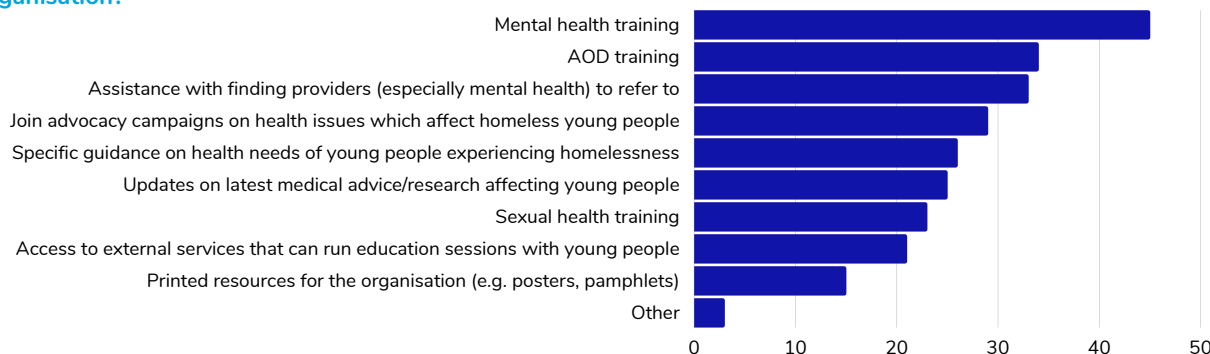
To inform our health research and program (Sticky Stuff), respondents were also asked to identify the key health issues affecting young people who experience homelessness. As reflected in Figure 5, all respondents felt that the main health issue affecting homeless young people was mental health (100%), followed by alcohol and other drugs (73%).

**Figure 5: Annual survey total responses to the question: In your opinion, what are the key health issues affecting young people experiencing homelessness?**



Following on from this question, respondents were asked what kind of health resources would be useful for their organisation. Figure 6 shows that a large majority (75%) felt that mental health training would be useful, followed by AOD training (57%), assistance with finding providers (especially mental health) to refer to (55%), joint health advocacy campaigns (48%), specific guidance on health needs of young people (43%) and updates on the latest medical advice for young people (42%).


**Figure 6: Annual survey total responses to the question: What kind of health resources would be useful for your organisation?**





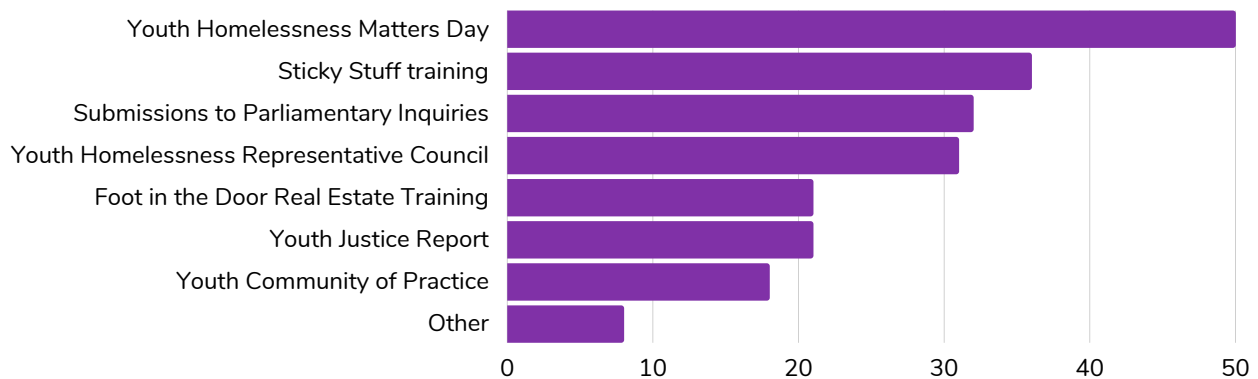
## Value of our work

The survey also attempted to evaluate the effectiveness of our work, including identifying which projects and activities members found most useful.

**83%**   
of respondents were aware of Youth Homelessness Matters Day

Firstly, to identify our reach, the survey asked respondents which of our initiatives they were aware of. Encouragingly, the majority of respondents were aware of one or more of our initiatives. Only three respondents were unaware of any. Figure 10 shows that the most well-known initiatives were Youth Homelessness Matters Day (83%), Sticky Stuff (60%), Submissions to parliamentary inquiries (53%) and the Youth Homelessness Representative Council (52%).

Figure 10: Annual survey total responses to the question: Which of the following Yfoundations initiatives are you aware of?



When asked to what extent we provide their organisation with useful information for their work, respondents' answers were generally positive or neutral. Although 40% of respondents were neutral, 42% felt we had 'to a large extent' provided their organisation with useful information for their work and 8% felt we had done this 'to a very large extent.' Some respondents (4) felt that we had done this to a 'little extent', and a small number (2) felt we had done this to a 'very little extent'. Although the number of negative responses was low, the large amount of respondents who felt neutral indicates that we need to increase our engagement with members to ensure that our work is useful to them.

The majority of respondents felt that the most useful resource that we provided was general information and updates (e.g., updates on funding, DCJ commissioning, statistics on youth homelessness, policies and training) which some respondents indicated they received through our monthly newsletter, website, emails, podcast, events and meetings such as Youth Communities of Practice. Several respondents (10) felt that our policy and advocacy work had been the most useful.

Figure 11: Annual survey total responses to the question: To what extent do you think that Yfoundations provides your organisation with useful information for your work?

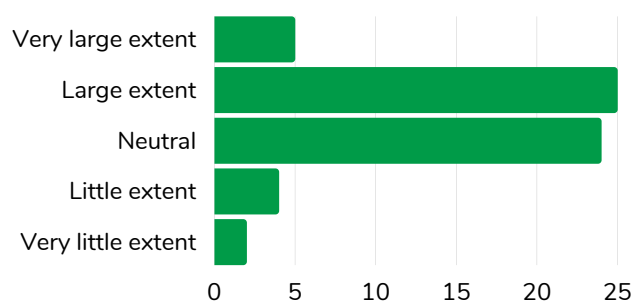


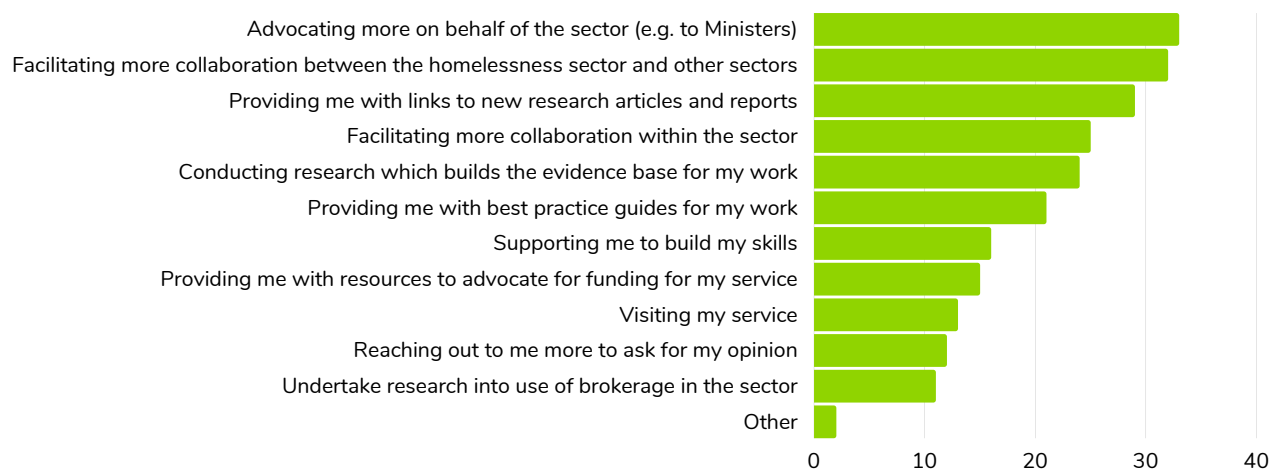
Figure 12: Annual survey word cloud responses to the question: What is the most useful information, resource or service that Yfoundations has provided you in the past year?

advocacy Youth policy Regular updates emails  
information training resources

In particular, respondents mentioned our work on the 'Unaccompanied 12–15-year-olds presenting to SHS' policy, our reports, collaboration on research projects and our overall advocacy work, including submissions to the government. Six respondents indicated that our training programs (Sticky Stuff and Foot in The Door Training) were the most useful thing we provided. However, 13 out of 60 respondents (22%) were either unsure, wrote "Not Applicable" or said nothing was useful. Although this was the minority, it indicates that we need to expand our reach while ensuring that we are effectively supporting the youth homelessness sector to address their needs.

When asked how we could support respondents better, the most common response (55%) was that we could advocate more on behalf of the sector. A slightly smaller number of respondents (53%) felt that we could facilitate more collaboration between the homelessness sector and other sectors. Just under half (48%) of respondents would like us to provide them with links to new research articles and reports. A smaller but still significant number (42%) wanted us to facilitate more collaboration within the sector and conduct research that builds the evidence base for their work (40%). In light of this, we will seek to facilitate more collaboration opportunities for our members in the next financial year and continue to advocate for the sector.

**Figure 13: Annual survey total responses to the question: How can Yfoundations support you better?**

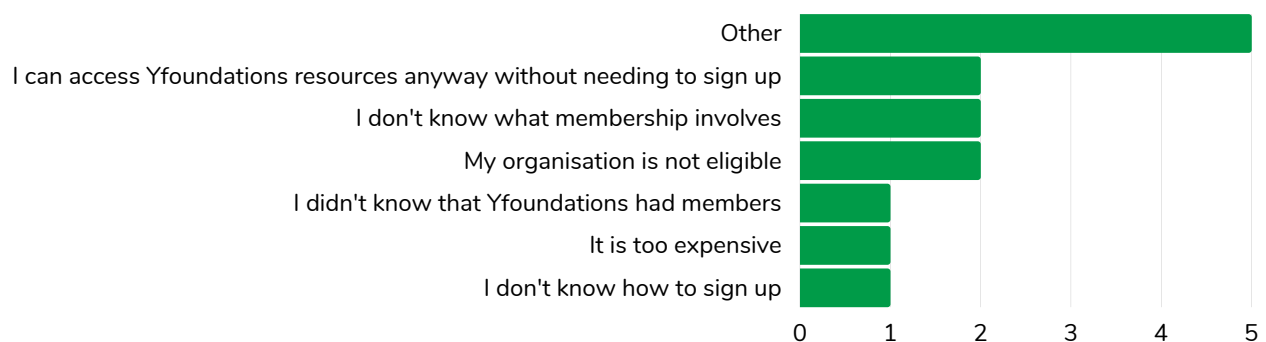


### Membership Promotion

When asked why respondents were not members, the responses were varied. Out of the 12 survey respondents who were not members, only one respondent didn't know that we had memberships, one thought it was too expensive and one didn't know how to sign up. Two respondents felt that they could access our resources without needing to be members, and two felt that they didn't know what our membership involved. Two respondents indicated they were not eligible for memberships, and one stated they were based interstate. One respondent didn't know their organisation was not a member and another stated they were members of another SHS peak. One stated that youth homelessness was only a small part of their work, and another was unsure.

These responses suggest that perhaps we need to clarify how an organisation can become a member as well as our membership offerings.

**Figure 14: Annual survey total responses to the question: Why do you think your organisation is not a member?**



## Conclusion

The findings of the 2020-21 Yfoundations Annual Survey provide scope for optimism. The number of people who responded to the Annual Survey was nearly double those of last year, and respondents were spread across a wider range of areas within NSW. The majority of our members report that they trusted us to a high or moderate level and were overall satisfied or neutral with the amount we engaged with their organisation in the last year. Also, many respondents felt that our work was useful to them to some degree. They were familiar with our programs and initiatives, in particular Youth Homelessness Matters Day, Sticky Stuff training, submissions to parliamentary inquiries and the Youth Homelessness Representative Council.

However, the Annual Survey also reveals opportunities for significant improvement. Many respondents state that we could support them better by advocating more on behalf of the sector and facilitating more cross-sector collaboration. In addition, responses indicate that we need to work towards fostering higher levels of trust amongst members and increase their satisfaction levels. A number of respondents to the Annual Survey also reported that they or their organisation weren't members or stated that they were unaware of their membership status. This group were significantly less engaged with our organisation and saw fewer benefits from our work. These results highlight the need to improve and better showcase our membership offerings and expand our membership base, drawing on relevant bodies and individuals across and beyond the youth homelessness sector.

We would like to thank the sector for their feedback and will now use the insights to work more closely with our members to improve our service offering, advocacy and communication to get better outcomes for homeless children and young people across NSW.





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