

YOUTH
HOMELESSNESS
MATTERS
DAY 2024

CAMPAIGN KIT

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About Youth Homelessness Matters Day

Youth Homelessness Matters Day (YHMD) is a national day that aims to raise awareness and public discussion about child and youth homelessness. It's a day to start conversations about sustainable and innovative solutions to support the needs of young people experiencing homelessness.

YHMD was conceived in 1990 by a group of social advocates because too many young people were leaving home with nowhere to go and with little social support.

Over the years, YHMD has grown into a national celebration of young people's resilience and an important day of advocacy. It's celebrated online and in communities around Australia.

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YHMD is held on the third Wednesday of April every year.

In 2024, YHMD is on Wednesday 17 April.

YHMD Call to action

For too long, the specific and complex needs of children and young people at risk of or experiencing homelessness have been assumed to be the same as those of adults and have not been explicitly addressed in government strategies to address homelessness. Child and youth homelessness needs a coordinated approach at a national level to ensure we can support children and young people at every stage of their journey.

This YHMD, we're continuing our call on the Australian Government to develop a standalone National Child and Youth Homelessness and Housing Plan. You will find this call to action featured throughout our campaign resources.

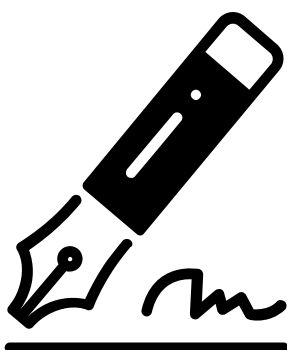
We're also calling on the Australian Government and state/territory governments to commit adequate funding to implement solutions.

For more information, read this Parity article at www.yfoundations.org.au/news_calling_for_a_standalone_national_child_and_youth_housing_and_homelessness_strategy.

Sign and share our petition calling for a standalone National Child and Youth Homelessness and Housing Plan

[Click here to sign](#)

or visit www.yfoundations.org.au/yhmd-24-petition



Key messages

'We can end child and youth homelessness'

We have the knowledge, the people and the organisations committed to ending child and youth homelessness. Together we can urge all levels of government to take real action and provide the necessary funding to implement solutions.

What is the problem?

Too many children and young people in Australia live in unsafe home environments, couch surf or sleep rough.

- ✔ 38,300 children and young people (15–24 years old) presented alone needing support from a specialist homelessness service (SHS) – 13,706 were not able to get the support they needed.
- ✔ 17,248 children and young people presented alone needing a crisis bed – but only 1 in 2 got it. This resulted in 8,450 being turned away from getting a crisis bed throughout the year. We have no idea where these children and young people slept those nights.
- ✔ 17,856 young people needed long-term housing – but a mere 4.3% (786) actually got it.
- ✔ The data does not accurately reflect the serious problem of domestic and family violence (DFV) for children and young people. Frontline services tell us that DFV is overwhelmingly the most common reason why children and young people need a bed and help.

What is the solution?

Solution 1: Increase funding for crisis homelessness services so that children and young people are not living in unsafe and violent environments.

Solution 2: Governments commit to standalone homelessness and housing plans to end child and youth homelessness.

Why your message matters

Personalising the message telling people why you care about child and youth homelessness helps others to care. You could start a conversation or social media message with, 'Ending child and youth homelessness matters to me because...'

This is about what kind of society we all want to live in. If enough people show they care, politicians will be motivated to act. Instead of fuelling discussions on who is to blame, we can focus on solutions to end child and youth homelessness.

Facts and figures state the reality of the problem but hearts and minds are influenced by real people's stories and honest concerns.

Know what matters to you

Be armed with the key messages and information in our [YHMD Fact Sheet](#) and website, and direct people there for more info.



Guide to talking about child and youth homelessness

Advocating for child and youth homelessness can be challenging. This guide offers facts, figures and conversation points to help. Stay positive, have open conversations and show support for young people. Download it [here](#).

www.yfoundations.org.au/yhmd-resources



Lived experience

'We can end child and youth homelessness'

When you involve young people's lived experiences as a foundation of your campaign, you need to listen, respect, and act upon the insights their stories provide, ensuring their narratives shape your initiatives and advocacy.

Key Points:

Value Experience: Recognise young people's stories as lived expertise. Where possible, remunerate them for their time.

Create Safe Spaces: Foster environments where young people can share their experiences with respect and empathy. Be transparent and honest. Check in regularly with the young person.

Inclusive Voices: Involve young people in shaping your campaign, demonstrate the significant impact of their voices, and support diverse voices that reflect the diversity of youth homelessness.

Social media kit



Take action on social media



Building our movement online

Research shows you are the most influential voice to your friends, family and neighbours. They will listen to you more than any person on TV. Your post is more influential than any advertisement. So share and let them know why you think youth homelessness matters!

Don't forget to like, comment and share posts from the YHMD facebook page and #YHMD2024 posts on Instagram and LinkedIn. And follow, favourite and retweet the #YHMD2024 conversation on X.

Hashtags, tagging and more info

#YHMD24

Use the hashtag to help demonstrate the size of our movement online.

@yhmday

Tag us so we can see all that's happening and help people follow the campaign.

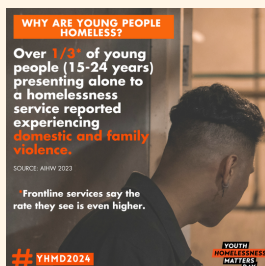
Yfoundations.org.au

Send people here to find more info, download more resources, sign the petition and register your event.

Socials tiles

Download these and more from the YHMD website at

www.yfoundations.org.au/yhmd-resources



Follow, like and share the campaign



www.facebook.com/yhmday/
#YHMD24

Social media kit

Socials captions

Your own words are the most powerful!

'We can end child and youth homelessness'

In **crafting your message**, be authentic and genuine. Keep a happy, positive and joyful tone when discussing children and young people. Be serious when talking about the problem of children's and young people's homelessness. **Say why ending child and youth homelessness matters to you.**

Suggested openers: 'This matters to me because...' or 'Our organisation serves children and young people experiencing homelessness, and we need more support to...'

If you have a personal story, de-identified story or conversation that supports your reason, your message will be more powerful.

But it's also fine to keep it simple and say, 'We can end child and youth homelessness if we listen to children and young people and the organisations that help them - and provide the support they ask for.'

We have the knowledge, the people and the longstanding, ongoing commitment to end child and youth homelessness. We need the resources to make this possible.

Supporter Placard

Download, print, write your name, take a photo holding it and post on social media.

www.yfoundations.org.au/yhmd-resources





Contact your local media

You can amplify your YHMD 2024 campaign by contacting your local media, especially if you are holding an event. Here are some tips on how to effectively communicate with the media and make the most of YHMD.

Why contact your local media?

Talking to local media can be an effective way to get the word out about your event, #YHMD2024, and the issue of youth homelessness.

This is a great way to encourage people in your community to join the campaign and raise awareness about the increase in young people experiencing homelessness. You can also use this as an opportunity to ask decision-makers to help these young people.

Be sure to demand that the Australian Government properly fund youth homelessness services and stop children and young people from sleeping in unsafe and insecure places.

Don't forget to promote the petition! Let's advocate for a standalone National Child and Youth Homelessness and Housing Plan.

Contact your local media

Tips for communicating with your local media

- Submit an opinion piece to a publication – between 600–800 words.
- Put together a media kit: it should contain a media release, details of your Youth Homelessness Matters Day event, bios of one or two young people available to share their experience with media and, if possible, some images. You should also include background on your organisation.
- A media release should be no longer than one page and give the who, what, where, when and why. Put your media contact person and their phone number at the end. Include the YHMD2024 logo available on our [resources page](#).

Who to contact

- Newspapers in your area can be found at www.newspapers.com.au
- Local radio stations and TV programs
- Local ABC radio www.abc.net.au/local
- Local publications and magazines
- Don't forget Indigenous, multicultural and community media

Media resources

These are available on our [resources page](#) at www.yfoundations.org.au/yhmd-resources:

- YHMD logos
- YHMD factsheet
- Socials tiles... and more!



Hosting a YHMD event

Where to start

You can organise community events like BBQs and picnics where people can learn more about child and youth homelessness in a social environment. This can create a sense of solidarity and support for addressing the issue. Set up stalls with information on the issue and encourage discussions to get people talking and sharing ideas about local initiatives.

Ideas for hosting a YHMD event

- Host a free BBQ or picnic and provide couches for people to sit and chat. Encourage discussions around child and youth homelessness.
- Organise an overnight couch-sleeping event to give participants a small glimpse into the experience of homelessness.
- Host a documentary viewing session. Some recommended documentaries are: 'Searching for Home' and 'All that Matters – Stories of Youth Homelessness', 'You Can't Ask That: Homeless', and 'Filthy Rich and Homeless'.

Two films that offer a powerful glimpse into the struggles faced by children and young people experiencing homelessness are 'Gimme Shelter' (2013) and 'The Florida Project' (2017).



Hosting a YHMD event



Couch conversations

If you have creative friends, you could host a ‘Couch Conversations’ event where you invite them to your house to perform. It could be a dinner party on the couch, a music jam session, an open mic night around the couch campfire, or a crafting couch! Have fun and engage in great conversations about how we can end child and youth homelessness.

Why include a couch?

Couch surfing is a common form of ‘hidden’ homelessness. In 2022–23, almost one-third of young people presenting alone to homelessness services were couch surfing before they turned up. However, we know that many more children and young people couch surf and don’t seek support. Couch surfing can cause substantial harm to young people’s health and often puts them at risk of servitude, exploitation, sexual violence and abuse. Couches can symbolise places that are not a proper ‘bed’ or ‘bedroom’, an often uncomfortable place to sleep, or a ‘makeshift bed’/space.

Join established YHMD events

Anglicare and City of Darwin (NT) Couch Surfing race has been going for over 10 years
www.anglicare-nt.org.au/events/couch-surfing/

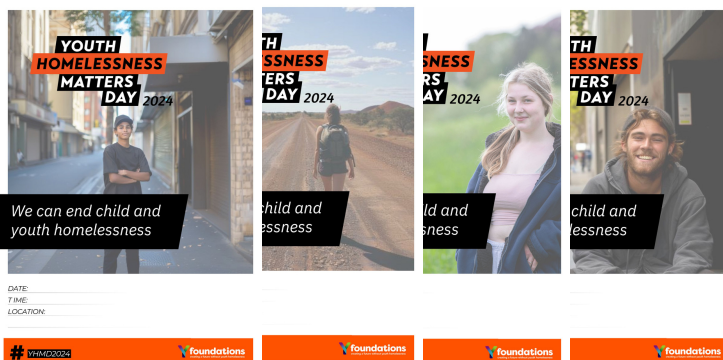
YP Space MNC is hosting Youth Homelessness Matters Day by the beach at Port Macquarie
events.humanitix.com/youth-homelessness-matters-day-2024

Check our YHMD events page for more
www.yfoundations.org.au/yhmd-registerevent

Hosting a YHMD event

YHMD Event Posters

You can download our YHMD event posters from our resources page www.yfoundations.org.au/yhmd-resources



Register your YHMD event

Please share your event details on the YHMD website so we can feature them on the official YHMD events page and social media platforms. This will help spread the news to your community. Go to www.yfoundations.org.au/yhmd-registerevent

YHMD T-shirts

Want to ramp up your advocacy? We have produced a range of t-shirts you can wear on 17 April and all year round! There is also a range of other merchandise available to help you promote YHMD.

For more information on pricing and available items, [YHMD Shop](#)



Campaign in your community

Meet with your local MP or Senator

Advocate for ending child and youth homelessness by meeting with your local MP or Senator. Share your story, express your views clearly and passionately with key points, and ask for commitments.

Remember to arrive on time, be respectful and follow up with a thank-you letter.

Find your local Federal MP or Senator at www.aph.gov.au/Senators_and_Members

Contact us

If you have any questions or need further information in relation to Youth Homelessness Matters Day, please contact us at yhmd@yfoundations.org.au



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