



# Premier's Youth Initiative

## Yfoundations factsheet

### What is the Premier's Youth Initiative?

Young people leaving out-of-home care have a far greater risk of becoming homeless than their peers. To help address this problem, the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) rolled out the [Premier's Youth Initiative \(PYI\)](#) in 2017.

Through the PYI program, DCJ funds non-government organisations to provide subsidised head-leasing accommodation to eligible OOHC leavers aged between 16 years and 9 months and 17 and 6 months.



[Read our position paper on OOHC leavers](#)

These young people also receive support from advisors and mentors, who help them to define and achieve their accommodation needs and their employment and educational goals, and brokerage funding to purchase essential items.

PYI is provided by seven non-government services in the following areas:

- Central Coast and Hunter (Samaritans)
- New England (Foundations Care)
- Illawarra Shoalhaven (Southern Youth & Family Services)
- Nepean Blue Mountains (Platform Youth Services)
- Mid North Coast & Northern NSW (Uniting)
- Western NSW (Veritas House)
- South Western Sydney (St Saviours)

## What does the research say?

The Centre for Evidence and Implementation completed [a three-year evaluation of the Premier's Youth Initiative](#), which was publicly released in March 2021.

To determine the impact of PYI, researchers gathered data on the program participants between 2017 and 2020. Participants' outcomes were compared to a 'control group' made up of young people who met PYI eligibility criteria but lived in areas where the program wasn't available.

Comparing this group with participants showed that PYI was successful at preventing homelessness after the age of 18 for a highly vulnerable cohort: young people with a history of homelessness while in OOHC. Those who had a history of prior SHS in the control group were 182% more likely to become homeless after the age of 18, compared to young people who had no interactions with the homelessness system while in OOHC. But in the group which received PYI, those who'd accessed SHS during their time in OOHC were no more likely to become homeless after the age of 18, than those who hadn't.

### Young people who had experienced homelessness while in OOHC

#### Received PYI



**Just as likely** to become homeless after turning 18, compared to young people who hadn't experienced homelessness while in OOHC

#### Didn't receive PYI



**182% more likely** to become homeless after turning 18, compared to young people who hadn't experienced homelessness while in OOHC

These findings suggest that PYI is helping break the cycle of homelessness for high-risk young people leaving OOHC. Young people's feedback on the PYI was also overwhelmingly positive. Participants valued the PYI's workers' dependability, and the choice and control that the program provided. Many wanted to meet with their mentors more often and wished that they could have accessed the PYI from a younger age.

Despite these positive findings, the Centre for Evidence and Implementation acknowledged several limitations with the study and considers its findings to be tentative. It felt that a longer period of follow-up and better measures of homelessness were needed to be certain of the results.

## Whom can the Premier's Youth Initiative help?

The 2020 evaluation showed that PYI had an effect on a highly vulnerable cohort. However, not all young people receiving the program's support benefitted in the same way. In particular, Indigenous young people and young people leaving care from residential care settings were still at greater risk of experiencing homelessness and seeking SHS after age 18.



[Read our position paper on young people with complex needs](#)

Providers also reported that supporting adolescents with disability to secure and maintain appropriate accommodation within the Premier's Youth Initiative was particularly difficult.