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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Yfoundations Welcomes Labor and Prime Minister Anthony Albanese into Government.**

The NSW peak body responding to youth homelessness in Australia, Yfoundations, welcomes the 2022 Federal Election results and congratulates Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and his government for their win.

As one of the few remaining youth homelessness peaks in Australia, Yfoundations is committed to highlighting the urgent need to put a spotlight on children and young people who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness. Children and young people have been waiting too long for governments to acknowledge their needs and address them with targeted, effective and holistic strategies and programs.

This new government can and must support the transition of children and young people in this country into a future of self-reliance and wellbeing, thereby ensuring they are not consigned to a lifetime of homelessness. Doing this for our children and young people will also provide far-reaching benefits for the future of our society.

“A new government opens the way for fresh, distinct and different approaches to address child and youth homelessness effectively and in a long-lasting meaningful way. It clears the path for the development of a national strategy to end child and youth homelessness – a roadmap to tackle this and the systemic issues that drive and exacerbate child and youth homelessness,” said Yfoundations CEO, Pam Barker.

Yfoundations looks forward to working with Labor on its pre-election commitment to develop a National Housing and Homelessness Plan to ensure that child and youth homelessness is brought to the fore and to ensure that:

- homelessness doesn't happen in the first place
- when it does, it is a once –in-a-lifetime event, and
- there is a system to catch the young person, providing wraparound support as well as a pathway out of homelessness.

“Child and youth homelessness continues to escalate across Australia and there is still no overarching youth-focused national strategy to tackle it head on. Yfoundations is asking our new political leaders to commit to a national strategy to tackle homelessness among children and young people in Australia – a strategy that articulates the involvement of all service sectors to allow children and young people to receive the full range of interventions and supports they need to avoid homelessness in the first place or exit as quickly and as undamaged as possible,” said Pam Barker.

The numbers of young people fronting up to a youth homelessness service paints a clear picture of the severity of the situation. In 2020-21 nearly 42,000 of 15 to 24 year olds presented alone to a specialist homelessness service. Of the 42,000 young people:

- 23% did not receive support and were turned away because the services were full
- 29% were couch surfing at the time they sought help
- around one-third identified as Indigenous, and
- 71% were not enrolled in any form of education at the start of the support.

The 2016 Census showed a 26% increase over a 10-year period in 12 to 24 year olds experiencing homelessness in Australia. Sadly, we anticipate this figure will be significantly worse in data from the 2021 Census because of the COVID pandemic and the affordable housing crisis in Australia.

A dedicated National Youth Homelessness and Housing Strategy is the most effective way to develop and implement an integrated whole-of-government and whole-of-community response to the diversity and complexity of children and young people at risk of or experiencing homelessness. It would also establish Australia as an international leader in addressing homelessness among children and young people.

Yfoundations is looking forward to meeting with the Albanese government to discuss this proposed strategy and how we can work together in a focused and targeted way to stem the tide of children and young people falling into cycles of homelessness.

**-ENDS-**

**For further media information contact:**

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**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 Yfoundations 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.