



Media release

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Advocates call for 15,000 new homes for children and young people in response to new analysis showing social housing system failing 15-24 year-olds

Homelessness and housing groups have launched a national plan to fix housing for young people, featuring commissioned analysis by Nous that reveals 39,745 young people are alone, homeless and locked out of Australia's social and affordable housing system.

This includes 11,905 First Nations young people or around 30% of the total figure. It also includes 9,613 children aged 15-17 years old who had sought help from a homelessness service. Nearly three-quarters (72%) of the group were disconnected from all forms of education, training and employment.

A new National Youth Housing Framework was launched today at Parliament House by national peak bodies and frontline services. The launch was hosted by the bi-partisan Parliamentary Friends of Housing Group and attended by a range of Government, Opposition and crossbench MPs.

The National Youth Housing Framework sets out three critical reforms:

1. Develop and maintain 15,000 dedicated youth tenancies for 15-24 year olds across Australia
2. Provide linked support so young people can be safe, pursue their goals and transition to independence
3. Address the rental gap to ensure viability for housing providers offering tenancies to young people

Honey first became homeless at 16 and wants to ensure no other teenage girl has to experience the danger of being alone and homeless at that age.

"When I was 16, I slept in the emergency ward of a hospital because I had nowhere else. At 17, I had to fight an adult man with my bedroom door so he did not sexually assault me. In my first six months in Melbourne, I had lived with 154 people and then stopped counting. There is no real option for 'youth safe' housing in Australia and that has to change or more kids and young people are going to spend nights in fear for their lives."

Tyler first became homeless at 21 and it took four years of trauma and homelessness to find housing.

"I first slept on the street at 21, moving from bed to couch to bench with everything I owned. I had broken ribs, cigarette burns all over my body. I tried to kill myself. Last month I had a housing plan that included finding a safe park to sleep in. The current housing model doesn't account for the situation young people experiencing homelessness are coming from. When I first left my family home I needed support, I needed housing options that were trauma informed, that recognise the impact homelessness and mental health have on each other."

Homelessness Australia CEO, Kate Colvin said the Nous analysis shows a clear policy failure for children and young people in need of housing assistance.

"More than a third of the 40,000 children and young people alone and homeless across Australia are First Nations young people. These kids need a safe home and ongoing support to build a decent future for themselves."

Melbourne City Mission CEO, Vicki Sutton, said Australia faced a national crisis for children and young people.

“One vulnerable young person alone and homeless is a tragedy. Nearly 40,000 children and young people homeless and excluded from our housing safety net is a national crisis. Prioritising children and young people in national housing and homelessness investment will save lives and transform futures. The National Youth Housing Framework sets out a practical plan to fix housing for young people.”

Community Housing Industry Association CEO, Wendy Hayhurst, said the Federal Government needed to put in place a clear investment mandate to ensure social and affordable housing programs include dedicated tenancies with support that would be made available for children and young people.

“The Federal Government is investing billions of dollars in new social and affordable housing and it’s important that young people’s needs are up there as a priority. Using at least some of \$1 billion added to the National Housing Infrastructure Facility for supportive housing for young people would be a start, which the National Housing and Homelessness Plan should build on.”

Available APH interviews: Kate Colvin, CEO Homelessness Australia; Wendy Hayhurst, CEO Community Housing Industry Association; Vicki Sutton, CEO Melbourne City Mission; Honey and Tyler, young people who are/have been homeless and locked out of our housing system. Available at APH 13-15 November.

Media enquiries and interview requests: Daniel Scoullar, 0402 596 297, daniel@socialchangeprojects.com.au