



MEDIA RELEASE

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Ending Youth Homelessness first step to White Paper vision

This April 1st is Youth Homelessness Matters Day. It is a timely reminder that on any given night in Australia of the 105,000 people who are homeless, nearly half are under the age of 25.

State and Territory Plans to implement the Federal Government's White Paper on homelessness are also due to be submitted on 1 April this year as well. These plans will set out how State and Territory governments will use new funding available to them to meet the national target of halving homelessness by 2020.

"If we want to be able to look back in 10 years time, having met this new national target, addressing youth homelessness will be a critical first step", said Simon Smith, Executive Officer, Homelessness Australia.

Often young people first experience homelessness as children. Tragically, one in every 42 children under 5 in Australia uses a homeless service each year. These are generally children escaping domestic violence with their mother.

Many young people aged 18-25 can end up using adult homeless services. Research has shown that about 40% of people who are homeless as adults were first homeless as young people.

State and Territory homeless implementation need to include a diverse range of services to work with young people. These need include:

- services for children affected by domestic violence,
- early intervention and prevention programs. These have already been shown to be highly effective, with homelessness amongst 12-18 year olds falling by more than a fifth in recent years,
- support for young people leaving care and protection after they turn 18, so they don't end up homeless as adults,
- housing options that are appropriate and safe for young people aged 18-25, many of whom struggle to get access to the private rental market.

"We look forward to seeing the detail of how State and Territory Government's will use the new funding they have received under the White Paper", said Simon Smith. "Implementation plans due today will reveal how willing and able States and Territories are to turn the White Paper's vision into improvements on the ground".

"Let's hope that this year's Youth Homelessness Matters Day marks the first step towards achieving our national 2020 goal of halving homelessness, and ultimately ending homelessness for good".

For further information and comment:

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