

MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday 5 April 2017

Tasmanians join national call to take action on youth homelessness

Youth Homelessness Matters Day (YHMD) is a national awareness raising campaign that encourages all Australians to take a stand against youth homelessness in our communities.

The National Youth Coalition for Housing (NYCH), who hosts the online Youth Homelessness Matters Day campaign, want to generate a national conversation about youth homelessness to show decision makers that this issue is a priority for the community in the lead up to Youth Homelessness Matters Day on Wednesday 5 April.

In Australia, there are 26,000 young people aged 12 to 25 who are homeless each night and an alarming 42% of the homeless population is under 25 years old. Over 400 of the the 26,000 homeless youth across Australia, live in Tasmania.

Despite the large numbers of young people experiencing homelessness, there is not currently a national plan to address youth homelessness in Australia. This means there is not a strategic or long term approach to addressing this national crisis affecting our young people.

Joanna Siejka, Co-Chair, NYCH said, "The support for the Youth Homelessness Matters Day campaign shows that the community strongly believes now is the time to act and prevent more young people from experiencing homelessness.

We need a national action plan that addresses the needs of young people who are homeless as a result of family violence and family breakdown, as well as other contributing factors."

Family violence and family breakdown are the main causes of youth homelessness.

Ms Siejka said, "There is a common misconception that young people leave home because they want to, however, most young people who experience homelessness are escaping a negative home environment which is often fostered through an abusive, violent or broken home.

"If everyone in the community knew how their actions could support early intervention for young people experiencing homelessness, then a huge difference could made in young peoples' lives, earlier and for the better."

YHMD events will be held at a number of locations around Tasmania on Wednesday 5 April to provide a physical presence to the online campaign in Tasmania.

Whilst YHMD is a national campaign, Tasmania is the lead agency through the Youth Network of Tasmania and the campaign is supported by a range of organisations and individuals across Tasmania.

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www.facebook.com/yhmday

www.youthhomelessnessmatters.net

#YHMD2017 on social media

ynot is the peak body representing the voice of Tasmanian youth



LIKE. Give us a thumbs up on Facebook and have young people's stories as well as campaign updates and countdown delivered right to your newsfeed. Follow the hashtag **#YHMD2017** on twitter and keep posted on events organised throughout Australia. **facebook.com/yhmday & #YHMD2017 on Twitter and Instagram**

SHARE.

Break stereotypes that are associated with youth homelessness by sharing stories, statistics and information on social media and with your network. **facebook.com/yhmday & #YHMD2017 on twitter and Instagram**

ACT.

Pledge your support by signing up to our Thunderclap Campaign. Host an event and help us raise awareness about youth homelessness. Write to your local MP about the importance of this issue. Contact your local newspaper and let them know what's happening in your area.
youthhomelessnessmatters.net

For further information:

www.facebook.com/yhmday

www.youthhomelessnessmatters.net

#YHMD2017 on social media

Background Information:

- 42% of the homelessness population is under 25 years old
- 26,000 young Australians between 12 – 25 years old are experiencing homelessness every night
- More than 70% of the young people seeking assistance from homelessness services across Australia need help with family violence and family breakdown.
- The first and most common way young people experience homelessness is couch surfing

#YHMD Campaign Goals

- *Break stereotypes* – Breaking the stigma that young people leave home because they want to, addressing the causes of youth homelessness such as negative home environments and encouraging young people experiencing homelessness to seek support.
- *Engaging government, community and business* – to resource specialist youth homelessness services like youth shelters.
- *Asking for a national plan for addressing youth homelessness* – Youth homelessness needs a strategic approach at a national level to ensure support for young people at every stage from early intervention to crisis support.