

Home Time.

Fix housing for young people

Key messages - Campaign launch

Summary points

- New data from homelessness services shows there are almost 40,000 children and young people aged between 15 and 24 years old who are alone with nowhere to live. The highest numbers are in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland.
- This includes around 9,500 children aged 15 to 17 years old who have no parental or carer support and are forced to move between refuges, couches and the street.
- Over 45% of children in this group were still homeless after assistance from homelessness services, demonstrating the lack of housing options available to this age group.
- Children and young people without a safe home are at serious risk of harm, including physical and sexual violence. Many are homeless in the first place due to family violence, abuse, and neglect growing up.
- This new data supports independent analysis showing national, state, and territory policy settings are effectively locking young people out of safe housing and support.
- Today, a new advocacy campaign comprising over 75 organisations has written to the Federal Minister for Housing, Julie Collins, seeking urgent action on three key policy reforms.
- If acted on, these recommendations would establish 15,000 dedicated tenancies for young people across the country, with linked support services and financial support for housing providers.
- Experts predict that Federal Government investment through the upcoming Federal Budget and the next National Housing and Homelessness Plan could drastically reduce the number of vulnerable children and young people living in dangerous situations due to homelessness.

Campaign asks

We are calling on the Federal Government to:

1. Develop and maintain a national pool of 15,000 dedicated tenancies for young people aged 16-24 across the country
2. Provide linked support services so young people can pursue their goals and transition to independence
3. Address the rental gap to ensure viability for housing providers and landlords offering tenancies to young people who have been homeless

What is wrong with Australia's housing system?

- Australia's current housing system is structurally incapable of delivering enough safe homes and appropriate support for under 25 year-olds because:
 - a. Dedicated youth tenancies are not built into our housing system and there is no mandate for youth tenancies in new housing investments and programs
 - b. Young people do not have access to the linked support they need to establish a new home and work towards goals in areas like study and work.
 - c. Housing providers are disadvantaged when considering young people for tenancies due to lower rental income through the social security system.

Supporting messages

- Children often lose their homes and family support early in life due to extreme life events and trauma, including family violence, abuse, neglect and estrangement.
- Young people who are First Nations, LGBTIQ+, from diverse cultural backgrounds, living with disability, or who have had contact with child protection services are over-represented among 15-24 year-olds without a home.
- Unaccompanied children and young people are not currently a priority group for national housing and homelessness plans or investments.
- We see thousands of children and young people who have lost their homes as kids. They have lived with instability, fear and trauma. They have been told over and over again that there are no homes for them. Unless we can fix Australia's broken housing and homelessness system, this will never change
- Every parent knows the horror of imagining their children in danger, yet nearly 10,000 15, 16 and 17 year-olds are in danger each year, with no parental support and no safe place to call home. That is a national emergency that requires national action.
- If we invest in homes and support for children and young people with nowhere to live, we can change the stories of thousands of young lives and turn fear and trauma into hope and opportunity.
- If the Federal Government acts on these recommendations and invests in the futures of thousands of the most vulnerable young people in Australia, we can save lives and reduce the number of scared and lonely children living in fear of what each night will bring.

Other data points

- 37,872 15-24-year-olds approached homelessness services alone for assistance in 2022/23
- 9,232 (24.3%) of this group was 15-17 years old (children) when they sought assistance alone with no parental/carer support
- State breakdown: 12,854 in NSW (33.9%), 11,026 in VIC (29.0%), 5,654 in QLD (14.9%), 2,514 WA (6.7%), 3,082 in SA (8.1%), 1,422 in TAS (3.7%), 669 in ACT (1.8%), 1,190 in NT (3.1%)
- We can provide a breakdown of First Nations children and young people on request.