



# NATIONAL YOUTH COALITION FOR HOUSING



c/o: Homelessness Australia  
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## National Youth Coalition for Housing Youth Housing “Ask”

### 1. National Homelessness Strategy

#### **National Homelessness Strategy**

##### Rationale

There is growing concern that homelessness will be a subset of 'houselessness'. It is NYCH's opinion that the causes of homelessness for young people will not be solved primarily through a housing response. We would argue that homelessness responses for young people are more closely linked to support programs subsequent to family breakdown and structural disadvantage. However it would be anticipated that with a National Homelessness Strategy there would be a broader response to homelessness with a view to early intervention as well as follow up after a crisis response has been provided. There could also be specific themes and streams ie youth homelessness.

A Homelessness Strategy could be progressed in a consultative staged manner to the development of a Homelessness Act that builds upon and incorporates SAAP, increasing the scope of the program. The National Homelessness Act would encompass a range of programs responding to need including SAAP and CAP and thereby overcoming the historical issues facing these two programs. The Homelessness Act would provide a framework that brings together a range of services systems around needs as opposed to silo focused programmatic responses. As a result a National Homelessness Act will enshrine and enhance a long term consistent national response that meets the challenges of youth homelessness.

### 2. Key components underpinning National Homelessness Strategy for young people

#### **Increase in SAAP funding**

##### Rationale:

SAAP is an internationally recognized program that is working well as evidenced by its last Evaluation. The numbers of young people requiring crisis accommodation has reached a critical stage. Currently services are struggling to meet the demand and this in recent times has been exacerbated by the unaffordability of the private rental market. Further there is a need to recognize that the SAAP models are fundamentally different to adult responses. There is a need for an increase of funding to the existing service system up to 40% to ensure the current service system. Any further increase should be evidence based and be part of the longer term national homelessness strategy.

### **Development of CAP program logic**

Rationale:

The current Crisis Accommodation Program has no program logic and we are concerned about the use of this funding by State and Territory governments for purposes outside of the intent of the program. The creation of program logic will ensure a certainty of the use of funds and better planning and coordination.

### **Post SAAP follow-up and support services**

Rationale:

NYCH is concerned about the lack of support for people once they have exited SAAP and due to this lack of support falling back into patterns of behaviour that can send them around the homelessness cycle again. A small input of funding at this end of the service system can deal with the issue of people re-presenting.

### **Increased funding for the Reconnect Program (early intervention)**

Rationale:

The numbers of young people who enter into the crisis accommodation system do so due to family conflict (NDCA data). The trauma for these young people and their families could be minimized by more timely and targeted early intervention. Further the cost of early intervention is less costly than an accommodation and support response.

### **Funding for youth specific models of housing within an early intervention framework eg community placement models as outlined by David Mackenzie and QYHC**

Rationale:

The process to young people becoming homeless can involve spending increasing amounts of time out of the family home and residing with friends or extended family members – usually labeled couchsurfing. However if family support and mediation can occur during this period there is the potential for young people to be reunited with their families. Unfortunately the transient nature of young people's accommodation can undermine this process as well as continuing to have young people at risk. A formalized placement program, with the consent of family can ensure the young persons safety, continued engagement in school and focused intervention in supporting the family.

### **Scoping project exploring housing options for young people exiting care**

Rationale:

NYCH has been concerned for a number of years that the exiting option for young people in care is SAAP. Whilst SAAP can and does provide support to these young people our concern is whether this is the most appropriate exiting option. In particular SAAP is a homelessness program and we query the rationale of exiting young people from care into this system. As a result we would be keen to explore what housing options young people exiting care aspire to and what the barriers are to them achieving this aim.

### **Increase funding for JPET program**

Rationale:

Young people experiencing homelessness needs specialist support to enter the workforce and they do not have the traditional support networks from family. JPET is a complementary to SAAP and in order to assist young people to participate fully in society workforce participation is an essential part of that process.

## **3. State and Territory Homelessness Strategies**

Rationale:

The Federal Homelessness Strategy/ Act could provide the framework for State and Territory Homelessness Strategies through a Bilateral Agreement.

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Youth Accommodation Coalition (YACCOMM)/working party of YACWA – WA  
Queensland Youth Housing Coalition (QYHC) – QLD  
Youth Accommodation Association (YAA) – NSW  
Statewide Youth Housing Group of the Youth Network of Tasmania – TAS

Homelessness SA – SA  
Youth Coalition of the ACT (YCACT) – ACT  
Council for Homeless Persons and YAC - VIC  
Northern Territory Representative – NT

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*NYCH is a founding member of the Homelessness Australia*

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## 4. Affordable housing solutions

### **Increase in funding for social housing in particular public housing**

#### Rationale:

The private rental market and the PPP have seen very few deliverable for young people in recent years. The issue in relation to young people with both these concepts is that there needs to be a level of financial return. Young people particularly those on low incomes generally do not fit into the financial modeling of many of the new PPP, and the private rental market is too unaffordable.

An investment by the Federal government into public housing will not detrimentally impact on the housing market. It is a supply side solution that can assist the young people on low incomes that will not concern lending institutions or the housing developers.

### **Rent assistance scaled to income allowing for special consideration for young people**

#### Rationale:

The majority of young people in Australia, if they are not living in the family home, are living in the private rental market. Young people should not pay more than 30% of income on rent, if they are then the rent assistance is calculated to income.

The cost of rental has increasing at a greater rate than income and many young people are finding the rental market unaffordable. Further their incomes do not make them competitive with other renters, so not only is there discrimination of the basis of age and lack of references but their incomes immediately creates a barrier in their application.

### **Retargeting of first home owners**

#### Rationale:

The first home owners grant needs to be targeted to ensure equity across program funding.

### **Support business to develop housing options for their workforce especially traineeships and apprenticeships**

#### Rationale:

Large companies who have apprenticeships and traineeships need to be encouraged to provide housing for their staff, this is particularly relevant to regional centers where public housing is generally not provided and there is a small rental market. This is especially important in areas where the company will make a significant impact on the supply of private housing. However the provision of stable housing will also ensure that young people have the opportunity to complete their training without having to worry about whether or not they have roof over their heads. In essence the outlay of the purchase of housing for staff should not be cost impost on businesses as it is an asset on their balance sheet.

### **Affordable housing planning laws**

#### Rationale:

There has been an increase in large scale housing developments in some States. As part of these developments there has been no housing for people on low incomes. Local planning laws should be enabled to allow for the contribution of housing that is provided to community housing providers. This will improve the housing supply for people on low incomes and ensures that there is a social mix of people in a range of communities and will assist to reduce the movement of low income people to the outer fringe.