



Homelessness NSW

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **New data reveals urgent action required to address homelessness in New South Wales**

Urgent action is required to address the growing demand for homelessness services – in 2016/17 over 74,000 clients were supported by homelessness services in New South Wales according to data released today by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW).

Homelessness services are contracted to deliver services to 57,000 clients each year and so are supporting 30% more clients than the system is designed, and funded, for.

This is a 43% increase from 2013-14 figures and a 6% increase from 2015/16 figures.

And, homelessness services in NSW are increasingly unable to provide crisis and other accommodation due to services being full, with 2 in 5 clients not receiving any form of accommodation despite requesting it.

This situation is due to the chronic lack of affordable housing in NSW. There are 60,000 people on the social housing waiting list across NSW and according to the Anglicare 2017 Rental Snapshot only 1% of private rentals are affordable for people on low incomes across the greater Sydney region.

The lack of long term accommodation is also impacting on outcomes for clients. Two thirds of clients at the end of support who were homeless prior to accessing a service have no long term accommodation.

“This is the second year of data since the homelessness reforms undertaken 2015 and it confirms the untenable demand for homelessness services in NSW”. said Katherine McKernan, CEO of Homelessness NSW.

“The figures also highlight the impact of the housing affordability crisis in New South Wales on the most vulnerable. Homelessness will continue to rise unless governments urgently invest in the social housing system, take action to make private rentals affordable and appropriately resource homelessness services to meet the current demand.”

Action is also required to address domestic and family violence in NSW. The AIHW data shows a continued increase in the number of clients seeking assistance due to domestic and family violence with over 22,000 people seeking assistance in 2016/17.

This is a 55% increase since 2013/14 and an 11% increase from 2015/16 figures.

“Increasing numbers of women and children who have experienced domestic and family violence are seeking assistance from homelessness services. But services are not being funded to keep up with this demand. Ensuring a resourced and funded homelessness sector

is vital to ensuring the safety of those escaping domestic and family violence” DVNSW’s CEO Moo Baulch said.

Youth homelessness in NSW, too, is increasing against national trends where youth homelessness has decreased by 2%. In NSW, there were over 13,800 young people in between the ages 15-24 who presented alone.

“Despite reducing youth homelessness being one of the Premier’s priorities, these figures show that young people are increasingly requiring support from homelessness services. Urgent investment is required to prevent youth homelessness and to provide affordable housing options for young people”. Yfoundations’ CEO Zoe Robinson said.

## Quick Facts

In **2016/17** approximately:

- **74,000** clients were supported by homelessness services (43% increase since 2013/14, 6% increase since 2015/16)
- **22,000** clients were escaping domestic and family violence (30% of all clients)
- **13,800** clients were unaccompanied young people aged 15 – 24 (19% of all clients)
- **20,000** clients were Aboriginal (28% of all clients)
- **5,400** clients were aged over 55 (77% increase since 2013/14; 14% increase since 2015/16)
- **2 in 5** clients did not receive crisis or other accommodation despite requesting it
- **2 in 3** clients who were homeless prior to accessing a service had no long term accommodation at the end of support
- **21,410** clients who were at risk of homelessness maintained their housing following support from a homelessness service (88% of all clients at risk of homelessness)

## About Us

*Homelessness NSW* is a peak not for profit organisation that works with its members to prevent and reduce homelessness across NSW. Its members include small, locally based community organisations, multiservice agencies with a regional reach and large state-wide service providers.

*Yfoundations* is the peak body organisation representing youth homelessness in NSW.

*Domestic Violence NSW* is the peak, statewide representative body for a diverse range of specialist domestic and family violence services in New South Wales.

## Further information

Media can contact Ms Katherine McKernan on 0425 288 446 or at [katherine@homelessnessnsw.org.au](mailto:katherine@homelessnessnsw.org.au).