

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 12 April 2018**

## **Youth Homelessness Matters to Local School Students**

Local high school students are encouraging their peers to take the issue of youth homelessness into their own hands this Youth Homelessness Matters Day. A group of Trinity Catholic College students are using the national campaign day on 18 April to mobilise and encourage friends and classmates to undertake their own fundraising events and initiatives to raise funds and awareness for local young people who are homeless. The funds, to be donated to The Connecting Home Youth program, will be used for emergency accommodation costs, living skills programs, and basic needs including food, clothing, medical and personal care items.

To compliment the student's initiative, The Connecting Home Youth Team from Social Futures will be working with local high schools across the region, holding information sessions on youth homelessness. The sessions will inform young people about the risks and contributing factors of homelessness, better equip young people to support peers who are at risk, and educate students about how to access available services.

The sessions will also include a screening of the locally made Youth Homelessness video, *'You Can Ask That'*, which was produced in collaboration with high school students, young people who had been homeless, and youth case managers at Connecting Home, Social Futures. The film is an informative and powerful resource for sharing information on the topic with other young people, youth workers, teachers and the wider community. It was recently selected as a NSW State Premiers initiative to combat homelessness.

Youth Homelessness within The Northern Rivers is increasing and this has a snowballing impact on outcomes for both young people and the community. According to a report by Homelessness Australia, 2017:

- Young people who are homeless are less likely to stay in education
- They often go hungry
- They have poor health outcomes
- More likely to use drugs and alcohol



*We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land where we live and work and their continuing connection to land, water, sea and community. We pay respects to Australia's First Peoples, to their unique and diverse cultures, and to Elders past, present and future.*

- They are more likely to have bad mental health experiences
- They are more likely to experience violence and victimisation
- More likely to be in or involved with Juvenile justice services
- The younger someone is when they become homeless, the more likely they are to have episodes of homelessness.

Increasing positive outcomes for young people is an important community issue and starts with safe secure housing for young people to have a base from which to heal, hope and grow to achieve their goals and contribute to the community.

Connecting Home Youth Team work with over 800 young people, 16-24, per year across the region who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to provide information, advocacy, case management and transitional housing.

To contact Connecting Home please call 1800 048 310 (9am-4.30pm Monday-Friday) or email [firstresponse@socialfutures.org.au](mailto:firstresponse@socialfutures.org.au)

In a housing emergency call Link2Home 1800 152 152 (24 hours)

**-ENDS-**

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### **Notes to editors**

1. Social Futures works to achieve social justice for regional Australians. It has almost 300 staff working from 20 offices in regional New South Wales and delivers a wide range of programs and services from homelessness, family planning and mental health social inclusion for people living with disabilities.
2. Social Futures' Connecting Home is the largest homelessness service in the Northern Rivers.