

21 April 2021

Youth Homelessness Matters Day – Our young people deserve better – Social Futures

Social Futures is joining the call by campaign group, [Everybody's Home](#) for greater Federal funding to be directed to social housing and support services.

CEO Tony Davies says without increased funding, higher rates of youth homelessness is inevitable.

“Young people are copping it from all directions,” Mr Davies said. “House prices and rents are on the rise, the moratorium on rental evictions is coming to an end, Jobseeker rates have been cut dramatically and JobKeeper withdrawn.”

“Many young people, if they are working at all, are in precarious and vulnerable work and their jobs are threatened by job subsidies disappearing.”

Children and young people living with their families are likely to feel the pressure as well. According to the Federal Government, more than 300,000 children had at least one parent on JobKeeper in February.

Davies is concerned about the impact on young people's mental health and wellbeing. “For many, it's already an anxious time. The young people we see report increases in anxiety as the result of recent natural disasters and the pandemic. Housing stress further compounds their concerns.”

In March alone, Social Futures and its partners supported 90 homeless young people in the Northern Rivers region with advice, counselling, emergency accommodation and other support. Last year, more than 900 young people in the Northern Rivers sought assistance.

“When you know the potential harm that comes with housing stress, you realise how alarming these numbers are. We know that not having a stable and secure place to call home can be very damaging to young people and children. It throws up barriers to study and work aspirations, it leads to poorer overall health and higher levels of stress and anxiety.”

“This is not how our young people should be starting out in life. It's not what they deserve,” Mr Davies said.

According to a [2019 survey by Mission Australia](#), 1 in 6 young people aged 15 -19 reported some experience with homelessness, either as individuals or with their family. A problem even more acute within the Northern Rivers where child poverty rates, which exceed national levels. A [2018 study](#) found that children in the Tweed Shire lived in houses with higher rates of poverty and housing stress than the Australian average (20.8% vs 14.1%).

In the lead up to this year's budget deliberations, Everybody's Home has launched a [petition](#) calling for the Federal Minister for Education and Youth, Alan Tudge, to increase Youth Allowance and Rent Assistance for young people; partner with the States to build more



Social Futures is the business name of the Northern Rivers Social Development Council, Ltd. ACN: 612 367 192

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social housing, and create a youth homelessness strategy to invest in the support young people need to recover and to stay connected to education.

“We strongly support this campaign from EverybodysHome,” Mr Davies said. “But even if funding levels increase it’s important to recognise that youth homelessness is just part of a wider problem in this region. We have 30% of the State’s homelessⁱ and this region gets 5% of the budget to deal with it. It’s not tenable long term.”

ENDS

Media enquiries: Warwick Forster | Brand and Engagement Officer | 0427 556 892 | warwick.forster@socialfutures.org.au

Interviews: For interview please call:

Photo credit:

Note to editors:

1. Social Futures is a community service organisation based in Northern NSW. We have more than 40 years’ experience as a regional leader, advocating with the communities we work in; working in partnership with others; and providing services that promote inclusion, fairness and social justice. Our work encompasses homelessness and housing supports, youth and family services, programs that promote genuine participation for people with disability, community sector support, professional development, and systemic advocacy.

ⁱ 2021 NSW Street Count Results <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/download?file=803114>



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