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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Youth Peak calls for an end to Youth Homelessness amidst COVID-19 Pandemic

Youth Homelessness Matters Day (YHMD) is a national campaign that aims to raise awareness of youth homelessness amongst decision makers and the wider community. The campaign hosted by the National Coalition for Housing (NYCH) will take place online and in conversations around Australia on 15 April 2020.

As the nation faces an unprecedented public health crisis, youth homelessness matters now more than ever. Young people experiencing homelessness have been greatly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and real action must be taken by federal and state governments to support this highly vulnerable group.

Tania Hunt, CEO of the Youth Network of Tasmania said “It is near impossible for young people experiencing homelessness to comply with strict but necessary public health measures to contain the spread of COVID-19. You can’t stay at home if you don’t have a home in the first place and maintaining basic hygiene practices, like washing your hands, is challenging.”

“We know that many young people experiencing homelessness have underlying health issues such as poor physical and mental health and are more susceptible to respiratory conditions and infections. Young people who are homeless are particularly vulnerable and at an increased risk of contracting COVID-19.” Ms. Hunt said.

In Australia, there are 28,000 young people aged 12 to 25 who are homeless on any given night, representing 42% of our total homeless population. Nearly 2 in 5 people experiencing homelessness in Tasmania are under 25 years of age.

The vast majority of young people experiencing homelessness are hidden from view and are couch surfing, living in overcrowded accommodation, in shelters or sleeping in their car.

Family breakdown and family violence are the main causes of youth homelessness.

“As winter approaches, and we find ourselves dealing with the ongoing impacts of COVID-19, the demand for services will increase exponentially. Youth homelessness services are resourceful, resilient and adaptive however, without additional financial support the demand for services will be unmet and young people are at an increased risk of experiencing a range of adverse outcomes.” Ms. Hunt said.

ynot is the peak body representing the voice of Tasmanian youth



The Tasmanian Government recently announced an additional \$1 million for emergency accommodation as part of the Tasmanian Social and Economic Support Package.

“This is a welcome investment and will go some way in supporting vulnerable Tasmanians however, it is not yet clear where funds will be directed. We urge the Tasmanian Government to invest in supporting young people experiencing homelessness and the sector that supports them.” said Ms. Hunt.

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