



Don't Stop ... Bi-partisan commitment is needed to end Youth Homelessness

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MEDIA RELEASE

Data released today shows that more than half of all children and young people seeking accommodation in homelessness services were turned away, illustrating the enormity of the challenge of halving homelessness by 2020 ... but we have to do it !

Today's figures released by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare shows that in 2008-09 **just over 60% of all young people who presented to specialist youth homelessness service in NSW seeking accommodation were turned away.** "These figures show that we must continue the current commitment by the Federal and State Governments' to halving homelessness by 2020" the Youth Accommodation Association's CEO Michael Coffey said.

The report showed that a **lack of accommodation was the most common reason why youth agencies could not accommodate someone.** Youth agencies were also more likely than any other agency to be unable to accommodate someone due to insufficient staff to provide support. "These figures show that too many young people are being turned away from services due to insufficient resources. We know that assisting a young person during their first experience of homelessness is our best opportunity to stop them transitioning into long-term homelessness. However, this data shows that there is a clear number of young people that youth homelessness services are currently not able to reach" said Michael Coffey.

The Youth Accommodation Association is calling on all political parties to commit to halving homelessness by 2020 and provide long term funding for supported accommodation and new service models for people experiencing homelessness.

"When young people are being turned away from SAAP services, they risk becoming part of the 'hidden' homeless in Australia – those young people who couch surf and are not always linked in with services or support. We must have a spectrum of housing and support for young people experiencing homelessness so that all young people are able to access support at the time that they need it.

"There must be bi-partisan commitment to halving homelessness by 2020, meeting the goals set out in the White Paper and to fund homelessness services models beyond the life of the national partnership agreement which ends in 2013. We know we can end homelessness and our message to both parties is, don't stop now" Michael Coffey said.

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For more information on Youth Homelessness Matters visit www.yaa.com.au

