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## MEDIA RELEASE

### Youth Homelessness Matters Day, April 5 - Young people worried about housing

Figures showing that housing affordability is a growing issue for young people highlight the need for more long term affordable housing for young people in crisis, NSW homelessness and housing peaks said today.

The report released this week by the Advocate for Children and Young People (ACYP) that children and young people staying in refuges reported feeling worried and anxious about where they were going to go after their initial three months had expired in the accommodation.

According to the report, “young people who were working towards their goals, had secured employment, and were making concerted efforts to get their lives back on track, spoke of feeling very concerned about facing another perilous and uncertain housing situation”.

Homelessness NSW CEO, Katherine McKernan said as many as one in five people accessing homelessness services in NSW are between 14 and 24 years old.

“43 per cent of Australia's homeless population is under 25, but in NSW young people hold less than two per cent of the 140,000 social housing tenancies,” she said.

“The number of clients aged 15-24 in the homelessness service system increased by 13 per cent in 2015/16 - which is a huge concern and shows how serious the situation is becoming.

“The lack of affordable housing isn't just impacting on young people seeking to buy a home, but is having serious impacts on those at risk of and experiencing homelessness.

“In 2015/16 Homelessness Services saw a staggering 84 per cent increase in the number of people couch surfing before they even asked for help.”

NSW Federation of Housing Associations CEO, Wendy Hayhurst said people were working on creative, long-term accommodation solutions that would give young people the security and safety they need to find jobs and get on with their lives – but they need government support.

“Homeless services can provide support for young people, but young people are often last on the list when it comes to being placed in what little long term affordable and social housing is available,” Ms Hayhurst said.

“There are solutions out there – such the initiative by the Addison Hotel in Kensington to provide housing for young people while the hotel awaits development approval.

“It shows that people are willing to think outside the box, but we need the State Government to urgently release an Affordable Housing Strategy that not only looks at property ownership, but also at affordable options in the private rental market for young people as well.”

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