



Media Release – November 2005

Reclaiming the Focus on Young Homeless Victorians

Reflecting growing concern over youth homelessness, a forum entitled “Housing Young People: Getting a Foot in the Door” will be held at the Richmond Town Hall tomorrow where over 150 people will attend to hear a range of speakers from sector, government, academic and research backgrounds.

The Forum will be hosted by the Council to Homeless Persons (CHP) together with the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria and the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare and will be aimed at highlighting the need for a youth specific response to homeless young people in Victoria.

The 2001 Census found 7,064 young people aged 12-25 to be homeless. This translates to young people comprising an alarming 35% of the total homeless population. Many of these young people are couch surfing or sleeping rough. Research since the Census has indicated that this situation is not improving.

Deb Tsorbaris, Chief Executive Officer at the Council to Homeless Persons said “The Forum comes at an important time for the homelessness sector as it works towards better outcomes for young people accessing services against the backdrop of the Victorian Government’s Youth Homelessness Action Plan (YHAP).”

The YHAP, launched in 2004, is a state government initiative aimed at addressing the specific needs of young homeless people in Victoria. As the Action Plan begins to enter its second stage of implementation, the Forum provides an ideal opportunity for the sector to further discuss the challenges faced in providing individualised responses to young people.

“It’s about allowing the sector to express its concerns and needs in responding appropriately to young people. At the end of the day, it’s about improving the capacity and resources of services to be able to work with young people experiencing homelessness,” Ms Tsorbaris said.

Following the Forum, CHP will produce a publication of all papers and reports presented on the day. This publication will be a crucial tool in informing the YHAP process in 2006.

“It’s exciting to see a real focus on improving the experience of young homeless people in Victoria and the overwhelming response we have had to the Forum is just proof of this commitment,” Ms Tsorbaris said.

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