

MEDIA RELEASE

3 June 2011

Data Supports the Call to End Youth Homelessness

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) data on the use of specialist homelessness services, released this morning, shows a 10% increase in the number of young people accessing support.

The Youth Coalition of the ACT, the peak body for youth affairs in the Territory, believes the data supports the urgency of prioritising work to end youth homelessness, both locally and nationally.

Today's figures show 219,800 people experiencing homelessness were supported by specialist homelessness services over the course of the 2009/10 financial year, up from 204,900 in 2008/09.

'Nearly a third of these people were young people aged 15-24', said Emma Robertson, Director of the Youth Coalition.

'The report tells us that in terms of the total general population, young people aged 15-19 years, especially young women, were the most likely to use specialist youth homelessness services.'

'Around 1 in 5 young men and young women aged under 25 years old cited family breakdown as their main reason for seeking assistance.'

In 2009/2010:

- 43,300 people aged 15-24 years old received support;
- 1 in 51 Australian women aged 15-19 years old received assistance from specialist homelessness services;
- More than 84,000 children used specialist homelessness services; this equates to 1 in every 62 Australian children (1 in 38 children aged 0-4).

'The good news is that over 95% of clients had their needs met by services. This illustrates that specialist youth homelessness services have a vital role to play in supporting vulnerable Australians and in the effort to reduce homelessness.'

'We need to support the existing specialist youth homelessness services to be responsive to young people and we need to continue the positive directions in early intervention and prevention services to stop young people from entering the homelessness service system', Ms Robertson said.

'The task of ending youth homelessness needs to be an urgent local and national priority. No young person in Australia should experience homelessness.'

For further comment please contact Emma Robertson on 0422 665 469