



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**13 March 2013**

### **Countdown to Youth Homelessness Matters**

Did you know 44,083 Australians under the age of 26 are homeless at any given time?

The Youth Coalition of the ACT, the peak body for youth affairs and young people aged 12-25 years, is today launching an ACT countdown to Youth Homelessness Matters Day (YHMD) 2013.

YHMD is the only national campaign aimed at raising awareness and understanding of youth homelessness in Australia. With a 20-year history, the campaign is run every year and in 2013 will be held during National Youth Week on Wednesday 10 April.

The aim of the YHMD campaign is to break the common stereotypes that are associated with youth homelessness, young people who experience disadvantage and youth refugees.

'Stereotypes are currently a major inhibitor to young people accessing support. The stigma attached to homelessness means that many young people deny their experience and put themselves into very dangerous situations instead of seeking help.' said Emma Robertson, Youth Coalition Director.

The campaign also aims to engage government and corporate sectors to resource specialist youth homelessness services to provide young people with the help they need in order to get back on their feet.

'The YHMD ACT countdown campaign begins today 13 March 2013. In the four weeks between now and YHMD 2013 we will be sharing stories, facts, statistics, information about services, and images aiming to get the ACT community involved.' Ms Robertson said.

The Youth Coalition is also approaching YHMD ACT Ambassadors, who will play an active role in assisting to raise awareness in the ACT and encouraging the Canberra community to make youth homelessness matter. Ambassadors will help promote the campaign in the lead up to YHMD through their networks and contacts, including through the use of social media.

More information about Youth Homelessness Matters Day 2013 in the ACT can be found by joining the facebook event: <https://www.facebook.com/events/486652908066666/>, following the Youth Coalition Twitter: [youthco\\_act](https://twitter.com/youthco_act), or via <http://www.youthhomelessnessmatters.net/>

**For further comment please contact Emma Robertson on 0422 665 469**