

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

19 April 2021

### **Youth Homelessness at Crisis Point in Australia**

Homelessness services are struggling to meet escalating demand, with Brisbane Youth Service recording a 336% jump in requests for support from January to March 2021 in comparison to the same period last year.

This increased demand is putting extreme pressure on an already stretched frontline team, while at the same time the Federal Government has announced proposed cuts of over \$56 million to homelessness services across the country from June 2021.

With youth homelessness reaching a crisis point in Australia, Youth Homelessness Matters Day on Wednesday, 21 April 2021 provides an opportunity to raise awareness about the significant challenges facing vulnerable young people.

Brisbane Youth Service CEO Annemaree Callander said, “42% of homeless Australians are under the age of 25\* and young people have also been disproportionately affected by the economic downturn due to the COVID-19 pandemic”.

“Funding cuts will see more young people unable to access the urgent support they need and inevitably result in a surge in youth homelessness across the nation”.

Young people who seek help from Brisbane Youth Service usually have multiple, complex needs. In addition to a lack of safe and affordable housing they are often struggling with mental health concerns, exposure to family violence, and financial and legal issues.

“Homelessness puts young people at risk of further violence and trauma, so being able to provide assistance when they ask for help is critical to the ending their experience of homelessness and preventing further harm,” she said.

“We need an urgent increase in funding and community donations to end homelessness for vulnerable young people and young families,” said Ms Callander.

After support from Brisbane Youth Service, homelessness reduces by 67%, young people living in temporary or unsafe housing decreases by 92%, there is an 87% drop in reporting of poor mental health and an 85% reduction in young people in a crisis or serious violence situation.

Youth Homelessness Matters Day is a project of the National Youth Coalition for Housing, of which Brisbane Youth Service is a member. To get involved or donate, visit [brisyouth.org](http://brisyouth.org) today.

\*2016 ABS Census

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*Notes:*

- Each year more than 1400 young people in crisis (aged 12-24years) are supported by Brisbane Youth Service
- 54% are homeless, 71% have experienced family violence, 55% have a diagnosed mental health issue and 22% are young parents
- Most are also experiencing a range of other complex issues and barriers such as:
  - *82% are in unsafe, unsuitable or unaffordable housing*
  - *60% have no or poor family support*
  - *51% are disengaged from education or unemployed*
  - *33% have current legal issues*
  - *23% have no source of income*

According to Homelessness Australia, in 2019-20 homelessness services had to turn away 260 people needing assistance per day, two-thirds of which were women and girls, many fleeing domestic violence.

*Since 1977, Brisbane Youth Service has been working to create new futures for vulnerable and at-risk young people (aged 12-24 years), providing free, confidential services including: crisis and transitional housing; emergency relief; physical and mental health services; specialist young women's services; and parenting and family assistance.*

**ENDS**