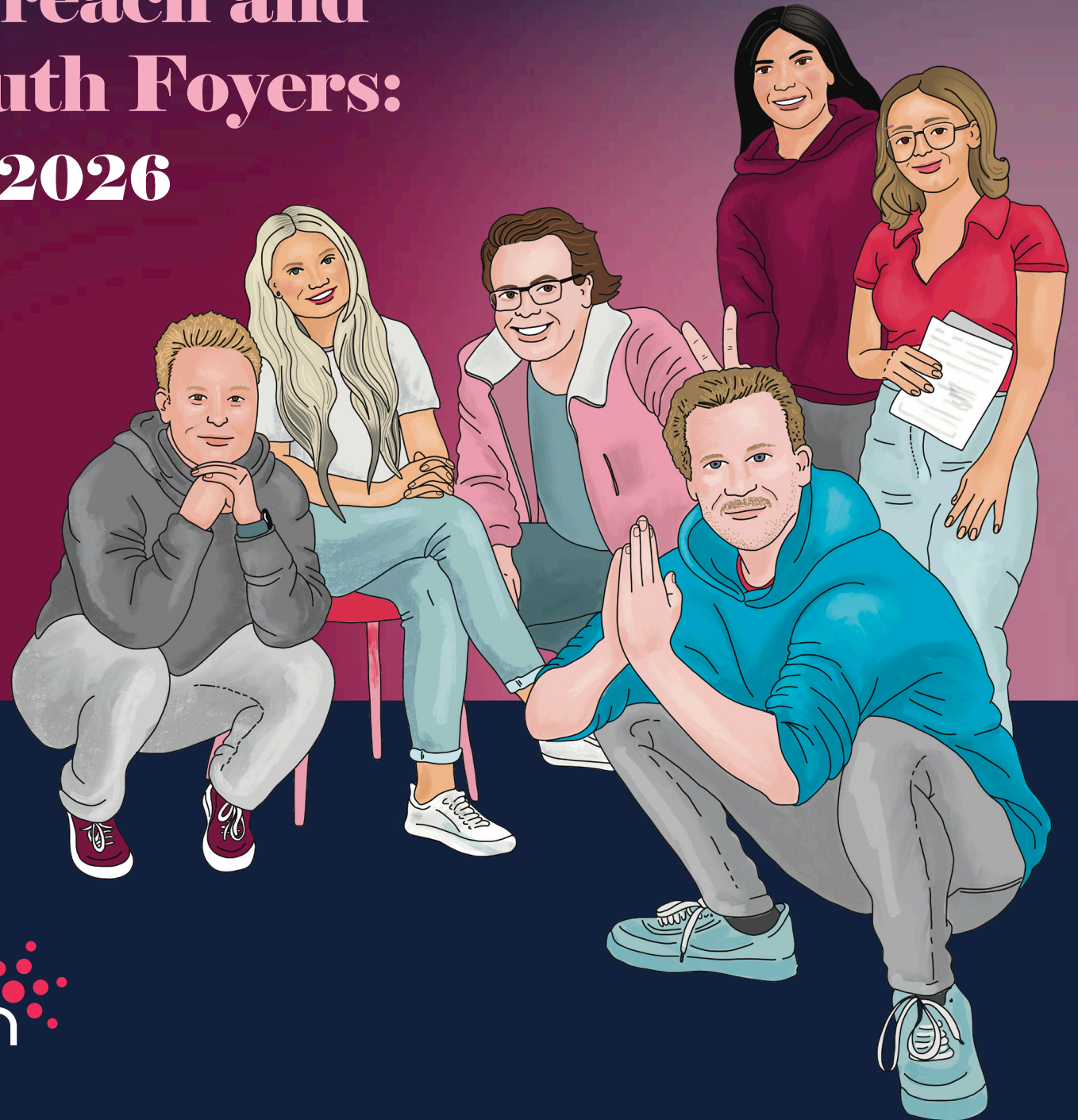


Growing the reach and impact of Youth Foyers: Strategy 2023–2026



‘Homelessness carries a weight beyond physical shelter’

Sakshi's story

Sakshi moved into a Youth Foyer in 2020, after living in refuge accommodation and struggling to secure appropriate housing through specialist housing support services.

Nowadays she balances building an impressive career in the justice system with advocating for other young people as a Foyer Foundation Youth Ambassador.

Reflecting on her time at Glen Waverley Education First Youth Foyer, Sakshi credits “the Advantaged Thinking approach with 24/7 support” as well as the Youth Development Workers who were “a powerhouse of skills right when I needed them”

for what she perceives as “the comprehensive answer to the sprawling issue of homelessness among young people”, which she feels the Youth Foyer approach offers.

“Whilst a lot of the organisations focus on just the circumstances... another aspect of Foyer that really helped me achieve my goals was the extensive network of collaborating organisations, which allowed me to access various forms of assistance all from one space.”

“Dealing with one big issue doesn’t magically make all the other stuff disappear,” Sakshi said. “It wasn’t just about getting a place to crash. It felt as if I had suddenly been handed a guide to life, assisting me in navigating challenges and embracing new opportunities.”



Unlocking Potential

44,000

Over the last decade, on average 44,000 children and young people just like Sakshi presented alone for specialist homelessness support services every year



3 in 5

were repeat service users



are First Nations young people

These figures are an important wake up call for us all. In a country as wealthy as Australia, why are so many children and young people at risk of or experiencing homelessness? How do we create pathways out of homelessness towards the life each young person aspires to?

Having a safe and stable home is a basic human right that every single person deserves, especially our children and young people.

Homelessness is never a choice. For most young people, an experience of homelessness is usually the result of many layered experiences of family and domestic violence or breakdown, neglect, abuse, poverty, housing stress or interaction with the justice system.

One in three young people who live in Out-of-Home Care end up experiencing homelessness. 31% are First Nations young people, despite First Nations people only making up just over 3% of our population.

Behind these numbers are young people with enormous potential, ready to launch into the world, and they have been overlooked for too long.

To unlock thriving futures, children and young people experiencing or at risk of homelessness need more than a roof over their heads. They need a safe and stable home: with meaningful connections, trusting relationships, and a way to build strong foundations in education, employment, and independent living skills.

That's why we are serious about growing the reach and impact of Youth Foyers in Australia.

All young people need a safe and stable home... with meaningful connections, trusting relationships, and a way to build strong foundations in education, employment, and independent living skills.

Sources

- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare: [Specialist homelessness services annual report 2021-22](#)
- Australian Bureau of Statistics: [Estimating Homelessness: Census](#)

A future we believe in

We aspire to a future where young people who experience or are at risk of homelessness go on to live thriving, independent futures.

We see the talents and potential of every young person, no matter what challenges they have faced in life. This is Advantaged Thinking, and we embed it into everything we do.

We back young people to take charge of their lives and unlock the futures they want. Futures with a safe and stable home, a job, a way to support their families and actively contribute to their communities.

We amplify the voices of young people with lived experience of homelessness, and work together with others to tackle the systemic barriers that get in their way. We believe young people should be part of shaping the solutions that work best for them.

We acknowledge the overrepresentation of First Nations young people who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness and we stand for a future where all First Nations people can experience equitable housing and life outcomes.

We respect and include people of all backgrounds, identities, abilities, and viewpoints.

50 Youth Foyers by 2030

We are a national network of young people, service providers, community housing providers, investors and philanthropists working together towards our bold goal of 50 Youth Foyers by 2030. Our network includes Youth Foyers across Australia and FoyerInvest, a national consortium of organisations seeking to grow the reach and impact of Youth Foyers through impact investment. Together we aim to change the life trajectories of more young people experiencing or at risk of homelessness to unlock thriving futures.



“Foyer has been so life-changing for me as it’s not only supported me with finding employment, but it’s also supported me in achieving my goals, particularly around education.”

—Tyrah, Youth Ambassador

There are many reasons why a young person might experience or be at risk of homelessness

Family breakdown

Mental health

Domestic & family violence

Inter-generational trauma

Out-of-Home Care

Juvenile detention

Housing & financial stress

Regional lack of access to services

So they can go on to lead thriving futures

80%

exit into safe & stable housing

65%

gain secure work

Youth Foyers wrap a cloak of supports around a young person aged 16-24 for up to 2 years

Housing

Education

Employment

Advantaged Thinking

Community



ADVANTAGED THINKING

Youth Foyers: a crucial part of the solution

Youth Foyers provide a safe and stable home for 16 to 24-year-olds at risk of or experiencing homelessness by integrating housing with education, employment and life skills supports.

Over 75% of young people asking for medium-term support in Australia are turned away and 72% are not enrolled in any form of education or training. Youth Foyers address this critical gap in our support system, reshaping life trajectories towards a future of independence.

We seek to expand the reach and impact of Youth Foyers; to back more young people at risk of or experiencing homelessness to build brighter futures, supported by their communities.

We are working towards a collective goal of 50 Foyers by 2030 in response to increasing demand from young people and communities across Australia.



Accreditation

Accreditation is key to maintaining the highest standards across the Foyer network. It is a voluntary process that demonstrates the quality and excellence of service delivery in Foyers all around the country, and a safeguard to ensure the sustainability and growth of the Foyer model.

The Foyer Foundation employs Validation Assessors and an independent Accreditation Panel to ensure impartial evaluation.

**“Youth Foyers
provide a unique
experience for young
people. It allowed
me to learn how to
be an adult. To have
a home. To have a
space that was my
own. And I didn’t
have to do it alone.”**

— Ash, Youth Ambassador

The Foyer Foundation

Our purpose is to unlock thriving futures for young people experiencing or at risk of homelessness by growing the reach and impact of Youth Foyers.

We do not do this alone. We catalyse momentum towards our common goal of 50 Foyers by 2030 by bringing together young people, organisations, and investors in communities across Australia.

We connect and align activities, gather evidence and insights, ensure quality services, and advocate with young people and our growing network.

We understand that to unlock thriving futures, we must work together.

“The Foyer model and the staff changed my life for the better. Through Foyer’s support I finished my university degree, I gained employment and most importantly, I now feel happier... I want Foyer to be available to as many Young People as possible.”

— Kim, Youth Ambassador

Photo courtesy of Y21 Trinity Hill and reproduced with the kind permission of Anglicare Tasmania

Strategic alignment

Learning, development & accreditation

Evidence & research

Mobilising resources

Advocacy & communications

Catalyse momentum
50 Foyers by 2030



Our shared strategy

Aligned action across the ecosystem

Youth Foyers

Our growing network of accredited and accrediting Youth Foyers working with young people in communities across Australia.

FoyerInvest Consortium

A national consortium of service providers, community housing providers, philanthropists, and impact investors seeking to grow the reach and impact of Youth Foyers.

Other collaborators

The broader youth homelessness service system, including governments, policymakers, researchers, peaks, and service providers.

Strategic pillars

Impact

Creating a nationally consistent evidence base that informs learning and practice.

Integrity

Ensuring every Youth Foyer in Australia offers young people the high quality service they deserve.

Young people at the heart

Elevating the voices and lived expertise of young people in everything we do

Innovation

Challenging ourselves to evolve the Foyer approach in response to changing needs of young people and communities.

Investment

Working together to amplify investment in Youth Foyers across Australia.

Bold goal

Vision



50 Youth Foyers
by 2030

A future where young people who experience or are at risk of homelessness go on to live thriving, independent futures

Catalysed by the Foyer Foundation

A central connector that enables young people, organisations and investors across Australia to work together towards our common goal: aligning activities, gathering evidence and insights, ensuring quality services, and driving advocacy efforts.

Young People at the Heart

Elevating the voices and lived expertise of young people in everything we do.

Our objectives

- Uphold Advantaged Thinking and elevate the voices of young people in our governance, strategy, advocacy, and everyday practices.
- Back young people and invest in building their capacity through training, employment, and access to leadership and development.
- Demonstrate best practice in employing and engaging young people within the Foyer Foundation and across the Foyer network.

How we'll do this

- Provide opportunities for young people with lived expertise to be part of the Foyer Foundation's governance and decision-making processes.
- Launch the revised Youth Foyer Ambassador program: employing young people with lived experience of Youth Foyers to be part of co-designing strategic projects and advocating for change.
- Create additional engagement and consultation opportunities for a broader group of young people who live or have lived in Youth Foyers.
- Establish a toolkit of policies, structures, and practices for engaging with and employing young people using an Advantaged Thinking approach that can be used by the Youth Foyer network and beyond.

Success by 2026

- 25 young people will be employed by the Foyer Foundation as Youth Ambassadors across several cohorts.
- 3+ young people will have completed or be undertaking Foyer Foundation internships.
- 50+ young people will be engaged in or contributing to key projects.
- Young people will be actively involved in decision-making at operational and governance levels.
- We will have evidence of organisations across The Foyer Network adopting tools, structures or practices modelled by The Foyer Foundation.
- Young people we employ or consult with will reflect the demographic diversity of young people experiencing homelessness in Australia.

“Foyers do put young people at the heart. Even though I don’t have really any formal experience or qualifications, or anything fancy, I have been a part of driving change. I have been able to discuss things that might not be viewed or seen from other people’s perspectives.”

—Ash, Youth Ambassador

Impact

Creating a nationally consistent evidence base that informs learning and practice.

Our objectives

- Understand and demonstrate impact through a consistent outcomes measurement approach across all Youth Foyers nationally.
- Use insights to drive continuous improvements in learning and practice.
- Develop new evidence to strengthen our case and support our advocacy.

How we'll do this

- Implement a National Outcomes Measurement framework across all Youth Foyers for the first time in Australia.
- Establish strong data governance processes and infrastructure to ensure data security and trust.
- Develop new dashboards, reporting tools and practices that enable data driven insights and inform continuous improvement nationally and within each Foyer.
- Undertake new research projects that strengthen our understanding of the impact of Youth Foyers.

Success by 2026

- 80% of existing Youth Foyers will have adopted the National Outcomes Measurement Framework.
- 100% of new Youth Foyers will be using the National Outcomes Measurement Framework.
- Young people will have agency through data collection.
- We will have evidence of data and insights being used to inform decision-making, learning and improvement across Youth Foyers.



Integrity

Ensuring every Youth Foyer in Australia offers young people the high-quality service they deserve.

Our objectives

- Lead Advantaged Thinking culture and practice across the Foyer network.
- Drive service excellence and uphold high standards in Youth Foyers across Australia from inception through to accreditation.
- Equip and enable the Foyer provider network with the tools and opportunities to share knowledge, and continuously learn and improve together.

How we'll do this

- Develop national standards, consistent language and communication tools that align to the accreditation framework and allow for local place-based adaptation.
- Develop a learning curriculum and program to support emerging and accredited Foyers as we scale.
- Provide tailored supports to accelerate the learning journey of new and emerging Youth Foyers.
- Create a virtual Foyer Hub to share learning content, 'how to' guides, tools, and practice examples to support the Foyer network across all stages of a Youth Foyer development, from emerging Foyers through to Accreditation.
- Review, evolve and digitise the voluntary Foyer accreditation process ensuring the ongoing independence of the accreditation panel.
- Revitalise Youth Foyer communities of practice across Australia.

Success by 2026

- We will have nationally consistent, high-quality services and infrastructure across all Youth Foyers.
- Active participation and engagement in online and peer learning forums and communities of practice across the Youth Foyer network will be the norm.
- 90% of Youth Foyer projects will have gained and maintained accreditation within 3 years of opening their doors.

“Advantaged Thinking is a real togetherness framework. We work together, we talk through things together, we understand together and we believe together.”

—Ash, Youth Ambassador

Innovation

Challenging ourselves to evolve the Foyer approach in response to the changing needs of young people and communities.

Our objectives

- Embed the culture and practice needed to drive continuous learning and innovation across our network.
- Develop digital infrastructure to enable knowledge sharing, collaboration, and innovation.
- Continuously adapt and evolve the Foyer approach to serve the needs of young people.



How we'll do this

- Digitise our core systems, tools, and practices to enable knowledge sharing, collaboration and real-time learning.
- Define the way Youth Foyers fit into the broader service ecosystem supporting young people at risk of or experiencing homelessness, identifying gaps and opportunities to innovate and adapt at local and national levels.
- Identify, prioritise and progress at least three shared innovation agendas that matter in multiple Foyer communities across Australia; creating an innovation process that diverse people and organisations can participate in
- Work with First Nations communities and organisations to continue to explore and develop First Nations-led Foyer models.

“Foyers evolve with the people that come through them. The things that a Foyer will focus on changes depending on the cohort of young people that are in the building.”

—Ash, Youth Ambassador

Success by 2026

- We will have established systems and tools to respond and operate at scale and with integrity.
- Implementation of at least three innovation agendas will be underway with real world prototypes.
- We will have strong and respectful partnerships with First Nations people and organisations that strengthen the way we support First Nations young people.
- We will have developed a First Nations led strategy.

Investment

Working together to amplify investment in Youth Foyers across Australia.

Our objectives

- Build a strong brand and profile for Youth Foyers at federal, state and territory levels.
- Align our growth and advocacy strategies nationally and at a state or territory level through the FoyerInvest consortium, working together across states and sectors.
- Secure the funding commitments required to grow and sustain the Foyer movement.
- Maintain a sustainable investment model for the Foyer Foundation to continue its critical enabling role.

How we'll do this

- Collaborate across the national FoyerInvest Consortium to align efforts.
- Working with new and established Youth Foyers in communities across Australia to better understand and support their funding needs.
- Developing and testing innovative impact investment and payment-by-outcomes structures to unlock new investment in Youth Foyers.
- Making aggregate proposals to federal, state and territory governments, philanthropists and private investors that leverage different sources of capital in new ways.
- Advocacy campaigns that build awareness of Youth Foyers.
- Convening relevant state networks and enabling state-based advocacy efforts.
- Ensuring the core enabling role played by The Foyer Foundation is sustainable as the Foyer network scales.

Success by 2026

- 30 Youth Foyers will be established or have funding committed.
- Foyer Foundation will be maintaining a sustainable financial model at the core.

“Foyer Oxford helped me develop the life skills I didn’t have before... Without Foyer I would not be the person I am today, who values myself and wants to spread the advantages of Foyer to more young people who are at risk of homelessness.”

—Kim, Youth Ambassador



Realising our ambition

Realise
your DREAMS

Realising our ambition of 50 Youth Foyers by 2030 would unlock thriving futures for over

20,000 young people

over the course of a decade.

This will have flow on impacts for families, communities, and our economy for generations to come, breaking cycles of disadvantage.

We can only achieve this impact by working together.

Join us

If you want to be part of making this happen, get in touch via our website, social media channels or at

info@foyer.org.au



We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which we live and work, and pay our respects to their elders, past, present and emerging. We recognise the enduring connections and rich cultural heritage of First Nations peoples, and we commit to fostering understanding, respect and reconciliation.

