Youth Foyers®: Unlocking the potential of 3,000 young people in NSW

December 2025 | Pre-Budget Submission

FoyerInvest

Current Port Adelaide Foyer Resident, Sienna.

Too many young people are not able to reach their full potential

Young people need pathways out of homelessness to prevent a lifetime of disadvantage

Over 16,000 young people experienced or were are risk of homelessness in NSW last year. Most aren't in education or employment and repeatedly access overstretched crisis Specialist Homelessness Services that are frequently unable to provide medium or longer term support. One-third are First Nations young people and up to 60% have been in out of home care. Most have experienced family violence and had parents who also experienced homelessness. Too many are in temporary hotel accommodation - an expensive and ineffective solution for young people experiencing homelessness.

In the absence of a safe and stable family environment, these young people need support to navigate the path to independence, prevent them from a lifetime of adult homelessness and set them up for the future they deserve.

Youth Foyers are a crucial part of the solution, supporting young people into education, jobs and stable housing.

Scaling this proven solution to 50 Foyers by 2030 nationally would unlock thriving, productive futures for 15,000 young people over a decade and save the government $2.9bn in lifetime benefits. 3,000 of these could be young people in NSW if the NSW Government commits to scaling this proven model.

Investing in preventive services like Youth Foyers, alongside ensuring a strong homelessness system, especially for First Nations young people and those leaving care, is essential to unlock thriving, productive futures for all young Australians.

Sources: AIHW (2025) Specialist Homelessness Services, 2024/25, MacKenzie, D., Hand, T., Zufferey, C., McNelis, S., Spinney, A. and Tedmanson, D. (2020) Redesign of a homelessness service system for young people, AHURI Final Report 327. Number of young people calculated assumes 3 addtl Foyers plus Foyer Oxford = 283, 1.5 yr length of stay, 10 years., Under One Roof: The Social and Economic Impact of Foyers (2022)

Most young people leave home because it's not safe for them to stay

Youth homelessness is not a choice - it's a signal that something has broken down in the systems and relationships that are meant to keep young people safe.

Many young people leave home because of family breakdown, violence, or conflict that makes staying unbearable or dangerous. Others are pushed out by overcrowding, poverty, discrimination, or the stress of unstable housing. Some have grown up in care or in families where adults are struggling with their own challenges.

Without a safe and supportive home, it is difficult for young people to finish school, find work, or build their future.

Up to 70% young people accessing specialist homelessness services have experienced domestic violence.

Up to 60% have experience in the care system.

60% of young people experiencing homelessness are repeated users of SHS, often due to lack of pathways out of homelessness.

Source: AIHW Specialist Homelessness Services Annual Report 2023/24; McDowall, J. J. (2020). Transitioning to Adulthood from Out-of-Home Care: Independence or Interdependence.

Sydney Foyer Central Residents (Uniting ACT.NSW)

Youth Foyers are a critical part of the solution

Most young people facing homelessness need more than a roof over their head to navigate the path to adulthood and independence. Like every young person, they need support to access education opportunities, find a job, learn how to cook, clean and manage a budget.

Youth Foyers provide this, providing 16-24 year olds with a safe and stable home, integrated with education, employment and life skills support for up to two years.

Youth Foyers support young people from a diverse range of backgrounds, many with experience of the care, justice and mental health systems and from diverse cultural backgrounds. They support young people who are ready to transition to independence but need some support to take that step.

This support is based on the concept of Advantaged Thinking - an approach that recognises the skills, talent and potential of each person and is based on a deal with every young person detailing their goals for independence and the mutual commitments needed to achieve them.

Youth Foyers are not the right solution for every young person at every stage of their homelessness journey, but are **a critical part of a well-functioning homelessness system and a missing stepping stone out of homelessness to independence**.

Youth Foyers break the cycle of disadvantage

80%

Exit into education, employment or both

80%

Exit into safe, stable accommodation

87%

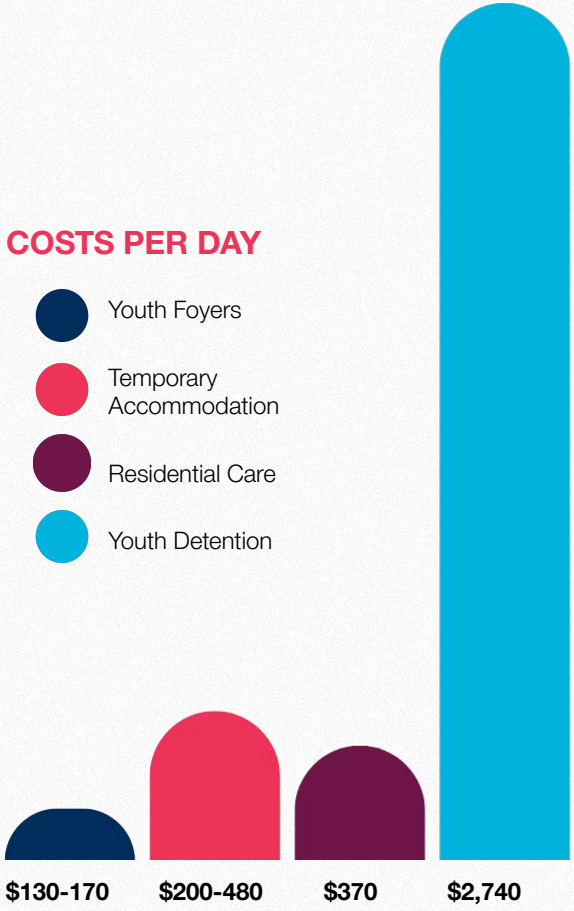
Believe they can reach long term goals

> **“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, Former Resident of Foyer Central (Uniting NSW.ACT) and Foyer Foundation Youth Ambassador

Sources: Youth Foyer National Outcomes Framework, Under One Roof Accenture, AHURI 2023

Youth Ambassador and former Foyer Central resident, Tyrah.



Youth Foyers are a cost-effective solution

Youth Foyers are a cost effective solution, providing crucial wrap-around supports that help young people build the skills for a thriving future at a cost well below some of the alternative options.

Investing to provide this pathway out of a lifetime of homelessness delivers a strong return on investment.

6:1 Return on investment through higher tax revenues and lower healthcare, justice and housing costs, half of which directly benefits the state government.

Compared to the 2:1 return on investment in social housing, Youth Foyers offer a much stronger return.

Source: Report on Government Services (2025) 2023/24 Table 16A.37, Table 17A.20; Accenture Under One Roof; Australian Community Housing

There are only two Foyers in NSW. Ten more are needed over the next decade to meet the needs of young people.

Despite having the highest numbers of young people experiencing homelessness, NSW has just two Youth Foyers.

By comparison, Victoria has 14 Foyers in operation or being built; Queensland has recently announced new funding that will bring the total to 11 once complete; and Tasmania has five in operation.

Sixteen communities across NSW have identified a need for a Youth Foyer. Five are actively seeking funding.

10 Youth Foyers over 10 years will unlock the potential of 3,000 young people, including 1,000 young First Nations people.

*Formerly National Housing Infrastructure Facility Crisis and Transitional (NHIF CT)

Five Youth Foyer projects are actively seeking capital funding but will need operating funds to make the Youth Foyer a reality

PROJECTS SEEKING FUNDING

TWEED HEADS	Social Futures is proposing a 34-bed Youth Foyer, as a purpose built development serving the whole of the Tweed Shire.
BLACKTOWN	Marist 180 owns the site and is developing plans for a Youth Foyer combined with social housing.
WYONG	CatholicCare Diocese of Broken Bay is proposing a 57 bed Youth Foyer. The available land for the project is in close proximity to train station, TAFE, shopping and service centre.
DUBBO	Orana Support Services is proposing a 42 bed Youth Foyer. There is strong support from local council and detailed construction cost estimates have been prepared.
BATHURST	Local training organisation Skillset is providing the land and partnering with Housing Plus and Veritas to develop and deliver a 30 bed Youth Foyer.

The NSW government has an opportunity to unlock Commonwealth capital funding (through the National Housing Infrastructure Facility Crisis and Transitional and Housing Australia's Future Fund) for Youth Foyers by providing operating funds for these Foyers.

But Youth Foyers are more than just a building. They provide wrap-around supports that are crucial to breaking the cycle of homelessness.

For an investment of just $50,000 per young person per year, we can unlock thriving futures for young people.

Investment in Youth Foyers can support the NSW Government to achieve a range of priorities beyond housing and homelessness

HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS

Foyers reduce pressure on crisis services and social housing by creating pathways out of homelessness. 86% young people exit Youth Foyers to secure housing.

YOUTH JUSTICE

Foyer residents are 60% less likely to engage with the justice system.

FAMILY VIOLENCE

Family violence is one of the main drivers of youth homelessness. Foyers provide a safe place for young people from aged 16.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

Foyers support young people to develop the skills they need to succeed, supporting young people to finish school and pursue additional education. On exit from Foyers, 66% of young people have attained a Cert III or above.

LEAVING CARE

Youth Foyers provide a pathway to independence for young people who exit the care system.

CLOSING THE GAP

Over 20% of young people living in Youth Foyers identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders. There is a growing movement to develop First-Nations led Foyers and ensure all Foyers provide culturally appropriate support.

Let's prevent cycles of homelessness by setting young people up for the thriving futures they deserve

We call on the Minns Government to ensure young people in NSW who are unable to live at home, in particular young people leaving care and First Nations young people experiencing homelessness, get the support they need to navigate a pathway to a thriving future.

1

Commit to a pipeline of **10 Foyers over 10 years** in the Children and Young people Homelessness Action Plan, including **three First Nations-led Youth Foyers**

2

Provide **operational funding support of $4m p.a.** for two of the proposed Youth Foyer sites from 2027, to support proposals made under HAFF CT.

3

Increase funding for Specialist Homelessness Services by 50%, so that all young people experiencing or at risk of homelessness have the support they need, from crisis through to independence.

The Foyer Foundation is making this submission on behalf of the FoyerInvest consortium in NSW.

Together we aim to reach 50 new Foyers by 2030 and provide more young Australians with the transformative opportunity of safe, supported accommodation with integrated education, training, employment and life skills support.

This submission is supported by the following organisations:

CatholicCare Diocese of Broken Bay
foyerfoundation
Marist180
Mission Australia
Orana Support Service
Platform Youth Services
For Homeless Youth Property Industry Foundation
Social Futures
Shelter New South Wales
Uniting

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