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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nearly 1 in 3 people accessing homelessness services in NSW are children and young people under the age of 18 years

New figures revealed by the AIHW shows that nearly one in three people accessing Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) in New South Wales are under the age of 18 years, and that NSW has the highest number of unaccompanied 12 – 17-year-olds seeking assistance from homelessness services in the country. This highlights the urgent need for action and investment.

According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 22,286 children and young people under the age of 18 years accessed SHS in NSW during 2023–24. This accounts for almost one-third (32.8%) of all SHS clients in the state. 6,108 of these children and young people, aged 12 – 17 years, were unaccompanied by an adult. This was more than twice as many unaccompanied 12 – 17-year-olds than in Victoria, where the total number of SHS clients, far exceeded the total number in NSW.

Yfoundations, the NSW peak body for youth homelessness, is calling for a sustained focus on, and investment for, children and young people in the state's homelessness response.

Yfoundations CEO John Macmillan said: "It is unacceptable that so many children and young people in NSW are facing homelessness. These are not just numbers - they are kids who should be safe, supported, and given every opportunity to thrive.

The unacceptable numbers and rate of child and youth homelessness in our state highlights the need for an approach that recognises their distinct needs, backed by increased investment across the broad range of services required to make child and youth homelessness rare, brief and non-repeating.

Whilst we welcome the NSW Government's commitment to develop a Child and Youth Action Plan under the NSW Homelessness Strategy as a critical step toward ensuring that the unique needs of children and young people are front and centre in our state's homelessness response, it is clear from these new statistics that additional investment is needed to support the implementation of that Plan."

Yfoundations looks forward to working with Homes NSW, the community sector, and government partners to ensure the Action Plan delivers real and lasting change for young people.

For further information or to arrange an interview, please contact:

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