

# Child and Youth Homelessness Action Plan Sector Consultation Paper

June 2026



## Acknowledgement of Country

Yfoundations, Homelessness NSW and Domestic Violence NSW acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work across New South Wales and pay our respects to Elders past and present. We acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded.

We acknowledge the strength, resilience and leadership of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people, families and communities, and the ongoing impacts of colonisation, dispossession and systemic injustice that continue to drive Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people into homelessness at disproportionate rates.



## Introduction

On 18 May 2026, Yfoundations hosted a sector consultation on Homes NSW's Discussion Paper for the Child and Youth Homelessness Action Plan, with Homelessness NSW and Domestic Violence NSW (DVNSW) facilitating break-out rooms. 72 individuals attended on the day, representing organisations from across the homelessness, youth, and domestic and family violence sectors in NSW.

Participants considered the Discussion Paper in the broader context of what is needed to create a service system better placed to address child and youth homelessness, before considering the specific areas and priorities for shifting the system identified in the Paper in further detail.

This submission reflects the higher-level feedback from the sector about what is needed from the Action Plan, making a range of recommendations including with respect to the principles that underpin the Plan, before making recommendations for actions and priorities under the specific sections identified in the Discussion Paper. It has been prepared collaboratively by Yfoundations, Homelessness NSW and DVNSW to consolidate the collective wisdom of the sector. Individual organisations have also been encouraged to make their own submissions where they wish to raise additional or organisation-specific feedback.

## Overarching feedback and recommendations

### 1. Children and young people need a dedicated child and youth homelessness strategy under which the Action Plan should sit

The sector is being asked to comment on an Action Plan with no preceding strategy specific to children and young people. The general NSW Homelessness Strategy was not designed through a child and youth lens. Without a dedicated strategy, the Action Plan risks being a list of activities rather than a deliberate program of change against measurable objective. The sector advocates for a strategy – but getting the principles right, and ensuring they are distinct from the general Strategy, is vital so that children and young people are not treated as a homogenous group.

#### Recommendations

- Commit to developing a child- and youth-specific strategy in parallel and position this Action Plan explicitly as the first implementation schedule for the strategy.
- Ensure the strategy and the Plan's principles are designed through a genuine child and youth lens and are clearly distinct from the general NSW Homelessness Strategy.
- Avoid repeating the mistake of treating children and young people as a single homogenous group within the strategy and Action Plan.
- Where possible, position the strategy and Action Plan in a way that insulates them from changes of government and priorities, drawing on the lessons of previous government-led plans that did not survive political change.

### 2. The Plan needs ambitious, strengths-based language and a positive vision

The language in the Discussion Paper is consistently passive and its ambition too low. The sector's position is that the Plan requires a shared ambition and a positive vision for young people, expressed in active, ambitious and strengths-based language that enables and empowers them. Aspiration is a precondition for good design: a clear ambition for young people will change the way the Plan is framed.

#### Recommendations

- Add an explicit ambition or vision statement – a positive picture of what a young person's life looks like if the Plan succeeds.
- Replace passive language ('should', 'making sure', 'collecting') with 'must', 'deserve' and 'have a right to'.
- Use strengths-based, enabling language throughout, centred on empowering young people rather than describing deficits.
- Avoid reducing homelessness to rooflessness; recognise couch-surfing, overcrowding and crisis or transitional accommodation as homelessness.

### 3. Lived experience must guide the Plan throughout its life – design, delivery and evaluation

Being guided by lived experience must be an ongoing commitment throughout the life of the Plan – across design, delivery and evaluation – not a one-off consultation. The current treatment of lived experience in the Discussion Paper does not reflect its stated importance.

## Recommendations

- Establish a framework for engaging children and young people with lived experience that works with all of the cohorts identified in the Plan, and that includes remuneration where relevant and appropriate.
- Extend engagement beyond the existing Advisory Group, whose lived-experience members are 18 and over, with mechanisms deliberately designed for younger children and young people.
- Embed engagement before, during and after design, delivery, implementation and evaluation - not only at the point of 'informing' design.
- Enable young people, alongside peak bodies, to help define what success looks like and how it is measured within the Plan.

### 4. The scope of and outcomes that can be achieved through the Plan will be constrained where limited to being 'within existing resources'

The credibility of framing that the Plan's focus on activities that can be delivered 'within existing resources' was challenged across the sector. Recognition of the current fiscal environment and that initial actions may need to begin within existing resources, does not equate to acceptance of this as a suitable response to child and youth homelessness in NSW. This submission takes the position that actions and priorities that are the responsibility of government agencies can be achieved from within existing resources, albeit that this may require re-prioritisation and re-allocation of internal resources and funding. The Plan must be honest that there is no spare capacity in the NGO sector that is already operating beyond its funded means. In a no-new-resources environment, the focus should turn to government's own productivity and efficiency, which limits capacity but offers real scope for improvements for children and young people.

## Recommendations

- State plainly the distinction between actions deliverable within current resources and actions that require new investment, naming both, so that future funding can be mobilised quickly when it becomes available.
- Allocate priority to actions based on need, not the availability of funding
- Acknowledge openly that there is no spare capacity in the NGO sector to absorb additional expectations.
- Where new funding is not available, target improvements in government productivity and efficiency which will flow through to better outcomes for children and young people.

### 5. The Plan must be a whole-of-government plan with clear accountability

The Discussion Paper places considerable expectation on NGOs and says little about the responsibilities of government. The sector understands that the Action Plan itself is intended to set out where responsibility sits across government and strongly welcomes that. The sector's position is that allocating responsibility must amount to genuine, whole-of-government accountability: naming a responsible agency is not enough on its own. Each responsibility must carry named actions, owners, funding and mechanisms, and the Plan must not default expectations back onto the NGO sector. The lion's share of the gaps

in the system emerge from a lack of government accountability - nowhere more so than in the child protection system, where DCJ's role needs to be fully and explicitly reflected. The sector also looks to the Plan to make Homes NSW's own obligations explicit and to bring Education, Health and Justice meaningfully to the table.

### **Recommendations**

- Ensure the responsibilities the Action Plan allocates amount to genuine whole-of-government accountability - with named actions, owners and funding for DCJ (child protection), Homes NSW, Education, Health and Justice - not simply a statement of which agency is nominally responsible.
- Prioritise stronger accountability from the child protection system. Families should not be left in refuges for extended periods because DCJ has no alternative care arrangement, nor exited from departmental oversight into refuges without support.
- Ensure the Plan reflects and reinforces the existing statutory obligations on schools, child protection, health and police, as well as broader accountabilities under Article 27 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which places a legal obligation on the State to support children to have a home.
- Utilise existing cross-accountability mechanisms including the Secretary's Board spanning all relevant government portfolios as a vehicle for cross-agency accountability.
- Stop transferring risk to the NGO sector without matching financial, governance and systems infrastructure.

### **6. The 0-24 age range must be disaggregated - without creating new gaps**

The most consistent position across the sector is that the 0-24 age range is too broad to drive sound policy or service design. Grouping everyone from infants to young adults together obscures profoundly different developmental, legal and service needs. The Plan must name and respond to distinct sub-cohorts - but broad parameters should be used to understand cohorts, never to exclude a young person or to justify a service system that cannot accommodate those who do not fit neatly into a bracket. Disaggregation must not create new siloes or gaps or push some children out of support.

### **Recommendations**

- Disaggregate the age range into developmentally meaningful brackets - 0-12, 12-16, 16-18 and 18-24 - treating each as children and young people in their own right and tying actions to specific brackets so no cohort is missed.
- Distinguish accompanied from unaccompanied children and young people, who need fundamentally different responses, and avoid an over-emphasis on out-of-home-care leavers that renders other vulnerable young people invisible.
- Prioritise investment in the 12-16 cohort, who fall between SHS eligibility (capped at 16+) and the child protection system, including dedicated attention to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and CALD children and young people in this group.
- Guard against the framework being used to exclude young people or to create new service gaps; the system must remain able to accommodate every young person who needs support.

- Address the acute barriers facing 16-17-year-olds - unable to sign leases, ineligible for many tenancy products, unable to access shared-accommodation listings, often unable to return to family - which leave them stuck in crisis accommodation with no viable exit.
- Respond to the rapidly emerging 20-23 cohort, including clear social housing pathways, as housing stress, cost-of-living pressure and the youth payment gap drive numbers that services have not previously seen.
- Set realistic objectives for safe reunification or repatriation with family where this is appropriate and possible.
- Improve the intersection with the child protection system for both accompanied and unaccompanied children and young people. A child finding their way into a refuge must never be treated as grounds to reduce their risk rating.

## 7. 'Person-centred' must be defined - in collaboration with the sector - and embedded across the system

'Person-centred' is used inconsistently and remains undefined. It was also the language of the previous Homelessness Strategy, and the sector is wary of it being used as rhetoric without clear meaning. The sector holds the practice expertise and should define what person-centred means for children and young people, accompanied by a genuine commitment to change in practice. Person-centredness must build in the voice and agency of children and young people and must operate at the level of the whole system, not only within individual services.

### Recommendations

- Collaborate with the sector to define person-centredness for children and young people, with a clear commitment to changed practice at Homes NSW and across government.
- Build the voice and agency of children and young people into design, delivery and measurement.
- Apply person-centredness across the whole system, so that a young person navigating multiple services and locations experiences coherence, not just within each individual provider.
- Reform current practices that contradict person-centred principles.
- Measure whether young people experience agency in the process, not only service outputs.

## 8. The Plan must build on cultural strengths and respond to identified groups with particular vulnerabilities

The Plan must be responsive to the needs of identified groups that have particular vulnerabilities and must build on the strengths of particular cultures and communities. This responsiveness should be woven throughout the Plan and built into the disaggregation discussion in Position 1 rather than treated as an add-on.

### Recommendations

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people - around 30% of children and young people seeking SHS assistance - need Aboriginal-led, culturally

safe responses, whole-of-family approaches, and explicit recognition that connection to culture is a protective factor. Cultural safety must be more than a checkbox: it requires identified roles, ACCO-led services and structural reform.

- Young women, trans and gender-diverse young people experience disproportionate housing insecurity, additional economic inequality and specific safety concerns that need explicit recognition and treatment within the Plan.
- LGBTIQ+ young people often need inner-city locations for community and cultural safety; funding should be calibrated to the cultural safety of a location, not rent comparison alone, which current Rent Choice Youth caps undermine.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and CALD young people need culturally safe responses and a workforce that reflects their communities, including Aboriginal and CALD-specific roles within the DFV Specialist Workers for Children and Young People programme.
- Young people with disability and neurodiversity face barriers to engaging with services at all; the Plan needs to address post-NDIS changes that are pushing complex needs back into the homelessness sector without commensurate training, which must be funded.
- Young parents under 18 and pregnant young women fall through the gaps – often outside Rent Choice Youth eligibility, priced out of private rental, with growing numbers couch-surfing with infants – the Plan needs to provide for tailored products for this cohort.
- Apply a gendered, culturally responsive lens to the impossible choices facing Aboriginal women who fear child removal if they leave violence.

## 9. Support – not just housing – is what is missing

Housing supply without equivalent investment in support will not work for young people. The sector's position is that support is the missing piece, and that the need for support for children and young people is generally greater than for adults. Housing is only part of the solution; current bricks-and-mortar investment will not, on its own, respond adequately to the needs of children and young people in the Action Plan.

### Recommendations

- Match every capital build with operating dollars and skilled, well-trained and well-paid case management with genuine wraparound capacity.
- Recognise explicitly that children and young people generally need more support than adults and design the Plan accordingly.
- Define 'support' in concrete terms – funding, workforce and wraparound.

## 10. The Plan must recognise domestic and family violence as a primary driver and prioritise accordingly

The Plan must recognise the significance of domestic and family violence as a major driver of child and youth homelessness and prioritise actions accordingly. Children and young people experiencing domestic and family violence are victim-survivors in their own right, not merely accompanying adults, and this must be explicit throughout the Plan.

## Recommendations

- Recognise children and young people affected by domestic and family violence as victim-survivors in their own right within the Plan
- Utilise specialist homelessness service (SHS) expertise as part of a more coordinated response. SHS involvement must not be used to justify any reduction in the prioritisation or provision of child protection and other services. This is particularly important for unaccompanied young people aged 12-15, where entry into refuge must not trigger a reduction in DCJ risk assessment or case closure. Entering refuge should be recognised as a protective behaviour, not a reason to step back from child protection responsibilities. Equally, families who access a refuge of their own accord, without existing child protection involvement, must not be penalised for their victimisation. The SHS workforce must be equipped to appropriately assess child safety and wellbeing, while keeping in view the protective behaviours of the non-offending parent.
- Make investments that enable older children, particularly teenage boys, to remain with their mothers and siblings; they are too often excluded from domestic violence shelters, splitting families.
- Fund accommodation and behaviour-change support for users of violence to enable safe-at-home responses; provision is critically thin, with very limited men's crisis accommodation across large parts of regional NSW.
- Give specialist domestic and family violence evidence appropriate professional regard, rather than repeatedly demanding further proof where policy already allows acceptance of specialist evidence, which slows responses.
- Reverse the drift of funding into motel-style accommodation at the expense of the SHS system that provides wraparound support and monitor temporary accommodation and Link2Home practice for the increased questioning of domestic and family violence presentations.

### 11. Local delivery must be tailored to children and young people and resourced by government

Local delivery must be tailored to the needs of children and young people and must be resourced by government - not assembled out of the goodwill and unfunded effort of the NGO sector. Effective local responses depend on coordination mechanisms that are properly resourced and serviced.

## Recommendations

- Resource and service local coordination mechanisms through government, involving the NGO sector but not relying on the sector to make them work.
- Ensure mechanisms are flexible enough to respond to emerging issues, such as natural disasters, which can rapidly strip affordable housing stock from a region.
- Keep place-based responses embedded in the broader system; they must not become a mechanism for devolving risk onto local NGOs while government retains monitoring authority.

- Co-design and ground truth any move toward individualised packages before adoption, given the lessons from the NDIS and out-of-home care, where individualised approaches have failed without strong system infrastructure and skilled support.

## 12. The Plan must commit to data development and building the evidence base

The Plan should include an explicit commitment to data development and building the evidence base. Child and youth homelessness is largely hidden – in couch-surfing, overcrowding (especially in First Nations communities) and staying with extended family – and current data does not capture its true scope.

### Recommendations

- Focus on data linkage and on more effectively measuring the full scope of child and youth homelessness across the different cohorts.
- Link data development to, and use it to reinforce, the accountability of government to deliver the Plan – including public reporting, not merely collection of data.
- Invest in cross-system data linkage which integrates data across social systems and enables outcomes to be tracked.
- Reframe measurement around learning and improvement, with data and lived experience as inputs.

### Guiding Principles

Strong guiding principles are essential to ensure a Plan that is appropriately focused on the needs of children and young people – particularly in the absence, at present, of a dedicated child and youth strategy. The principles carry significant weight, and their language must be more deliberative, ambitious and focused on the strengths of children and young people than the current drafting. The sector’s position on each principle is set out below.

#### Principle 1 – Housing is a human right

- Strengthen the wording to reflect Article 27 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which creates a clear legal obligation on the State to support children to have a home.
- Hold housing and support together. Support that is appropriate to age, developmental stage and culture should be elevated, because without it the right to housing will not be properly realised.
- Include a commitment to defining ‘support’ in concrete terms – funding, workforce and wraparound – so the principle has substance.

#### Principle 2 – Aboriginal expertise and leadership are respected

- Add explicit recognition of a whole-of-family, holistic model that includes Aboriginal children and young people; the supporting points currently reference ACCOs and culture but not the whole-of-family approach.
- Specify direct engagement with Aboriginal children and young people in development, rather than assuming it through ACCO involvement alone.

### Principle 3 – People with lived experience inform service design

- Substantially expand this principle, which is currently a single sentence and far shorter than the others despite its stated importance.
- Include a commitment to remunerate lived-experience participants for their time.
- Extend engagement across before, during and after design, delivery, implementation and evaluation – not only ‘informing’ design – and reach the full age range, with explicit mechanisms for younger children and young people.
- Enable young people, with peak bodies, to define what success looks like and how it is measured; consider reframing the principle itself as an outcome centred on young people’s leadership.

### Principle 4 – Person-centred principles are embedded in policy and practice

- Include a commitment to defining person-centredness clearly, recognising that the sector holds the practice expertise.
- Require person-centredness to operate across the whole system, not only within individual services, so young people experience coherence as they move between services and locations.

### Principle 5 – Prevention is prioritised

- Refer explicitly to the two layers of prevention: preventing children and young people from entering homelessness in the first place and preventing a lifetime of adult homelessness once a young person is already in the system.
- Move from ‘should’ to ‘must’ where the law already requires action by schools, child protection, health and police.
- Recognise income adequacy and rental affordability as preventive measures.
- Recognise the role of advocacy and systems-abuse mitigation by specialist services in preventing unnecessary disconnection and separation.

### Principle 6 – Housing First principles are embedded in policy and practice

- Reword this principle to recognise that Housing First for Youth is materially different from the adult Housing First model; translating the adult model directly into youth contexts is confusing and risks unintended outcomes. Reference the Housing First for Youth model.
- Adapt the principle to the different needs of the various cohorts; for under-16s in particular- they need parenting, support and someone taking parental responsibility. A commitment to Housing First principles must not undermine this priority or normalise the wrong outcome.
- Ensure the principle does not reduce homelessness to rooflessness and note that current social housing policy settings can actively contravene a Housing First for Youth approach.

### Principle 7 – Service planning and delivery is flexible, localised and joined-up

- Underpin this principle with a dedicated SHS Workforce Strategy; flexible, localised and joined-up delivery is not achievable without a strong, well-supported workforce on the ground.

- Restore the localised dimension, which the current 'this means' description omits - it references seamless access to coordinated services but not local delivery.
- Place accountability for joining-up the system on government; it is government's responsibility, not the sector's, to make the system cohere.
- Strengthen the language - 'should have seamless access' is too soft; use 'must' or 'have the right to'.

### Principle 8 - The workforce is strong and supported

- Replace the deficit-based framing with a strengths-based mindset - a workforce that believes in the strengths and potential of young people, not only one that is trauma-informed.
- Add training and capability for the complexity being directed into homelessness services following NDIS changes, including disability, dual diagnosis and complex behavioural needs.
- Include a commitment to investing in explicit Aboriginal-specific and CALD-specific workforce roles.
- Reference the domestic and family violence Workforce Development Strategy and ensure it includes specific provision for Specialist Workers for Children and Young People.
- Address pay, contract length and continuity; place-based responses depend on relationships and trust, which short contracts and low pay undermine.

### Principle 9 - Systems, tools and measurement are consistent and fit for purpose

- Reframe the principle around learning and improvement, with data and lived experience as inputs, rather than the passive and narrow act of collecting data.
- Add accountability explicitly, including a commitment to publishing outcomes and data .
- Include a commitment to invest in cross-system data linkage.
- Measure young people's experience of agency in the system, not only service outputs.

## Positions on the three system shifts - Discussion Paper

This section identifies the sector's response to the specific issues raised in the Discussion Paper. Priority actions are identified, arranged in terms of those that can be implemented from within existing government resources and those requiring additional investment.

### Shift 1: From crisis to prevention

The sector supports the shift from crisis to prevention however questions the extent to which young people do not know how to access services. A significant issue is that young people are aware that existing services are unable to respond because they lack capacity. Hidden homelessness, missed warning signs and disrupted education are rightly identified, and domestic and family violence should be elevated further as a primary, gendered and intersectional driver.

## **Recommendations**

### ***Within existing resources***

Recognise the two layers of prevention - preventing entry into homelessness and preventing a lifetime of adult homelessness once a young person is in the system.

- Elevate parental and community education, drawing on the evidence that upstream community-level campaigns work; public messaging should affirm that help is available.
- Recognise that when a ROSH report is made and DCJ is unable to respond promptly, local police can play an important early identification and referral role, connecting children, young people and families to DFV and homelessness support services in that gap.
- Recognise advocacy and systems-abuse mitigation, supported medium-term housing, and the ability of rural and regional young people to remain in their communities as prevention measures.
- Achieve coherence between Education, Youth Justice and Health services - to prevent escalation into the crisis service system.

### ***Requiring additional investment***

- Expand the DFV Specialist Workers for Children and Young People programme across NSW with funding matched to geographic coverage and develop a dedicated workforce development strategy and practice framework for the programme; recent expansions have stretched geography without corresponding budget.
- Build on and properly resource the Homeless Youth Assistance Program (HYAP), which funds non-government organisations to provide targeted, holistic support for unaccompanied children aged 12-15 and, in some sites, short-term accommodation, with the aim of safe reunification or transition to longer-term supported accommodation. HYAP does not yet close the gap: accommodation is available only at some of a limited number of sites across NSW, support is short-term, and transition depends on longer-term supported accommodation that is frequently unavailable. Scale and resource the program so holistic support and accommodation are consistently available statewide, and ensure viable longer-term options exist to move into.
- Fund accommodation and behaviour-change support for users of violence to enable safe-at-home responses; provision is critically thin, with very limited men's crisis accommodation across large parts of regional NSW.
- Treat income adequacy and rental affordability as prevention, and reform Rent Choice Youth urgently - caps have not kept pace with rents, the three-year cap does not fit young parents, and real estate agents need education about the product.

### ***Shift 2: From service-centred to person-centred***

The sector broadly endorses this shift, including the recognition of children as victim-survivors in their own right, the need for a continuum of services, and the problems of conditional barriers, gaps for older teenage sons and restrictive program limits. However, the framing about reducing 'unnecessary child protection escalation' is potentially counterproductive. Specialist services play an important and legitimate advocacy role with

DCJ, and a goal expressed in terms of reducing reports risks discouraging appropriate engagement with the child protection system. The intent would be better stated as improving coordinated, collaborative practice between services and DCJ, rather than as a target to reduce reports. SHS workers must also be trained on when to report to DCJ, taking a holistic view of risk that includes recognising the protective behaviours of any non-offending parent, rather than viewing refuge entry or help-seeking as indicators of risk in themselves.

## **Recommendations**

### ***Within existing resources***

- Define what person-centred means before listing actions, with the sector leading the definition and a commitment to changed practice across the system.
- Make age- and time-eligibility settings flexible so young people do not fall through gaps between products, reflecting and supporting the move away from strict 12-week caps in updated SHS specifications.
- Deliver practical, low-cost improvements at Homes NSW counters - trauma-informed counter staff, full staffing of empty desks, security and concierge presence, and psychologically informed waiting environments.
- Reform temporary accommodation to be trauma-informed and person-centred.
- Decentralise application processes and remove income cliff-edges that exclude young people with unstable or 'just over' incomes from the supports they need.
- Include youth housing models within the definition of social housing and fund from within existing supply.

### ***Requiring additional investment***

- Ensure quality, skilled case management accompanies any expansion in housing supply; matching operating dollars to capital investment is the single most important gap to address.
- Increase supply of short, medium and long-term housing appropriate for young people, with embedded supports - youth foyers, medium-term supported accommodation and transitional housing plus - and identify existing government assets for refurbishment or meanwhile-use tailored to young people.
- Provide diverse housing solutions, avoid mixing 16- and 17-year-olds into shared stock with very different complexities, and accommodate couples and family configurations where these are the only support structures a young person has.

### Shift 3: From central to local delivery

The sector endorses the shift to local delivery, recognising current problems with too many hoops, cultural safety gaps, services geographically disconnected from supports, limited regional options and broken continuity of care when young people are moved for long-term housing. Local delivery must, however, be properly resourced by government and embedded in the broader system.

### Recommendations

#### *Within existing resources*

- Adopt and scale replicable accountability mechanisms, such as regular case-coordination meetings between refuges and DCJ that have sharply reduced average lengths of stay.
- Co-design and ground truth any move to individualised packages before adoption and keep place-based responses embedded in the broader system rather than a means of pushing risk onto local NGOs while government retains monitoring authority.
- Give cross-border issues a specific focus. Young people crossing state lines for safety, housing or services (for example Queanbeyan/ACT, Bega Valley/Victoria, Northern Rivers/Queensland) are too often deemed to have 'made themselves homeless' and lose access to Rent Choice Youth and refuges. Establish formal cross-border arrangements and enable use of assets across borders where this expands options.
- Calibrate funding distribution to the cultural safety needs of particular locations and ensure governance and the definition of success sit with young people, peak bodies and the sector, not government alone.

#### *Requiring additional investment*

- Make hubs and one-stop-shop models cross-sector – spanning government and NGO providers – since a single organisation cannot generate sufficient throughput, drawing on the AHURI evidence on hubs as the appropriate entry point. Fund NGO's to host and participate in hub model.
- Treat cultural safety as foundational, not optional – funding and requiring Aboriginal-led services, identified Aboriginal and CALD specialist roles, and culturally safe practice across mainstream services.
- Specify workforce development for local delivery; capital builds and place-based responses need a well-trained, well-supported workforce on the ground.
- Scale mobile, outreach and visiting health and social services as positive cross-system examples.

### Conclusion

The recommendations throughout this paper come back to a small number of consistent calls: disaggregate the 0–24 age range so that very different needs are visible and acted on; ensure that the responsibilities the Plan allocates amount to genuine whole-of-government accountability; position it beneath a dedicated child and youth homelessness

strategy; be honest about resourcing; raise the ambition and the language; invest in support alongside housing; and recognise domestic and family violence as a primary driver. Each of these maps to a concrete change in the drafting or design of the Plan, rather than to a question of principle.

Yfoundations, Homelessness NSW and Domestic Violence NSW look forward to continuing to work with Homes NSW and partner agencies on the development and implementation of the Plan, and to bringing the voices of children, young people and frontline services to that work. Getting this Plan right is ultimately about whether children and young people in NSW grow up with safety, stability and a future they have a hand in shaping.