

Yfoundations
**Annual
Membership
Survey**
2025



Acknowledgements

Yfoundations acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land we and our members operate on across NSW. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded and thank them for protecting the land and its ecosystems for time immemorial.



Introduction

As the peak body for child and youth homelessness in NSW, Yfoundations is committed to supporting positive change for and across the youth homelessness sector by providing advocacy, research, policy advice and sector development resources, with a focus on increasing the growth and sustainability of the sector and improving outcomes for children and young people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

This sector holds a wealth of collective wisdom, knowledge, commitment, operational insight, and frontline and lived experience. For our work to be impactful, we believe it must be informed by the sector, voices from the frontline and the voices of those with lived experience.

Each year, Yfoundations reaches out to our members and stakeholders in the youth homelessness services sector to gather feedback

on our work throughout the previous financial year. This data is invaluable as it helps us understand how to better support our members and improve our services. It gives us additional insight into what's working, what's needed and where we need to improve so Yfoundations can constantly grow and refine our goals as a team and organisation.

About the Annual Membership Survey 2025

This year, due to our increased focus on sector advocacy and consultation in the lead up to commissioning, increased submissions to government and agencies, changes within Yfoundations, and being mindful of the impact of several surveys being conducted with the sector at the same time, this survey was distributed in late 2025 to early 2026. We also refined the survey questions and our distribution list.

Many questions, particularly around identity, were introduced and reworked from the previous survey to differentiate between questions that would provide a profile about respondents per se and questions that may help build a more comprehensive profile of the composition of the workforce in the organisations surveyed. Our intention was to provide greater insight into our membership base and sector workforce development and advocacy needs.

For some questions, we reverted to the style of questioning used in previous surveys to enable a comparative year-on-year analysis of responses, particularly on key issues impacting service providers, child and youth homelessness, and feedback on our performance.

Whereas in previous years the survey was distributed to all those on our communications mailing list, this year we targeted members and a more limited range of stakeholders with whom Yfoundations had worked throughout the year. We also targeted distribution to key people within each member organisation to avoid the survey being sent to many different people within the same organisation.

As a consequence, the number of responses was smaller than in the previous year. We recognise this focused distribution has impacted the number of responses from frontline workers, case managers, etc. as reflected in the demographics on the positions held by respondents, which tends towards managers and senior managers of organisations. We will consider all of these impacts in shaping our next survey methodology.

The survey was released on 19 December 2025 via email and promoted through our newsletter and across our social media platforms. Due to the end of year break and slow returns, we extended the survey close date to 13 February 2026. The survey yielded 23 responses.

Introduction



Focus of the Annual Membership Survey 2025

This year's survey was designed to provide a better understanding of:

- the demographic reach and diversity of Yfoundations' members and stakeholders, and survey respondents, including their ages, roles, backgrounds, and workforce sizes and compositions
- lived experience within the sector, and respondents in priority cohorts, particularly those who identify as being First Nations or from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, LGBTQIA+, or living with disability
- the longevity of experience in the sector workforce, wellbeing supports within the sector, career progression, and how we can better support the workforce
- sector concerns and priorities, providing respondents the opportunity to report the key issues and challenges they believe most impact their service delivery and children and young people experiencing or at risk of homelessness
- how respondents perceive and value Yfoundations, enabling us to process valuable feedback on how we can improve our impact and reach.

The first two sections of this report provide a profile of the survey respondents, including their age, role and the sector they work in, and a profile of the organisations for which they are responding, including location, size of the workforce, and workforce diversity,

The next section explores sector priorities and concerns - where respondents report on what they see as the key issues most impacting children and young people experiencing homelessness in NSW and the youth homelessness sector.

That's followed by workforce considerations, where respondents identify concerns, motivations and development needs for themselves and their workforces.

The final section explores how respondents perceive and value Yfoundations, providing valuable information on our performance and how we can improve our reach and impact.

This report will draw comparisons from previous Annual Membership Surveys where comparisons are useful and can be validly made.

Profile of respondents

The first section of our survey aims to build a profile of the characteristics of respondents, including ages, position titles, roles, identities, and their lived experience.

Position

The majority of respondents work in a youth homelessness service or a not-for-profit (NFP) organisation that provides child/youth homelessness services and support, with 9% of responses being from individuals and 9% of respondents having lived experience of child and youth homelessness.

The majority of respondents were working at managerial and senior managerial levels, with CEOs comprising 39.2% (up from 18.2% in 2024), Managers 34.8% (up from 25% in 2024) and Executive Managers 8.7% (down from 11.4%).

'Case Manager' accounted for 4.4% of respondents (down from 9.1% in 2024) with 'Lived experience worker' also comprising 4.4% and another 4.4% being 'Not-for-profit worker who does not provide frontline services'.

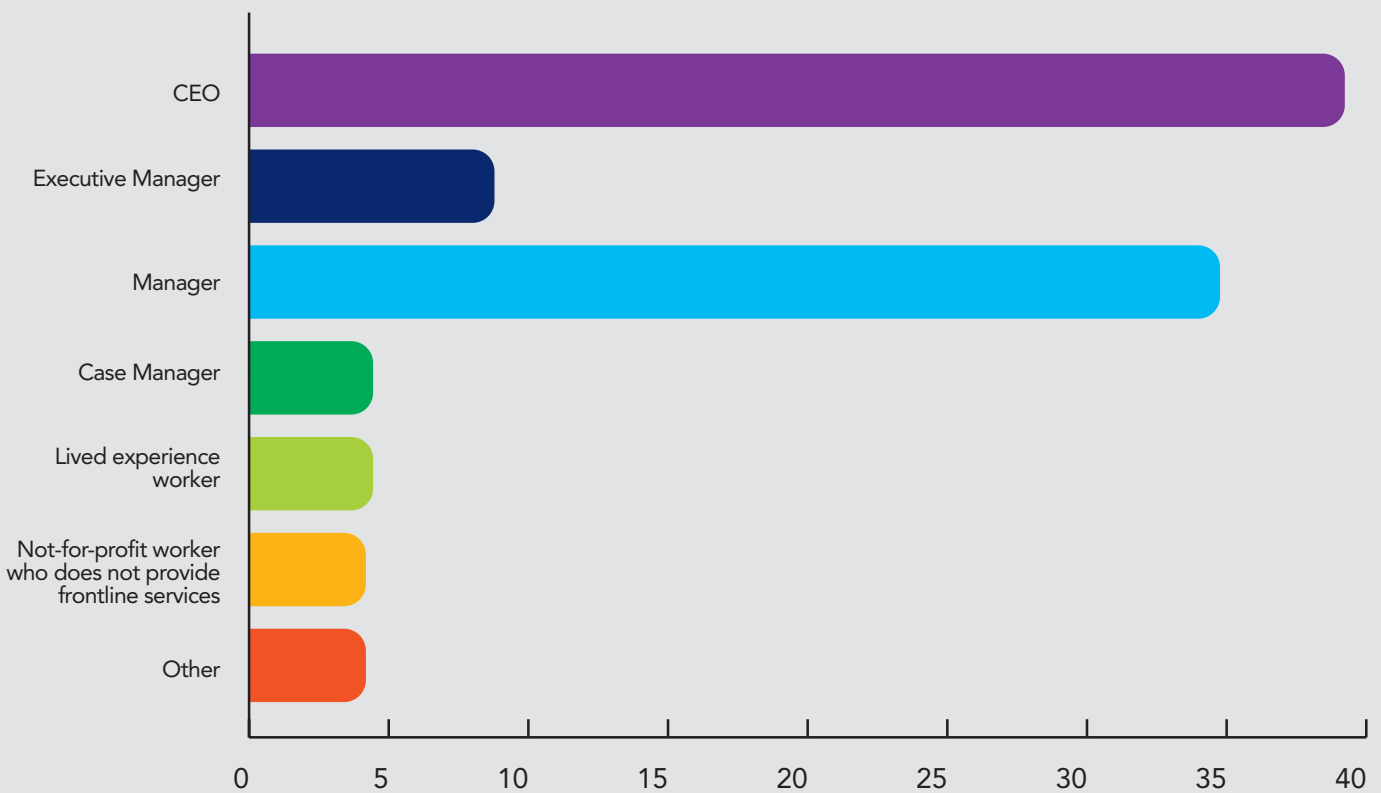


Figure 1: Responses to 'What is your position title?'

Profile of respondents

Current role

Around 47.8% of respondents have worked in their current role for more than 10 years, with smaller percentages in the 7-10 years (13%) and 4-6 years (17.4%) brackets. Those who have been

in their role for 2-3 years and 6 months to one year respectively comprise 8.7% of respondents, with 4.4% in their current role for one year or less.

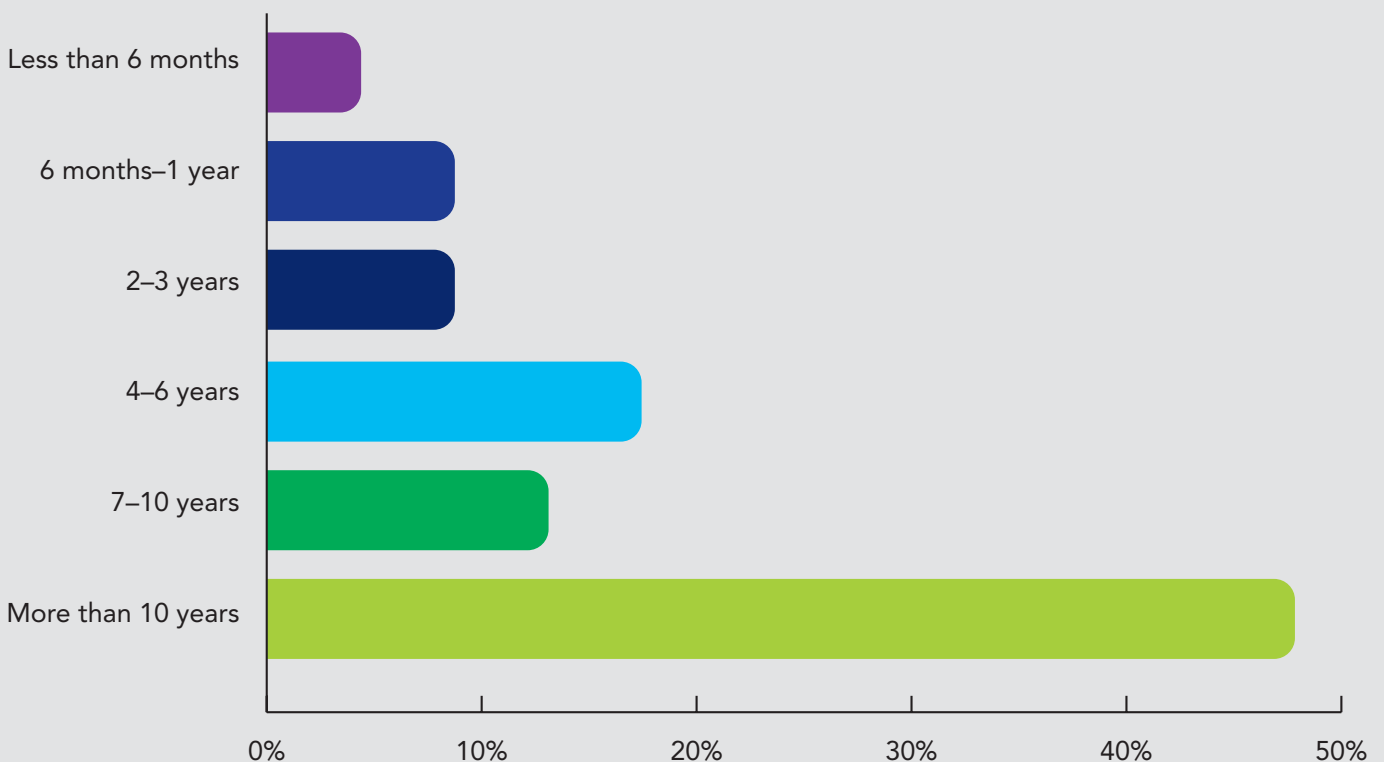


Figure 2: Responses to ‘How long have you been working in your current role?’

Permanent full-time workers comprised 60.9% of respondents, with another 21.7% being permanent part-time and 13% being fixed-term full-time workers.

Most respondents have worked in the youth homelessness sector for more than 10 years (69.6%), with 13% having 7-10 years of experience in the sector.

The majority of respondents were aged between 45-54 years (39.2%), followed by 65+ years at 21.8% (up from 4.7% last year), with the 55-64 age group comprising the next largest at 17.4%. There were two respondents in the 18-24 years age group compared to none last year.

In terms of gender, most respondents (78.3%) identified as female and 21.8% identified as male. No respondents identified as non-binary.

On the question about indigeneity, no respondents identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

On the question about culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background, 13% of respondents identified as being from a CALD background.

While these questions received low response rates last year, it is clear the reduced and more targeted survey distribution this year has impacted this survey reaching a more diverse

Profile of respondents

respondent group. Recognising the responses to this question may not adequately reflect the diversity of the sector workforce, this year's survey included questions about the diversity of the organisational workforce, the responses for which are explored in the section on the profile of sector organisations and workforces.

To better understand diversity in sexual orientation and gender identity, this year we asked respondents whether they identify as

LGBTQIA+. Around 17.4% said they do and 82.6% don't. Again, the question was posed in the next section to gain a better sense of diversity in the workforce overall.

We also included a question on living with disability, with around 13% of respondents indicating they identified as living with disability, 78.3% not and 8.7% preferring not to say.

Lived experience

The contribution and value of workers with lived experience within the sector is widely recognised and strongly advocated. This is elaborated on further in the report.

Lived experience is also a key factor that informs the work of Yfoundations through our Youth Homelessness Representative Council, which comprises young people with lived experience of homelessness and housing instability.

This year, we repeated the question introduced last year asking respondents whether they have lived experience, leaving the term undefined to allow respondents to interpret the concept based on their own understanding.



The data shows an increase to 56.5% of respondents identifying as having lived experience (up from 40.9% last year), with 39.1% saying they did not and 4.4% preferring not to say.

By not defining the term we sought to capture a broader range of experiences, recognising the notion of lived experience varies from person to person depending on their personal journey and perspectives.

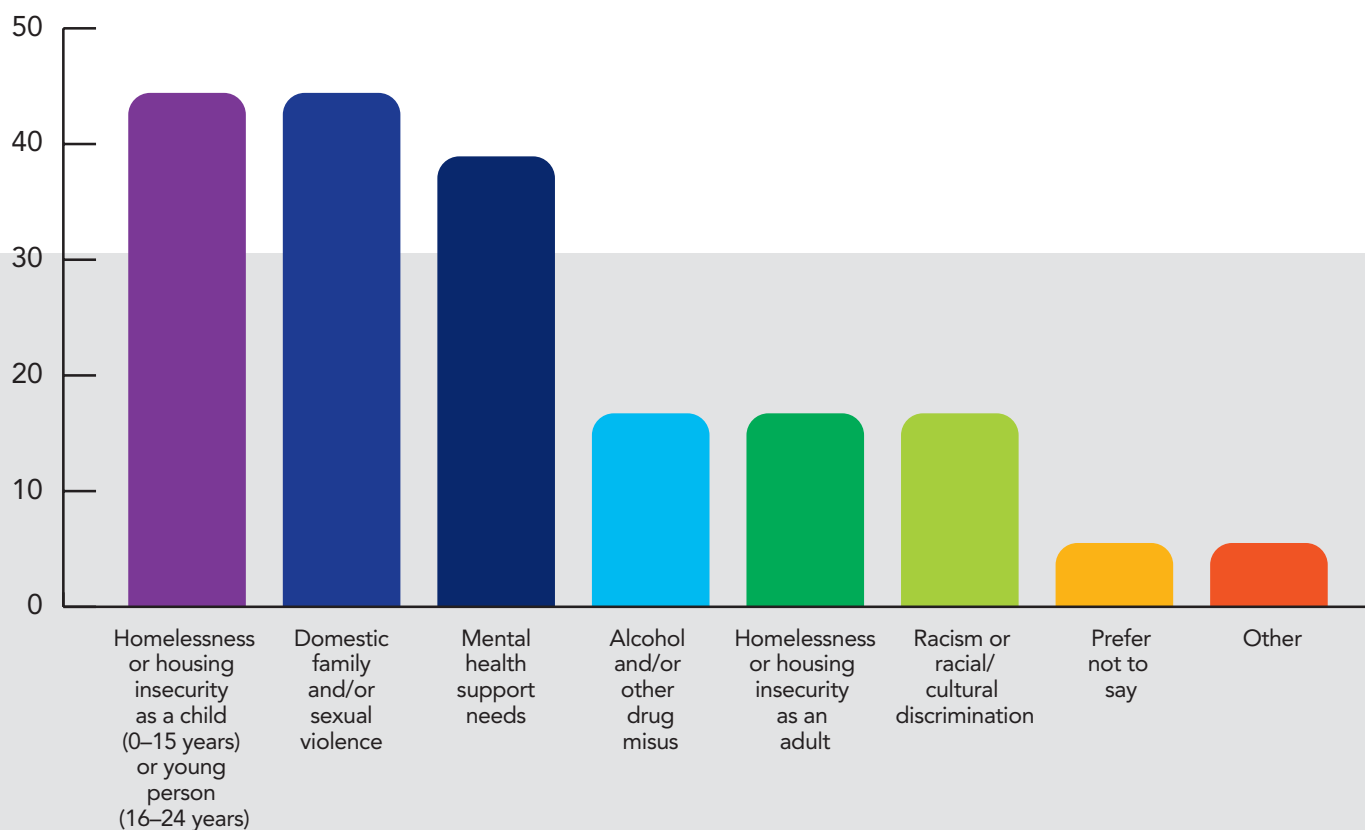


Figure 3: Responses to 'Which of these does your personal lived experience relate to? (Select all that apply)'

As shown in Figure 3, of those who reported having lived experience:

- 44.4% experienced homelessness or housing insecurity as a child (0-15 years) or young person (16-24 years)
- 44.4% experienced domestic, family and/or sexual violence
- 38.9% experienced mental health support needs
- 31.3% faced homelessness or housing insecurity as an adult and 31.3% as a child
- 16.7% experienced homelessness or housing insecurity as an adult
- 16.7% had experienced racism or racial/cultural discrimination
- 16.7% experienced alcohol and/or other drug misuse
- 5.6% reported 'other' experiences and preferred not to specify.

Of those who had experienced homelessness or housing insecurity as a child or young person,

the key factors contributing to their experience were identified as:

- domestic, family and/or sexual violence - 50%
- mental health - 33.3%
- abuse and/or neglect - 16.7%
- alcohol and/or other drug misuse - 16.7%
- couch surfing - 16.7%
- living in severely overcrowded dwellings - 8.3%
- refuge hopping - 8.3%
- unable to access social housing - 8.3%
- other - 8.3%.

'Prefer not to say' was selected by 16.7% of respondents, with 'other' including physical disability.

These figures highlight the complex and diverse lived experiences of workers in the sector and point to the importance of trauma-informed care, support systems and policies that address both the professional and personal challenges workers may face.

Profile of sector organisations and workforces

Given the scarcity of data about the characteristics of the youth homelessness sector workforce, we differentiated between questions about individual respondents and questions about organisations and their workforces, including their work and location, size and composition, and outlooks. We also included new questions on workforce composition to build a picture of the diversity of the workforce.

In the absence of 'official data' about the youth homelessness sector workforce, these questions are also intended to provide us with greater insight into the workforce development and advocacy needs of responding organisations and the youth homelessness sector across NSW. However, these can never replace the need for a well-resourced census on the SHS workforce that could provide detailed knowledge on the characteristics of the sector across the state, particularly the youth homelessness sector, which would facilitate better and more informed workforce resourcing and development.

The majority of respondents (75%) described their organisations as youth specialist homelessness services (SHS) while one service identified as a youth service. Of those who indicated 'other' services (18.8%), one delivers SHS and HYAP (Homeless Youth Assistance Program) while another delivers a medium- to long-term child and youth homelessness services not funded under the SHS program. Another service identified as a not-for-profit agency that is predominantly for young people and families and delivers a range of models.

The landscape of organisations and sectors represented in the survey was notably less diverse compared to last year but the response from SHS was higher (up from 52.3%).

As the youth homelessness services sector is largely funded through various programs managed by the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ), we asked in which of the 15 DCJ districts the services worked. The Mid North Coast district accounted for the highest proportion of responses (25%), with an even spread of 12.5% each from Nepean Blue Mountains, Southern NSW, South Eastern Sydney

and Sydney districts as seen in Figure 4.

Next were responses from Northern Sydney and Western Sydney (6.25% each), with one from a statewide service provider. While there were no responses from the Central Coast, Far West, Hunter New England, Illawarra Shoalhaven, Murrumbidgee, Northern NSW, South Western Sydney and Western NSW, it appears some of the respondents may also provide services in these areas.

We will focus on eliciting responses from all districts in this coming year's survey.

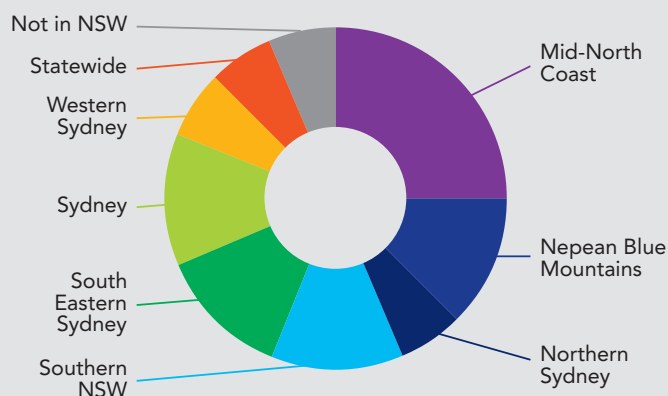
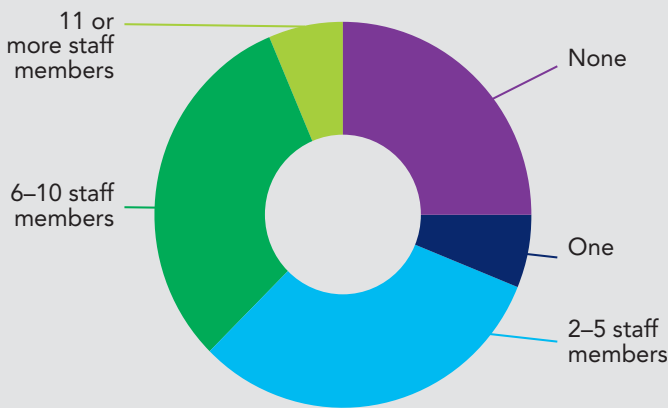
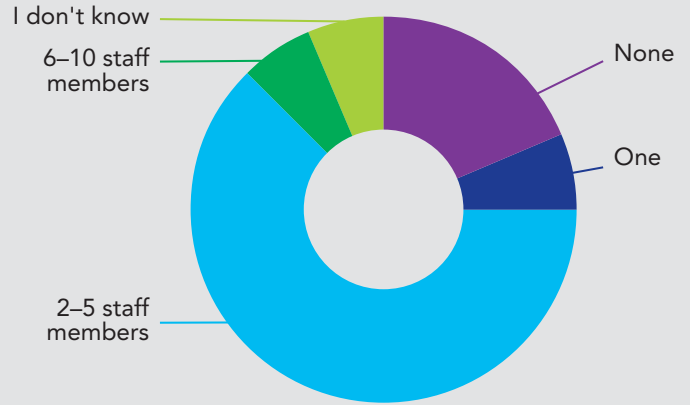


Figure 4: Responses to 'Which district/s in NSW does your service work in?'

This year we introduced the question, 'How many staff are employed in your youth homelessness service or provide youth homelessness support in your organisation?' A large percentage of respondents (62.5%) had workforces comprising more than 20 staff, with 18.8% having 6-10 staff members and 12% with 11-20 staff members. One service employed 2-5 staff members.

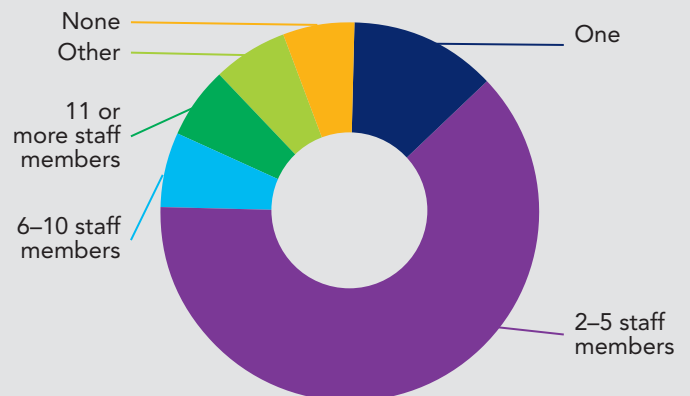
Workforce diversity

On the question, 'How many Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people are employed in your youth homelessness service or provide youth homelessness support in your organisation?', 62.5% responded 2-5 staff, 6.3% responded 6-10 staff, 6.3% said one staff member and 18.8% indicated none.

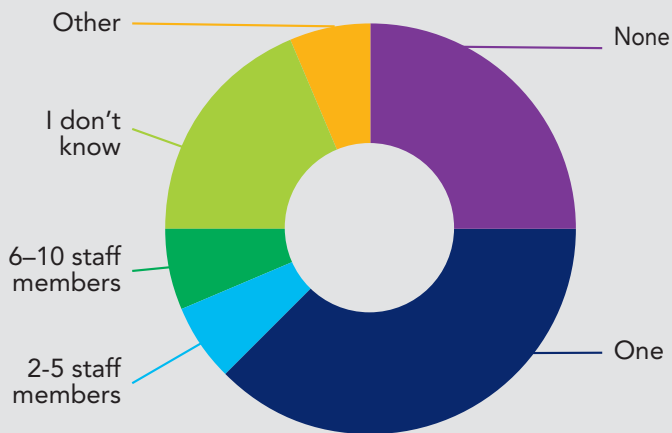


On the question, 'How many people from CALD backgrounds are employed in your youth homelessness service or provide youth homelessness support in your organisation?', 31.3% responded 6-10 staff, another 31.3% had 2-5 staff, 6.3% responded 11 or more, 6.3% said one staff member, and 25% indicated none.

On the question, 'How many people who identify as LGBTQIA+ are employed in your youth homelessness service or provide youth homelessness support in your organisation?', 62.5% responded 2-5 staff, 12.5% said one staff member, 6.3% responded 6-10 staff, 6.3% said one staff member, 6.3% didn't specify and said some, and another 6.3% indicated none.



Workforce diversity



On the question, 'How many people who identify as living with disability are employed in your youth homelessness service or provide youth homelessness support in your organisation?', 37.5% responded one staff member, 25% said none, 6.3% responded 6-10 staff, 6.3% said 2-5 staff, and 18.8% said they didn't know.

Understanding the diversity of the sector workforce is important to better understanding the range of challenges workers face and developing resources that address those challenges. Workers from diverse backgrounds - Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, CALD, LGBTQIA+, and living with disability - bring unique perspectives and expertise to the sector, particularly when engaging with clients from similar backgrounds. They play a crucial role in enhancing cultural responsiveness and bridging gaps in service delivery, improving both workforce and service accessibility for diverse communities.

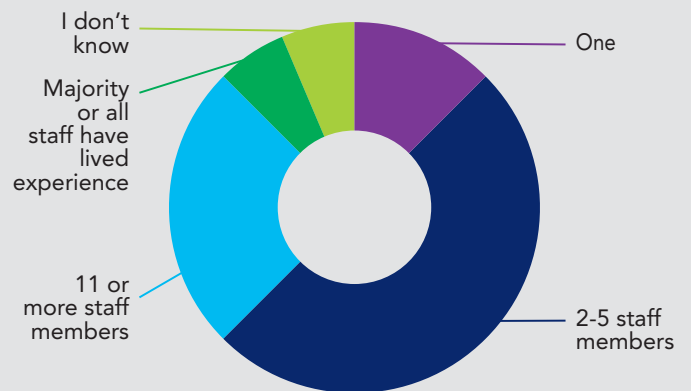
In particular, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers and CALD workers are identified as priority cohorts under the SHS Industry and Workforce Development Program, which aims to facilitate the recruitment, retention and sustainability of a more diverse workforce within the sector. Ensuring these workers are included and supported is essential to strengthening the sector's ability to meet the complex needs of all people seeking support and to foster more equitable and effective service delivery.

Likewise, recognising the value of and including people with lived experience in the workforce is vital to providing services that are both informed by professional expertise and shaped by personal insights into the realities faced by people experiencing homelessness and related challenges. This alignment of lived experience with professional roles enhances service delivery and improves outcomes for clients.

Workers with lived experience are also recognised as a priority group under the SHS Industry and Workforce Development Program, highlighting its importance in shaping a responsive and inclusive workforce. We are aware of many young people who have experienced homelessness and seek to enter the homelessness sector workforce, motivated by the support they received during their own experiences or by positive interactions with case workers. This demonstrates the powerful role lived experience can also play in inspiring future professionals in the sector.

Workforce diversity

On the question, 'How many people with lived experience are employed in your youth homelessness service or provide youth homelessness support in your organisation?', 50% responded 2-5 staff, 25% said 11 or more, 12.5% said one staff member, and 6.3% said the majority or all staff are people with lived experience.



Sector priorities and concerns

As the NSW peak body advocating for the services that support children and young people experiencing and at risk of homelessness, understanding service delivery, key sector concerns and priorities is crucial to informing the work of Yfoundations.

To ensure our work is aligned with and relevant to the sector and the key challenges and issues for it, we asked a series of targeted questions about who respondents primarily work with and about child and youth homelessness.

As shown in Figure 5, all the organisational respondents indicated they primarily work with young people 16–24 years of age, with 63% also specifying that they work with children aged 12–15 years and 37.5% respectively indicating they work with people experiencing homelessness and people at risk of homelessness.

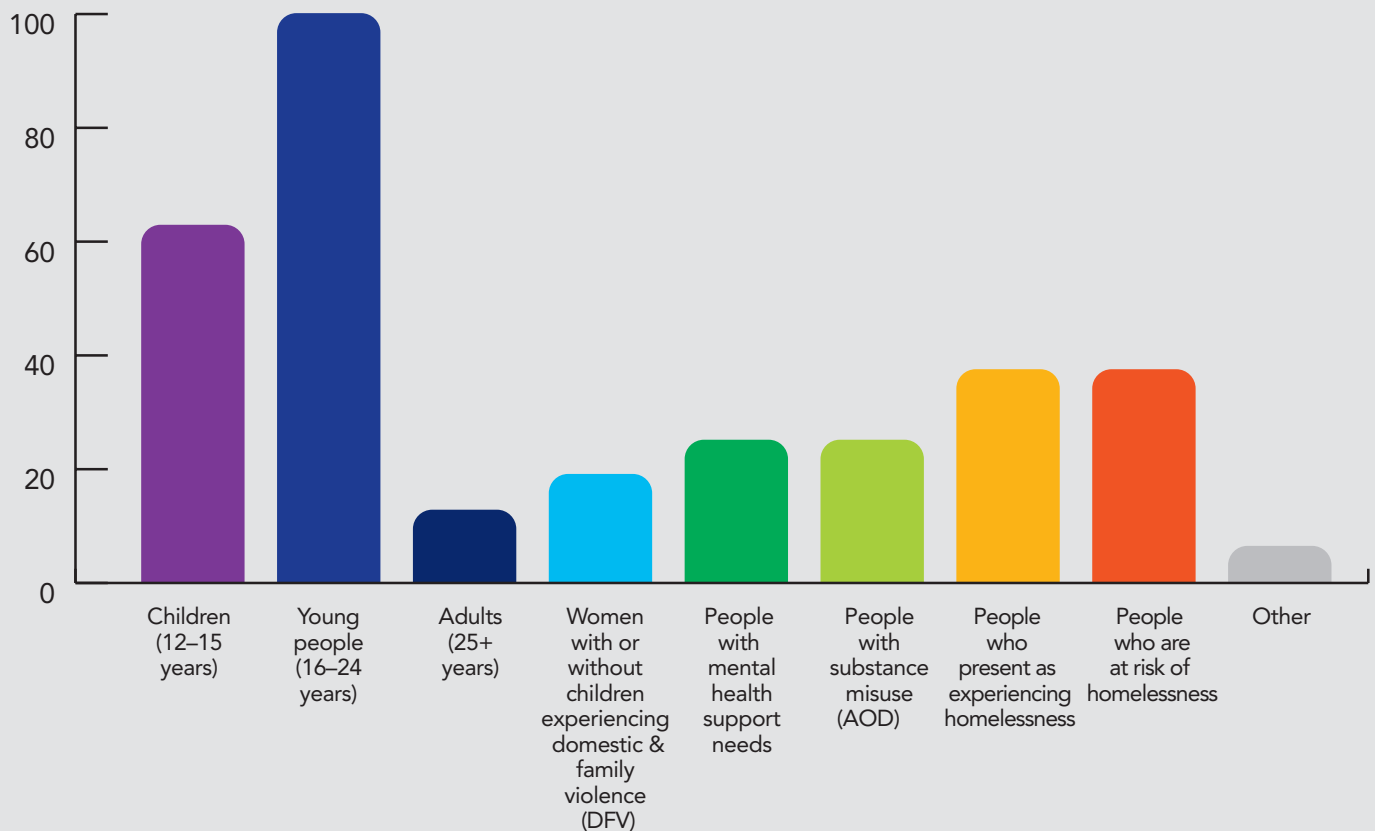


Figure 5: Responses to ‘What group/s does your organisation primarily work with?’ (Select all that apply)’

Respondents also nominated the following groups as those with whom they primarily work:

- People with mental health support needs - 25%
- People with substance misuse (AOD) - 25%
- Women with or without children experiencing

domestic and family violence (DFV) - 18.8%

- Adults (25+ years) - 12.5%
- Other - 6.3%

The ‘Other’ category included single parents with children.

Sector priorities and concerns

As shown in Figure 6, when asked to select the three main presenting reasons for clients accessing their service from the following list, responses showed an overwhelming presentation being for domestic and family violence (DFV - 81.3%). This figure tallies with the SHS Annual Report 2024-25 data, which shows the highest main presenting reason for children and young people seeking assistance in NSW was DFV. Respondents also selected couch surfing (50%), followed by abuse and/or neglect, and mental health, both at 43.8%.

These same issues ranked highest in the previous three surveys, albeit in a slightly different ranking, and have been consistently reiterated in research and anecdotal reports from our members.

These were followed by:

- Other - 31.3%.
- Tenancy issues - 25%
- Living in severely overcrowded dwellings - 25%
- Alcohol and other drugs (AOD) misuse - 18.8%
- Refuge hopping - 18.8%
- Exiting out-of-home care (OOHC) - 18.8%.

Those who selected 'Other' nominated family breakdown, poverty, inability to access affordable housing or board, financial stress, and lack of housing availability.

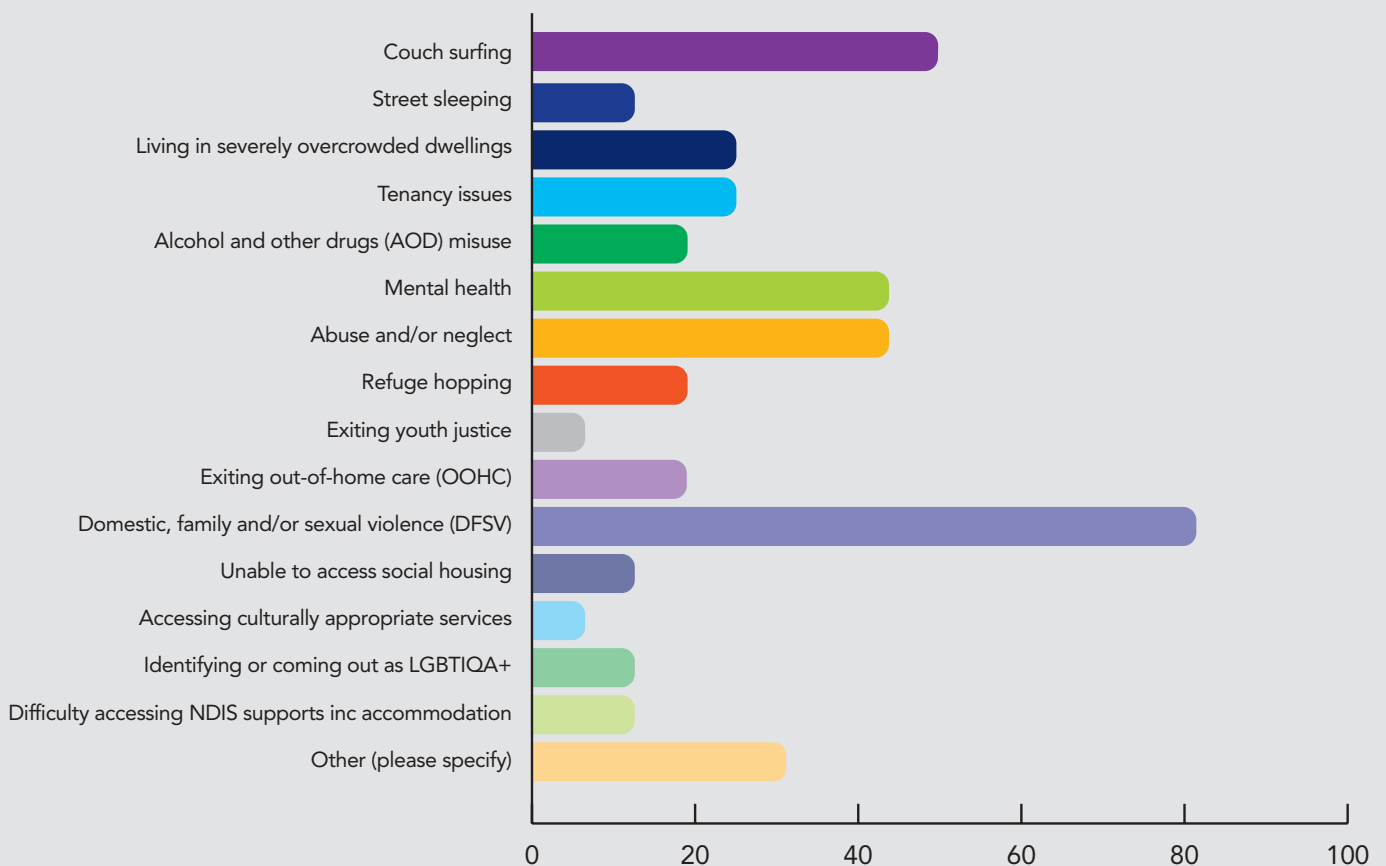


Figure 6: Responses to 'In the cohort of clients your organisation sees, what do you see as the main presenting reason/s when accessing your service? (Pick up to three)'

Health and wellness

As in the previous survey, and in keeping with the five foundations on which Yfoundations’ work is based – one being health and wellness – we again asked what respondents saw as the main health issues affecting young people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, this time asking them to select three.

As in the previous year, mental health rated highest, this year comprising 100% of responses, again highlighting the significance of trauma informed care and the need for greater access to mental health supports and professionals for young people experiencing homelessness. This was emphasised as a key concern in Yfoundations’ visits to services in regional and remote areas, with long waiting lists to see a GP for a referral to mental health services and the lack of mental health services cited as challenges for service providers.

Mental health was followed by alcohol and other drugs misuse, rating highly at 75%,

with disability (mental or physical) at 31.3%. Poor nutrition/diet was selected by 25% of respondents (on a par with last year) followed by smoking/vaping at 18.3%. Those who selected ‘Other’ nominated experiencing trauma as children and young people, along with family breakdown and poverty.

Interestingly, sexual health, dental health and chronic health conditions were not selected as key issues. This may be attributed to the demographic of respondents and key challenges in their areas, and should not be read to indicate they are not key health issues for those in other areas.

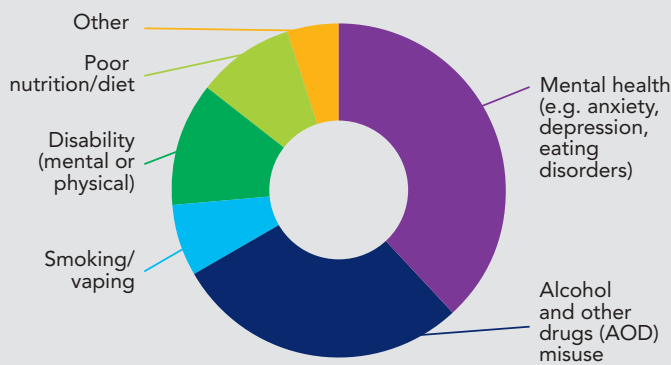


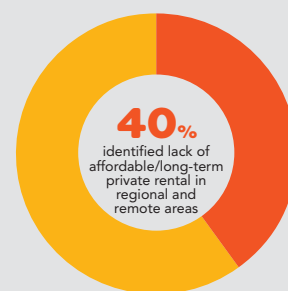
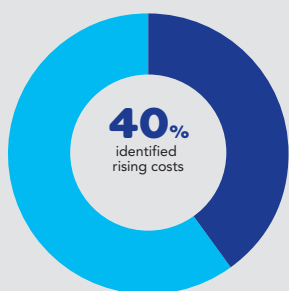
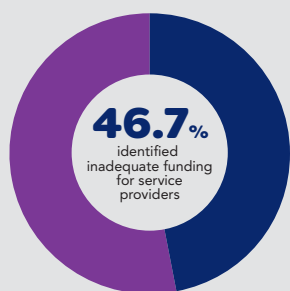
Figure 7: Responses to ‘What do you see as the main health issues affecting young people experiencing or at risk of homelessness? (Pick up to three)’

Funding, housing and accommodation concerns

When asked to select the three biggest issues currently affecting the youth homelessness sector, responses that ranked highest are those that directly impact the capacity of service provider to cover rising costs while meeting increasing demand, and to provide appropriate responses to those seeking support.

Inadequate funding for service providers ranked highest at 46.7%, with rising costs for service providers, including insurance premiums, utilities, wages and oncosts, etc., selected by 40% of respondents. This reflects the significant, longstanding and ongoing concerns among

service providers about the failure of government to sufficiently invest in homelessness services to meet the needs of young people and, more generally, all people experiencing and at risk of homelessness.



As in previous years, the 2025 survey responses reflect a continued and consistent focus on housing affordability and availability, with housing and accommodation-related issues remaining primary concerns for those working in the youth homelessness sector. Difficulty accessing social housing (public and community housing) was a significant concern, with 40% of respondents noting it as an issue, as was the lack of affordable and/or long-term private rental accommodation in regional/remote areas for young people, also at 40%.

In Yfoundations' visits to regional and remote areas in the latter half of 2025, lack of affordable and/or long-term private rental accommodation in regional/remote areas for young people was reported to be a key issue, exacerbated by

the rise in the predominance of holiday letting arrangements, leading to longer-term private rental housing being either not available or only available for limited tenancy periods outside of holiday seasons.

The lack of prevention and early intervention programs for young people was the next most prominent concern at 33%, followed by unaffordable rentals in the private rental market for young people (generally across all areas) at 26.7%. This was followed by lack of medium-term/transitional accommodation for young people, lack of crisis and medium-term accommodation for young people in regional and remote areas, and difficulty meeting high and/or complex needs of clients, each ranking equally at 20%.

Workforce considerations

To understand advancement opportunities for workers in the sector, we asked respondents how they would describe their career progression in their current role or in the youth homelessness sector.

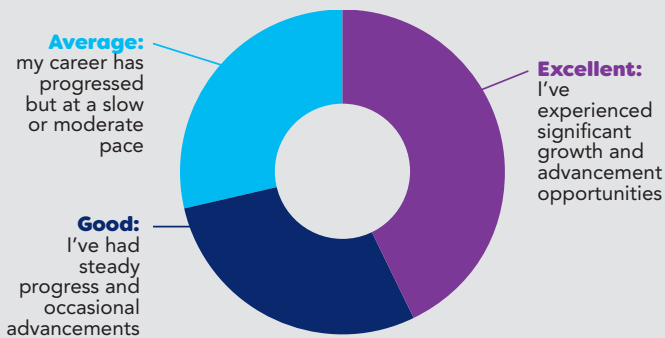


Figure 8: Responses to 'How would you describe your career progression in your current role or in the youth homelessness sector?'

Positive progression was selected by 71.4% of respondents (down from 82.1% last year), with 42.9% describing their growth as 'Excellent', having experienced significant growth and advancement opportunities (up from 38.5%

in 2024), and 28.6% describing it as 'Good', having had steady progress and occasional advancements (down from 43.6%). No one reported limited or no progress.

To better understand the motivations of workers in the sector, when we asked whether they intended to continue working in the sector, 80% of respondents said they did (down from 97.3% last year), with 13.3% stating they were not sure and 6.7% indicating they did not intend to continue working in the sector, citing retirement as the reason.

For those who intend to continue, when asked why, responses reflected the strong commitment and passion for the work articulated by respondents in last year's survey, with several expressing their passion for supporting young people to make a positive difference in their lives, and their commitment to ending child and youth homelessness.

"I am passionate about helping young people, sometimes it can feel unbearably challenging especially with homelessness and mental health on the rise and lack of resources, but it is something I feel I can continue to be a part of helping in for now."

"Enjoy and am passionate about the work I do and work within a fantastic supportive team."

"I have worked in the sector for 24 years and I am passionate about making a difference by empowering young people."

"We genuinely need to end child and youth homelessness in Australia."

Workforce considerations

These responses indicate that despite the challenges faced by the sector, identified earlier in this report, many workers are deeply invested in their work and intend to continue contributing to ending youth homelessness. Interestingly, those who indicated they were 'not sure' did not provide a reason for this.

When asked what supports are available to them for managing work-related stress and wellbeing issues, the majority of respondents reported having access to a range of supports, with 92.9% highlighting opportunities to debrief and 85.7% highlighting the Employee Assistance Program. These two also ranked highest in last year's survey (albeit in reverse order), emphasising the importance of opportunities and avenues for workers to articulate and process the factors impacting their stress levels and wellbeing.

A high proportion of respondents cited a supportive team (78.6%) and 71.4% said they have regular supervision with their manager, indicating the value of connectedness with team members and supervisors.

Flexible working arrangements, access to wellbeing days and stress leave, and access to DFV leave ranked equally at 64.3%, demonstrating the importance of flexibility to vary working arrangements and time off for managing stress and wellbeing.

Other supports include accessible training (57.1%), and regular supervision with an external service (42.9%), with one respondent citing 'external supervision or clinical intervention support as needed instead of EAP'.

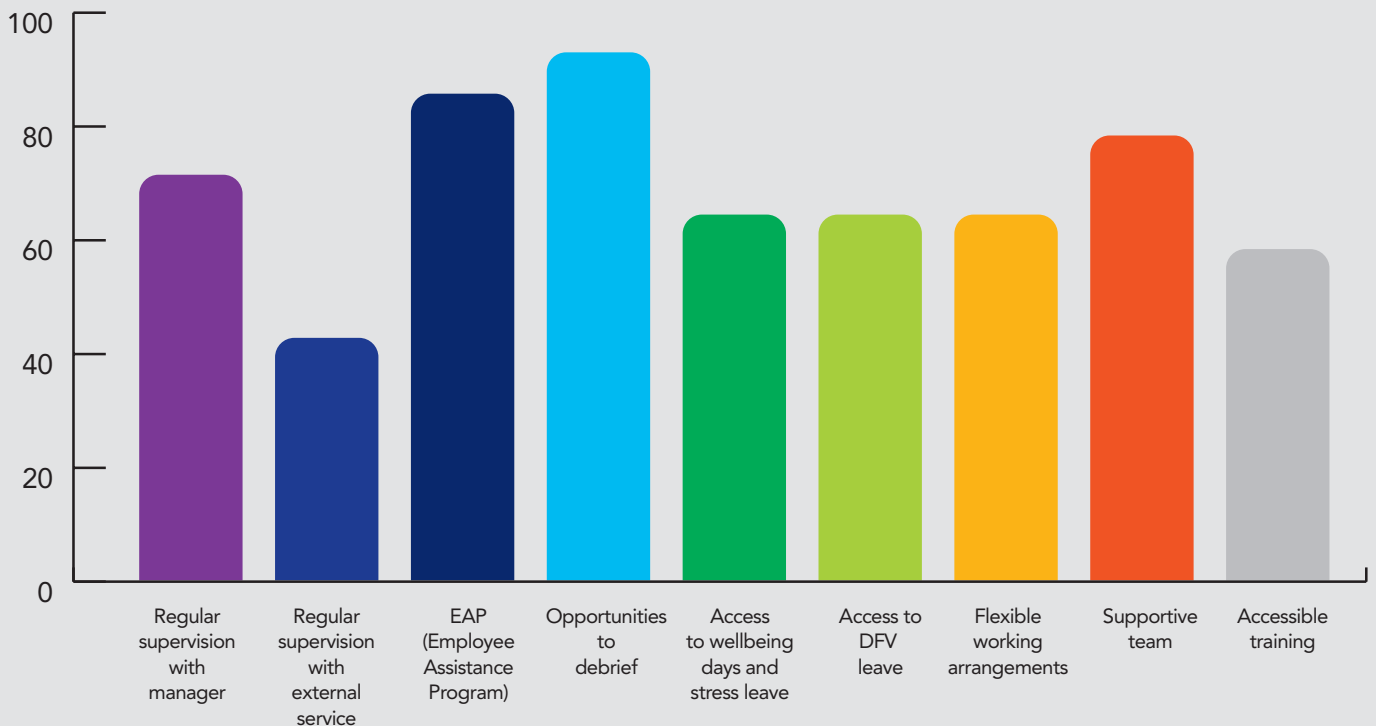


Figure 9: Responses to 'What supports are available to you for managing work-related stress and wellbeing issues? (select all that apply)'

As a member organisation, a key focus of Yfoundations is to advocate for our member services that support children and young people experiencing homelessness. The development

of an effective workforce with quality service provision relies on a range of factors, including workforce and sector development.

Workforce considerations

As shown in Figure 10, when asked what workforce and sector development resources respondents would like to see available for the youth homelessness sector, the highest responses in order of ranking included:

- a dedicated youth SHS sector hub with centralised resources
- training on trauma-informed practice
- early intervention training
- vicarious trauma resources
- documentation and reporting training (CIMS, etc.).

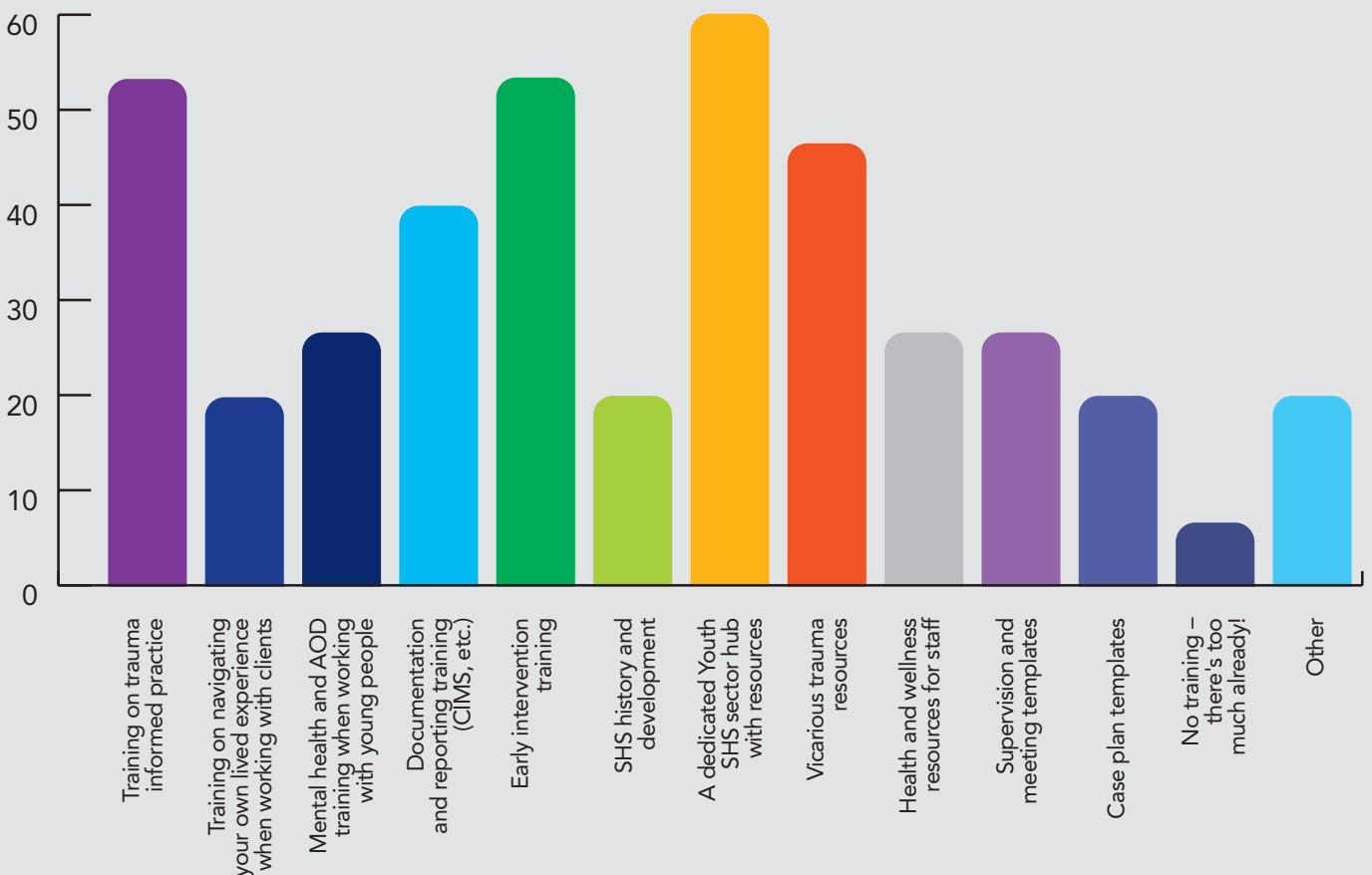


Figure 10: Responses to ‘What workforce and sector development resources would you like to see available in the future for the youth homelessness sector?’ (Select all that apply)

These responses reflect a need for practical youth-SHS focused resources, training and supports; work-related stress and wellbeing supports; and organisational supports, to address the complex challenges confronting the youth homelessness sector.

When asked where your organisation currently accesses workforce and sector development training, 66.7% of respondents selected the Association of Children’s Welfare Agencies

(ACWA)/Centre for Community Welfare Training (CCWT), followed by Yfoundations (60%) and Homelessness NSW Sector Hub (MTS training) at 53.3%.

Respondents who selected ‘Other’ (26.7%) nominated private training providers in specialist areas including systemic family work, mental health, DFV & First Nations (MOB Training) as well as TAFE, Uni and training that is internally organised and provided.

Our performance

When reflecting on Yfoundations' work, performance, relevance and contribution to the sector as a peak body, we are informed by responses received in the survey from our members and relevant stakeholders.

This includes responses about their satisfaction and engagement with Yfoundations, our work and resources; levels of trust in our representations on behalf of the sector and organisations; and the usefulness of the information and resources we provide. Responses to this part of the survey help Yfoundations determine the effectiveness and reach of our sector consultations and work, and provide critical insights into where and how we can improve.

When respondents were asked how informed Yfoundations has kept them about recent developments, opportunities, changes and/or challenges impacting the sector and/or child and youth homelessness, 55.6% said 'Very informed' with a further 27.8% indicating 'Informed' and 16.7% 'Somewhat informed'.

In gauging satisfaction with our engagement with members and stakeholders, respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with Yfoundations' engagement and consultation over the past year about our work and developments impacting the sector and/or child and youth homelessness. As seen in Figure 11, 55.6% of respondents were 'Very satisfied', 22% 'Satisfied' and 22.2% 'Neutral'.

Consulting with our members and relevant stakeholders has been an important component and process in our work this year and we are very pleased with these responses. While we cannot make a true comparative analysis on last year's rating given the difference in methodology, there is a notable increase in satisfaction of around 12%. We aim to reduce the number of stakeholders who remain neutral.

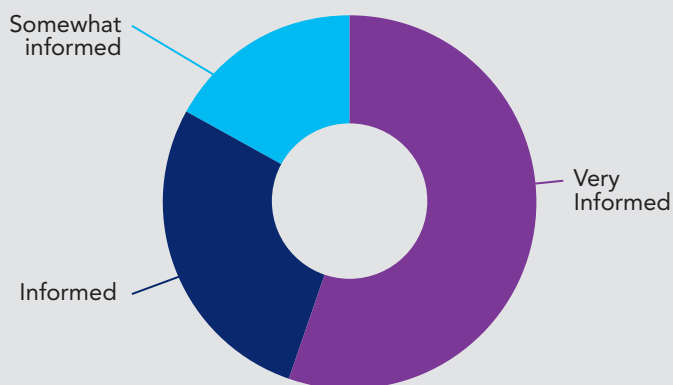


Figure 11: Responses to 'How satisfied are you with the engagement and consultation Yfoundations has conducted with your organisation in the last year about our work and developments impacting the sector and/or child and youth homelessness?'

Our performance

When asked whether they utilised any Yfoundations resources and information in the past year, 94.5% of respondents reported they had (up from 86.1% last year and 90.7% in 2023), with a significant rise in occasional usage (55.6%) compared to 27.8% in 2024 and 51.2% in 2023. Associated with this increase in occasional usage, the percentage of those who indicated they used our resources regularly remained steady at 27.8%, with a drop to 11.1% of those who had used them once or twice (compared to 19.4% in 2024 and 23.3% in 2023).

While the increase in occasional usage is encouraging and indicates our resources and information have been useful to our members and stakeholders, the overall response highlights opportunities for improved awareness and engagement with our resources, and further enhancement to ensure resources are consistently accessed and highly valued by all stakeholders.

To gauge which Yfoundations information, resources and forums are most popular and what may need more work or better promotion, this year we introduced the question about the main sources of engagement with Yfoundations' work, resources, information about child and youth homelessness, and information about developments impacting the sector.

Our monthly newsletter ranked highest at 77.8%, followed by participation in working groups, communities of practice, reference groups and/or committees at 61.1%, with general members meetings, and campaigns and associated activities (e.g. Youth Homelessness Matters Day, Young and Alone) ranking equally at 55.6%. This indicates our regular engagement is effective and works well for our members and stakeholders, with a preference for engagement in focused and live meetings and forums.

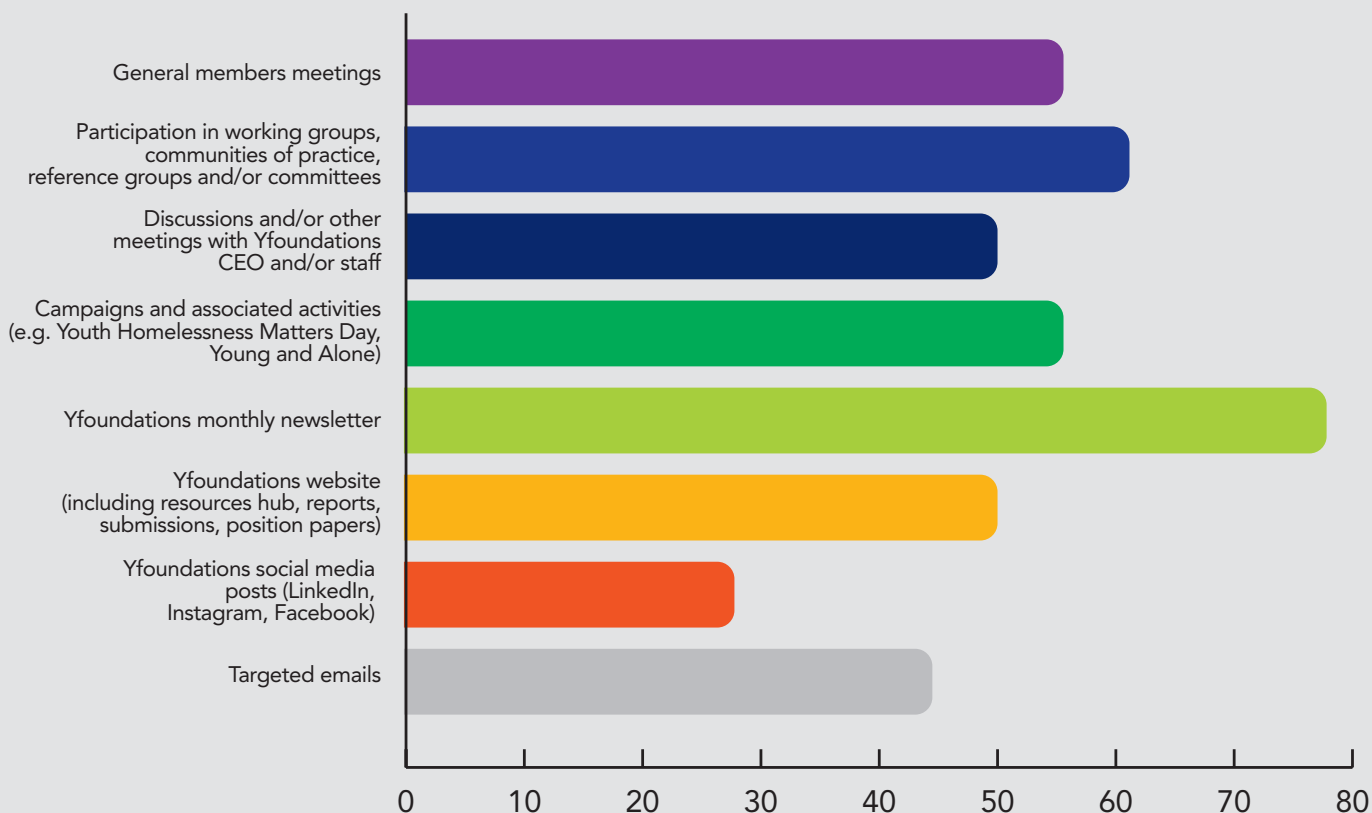


Figure 12: Responses to 'What are the main sources of your engagement with Yfoundations' work, resources, information about child and youth homelessness, and information about developments impacting the sector? (Select all that apply)'

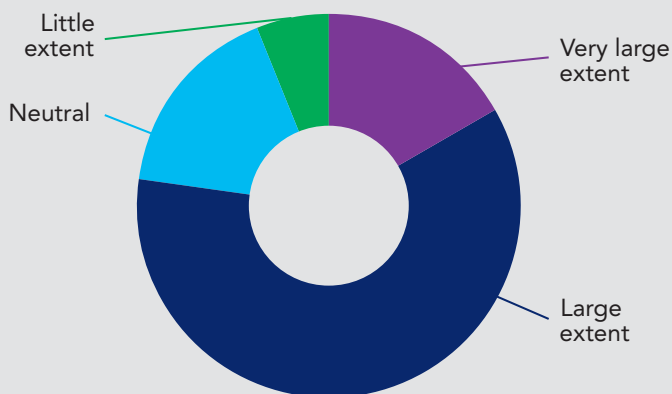
Our performance

Respondents also nominated discussions and/or other meetings with Yfoundations CEO and/or staff, and the Yfoundations website (equally at 50%) as main sources of engagement.

Information and updates about our work, developments in the sector, research summaries and links, events, and opportunities for the sector are features of our regular newsletters. Our working groups of members this year comprised the Commissioning Working Group and the Good Practice Guidelines Working Group, with communities of practice meeting for workers with lived experience and workers in regional and remote areas. Our regular bi-monthly

general member meetings provide a forum in which Yfoundations, our member services and stakeholders exchange knowledge and feedback and learn from each other. Resources, position papers and submissions produced by Yfoundations are promoted in our newsletters and meetings, and are available on the Yfoundations website.

Yfoundations will continue to refine our resources and communication strategies, and seek more regular informal feedback from members on our output, working towards a higher score that reflects consistent value and relevance to stakeholders.



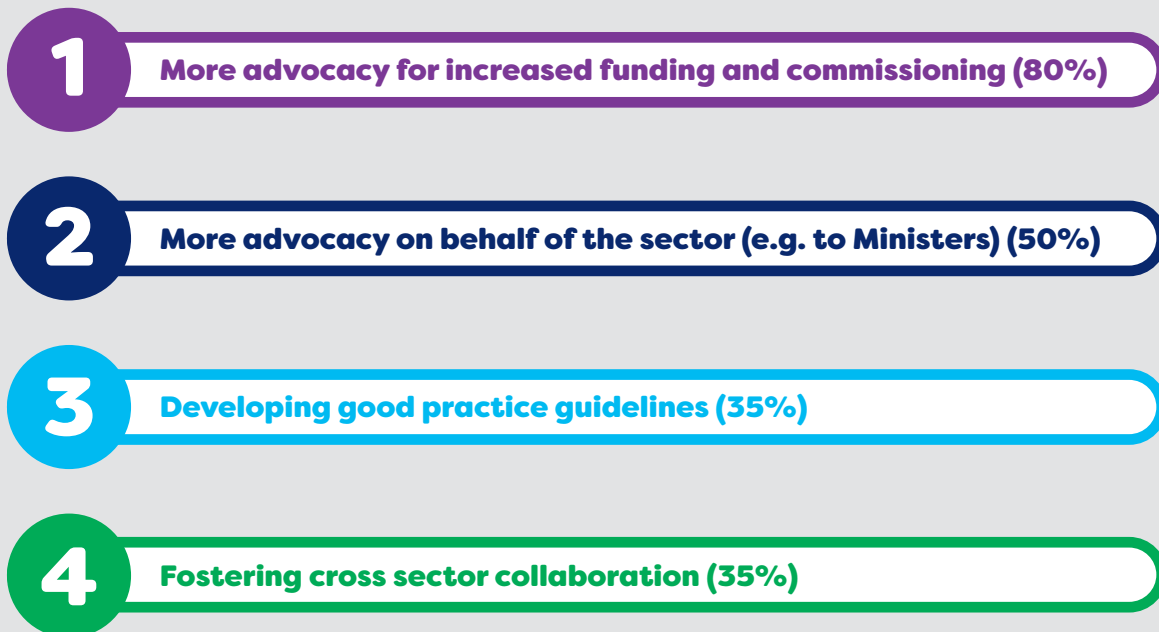
When asked to rate the extent to which Yfoundations provided their organisation with useful information and/or resources for their work over the year, 61.1% of respondents nominated 'large extent' (up from 34.3% in 2024), with 16.7% stating to a very large extent (up from 14.3%), indicating a high satisfaction rating for 77.8% of respondents (up from 48.6% in 2024). A further 16.7% were neutral. At the other end of the scale, 5.6% selected a ranking of 'little extent' (down from 17.1%).

This response demonstrates we have made significant inroads into increasing the relevance of the information and resources we have provided over the year. Again, reducing the number of stakeholders who are neutral on this aspect of our work is a priority for Yfoundations, and we will continue to refine our resources and communication strategies, working towards a higher score that reflects consistent value and relevance to stakeholders.

Yfoundations is always exploring how we can better support our members. When asked how we can support you better, key areas for respondents include more advocacy for

increased funding and commissioning (80%) and more advocacy on behalf of the sector (e.g. to Ministers) (50%). This has been a major focus of our work over the year and continues to be particularly important during this time given the schedules for and developments in the SHS commissioning process, the imperative for increased funding to sustain the sector in meeting the ongoing increasing demand for services and support, and the need for government engagement with Yfoundations and the sector on the development of the NSW Child and Youth Homelessness Action Plan.

Our performance



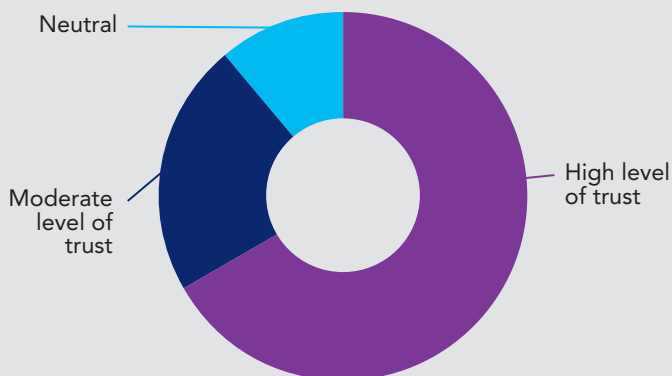
Other work that is ongoing and continues to be valued by the sector includes:

- continuing current communities of practice (30%)
- a central youth SHS sector hub (30%)
- skills development (30%).

Key to our relationship with our members and stakeholders is trust – trust in our ability and capacity to represent and advocate for the sector to government, ministers and other stakeholders; trust that participation in our consultations and meetings will lead to action and follow up on key issues

and in relevant areas; and trust in the information, communications and resources we deliver.

The results for the question, ‘How much do you trust Yfoundations to represent your organisation and/or the youth homelessness sector’ show an increasing level of trust on previous years, with 66.7% of respondents indicating a high level of trust (up from 50% in 2024 and 46.5% in 2023) and 22.2% having a moderate level of trust. Additionally, 11.1% were neutral (down from 19.4% in 2024). No respondents reported a low or very low level of trust.



We are encouraged by the increase in the high level of trust and that almost 89% of respondents reported high to moderate levels of trust in Yfoundations. Recognising the importance of trust from across the sector, we will continue to focus on building and maintaining this in the coming year.

Figure 13: ‘How much do you trust Yfoundations to represent your organisation and/or the youth homelessness sector?’

Membership

On Yfoundations membership, 85% of those who completed the survey confirmed their organisation is a member of Yfoundations (up from almost 70% in the previous two years), while 15% were unsure or did not know their organisation's membership status.

For those who were unsure about their membership status, when asked why, some indicated they did not know why and stated they read our newsletters and website, and use the Youth Homelessness Matters Day information and resources.

To round up the survey, we asked if respondents had any other comments or thoughts about any of the above or how we can better advocate on child and youth homelessness and/or for the sector that supports children and young people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. The feedback overall was encouraging and includes:

“Well done. Great leadership in the sector. Committed engagement with us... you are making a difference.”

“As a youth service Yfoundations are our peak body and do a marvellous job advocating for the sector.”

“Keep up the fantastic work!!”

“Thanks for the excellent resources, especially for YHMD.”

“Keep up the good work and please have more courage to lead a strategy to end child and youth homelessness in Australia.”

“We think it's important to have Youth Homelessness representation at a peak level... Will continue to support as we back the cause!”

Conclusion

Yfoundations is pleased about and encouraged by the increase in positive responses about our performance as a peak body for the youth homelessness services sector over 2025, particularly in the areas of engagement and consultation with our members and stakeholders, the relevance and value of the information and resources we provide, and the levels of trust in Yfoundations as an organisation and advocate for the sector and on child and youth homelessness.

At the same time, we also appreciate the feedback that indicates the areas in which we can improve our member offerings and advocacy, and we are committed to working on these, ensuring Yfoundations remains a strong and trusted representative for the youth homelessness services sector, and continues to provide the advocacy, resources and support needed to strengthen the sector.

This year's results once again provide a clear picture of the challenges and needs within the youth homelessness sector and priority areas for resources and support. Your feedback has highlighted the importance of greater advocacy for the sector, for increased funding, and on commissioning; practical resources that guide and support the work of the sector; and stronger sector-wide collaboration.

As we reflect on these results, we are committed to using this valuable feedback to improve our advocacy efforts, refine our resources and continue our strong collaboration with frontline services and other key stakeholders.

Once again, we are sincerely grateful to all those who participated in this year's survey. Your insights and feedback are invaluable and play a crucial role in guiding our work at Yfoundations. We deeply appreciate the time and thoughtfulness you put into sharing your experiences and suggestions.

Your continued engagement is crucial to the success of our shared work, and we look forward to ongoing collaboration and progress in the year ahead. Together, we can continue to improve the lives of children and young people at risk of and experiencing homelessness, and create a stronger, more connected youth homelessness services sector.

If you have any further comments or would like to discuss any aspect of this report, please do not hesitate to reach out to us directly via email to communications@yfoundations.org.au.

Sincerely,

The Yfoundations Team



Yfoundations

ACN 144 613 543

Suite 4, 619 Elizabeth Street

Eora Nation, Redfern NSW 2016

(02) 8306 7901

admin@yfoundations.org.au

yfoundations.org.au

