

MEDIA RELEASE

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Prioritising homeless young Tasmanians

The Commissioner for Children and Young People Leanne McLean today welcomed the call by Colony 47 to make homeless young people a priority for housing in the 2021-2022 Tasmanian State Budget.

“All children and young people have the right to a safe place to live,” Ms McLean said.

“Stable housing is essential to children and young people’s wellbeing. If a child is homeless, or in an unstable housing arrangement, the impacts are far broader than simply not having a roof over their head.

“Homelessness affects a child or young person’s ability to access other services essential for their overall wellbeing, like healthcare and education. These are fundamental human rights to which children are entitled under the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

“Solutions to homelessness need to focus on preventing children from becoming homeless in the first place. These solutions include support for children and families as early in their lives as possible.

“We also need to provide children who do experience homelessness with the resources and opportunities they need to thrive and realise their full potential.”

Ms McLean said homelessness is a very complex issue for the simple reason that many factors lead children and young people to being homeless. These issues are then compounded by a lack of housing options for young people.

“Bricks and mortar alone will not solve homelessness, but we certainly need more housing options for young people. And to promote and prioritise the wellbeing of children and young people who are homeless, that housing needs to be located close to transport, healthcare services and education, and provide community connectedness.

Ms McLean has welcomed new State Government commitments, including the recent \$10 million over three years for the Under 16 Lighthouse Pilot Project.

“This along with the trial of a dedicated Child Safety and Wellbeing Liaison position in the Advice and Referral Line, represent new and positive steps forward toward improving outcomes for children who are homeless and alone.”

Ms McLean said in her recent submission to the Under 16 Homelessness Draft Policy Framework, she recommended the Tasmanian Government also explore other innovative new models to provide housing and related supports for children and young people.

“Children and young people are so often overlooked in the housing crisis – it’s time we prioritise them as a cohort within the housing budget and include specific tailored solutions for young people leaving detention, young people who are exiting our OOHC system and children and young people impacted by family violence.

“The Tasmanian Government’s forthcoming Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy for 0 to 25 year olds as well as the upcoming Budget provide excellent opportunities for the Government to make strong commitments to promoting the wellbeing of young Tasmanians.”

Media Contact: A.Mark Thomas, M&M Communications, 0422 006 732

**Commissioner
for Children and
Young People**

L1 – 119 Macquarie St
Hobart TAS
Australia 7000

GPO Box 708
Hobart TAS
Australia 7001

childcomm@childcomm.tas.gov.au
+61 (03) 6166 1366
www.childcomm.tas.gov.au

 @commissionerforchildrentas
 @Child_Comm_Tas