**MEDIA RELEASE**

**DATE TBC**

**Youth Homelessness Matters Day 2025 Shines Light on Canberra Crisis: Young Canberran Shares His Story**

Youth homelessness in Australia is at a crisis point, with more than 43,000 children and young people under 25 presenting alone to homelessness services in 2023 to 2024. Alarmingly, almost half of these young people experienced mental ill health, and over one third had faced domestic and family violence. Despite their urgent need for accommodation, many were turned away due to limited capacity.

In the ACT, the situation is equally concerning. Youth homelessness has risen by 13.7 percent between 2016 and 2021. Of the 1,596 people experiencing homelessness in the ACT on Census night, more than 1 in 4 were aged 12 to 24.

Youth Homelessness Matters Day, held each year on the third Wednesday of April, raises awareness and sparks public conversation about child and youth homelessness. It has grown into a national moment to acknowledge young people's resilience and advocate for sustainable solutions that support those at risk.

Locklan Keimeier, Secretary of the Youth Homelessness Matters Day Committee, knows what it means to experience homelessness at a young age.

“Alone, isolated, and feeling the world is against you — this is how I felt when I was homeless. That was my reality,” he said.

Locklan left home at 17 and was couch surfing while completing high school.

His turning point came when he was accepted into the Foyer Foundation program, a model that provides secure housing and access to education, employment, and personal development opportunities.

“When you no longer have to worry about housing, it allows you to focus on education, work and other areas of your life,” he said.

“The Our Place Youth Foyer gave me a second chance at life.”

Youth housing services like the Our Place Foyer offer more than accommodation, they provide connection, guidance and a foundation for young people to thrive. However, demand outstripping supply leaves many young people without support.

“Young people are more likely to experience mental ill health, disengage from school and face long-term disadvantage if they are without a safe place to live,” said Locklan.

“Mental health services are often too expensive and difficult to access. We need to see real investment, especially for young people from diverse and disadvantaged backgrounds.”

The Youth Homelessness Matters Day Committee is calling for:

* Greater investment in youth housing, including Foyer-style models
* Expanded access to affordable, youth-friendly mental health services
* A national commitment to ending youth homelessness

“Young people going through high school should not have to worry about where they will sleep tomorrow,” said Locklan.

“They should not feel like the world is against them, but without proper services, too many still do.”

Youth Homelessness Matters Day is a reminder that homelessness does not just affect adults. It affects students, workers, and children, and it is happening right now, in our own communities. Support this great advocacy initiative by attending the event:

**When:** Wednesday 16 April 2025, 4.30 to 7.00 pm
**Where:** DKB Hall, 8 Hawdon Place, Dickson ACT (next to Café Stepping Stone)

**ENDS**

**Media contact:**
Stacey Kershaw-Brant
Black Sally Lane Media
0409 690 714