

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Youth Homelessness Matters Day 2026: Funding uncertainty risks re-traumatising vulnerable young Canberrans

As Youth Homelessness Matters Day 2026 approaches, renewed funding uncertainty surrounding the Our Place youth foyer is raising concern, with fears that the loss of stable housing could undo critical progress for vulnerable young Canberrans.

Funding beyond September 2026 remains unclear. For young people who have already experienced homelessness, trauma and instability, the prospect of losing safe housing is deeply destabilising.

In 2025, delays in confirming funding created significant distress among residents, forcing some to consider contingency exit plans. With uncertainty continuing, there are growing concerns about repeat harm and renewed calls for long-term funding certainty.

The pressure on youth homelessness services in the ACT remains high, with more than half of young people seeking assistance already homeless.

Behind these figures are young people sleeping rough and living in unsafe conditions.

Marija Rathouski became homeless at just 15, spending months sleeping rough before accessing support.

“For months, I slept rough, staying with friends whenever I could. It was scary,” she said.

“At that time, you’re not thinking about your future. You’re just trying to get through each day and find somewhere safe to sleep.”

Over the past decade, Our Place has supported 128 young Canberrans out of homelessness, helping them reconnect with education and build pathways into employment and independence.

Now working in the community sector and having purchased her own home, Marija says stable housing provided by Our Place changed everything.

“It means having the opportunity to be something, to be someone. Without that stability, none of what I’ve achieved would have been possible,” she said.

Tameka-Jane Kelleher accessed Our Place as a young person navigating homelessness, family and domestic violence, and is now raising her son in a stable home.

“Because of stable living, I know my son is going to be okay,” she said.

“It doesn’t just change your life; it changes what comes next. It breaks cycles that could have continued for generations.”

Our Place links stable housing with education, training and wraparound support, helping young people break cycles of homelessness and disengagement.

National evaluations show that around 70% of participants are engaged in education or have achieved a higher qualification one year after exit.

These outcomes rely on continuity. Without funding certainty, that stability is at risk.

Youth Homelessness Matters Day 2026 will bring together lived experience voices and the community to call for urgent, multi-year funding commitments.

Event details:

Youth Homelessness Matters Day 2026

Wednesday 15 April 2026

4.30pm to 7.00pm

DKB Hall, 8 Hawdon Place, Dickson

Tickets available via [Humanitix](#)

All lived experience quotes included in this release have been shared with informed consent.

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