




NT Shelter Policy Platform NT Election 2024

Ahead of the Northern Territory Election 2024, find out what we're calling for.

NT Shelter is the peak body for **affordable housing** and **homelessness** in the Northern Territory.



Contact Us

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OUR KEY ASKS

Appropriate and affordable housing for all people of the Northern Territory.



Develop an urban housing supply plan for the Northern Territory.

01



Mandate that 30% of all land released by the Crown for residential use be for social and affordable housing.

02



Complete the third tranche of reviews of the Northern Territory Residential Tenancies Act.

03

Safeguard and restore funding for homelessness services.

04



Give Territory Families Housing and Communities, full accountability for the specification, construction and delivery of public housing, and ultimate responsibility for repairs and maintenance.

05

IN THE REGIONS:

Establish short-stay accommodation in **Katherine**.

06

Establish transitional housing for women and children escaping domestic family violence in **Tennant Creek**.

07

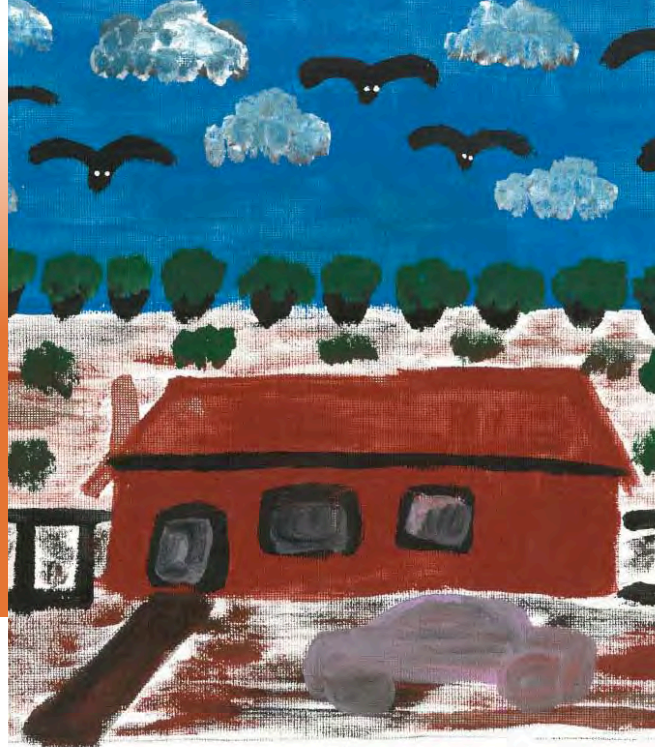
Establish a Youth Foyer in **Alice Springs**.

08

ASKS IN DETAIL

Develop an urban housing supply plan for the Northern Territory.

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01

The Northern Territory has a significant and disproportionate level of homelessness at twelve times the national average.(1) On the night of Census 2021, 13,104 Territorians were experiencing homelessness.(2) This is almost 6% of the total population (232,605).

In 2018, the Northern Territory Government estimated a shortfall of 8,000 to 12,000 social and affordable homes by 2025, of which approximately 75% were estimated to be for social housing.(3) By our calculations, the Northern Territory requires an estimated 19,000 dwellings to 2030, 40.5% of these are needed for social and affordable housing.(4)

75.6% of Territorians experiencing homelessness live in severely overcrowded conditions.

97.6% of people living in severely overcrowded dwellings are Aboriginal.(5)

SOLUTION:

A coherent short, medium and long-term urban housing supply plan that identifies the quantum, type and location of housing required by 2030 to support the current and projected future population, with consideration given to existing and forthcoming Commonwealth investment in housing.

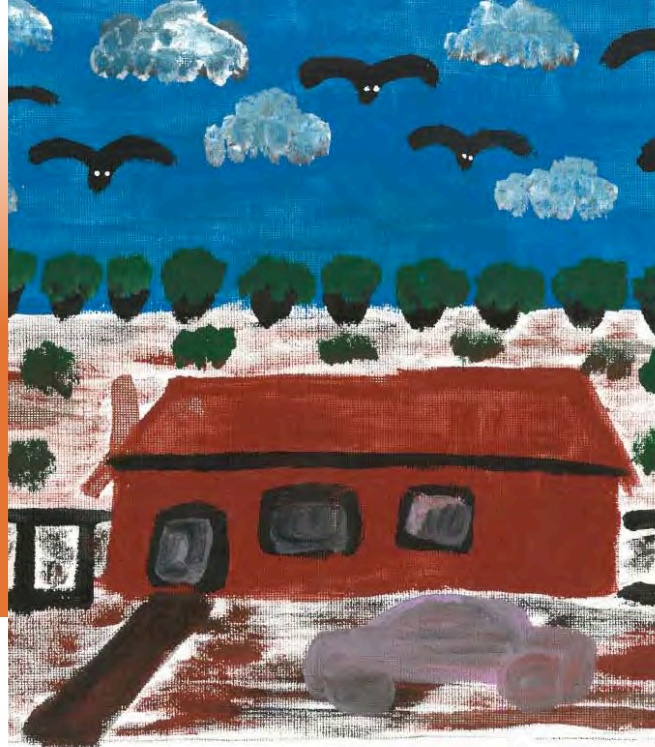


13,104

Territorians were experiencing homelessness on Census night 2021.(6)

ASKS IN DETAIL

Mandate that 30% of all land released by the Crown for residential use be for social and affordable housing.



02

The Northern Territory Government's economic plan is to build a \$40B economy by 2030.(7) This assumes population growth of 20% on current levels. A chronic shortfall of housing for rent and purchase for our existing population threatens the achievement of this objective. While NT Shelter's interest is predominantly in those who are unable to afford to pay market-based rents, the lack of supply and state of the housing system more broadly is a concern. Additionally, the National Housing Accord 2022 contains commitments to undertake expedited zoning, planning and land release to deliver social and affordable housing in well located areas. With such a huge mountain to climb in respect of the current and forecast future demand for social and affordable housing in the Northern Territory, there is too much risk for unconditional release of residential land to market. Providing clear and consistent messaging to the development sector and building industry on the need for social and affordable housing will ensure that costs and yields can be incorporated into proposals, with land values and project margins reflected accordingly and without risk to the project proponents.

SOLUTION:

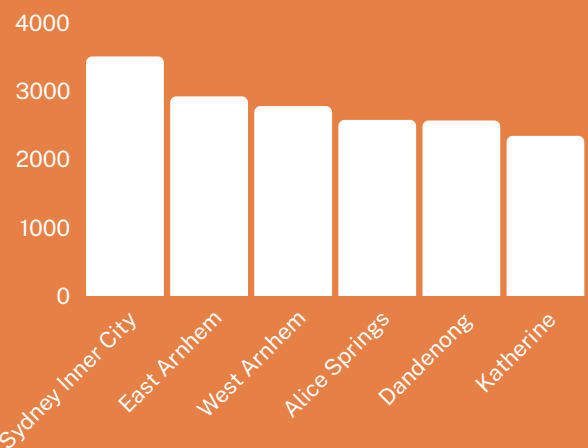
30% of all land released by the Crown for residential use be mandated as social and affordable housing. The mandated requirement should be 10% for new developments on freehold land.



Inclusionary zoning case study:

Over the 10 years to 2015, mandated inclusionary zoning in South Australia delivered 5,485 affordable homes, accounting for 17% of new supply in major residential projects. 63% of these homes were built on government land.(8)

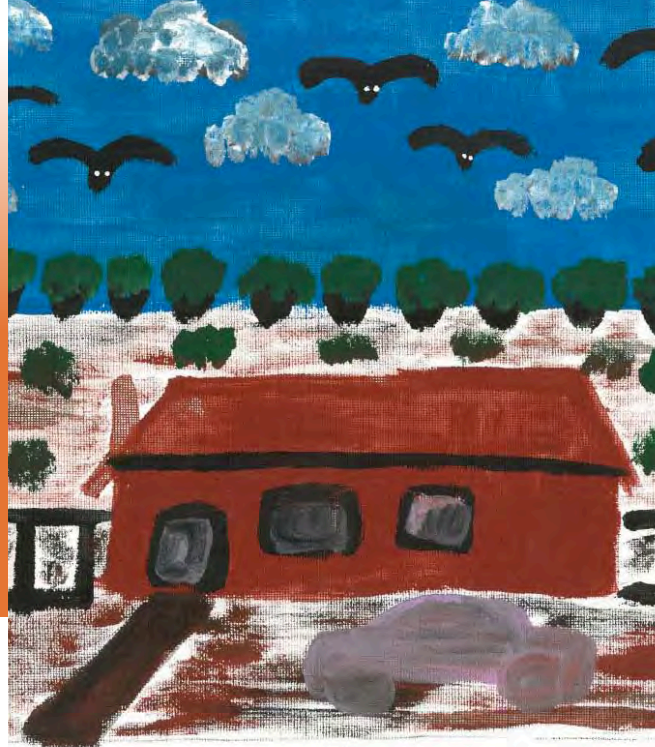
Four of the top six highest geographical areas of homelessness in Australia are in the NT.(9)



ASKS IN DETAIL

Complete the third tranche of reviews of the Northern Territory Residential Tenancies Act.

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03

Just under 50% of the Territory population rent.(10) This is a higher percentage than any other jurisdiction.

Renting is not a one-size-fits-all experience; different cohorts of renters, like those with disability and young renters, face additional barriers.(11) All public housing is subject to the Residential Tenancies Act (RTA). Many public housing tenants live with vulnerabilities including poverty and crowding, both of which occur at higher rates than elsewhere in Australia.(12)

Renting in the Northern Territory must be fair, safe, and certain and the RTA plays a critical role in safeguarding the rights of renters and landlords alike.

SOLUTION:

A third tranche of reviews of the RTA to bring Territory legislation in line with other Australian jurisdictions and provide fairer laws for the large portion of Territorians who rent. Key areas of RTA reform that need to be delivered are:

- Reasonable rent increases.
- Minimum standards for rental premises.
- Valid reason for termination of the lease by landlords and an end to 'no-cause' evictions.
- The establishment of an independent Residential Tenancies Bond Board.
- Protections against discrimination in the rental market.

47.6% of the Northern Territory population was renting at the time of the 2021 Census.

Compared to just over 30% nationally.(13)

In it's latest Rental Affordability Snapshot, Anglicare found that

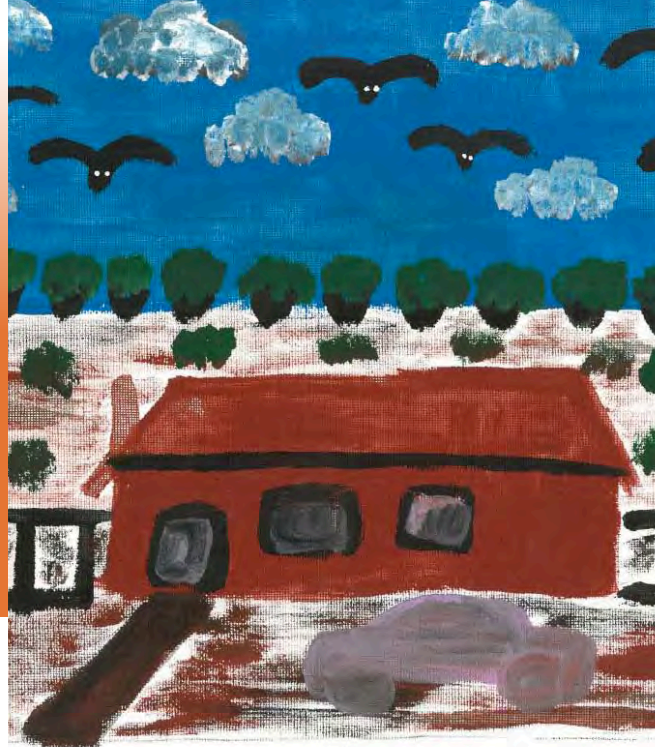


of NT rentals were affordable for a person on Youth Allowance.(14)

ASKS IN DETAIL

Safeguard and restore funding for homelessness services.

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04

Since the commencement of five-year funding agreements for our sector from 1 July 2018, the gap between Award wage cost increases and sector funding has risen to 16% in nominal terms. This is attributable to the cumulative impact of annual efficiency dividends and absence of funding compensation for National Wage Case decisions.

The continued erosion of funding for NT Shelter member organisations, frontline homelessness services, hampers collective efforts to reduce rough sleeping and provide housing supports to Territorians in need at a time when demand continues to skyrocket.

SOLUTION:

To maintain the capacity of funded services to effectively perform the services that they have been contracted to perform, the following is required:

- Increase base funding for frontline services organisations by a further 2.5% in 2024-25 and by 5% in 2025-26 and each subsequent year across the forward estimates to restore sector funding comparative to levels in 2018.
- Cease the application of efficiency dividends to frontline housing and homelessness services.
- Provide sufficient wage and CPI cost indexation to grant agreements to ensure that grant funding is maintained in real terms.

One
in
25

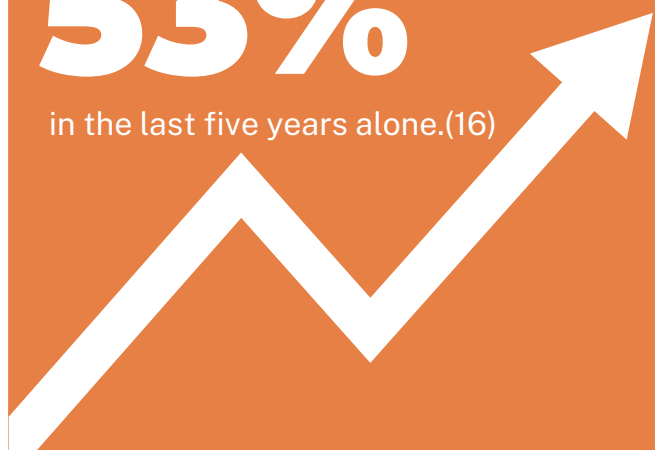


Territorians received assistance from an SHS in 22-23, compared to the national rate of one in 95.(15)

The level of unmet demand for SHS rises year-on-year in the NT, increasing

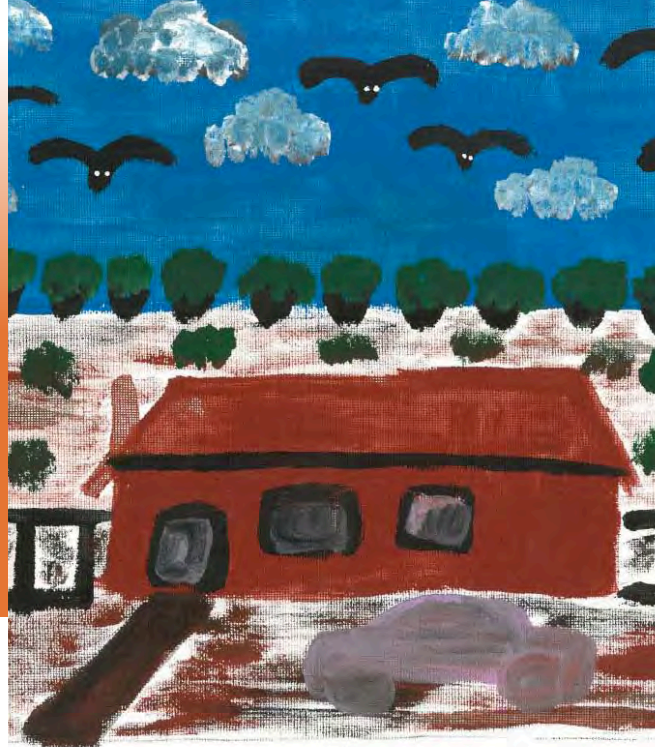
53%

in the last five years alone.(16)



ASKS IN DETAIL

Give TFHC full accountability for the specification, construction and delivery of public housing, and ultimate responsibility for repairs and maintenance.



05

The Northern Territory has an aged stock of housing. Several housing assets pre-date cyclone Tracy and are in very poor condition. Maintenance has been deferred on many housing assets and there have been precious few new builds, especially in urban centres over the past 20 years. The Northern Territory Government has also lost its way in terms of the turnaround time for getting vacant public housing assets available for new tenants, with the average duration having blown out 32.6% on the year prior, with an average of 163 days now taken to re-tenant a vacant dwelling.(17)

For the first time since the Social Housing Initiative in 2007, the Commonwealth Government has committed to investing in social and affordable housing. The Territory must ready itself.

163 days is how long it is taking the NT Government to turn around vacant social housing dwellings, on average.

This is a 32.6% increase on the year prior.(18)



SOLUTION:

Give Territory Families, Housing and Communities full accountability for the specification, construction and delivery of public housing, and ultimate responsibility for timely and cost effective repairs and maintenance. This must include effective neighbourhood, community and stakeholder consultation at all stages of the supply timeline.

Housing people - less expensive than leaving them homeless:



For every \$1 invested in providing housing today...



There are \$4.80 in benefits in 40 years' time!(19)



ASKS IN DETAIL

KATHERINE

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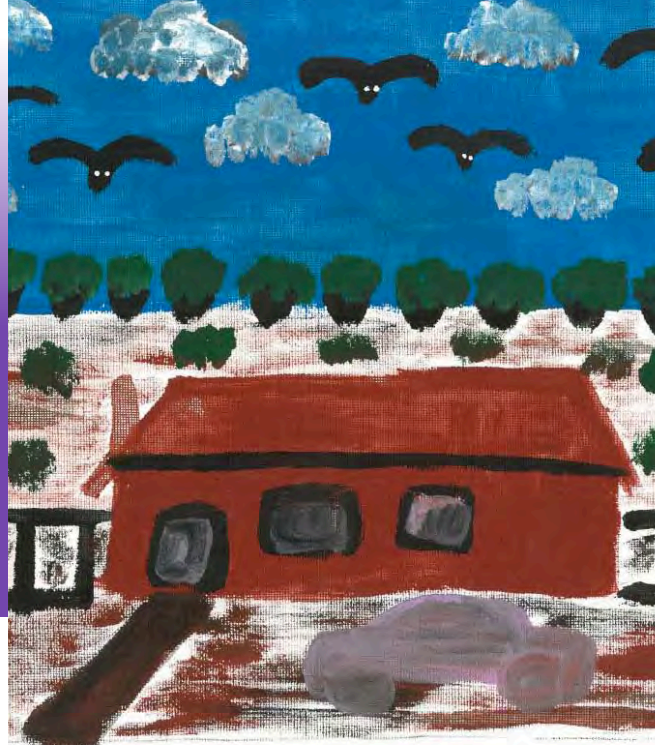
06

Short stay visitor accommodation in Katherine has been a top priority and budget ask from NT Shelter for several years. We were pleased to see the Northern Territory Government's commitment in 2022 to undertake a feasibility study for a short-stay accommodation facility. However, little progress has been made and visitors coming to Katherine to access essential services are still waiting for signs that suitable short-stay accommodation will be provided any time soon.

Short stay visitor accommodation is vital in providing a safe, affordable and appropriate place to stay for those visiting town to access health services, or for cultural, sporting or family reasons.

SOLUTION:

Allocate sufficient capital and operational funding for the construction and ongoing operation of a short-stay accommodation facility in Katherine.



One Katherine homelessness service reported that 94% of people seeking support were in town for medical reasons.(20)

The **Katherine region** covers an area of more than

350,000 KM²



That's larger than **New Zealand!**(21)

ASKS IN DETAIL

TENNANT CREEK

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07

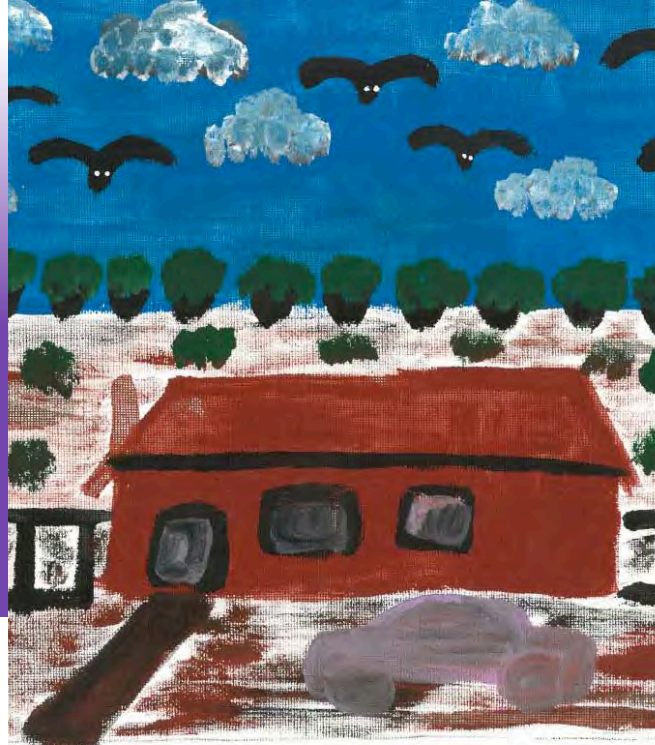
Domestic and family violence (DFV) and access to safe and affordable housing are inextricably linked. Inadequate housing is widely understood to be a risk factor for DFV and DFV is the top reason that people, predominantly women, leave their homes in Australia. (22). In the 2022-23 reporting period, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare reported that DFV was the top reason clients sought assistance from homelessness services.(23) In the Northern Territory, this client cohort is 56% and increasing, compared to 36% nationally.(24)

The highest rates of domestic family violence-related assaults are seen in the Barkly.(25)

A critical gap in the Northern Territory housing system is the lack of transitional housing for women and children escaping DFV. For women who are exiting from domestic and family violence crisis shelters or women who are not at imminent threat, there are few if any viable accommodation options in the Territory's regional centres.

SOLUTION:

In Tennant Creek, stakeholders have identified the urgent need for transitional housing to support women and children leaving violent homes.



On a per capital basis, **the Barkly has the highest rate of recorded DFV-related assaults** in the NT (almost three times the NT rate) and sexual assault offenses (2.6 times the NT rate).(26)

In Tennant Creek, it is not uncommon for support workers to be asked the question:

“

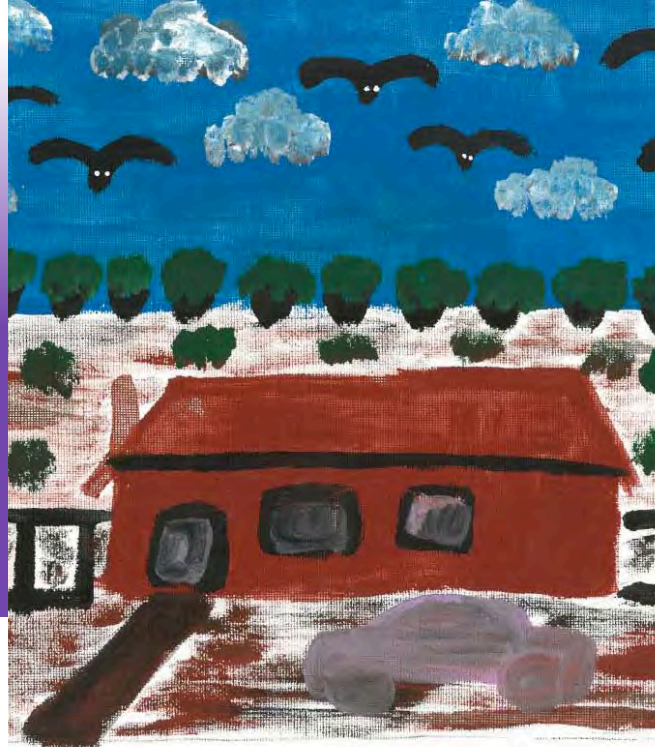
How do I leave him when I have nowhere to go?

”

ASKS IN DETAIL

ALICE SPRINGS

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08

Young people are disproportionately represented in the Northern Territory's homeless population. Despite representing less than 17% of the population, people aged 12-24 represent a quarter of the Territory's homeless population.(27) If we consider children under 12 also, almost 50% of the Northern Territory's homelessness population is under the age of 25.(28) The majority of youth homelessness in the Northern Territory is due to severe crowding.(28) Young people living in severely crowded dwellings represent 87% of homeless young people.(29)

We know that youth-specific accommodation is central to decreasing youth homelessness and the Youth Foyer model is one that has proven successful as a model for at-risk or homeless young people in every other Australian jurisdiction and overseas. 80% of Foyer participants exit into stable housing with 72% exiting into private housing.(30) Young people engaged in a Foyer program are 1.6 times more likely to achieve a higher level of education than if engaged with an SHS. (31) 65% of Foyer participants gain employment.(32)

SOLUTION:

It is time to take note of the evidence and invest in a Youth Foyer or similar youth-specific accommodation model as part of the accommodation landscape in Alice Springs.

3,255 

Young Territorians aged 12 to 24 were experiencing homelessness on Census night 2021.(33)

This is more than the entire population of Tennant Creek.

On any given day in the NT, homelessness services support over **2,600** clients. **320** are young people presenting alone. This is more than six busloads of young people...every day.(34)

6+
busloads
of young
people




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