

Young People & Housing

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People require different types of housing at different stages in their lives. With the current high cost of housing in Australia, many young people are moving out of their parent's homes later than in previous generations. However, for other young people, remaining in their family home is not an option. They may become homeless as children or as young adults. Experiencing homelessness at a young age makes it difficult for young people to continue their education and maintain social bonds with family and friends.

Issues

- Two in three 12–19-year-olds live at home with two parents (66%), and a further 20 per cent live with one parent. Less than one in three 20–24-year-olds lives at home with two parents (32%), with a further 10 per cent living with a lone parent. Young people in their early twenties who are not living with parents are either living in shared households (14%), with a partner and/or children (14%) or alone (6%). [\[i\]](#)
- On Census night in 2011, it is estimated that at least 26,238 Australians aged 12–24 were homeless on any given night, and that a further 22,433 youth were living in caravan parks, improvised dwellings such as sheds or garages, and overcrowded dwellings. [\[ii\]](#) 12–18-year-olds are more likely to be homeless than 19–24-year-olds. Female 12–18-year-olds, Aboriginal young people and young refugees also face a higher risk of homelessness. [\[iii\]](#)
- Of those counted as homeless in the 2011 Census in WA, 3,769 were under the age of 25 including 1,493 children under 12. The ABS acknowledges that youth homelessness is underestimated in the Census. [\[iv\]](#) This is due to the hidden nature of youth homelessness and the ways information can be recorded in the Census, for example homeless youth could simply appear as visiting friends or family on Census night.
- On Census night, 3,316 young people were in marginal housing in WA. Marginal housing includes people living in overcrowded conditions, improvised dwellings and caravan parks. [\[v\]](#)
- Young people exiting care are particularly vulnerable to homelessness. There are currently over 4,300 children and young people living under the protection and care of the Department for Child Protection (DCP) in Western Australia, with approximately 73% of these young people aged five years and older. [\[vi\]](#) Over 50% of children in care are Aboriginal children, despite the fact that they only represent 5.5% of the Western Australian youth population. During 2013 – 2014, almost 19,400 child protection notifications were received by the Department regarding children at risk of harm and abuse. [\[vii\]](#) For many young people turning 18 and leaving statutory care, their transition to adulthood and independence can be associated with poverty, unemployment and homelessness.
- Providing adequate services to young people is more cost effective than the alternative (homelessness). Zaretzky, Flatau and Brady (2008, p.11) estimated that 'if preventing a period of homelessness results in reduced utilisation of health and justice services over the client's remaining

life, the value of the offsets ranges from \$186,004 to \$1,140,122'. [viii] This is in comparison to most intensive supported housing programs, which can be delivered for less than \$30,000 per client per year. [ix] These programs can help repair family relationships, stabilise tenancies and help people transition back into housing if they become homeless. Investment in such programs means that less government spending will be needed in other sectors.

Resources

- [Youth Affairs Council of Western Australia \(YACWA\)](#)
P: (08) 9227 5440 or 1800 670 231 (regional areas)
E: yacwa@yacwa.org.au
- [Youth Legal Service](#)
P: (08) 9202 1688 or 1800 199 006 (country callers)
- [Kids Helpline](#)
P: 1800 551 800
- [YouthLink](#)
P: 1300 362 569
 - YouthLink, Northbridge – (08) 9227 4300
 - YouthReach South – (08) 9499 4274
- [YMCA HQ Youth Support Services](#)
P: (08) 9328 3221
- [Youth Futures WA](#)
P: (08) 9300 2677
- [ReachOut](#)
- [Headspace \(WA\)](#)
P: (08) 9335 6333 or SMS: 0405 533 262
- [WA Government](#)
 - Department for Child Protection
 - Crisis Care (08) 9223 1111 or 1800 199 008 (freecall)
 - [Department for Communities, Office for Youth](#)
 - P: (08) 6551 8700 or 1800 281 116 (freecall)
 - E: youngpeople@communities.wa.gov.au
 - [Commissioner for Young People & Children](#)
- [Passages Resource Centre](#)

Northbridge Centre P: (08) 9228 1478, E: passages.project@svdpwa.org.au

Peel Centre: P: (08) 9583 5160, E: passages.peel@svdpwa.org.au

- [Anglicare WA Youth Services](#)
- [Reconnect Services in WA](#)
- [Youth Involvement Council](#)
- [Perth Inner City Youth Service](#)

For more youth services, please [click here](#) to access a directory of services supporting young people in WA through the WA Housing Hub's *Housing Options & Resources*.

Last updated March 2015

[i] Muir, K., Mullan, K., Powell, A., Flaxman, S., Thompson, D. and M. Griffiths (2009) State of Australia's Young People: A Report on the social, economic, health and family lives of young people, Report for Office for Youth, DEEWR, Social Policy Research Centre, University of New South Wales.

- [iii] Council to Homeless Persons. (2015). *Youth Homelessness* . Retrieved from <http://chp.org.au/homelessness/youth-homelessness/>
- [iii] Muir et al (2009)
- [iv] ABS (2012) Census of Population and Housing: Estimating homelessness, 2011, cat. no. 2049.0, Australian Bureau of Statistics: Canberra.
- [v] ABS (2012) Census of Population and Housing: Estimating homelessness, 2011, cat 2049.0, Australian Bureau of Statistics: Canberra.
- [vi] WA Department for Child Protection (2012) Annual Report 2011-2012, Department for Child Protection: Perth.
- [vii] WA Department for Child Protection (2014). *Annual Report 2013-2014* . Perth, Western Australia: Author
- [viii] Zaretsky, K., Flatau, P., Brady, M. (2008) 'What is the (net) cost to government of homelessness programs?' Australian Journal of Social Issues, 43 (2). pp. 231-254.
- [ix] Queensland Shelter (2011) What Does it Take to House a Young Person?, Brisbane. Available from www.qshelter.asn.au , p.4