



# Frontyard Youth Services

## Youth Homelessness Fact Sheet

### What is Homelessness?

Homelessness in Australia is often referred to as a three layered situation.

**Primary homelessness** is the term applied to those without conventional accommodation – this could mean sleeping rough or living in a car.

**Secondary homelessness** is when people move frequently from one place to another, such as with couch-surfing or staying in a refuge.

**Tertiary homelessness** is when people have accommodation but it is considered unstable, such as living in a caravan park or rooming house .

(<http://www.homelessnessaustralia.org.au/site/about.php>)

### How many people are homeless in Victoria?

There are over 22,000 people that are homeless or marginally housed in Victoria, and of these, about half are young people under 25 years of age. In 2011, 68,500 women, men and children accessed homelessness services in Victoria. Almost 60% of homelessness service users are aged under 25

(Council to Homeless Persons , 2012 [http://chp.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/10122012\\_Homelessness-in-Victoria-with-2011-ABS-stats.pdf](http://chp.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/10122012_Homelessness-in-Victoria-with-2011-ABS-stats.pdf)). (Frontyard Youth Services 2013, Frontyard Database)

### What are the main causes of youth homelessness?

There are many reasons why young people experience homelessness, or become at risk of homelessness. These reasons can include:

- Family or relationship breakdown
- Family or partner violence
- Abuse and/or neglect
- Family homelessness
- Unemployment and poverty
- Lack of affordable housing
- Lack of sufficient income
- Lack of support in leaving state care
- Transitioning to adult employment and education services
- Mental health issues
- Alcohol or other drug issues

(Council to Homeless Persons 2012, [http://chp.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/10122012\\_Homelessness-in-Victoria-with-2011-ABS-stats.pdf](http://chp.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/10122012_Homelessness-in-Victoria-with-2011-ABS-stats.pdf))

In December 2011, over 18,000 young people contacted homelessness support agencies like Frontyard for assistance. Statistics show that the main reason for these young people experiencing homelessness was housing crisis (18%), followed by relationship or family breakdown (17%) and domestic and family violence (15%).

(Australian Institute Health and Welfare, 2012, [www.aihw.gov.au/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=10737422218](http://www.aihw.gov.au/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=10737422218)).



## What happens to homeless young people under 16 years of age?

State and Territory governments are responsible for the care and protection of children and young people if their parent or guardian can't care for them for any reason. Generally, the Victorian homelessness service system does not cater for unaccompanied young people under the age of 16.

For more information about protection services for people under 16 years who are unable to live with their family, please visit Victorian Department of Human Services at [www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/children,-families-and-young-people/child-protection](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/children,-families-and-young-people/child-protection).

## The cost of being homeless

There are many costs associated with homelessness. The emotional costs of the trauma involved are substantial. Also, homelessness can affect a young person's ability to achieve their full future potential in regards to employment, education and community participation.

One night in a youth refuge costs approximately \$188.

Young people (under 21 years) who are homeless may be eligible for Centrelink income support of up to \$201 per week. This presents many difficulties for young people to afford to pay rent, food, travel and education costs.

## What services are available for people that are homeless?

Because homelessness is a complex issue, services for people that are homeless don't just centre on housing, but instead try to support people around the issues that have contributed to their homelessness. This could include family mediation, drug and alcohol issue support, and support around issues with mental health. In terms of housing, there are a number of places that are set up to assist people that are homeless, such as refuges, and housing entry points. Many services also assist people to find private rental and share accommodation.

**Refuge** – Refuge is a supported share house type arrangement where young people are assisted with a place to stay for up to six weeks. During their stay, the young people are allocated a support worker who works with them to find more stable long term accommodation such as shared housing.

**Housing entry points** – Housing entry points are located in each main region of Melbourne and are places where people can go to get housing assistance, whether this be support, financial assistance, or referral into refuge or other forms of housing.

## How many people come into Frontyard each year?

Over 2,000 young people come into Frontyard each year. They generally visit, on average, six times per year. This means that over 12,000 in-person contacts are made each year.

Frontyard also assists young people via phone. The service receives over 10,000 calls for help each year.



## What does Frontyard do to help young people that are homeless?

Frontyard Integrated Youth Services work together to try and address the physical, social, and emotional needs of young people up to the age of 25, who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Frontyard seeks to provide young people with choices that contribute to their health and wellbeing, and where possible, return them to their community of origin. With this in mind, there are many services at Frontyard here to help, including:

- Youth Connections
- Youthlaw
- Family Reconciliation Mediation Program (FRMP)
- Melbourne Youth Support Services
- Job Services Australia
- Gateway Reconnect
- Department of Human Services
- Centrelink
- Young People's Health Service (YPHS)
- Young and Pregnant Parenting Program (YAPP)
- Plus other visiting services

These services help with things like emergency accommodation, health, legal assistance, and family mediation.

## Is Frontyard government funded?

Frontyard receives approximately 75% of its funding from the government for different programs that Frontyard runs, but the remaining 25% is sourced through donations made to Melbourne City Mission.

## How long has Frontyard been running and why did it start?

Frontyard began in 1989 as a strategy to assist young people in Melbourne who were experiencing homelessness or disadvantage. Originally a partnership between Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne City Mission and Centrelink, Frontyard has grown to become one of Australia's most successful integrated youth services.

## What can you do to help?

There are plenty of ways that you can help stop homelessness in Australia. Here are just a few suggestions:

1. Organise a Melbourne Citymission Winter sleep-out or pyjama day at your school/work/community group. They are fun to do and help raise much needed funds for our services. More info at [www.melbournecitymission.org.au](http://www.melbournecitymission.org.au).
2. Volunteer to work with a community organisation. There are lots of different opportunities at [www.volunteeringvictoria.org.au](http://www.volunteeringvictoria.org.au)
3. Donate to Frontyard Youth Services or any of the other great services at Melbourne City Mission by calling (03) 8615 4444 or visit [www.melbournecitymission.org.au](http://www.melbournecitymission.org.au)



## Quick facts

- Young people make up almost half of the 22,800 Victorians counted as homeless and marginally housed in the most recent census in 2011.
- Of these:
  - 3,850 were aged 19–24
  - 2,285 were 12–18
  - 3,640 were under 12.
- Homeless young women access homelessness services at almost twice the rate of young men. Young women cite relationship breakdown and domestic violence as the main reasons for their homelessness.
- Most young homeless people are single.
- More than 8% are single mothers with children.
- Compared with Australia as a whole, Victoria has a higher proportion of young people living in homelessness assistance accommodation (25% compared with 14% nationally).
- Only 51% of homeless youths stay within the Victorian school system.

