



MEDIA RELEASE – EMBARGOED TO Thursday 28 April 2016

The Costs of Youth Homelessness in Australia

—Landmark study shows early intervention could save more than \$626 million per year in youth justice, health costs alone

A world-first Australian study has shown that preventing young people from becoming homeless by strengthening and integrating school and youth services at a community level could save an estimated **\$626 million per year** across the youth justice and health services systems alone.

The Costs of Youth Homelessness in Australia (CYHA)—to be released on Thursday 28 April 2016—shows that the cost to society, just from increased interactions with the health and criminal justice systems for young homeless people, exceeds the total annual cost of all homelessness services across Australia for people of all ages.

Conducted between 2011 and 2015 by leading researchers at Swinburne University of Technology in Victoria, Charles Sturt University NSW, and The University of Western Australia, the study involved a longitudinal survey and analysis of young homeless people's use of services to measure the financial and social costs of youth homelessness in Australia. Drawing on welfare economics, sociology and finance theory, it is the first study of its kind anywhere in the world.

It calls for a complete reform of youth homelessness policy in Australia, citing a number of innovative and successful 'early intervention' programs that, if rolled out nationally, would lead to millions of dollars in savings to the economy.

In 2014-15, 41,780 young people aged 15-24 years accessed homelessness services across Australia. A significant number are forced to leave home because of family violence. Without early intervention, homelessness results in significant health risks, an increased risk of interacting with the criminal justice system and, for many who are early school leavers, the possibility of life-long disadvantage.

The three principal researchers are Associate Professor David Mackenzie (Swinburne), Professor Paul Flatau (The University of Western Australia) and Professor Adam Steen (Charles Sturt University).

Funding partners—The Salvation Army, Mission Australia, and Anglicare NSW South, NSW West & ACT.

Ends/ends...

MEDIA NOTE

The Costs of Youth Homelessness in Australia will be launched at 11:00am at The Salvation Army Hall, 69 Bourke Street, Melbourne on **Thursday 28 April 2016**. A separate media alert and invitation will be issued.

The following media material is available:

- Broadcast-quality TV footage and interview grabs with Associate Professor David Mackenzie (VIC), Professor Paul Flatau (WA) and Professor Adam Steen (NSW), and formerly homeless young people
- Audio grabs—as above
- Embargoed copy of the key findings, *The Costs of Youth Homelessness in Australia*
- Embargoed copy of the Research Briefing, *The Costs of Youth Homelessness in Australia*
- Researcher bios

Associate Professor David Mackenzie, Professor Paul Flatau and Professor Adam Steen are available for pre-recorded interviews prior to the embargo date.

For interview arrangements and all other media information:

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