



The Y NSW Youth Parliament

Housing Access Scheme Youth Act 2026

Bill Proposed By: 2026 Housing & Homelessness Portfolio

Lead Sponsor: Amy Lightowler, Youth Shadow Minister for Housing & Homelessness, Youth Member for Newtown

Sponsors: Jayda Douglas, Youth Member for Epping
Stacy Foxcroft, Youth Member for Wahroonga
Sumaya, Youth Member for Blacktown
Josie Hatherall, Youth Member for Vacluse

Lead Refuter: Ananya Karthik, Youth Minister for Housing & Homelessness, Youth Member for Winston Hills

Refuters: Rowon Bienke von Freyhold, Youth Government Whip in the Upper House, Youth Member for Ballina
Jack, Youth Member for Pittwater
Billy Bofinger, Youth Leader of the Upper House, Youth Member for Cronulla
F R-N, Youth Member for Newtown

Summary of Debate:

On Wednesday the 15th of July 2026 the *Housing Access Scheme Youth Bill 2026* was debated on the floor of the NSW Legislative Council; presided over by Mr Stephen Bali MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Planning and Public Spaces, and Member for Blacktown.

Results of the Vote:

The results of the vote on the passage of amendments were 16 Ayes, 21 Noes, 0 Abstentions. As such, the amendments were resolved in the negative.

The results of the vote on the passage of the bill were 20 Ayes, 12 Noes, 5 Abstentions. As such, the bill was passed.

The *Housing Access Scheme Youth Bill 2026* was passed in its original form.

I certify that this Bill has been duly passed by the Y Youth Legislative Council of New South Wales, has received assent, and is now a Youth Act.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JD'.

Jamison Dustin, 24th Youth Governor of the Y NSW Youth Parliament

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The Y NSW Youth Parliament

Housing Access Scheme Youth Act 2026

Act no. 07, 2026

An Act to

Combat youth homelessness through financial incentives on vacant land, access to services, and collaboration between government and non-government organisations, and related purposes.

I have examined this bill and find it to correspond in all respects with the bill as finally passed by the Youth Legislative Council.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'A' followed by a series of loops and a long diagonal stroke.

*Amelie Kemper-Massie, Youth Deputy Premier of the Y NSW Youth Parliament –
Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council*

Explanatory Note

Summary

The Youth Housing Access Scheme aims to reduce youth homelessness in New South Wales by addressing both the causes and consequences of youth homelessness, improving access to housing, education, healthcare, identification, and culturally safe programs. This Bill recognises the complexity of youth homelessness, acknowledging young people experiencing this often face multiple barriers, which make it difficult to access stable housing and other essential services. The Bill addresses this through strengthening collaboration between government and community organisations, encouraging the use of vacant residential land and housing, improving access to support services, and ensuring young people can access education, healthcare, and identification regardless of their housing situation.

Part 2- Collaboration Between Government and Non-Government Organisations

Part 2 sets out how the government will collaborate with non-government organisations such as the Specialist Homelessness Services and the introduction of culturally safe programs in order to ensure connection to land and culture for homeless youth. This also includes equal access to education through subsidised costs.

Division 1 explains the introduction of the Youth Cultural Connection Homelessness Support Program (YCCHSP), a program which provides culturally safe services such as connection with elders and social activities which will operate across metro, rural and remote areas of NSW. Partnership between elders and the local land council ensures that elders are included and will oversee the development of this program. This program is also to include youth refugees experiencing or on the brink of homelessness, including interpretation services, education pathways, community integration etc. An annual report of the success of this program will be required.

Division 2 establishes a dedicated, needs-based funding framework for supporting young people experiencing homelessness. It requires Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) to allocate funding to deliver youth appropriate, trauma-informed support. Funding also must consider the specific needs of young people; mental health, disability, cultural identity etc. Division 2 sets the minimum service standards, ensuring young people have access to nutritious food, health and wellbeing support and appropriate living conditions. SHS providers must also publish annual reports explaining how funds were allocated and demonstrating that decisions were based on the right criteria. Through this funding SHS must consider youth homelessness rates, demographic trends and cultural needs.

Division 3 ensures that homeless or at-risk young people can access education on an equal basis with their peers. All schools must provide to some extent free or subsidised uniforms, meals, subject fees, excursions and learning materials. Schools also must provide flexible learning environments to keep a wider variety of students engaged. No student should be excluded from any educational activity simply because they cannot afford the cost.

Part 3- Financial Incentives for Vacant Land

Part 3 aims to increase the availability of housing and accommodation for youth who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness. It does this by discouraging landowners from leaving land unoccupied for extended periods of time, and through encouraging investment in affordable housing, crisis accommodation, and long-term housing options for homeless youth.

Division 1 introduces a vacancy tax for residential land and housing that is left unoccupied for extended periods. The tax increases the longer a property is left vacant, which encourages owners to either develop vacant land, make housing available for people to live in, or sell unused properties to those who will use them. However, this division also recognises that not all vacant land should be treated the same. Exemptions are provided for situations where land cannot reasonably be developed, where development is already planned, where the property is a person's primary residence, or in other cases where special circumstances apply. If

property owners seek an exemption, then they must provide evidence to demonstrate that they meet the eligibility requirements. In addition, this Division provides tax deductions for individuals and organisations that contribute to housing solutions for young people, thereby reducing financial barriers for providers. This encourages the creation of crisis accommodation, affordable housing, and stable long-term housing for homeless youth and their families.

Division 2 improves transparency and accountability by requiring landowners and corporations to report vacant residential land and housing through their annual tax returns. Owners of vacant land must also provide information, including how long the land has been vacant and future plans for its use or development. This allows governments to better understand the extent of unused residential land and monitor whether landowners are taking reasonable steps to productively use the land which they own.

Part 4- Access to Services

Part 4 sets out the rights of homeless young people experiencing homelessness and their access to essential services.

Division 1 ensures that young people have access to free comprehensive healthcare. Young people experiencing homelessness are entitled to regular GP visits every 6 months, alongside mental health support, dental care and vaccinations. This healthcare also includes access to reproductive and sexual health services, and support for any drug, alcohol, or vaping issues. Any other specialist treatment that is reasonably necessary is also covered. Prescribed medications must be provided free of charge. To ensure continuity of care is preserved, where possible, services should be delivered consistently with the same providers and maintained accurate medical records.

Division 2 addresses how service providers should handle consent when a young person under 16 seeks access to services, if seeking parental or guardian consent would put the young person or anyone else at risk, it need not be sought. Beyond safety, providers should also consider how urgently the young person needs help, whether a parent could realistically be contacted in time, the likely impact of any delay, any history of family violence or abuse, and the young person's own ability to make informed decisions. Services may be provided without parental consent where it is unsafe or impractical to obtain it. All decisions must be recorded.

Division 3 ensures that young people experiencing homelessness are not blocked from accessing services simply because they lack standard identity documents. Instead of requiring fixed forms of ID, providers must accept any reasonable combination of materials that helps establish who the person is. This could include a statement from someone who knows them, school or medical records, old photos or messages, housing records, or any ID they hold, even if it expired. No young person can be turned away from emergency accommodation or urgent support solely due to a lack of conventional ID. If evidence is rejected, written reasons must be given, and the young person has the right to appeal to a body such as NCAT, with a written outcome within six weeks, or two weeks in urgent cases. All fees for obtaining or replacing identity documents are waived. Requests must be dealt with promptly, with timeframes set according to urgency; Same day for immediate needs, within one week for urgent cases, and within three weeks in all other cases.

Rationale

Addressing youth homelessness is a matter of significant importance as its persistence compromises the welfare, security and future of social and economic participation of young Australians. Research indicates that people who experience childhood poverty are up to 3.3 times more likely to remain in poverty in adult life (Vera-Toscano & Wilkins, 2020), demonstrating the cyclical nature of homelessness. Implications of this instability include substance abuse, mental health issues and unemployment, highlighting the long-term social burden that requires early intervention through structured housing schemes. Youth homelessness is particularly detrimental as many are unable to financially support themselves due to school commitments and lower wages. Homelessness is, therefore, not an isolated event, but a generational cycle that requires systemic intervention.

Despite this urgency, current legislative management of youth homelessness in NSW fails to meet the specific needs of young people, including their developmental, educational and social needs. Although services such as Specialist Homelessness Services exist, they face chronic underfunding and a lack of legislation improving their connection and access to crucial health, educational and social services, resulting in significant gaps in support. At the same time, the broader housing crisis means that even when assistance is provided, there are few affordable housing options available for young people to move beyond homelessness in the long-term, particularly for those receiving low-income payments such as Youth Allowance. This issue is further exacerbated by the lack of regulation surrounding vacant housing, including a lack of incentives to begin utilising unused properties, meaning properties sit vacant whilst young people are struggling to find a place to live. Without change, the existing system will continue to produce long-term social and economic consequences, including compounded inequality, unemployment, and intergenerational disadvantage.

The history of legislation regarding homelessness in NSW highlights how, although important developments have been made, there is an urgent need to specifically address young people and contribute meaningfully to the pervasive situation of homelessness. In 1999, through a group of government agencies “Partnership Against Homelessness” a protocol was developed, “The Protocol for Homeless People in Public Places”, to ensure homeless people, in interaction with government organisations, non-government organisations and businesses, were treated with dignity. Further, on 1 November 2023, the Australian government established the Housing Australia Future Fund Act, with the objective of this bill to address acute housing needs by increasing the availability of social and affordable housing through an investment of \$10 billion. Whilst these investments have supported the growth of homelessness focused NGOs, they continue to fall significantly short of the resources and legislation needed to adequately tackle the urgent situation of youth homelessness in NSW. On census night 2021, 28,000 young people were experiencing homelessness (ABS, 2021). On that night, young people made up 23% of the homeless population, an overrepresentation of their demographic (ABS, 2021). This is backed by 2023-2024 data showing that almost half of everyone who accessed homelessness support in NSW was under 24, including 17,062 young people aged between 15-24, most of whom (13,217) came in without anyone to support them (Homes NSW, 2025). When young people do reach out for help, the system is often too overstretched to respond. 1 in 2 young people seeking crisis accommodation are turned away because services lack the capacity to help (Social Futures, 2025). NSW, out of any other state, has the most people experiencing homelessness, and the problem consistently rises as housing costs increase. Risk factors such as family conflict, domestic violence, mental health challenges, and leaving OOHHC put young people at a disproportionately high risk of losing stable housing (AIHW, 2025). It's clear that this isn't just a personal issue for those affected, instead it's a pattern that existing laws have failed to break.

Through legislating vacant land in NSW, we can improve housing supply, generate revenue to assist in funding non-governmental homelessness shelters, and create incentives that support land in being utilised for homeless youth. Currently, a significant portion of NSW housing stock is being ineffectively used, with close to 300,000 properties sitting vacant in the

long-term (NSW Parliament, 2025). These vacant, untapped properties contribute to the housing affordability crisis in NSW. In 2024 less than 1% of listings nationwide were affordable for someone on minimum wage, with less options for those reliant on a Youth allowance or the Disability Support Pension (Barnardos, Australia 2024). Further, NSW is currently falling behind in the national push for housing affordability, with a median house price of \$1.62 million, well above the national median of \$980,000 (Chen, 2026). In other regions, including domestically in Victoria and internationally in Ireland, France, and Scotland, national policy has been developed to deal with housing affordability by increasing the use of vacant land. Through extending the legislation of vacant land to NSW, we can likewise tackle housing affordability and assist homeless youth.

Furthermore, education is a vital mechanism which can work to both mitigate the causes of youth homelessness and assist those experiencing it in overcoming barriers. In NSW, a substantial proportion of cases brought before tenancy tribunals involve issues such as rent arrears, and bond disputes, areas where misunderstanding of legal requirements is a key factor (Tenants' Union NSW, 2025). National survey data further indicates that over 1 in 3 renters are not confident in their understanding of their tenancy rights, leaving them less able to challenge unlawful practices or comply with formal requirements (CHOICE, 2023). This lack of awareness has direct consequences: renters with low legal literacy are significantly more likely to experience eviction or forced moves, with studies showing that knowledge of rights is strongly correlated with tenancy stability and dispute resolution outcomes (AHURI, 2024). For young people, this issue is intensified. Many enter the rental market for the first time without prior experience or guidance, and data shows that those aged 15–24 are overrepresented in early tenancy termination and informal eviction situations (AIHW, 2025). Without a clear understanding of notice periods, rent obligations, or avenues for support, minor issues can escalate quickly into lease termination. This contributes to a cycle of repeat housing loss, with tenancy failure acting as a major pathway into homelessness for young people. Although there is a current free online financial literacy course called Rent It Keep It (RIKI) in NSW, there are currently no courses that are suitable for providing people a basic understanding of how to rent including basic financial literacy and relevant taxation. Given that limited awareness of tenancy rights is not a minor issue, but a systemic driver of housing instability, there is a significant need for policy responses that address renter knowledge as a core factor in preventing and responding to youth homelessness.

The future of our country is our young people, and yet they are the ones who are being left behind by a system that is designed by adults and for adults. Homelessness is far too often treated as a maths equation, something which with the correct formula can be solved. This is not the case. The reality is, homelessness is far more than just losing a roof over your head, it comes in so many forms, with so many impacts. Becoming homeless means the complete degradation of personal comfort and sense of safety. In addition to this, it creates a survivor mentality, one where, when all feels lost, simple tasks like hygiene, proper food and looking after oneself begin to require maximum effort.

Homelessness in any form creates a sense of hopelessness that is incredibly difficult to break. Habit and mentality is formed within years of youth. A youth of homelessness, displacement, and hopelessness, can often mean a lifetime of the same. With a near record breaking prevalence of youth homelessness, it is now more important than ever that we protect our countries future generations from this threat, or else we as a nation risk a future defined by struggling being passed down for generations.

Reference List

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2021, *Census of Population and Housing*, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra.

Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) 2024, *Tenancy rights, legal literacy and housing stability*, AHURI, Melbourne.

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) 2025, *Homelessness and homelessness services*, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Canberra.

Barnardos Australia 2024, *Housing affordability and young people*, Barnardos Australia, Sydney.

CHOICE 2023, *Renter rights awareness survey*, CHOICE, Sydney.

Homes NSW 2025, *Homelessness data report 2023–2024*, Homes NSW, Sydney.

NSW Parliament 2025, *Vacant properties in NSW*, NSW Parliament, Sydney.

NSW Youth Parliament 2024, *Out of Home Care Transition Youth Act 2024*, The Y NSW Youth Parliament, Sydney, viewed 3 May 2026, https://d2zvqky3pkh4r9.cloudfront.net/uploads/YaC/Youth%20Parliament/Bills%202024/out_of_home_care_transition_youth_act_2024.pdf.

NSW legislation 1997, *Duties Act 1997*, sect. 104D, NSW Government, Sydney, viewed 3 May 2026, https://classic.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nsw/consol_act/da199793/s104d.html.
Social Futures 2025, *Youth homelessness in NSW*, Social Futures, Lismore.

Tenants' Union NSW 2025, *Tenancy tribunal data and renter legal literacy*, Tenants' Union NSW, Sydney.

Vera-Toscano, E & Wilkins, R 2020, *Poverty and intergenerational disadvantage in Australia*, Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, University of Melbourne, Melbourne.

The Y Youth Legislature of New South Wales enacts—

Part 1 Preliminary

1 Name of Act

This Act is the Housing Access Scheme Youth Act 2026 .

2 Commencement

Part 2 of this Act shall commence on 1 July 2028.

Part 3 of this Act shall commence on 1 July 2029.

Part 4 of this Act commences on the day it receives assent.

3 Objects

The objects of this Act are to—

- (a) to reduce youth homelessness and housing insecurity in New South Wales
- (b) to improve access to safe, stable, and affordable housing for young people experiencing or at risk of homelessness
- (c) to ensure that young people experiencing homelessness can access essential services without unnecessary difficulties, or barriers
- (d) to promote the wellbeing, health, education of young people experiencing homelessness

4 Definitions

In this Act—

Affordable housing is priced so that occupants spend no more than 30% of their gross income on rent or mortgage repayments.

Accompanied homeless youth refers to young people experiencing homelessness who are being cared for, protected, and physically accompanied by a parent, carer, or other responsible adult.

Child refers to a person who has not yet attained the age of 18 years.

Crisis accommodation is short-term emergency accommodation for individuals without safe access to safe housing, typically provided for a duration of up to three months.

Homelessness has the same meaning as that of Mackenzie and Chamberlain's (1992) definition, adopted by the Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Homelessness in 2001.

Housing instability means circumstances in which a person's housing situation is precarious, unaffordable or unsafe.

LALC means the Local Aboriginal Land Council.

Liaison officer refers to any person designated by a Specialist Homelessness Service or other relevant authority to assist a young person in accessing youth homelessness services.

Out-of-home-care (OOHC) has the same meaning as that prescribed by the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW).

Specialist Homelessness Services or SHS means the services funded under the Specialist Homelessness Services program that is run by the NSW Department of Communities and Justice.

Temporary accommodation is an outdated program that pays for hotel or motel rooms for individuals who cannot access crisis shelters.

Tenancy rights are the legal entitlements and obligations of tenants, including rights around rent increases, bonds and eviction.

Tenancy tribunal (NCAT) - the NSW civil and administrative tribunal that hears disputes between tenants and landlords.

Unaccompanied homeless youth refers to young people experiencing homelessness who are not physically accompanied by, or being cared for or protected by, a parent, carer, or other responsible adult.

Vacant land is unoccupied land which has been zoned to be residential, or is residential land or housing

Occupied is when a property is being used by an individual or group of individuals as a primary residence.

YCCHSP refers to the Youth Cultural Connection Homelessness Support Program established under Part 1 of this Act.

Young person refers to a person between the ages of 12 and 25.

Youth refers to a person under the age of 25.

Note— The *Interpretation Act 1987* also contains definitions and other provisions that affect the interpretation of this Bill.

Part 2: Collaboration between Government and Non-Government Organisations

5 Cultural Programs

- (1) Establishment of a program through youth homelessness services to foster identity, personal development, and community connection through culture and connection to land.

- a. Establish a Youth Cultural Connection Homelessness Support Program (YCCHSP) to provide culturally safe services to youth such as workshops, social activities, accessible language interpretation services and connection with cultural leaders.
 - b. The program shall operate across metro, regional and remote areas of NSW
 - c. The program may be delivered directly by the Department of Education or through service providers
- (2) Partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Elders through the needs of the area and the local land council being the consultant
 - a. Elders are engaged in program design, delivery and evaluation
 - b. All Cultural content is reviewed and approved by elders
 - c. Activities may include but are not limited to storytelling, art, language sessions and cultural mentoring on the importance of land, culture or family.
- (3) Refugee Youth inclusion
 - a. The program must also provide tailored support for recent refugee youths who are experiencing homelessness or housing instability
 - b. Translation or interpreting services may be included
 - c. Workshops addressing housing rights, education pathways and community integration
 - d. Culturally appropriate mental health support services
- (4) Reporting by the program coordinator to ensure the program is impactful in improving cultural identity and personal development for homeless youth without being tokenistic.
 - a. The program must prepare an annual report or evaluation on the operation and outcome of the program
 - b. This may include participation rates, outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Youth, Outcomes for refugee Youth and recommendations for improvement.

6 Funding Youth Homelessness

- (1) The Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) must allocate an amount of funds toward homeless youth in accordance with:
 - a. The increased cost of delivering age-appropriate, developmentally suitable, and trauma-informed support to youth.
 - b. The importance of early intervention in terms of economic and social benefits.
 - c. The percentage of homeless population that are youth.
- (2) Without limiting subsection (6.1), the amount of funding allocated to a service where possible, must take into account:
 - a. The demand for services within the area in which the service operates.
 - b. The characteristics and needs of youth accessing the service, including:
 - i. additional support needs (including disability, mental health, or trauma)
 - ii. cultural, religious, or identity-related needs

- c. The costs associated with delivering services in the relevant location, including regional, rural, or remote areas.
 - i. The need to ensure safe, appropriate, and adequately staffed accommodation.
- (3) Funding provided under this section must be sufficient to meet minimum service standards such as:
 - a. The provision of nutritionally adequate food, including accommodation of dietary requirements such as allergies, anaphylaxis, coeliac disease, and religious dietary practices.
 - b. Access to appropriate health, wellbeing, and support services.
 - c. Safe staffing levels and workforce capability.
 - d. Maintenance of facilities to a standard that ensures the safety and dignity of children and young people.
- (4) Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) must, annually, produce and publish a report containing:
 - a. Allocation of funds.
 - b. Sufficient justification as to why that allocation was made including clear evidence of the use of criteria mentioned in subsection (6.1).
 - c. Evidence of the considerations mentioned in subsection (6.2).
- (5) Funding arrangements must allow for the ability to accommodate large, unforeseen fluctuations in demand. In determining the allocation and location of services, the Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) program must consider:
 - a. The level of homeless youth in relation to the total population of homeless individuals and families
 - b. The extra funding needed to support and adequately care for youth.
 - i. Population size and demographic trends;
 - ii. Levels of youth homelessness and housing insecurity within an area;
 - iii. Availability of culturally appropriate services, including, the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander communities;
 - iv. The needs of refugee and culturally diverse communities;
 - v. Any geographic barriers that may prevent access to support services, this includes lack of public transport, long travel distances.

7 Education

- (1) Public schools and all government educational institutions must ensure the provision of the following services to youth who are homeless or at risk of homelessness:
 - a. The provision of subsidised or free school uniforms where required.
 - b. The provision of subsidised or free meals and lunches where required.
 - c. Assistance with subject fees, excursions, camps, and educational materials
 - d. Flexible learning environments where appropriate.
- (2) Schools must take reasonable steps to ensure that homelessness or housing instability does not prevent a child or young person from accessing education on an equal basis with other students.

- (3) A student must not be excluded from participating in any educational activity solely because they are unable to pay the associated costs.
- (4) The Minister for Education is responsible for ensuring the adequate funding of educational institutions to meet their obligations under subsections (7.1), (7.2) and (7.3).

Part 3: Financial Incentives for Vacant Land

8 Tax Incentives Establishment

- (1) There shall be a progressive vacancy tax on unoccupied land which has been zoned to be residential, and residential land and housing. The tax rate under this subsection shall be as follows:
 - a. 1% of the property's monetary value in the first year the property is unoccupied.
 - b. 2% of the property's monetary value in the second year the property is unoccupied.
 - c. 3% of the property's monetary value in any subsequent year the property remains unoccupied.
- (2) The following land shall be exempt from being taxed under subsection (8.1):
 - a. A primary residence;
 - b. Land that has plans to begin development within two years, unless exceptional circumstances apply;
 - c. Land incapable of being developed;
 - d. Land held under Native Title;
 - e. In any other circumstances the Minister for Finance deems appropriate.
- (3) Under this section, land is considered 'unoccupied' if the land is residential and has been occupied for less than three months of a year.
- (4) A person or organisation seeking an exemption under subsection (8.2) must provide reasonable proof that the exemption applies when lodging their tax return.

9 Tax Deductions

- (1) A tax deduction of \$40,000 shall apply in the following circumstances:
 - a. Persons or organisations that provide land that is leased, rented, purchased or developed for the purpose of providing crisis accommodation for:
 - i. Unaccompanied homeless youth, or;
 - ii. Accompanied homeless youth and their families
 - b. Persons or organisations who provide affordable residential properties for youth.
 - c. Persons or organisations who provide land that is leased, rented, purchased or developed for the purpose of providing stable, long-term accommodation for homeless youth.

10 Home and Land Ownership Scheme

- (1) All home and landowners are to report the amount of vacant land and/or housing owned by each individual/corporation during annual tax returns.
 - a. Vacant landowners will propose a timeline plan of the intended purpose of the land.
 - b. This plan must include the duration for which the land remains vacant and the intended future use or development of the land.

Part 4: Access to Services

11 Healthcare

- (1) Children and young people experiencing homelessness shall be entitled to comprehensive, accessible, and bulk-billed healthcare services where required, including:
 - a. Regular general practitioner (GP) health assessments conducted at least every six (6) months, or more frequently where clinically indicated.
 - b. Mental health services appropriate to the individual needs of the child or young person, including counselling, psychological support, and psychiatric care where required.
 - c. Routine dental examinations and, where clinically necessary, orthodontic treatment.
 - d. Access to vaccinations in accordance with the national immunisation schedule, including additional vaccinations as required, such as seasonal influenza immunization.
 - e. Access to preventative health education programs, consultations, and informational resources.
 - f. Access to gender-specific and reproductive healthcare services, including menstrual health support, contraception, pregnancy-related care, and sexual health services.
 - g. Access to alcohol, other drug (AOD), and vaping cessation and support services.
 - h. Access to any other specialist medical treatment deemed reasonably necessary.
- (2) Where a child or young person requires prescribed medication, such medication shall be provided at no cost to the individual.
- (3) Health services provided under this section should, where practicable and appropriate, be delivered in a manner that ensures continuity of care for the child or young person, including consistent access to healthcare providers and the maintenance of medical records across services.

12 Consent for Services

- (1) If a child or young person seeking access to youth homelessness services is under the age of 16 years, the service provider must consider whether it is appropriate to seek the consent of a parent or guardian having regard to the individual

circumstances of the young person involved.

- (2) In determining whether to seek such consent, the primary consideration is whether it is safe to do so, including:
 - a. The safety and wellbeing of the child or young person, and;
 - b. The safety of any other person.
- (3) Without limiting subsection (12.2), the following matters should also be considered:
 - a. The urgency with which the young person requires access to services;
 - b. Whether the parent or guardian can be contacted within a reasonable period;
 - c. The likely impact on the young person if consent is not obtained promptly;
 - d. Any known history of family violence, abuse, or neglect;
 - e. The capacity of the young person to make informed decisions, and;
 - f. Any other matter the service provider considers relevant.
- (4) A service provider may provide services without parental or guardian consent where:
 - a. It is not safe to seek such consent, or;
 - b. It is not reasonably practicable to obtain such consent in the circumstances.
- (5) All decisions should be recorded by a service provider or appropriate authority to ensure accountability and protect vulnerable individuals.

13 Identification

- (1) Where a homeless child or young person is required to establish their identity in order to obtain a document, service, benefit, or assistance, the child or young person must not be required to comply with fixed or prescriptive identity verification procedures where this would be unreasonable in the circumstances.
- (2) A homeless child or young person may establish their identity through any information or material that reasonably demonstrates their identity, whether provided individually or in combination. This may include:
 - a. A signed confirmation from a responsible person who is able to identify the young person;
 - b. School, educational, or training records;
 - c. Medical or health records;
 - d. Housing, tenancy, or utility records;
 - e. Information the young person can provide that matches existing public records that other people would be unlikely to know, for example their birthplace or parents' birthdays;
 - f. Digital records, including old messages and photographs;
 - g. Any existing ID the young person has, whether or not it has since expired, or;
 - h. Any other information or material the liaison officer, service provider, or relevant authority considers relevant.
- (3) A child or young person must not be denied access to emergency accommodation, essential support services, or urgent assistance solely because they are unable to provide conventional proof of identity.

- (4) If evidence provided by a child or young person under subsection (13.2) is deemed false or inadequate, reasons must be provided in writing to the person.
 - a. Homeless youth or their advocates are entitled to appeal any decision made under subsection (13.2) to an appropriate authority such as the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT). The outcome of that appeal must be provided in writing to the appellant within 6 weeks, or 2 weeks, if the matter is considered urgent.
- (5) Any fee associated with a homeless child or young person obtaining or replacing documents under this section shall be waived.
- (6) Homeless youth attempting to obtain identification under this section should be placed on a priority list, and identification should be provided as soon as reasonably possible. Requests should be prioritised based on the following schedules:
 - a. Immediate: Same-day
 - b. Urgent: Within 1 week
 - c. In all other cases: Within 3 weeks
- (7) When deciding the response timeframe under subsection (13.6), the decision-maker should consider the likely impact on the child or young person if ID is not obtained within a given timeframe.



Produced for The Y NSW Youth Parliament