



# Youth2 Campaign

*"Homeless is not just being roof-less or house-less. It's not having a place to belong"*

*Frankston and Mornington Peninsula Youth Homelessness Summit*

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**Youth 2 Alliance Advocacy Proposal  
Youth Educational Foyer and  
Frankston and Rosebud Crisis Accommodation**

Re: LCLSIC Inquiry into Homelessness and Recommendations

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## Summary

The Youth 2 Alliance advocates to Local Members and the Victorian Government, to urge priority consideration and immediate action, to address the absence of crisis housing and support services for young homeless people in Frankston and the Mornington Peninsula. Youth homelessness has become an increasingly complex and urgent priority for the two Local Government Areas (LGA) and the wider cross-sector interests, represented by the Youth 2 Alliance. The experience of homelessness in coastal parts of Victoria is different to that within inner city urban LGAs and tends to be less visible, with caravans, tents and sleeping out representing a proportionately higher role in homelessness.

The COVID-19 pandemic has hit the youth and community service sector hard. In the Frankston and Mornington Peninsula LGAs in particular, there has been a significant increase of 50% in the rate that young people (390) aged 15-25 (without dependents) have requested assistance with securing crisis housing. Frankston and the Mornington Peninsula are two of the sixth worst LGAs in Victoria, with homeless residents, sleeping rough every night.

Currently, homeless young people cannot access crisis accommodation locally, which means at their most vulnerable, they are forced to leave their community, support networks and lose connections to their place of education or vocation. They may need to travel to Highett, Dandenong, or potentially much further, requiring a 2.5 hour one way journey on public transport, to an unknown place. With over 80 per cent of the Mornington Peninsula not serviced by public transport, lack of viable connectivity options makes accessing crisis accommodation in another LGA, even more of a challenge. The current absence of local crisis accommodation does not align with the wider principles of a local place based approach, particularly in an emergency scenario when the community needs local support the most.

Educational Youth Foyers are another important piece of any crisis housing model as they support surrounding services and links to local TAFEs, secondary colleges and provide additional educational and mentoring support.

**The Youth2 Alliance is a partnership of 12 organisations with specialist expertise Frankston and Mornington Peninsula LGAs including:**

- Whitelion
- YSAS/Headspace
- Mornington Peninsula Shire
- Frankston City Council
- Frankston / Mornington Peninsula Primary Care Partnership
- The Salvation Army
- Fusion Australia
- Melbourne City Mission
- Southern Homelessness Services Network
- Brotherhood of St Lawrence
- Neami National

***The Youth2 Alliance has also involved young people and community members in crafting its advocacy position.***

The Youth2 Alliance draws attention to the findings and recommendations relating to young people from the recent Victorian Parliament's Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Standing Committee's Inquiry into Homelessness in Victoria 2019.



In summary, the Committee called for:

1. Investment in the Education First Youth Foyers where neededmost.
2. Support engagement with bodies and institutions to identify and respond to risk factors of homelessness
3. Responding to barriers faced by young people
4. Additional funding for innovative models like Kids Under Cover.

It is unacceptable that our most vulnerable young people are forced to leave their community and supports for safe crisis accommodation, during a critical time of high stress andwhen personal safety may be further compromised, as a result.

## Ask

**Youth2 Alliance asks that Local, State and Federal Governments work together to fund and source crisis and transitional housing support for young people 16 - 24 who live in the Frankston or Mornington Peninsula LGAs.**

The Youth 2 Alliance is specifically asking for:

- **Crisis accommodation in both Frankston and Rosebud with the capacity to accommodate 24 young people. It is, estimated funding would provide assistance for up to 120 young people per year.** Costs of construction for similar sized crisis accomodation in Metropolitan Melbourne is approximately \$3.1 million per site<sup>1</sup> with recurrent operating costs projected at \$1.056m per annum plus 2% CPI.<sup>2</sup>
- **An Education First Youth Foyer would support best practice outreach and education for 8-20 young people per annum.** Costs of construction of an 8-20 bed Foyer are approximately \$4 million.<sup>3</sup> Ongoing recurrent costs are \$450,000 based on an existing Melbourne based model with 3 FTE and ongoing property costs plus 2% CPI.<sup>4</sup>

This would require approximately 10.2 million in captial funding for the construciton of two crisis accomodation centres in Frankston and Rosebud, and a supporting Youth Educational Foyer. Recurrent funding has been costed for each site and totals 10.5 million over 4 years.

Capital funding		Recurrent funding				TOTAL
2021-22		2022	2023	2024	2025	
Frankston crisis accommodation	3.1m	1.056m	1.077m	1.098m	1.120m	7.451m
Rosebud crisis accommodation	3.1m	1.056m	1.077m	1.098m	1.120m	7.451m
Youth Educational Foyer	4m	450k	459k	468k	477k	5.854m
						<b>20.756m</b>

<sup>1</sup> Victorian Parliamentary Budget Office

<sup>2</sup> The Salvation Army

<sup>3</sup> The Foyer Foundation

<sup>4</sup> Melbourne City Mission



**Youth2 Alliance requires an investment of \$20.756 million in State or Federal Government funding over the next 4 years to address the gap in crisis accommodation in Frankston and Mornington Peninsula.**

Youth2 Alliance looks forward to a productive dialogue as we continue to work together to address youth homelessness across the Frankston and Mornington Peninsula LGAs.

Yours sincerely,



**Andrew Bruun**  
CEO, Youth Support + Advocacy Service

*On behalf of the Youth2 Alliance*

## **Background**

The Frankston and Mornington Peninsula Youth2 Alliance Submission to *the LCSISC Inquiry Into Homelessness* outlined local issues, needs and opportunities to address the local youth homelessness crisis (submission number 449). The Frankston and Mornington Peninsula Youth2 Alliance endorses the Inquiry's findings on social and affordable housing access. In particular the Youth2 Alliance wishes to advocate for service funding, as outlined by the report recommendations below.

## **Key Victorian LSISC Homelessness Inquiry Report (April 2021) Recommendations**

- 1) System and resource changes to promote early intervention (Recommendation 7-13 and specifically Recommendation 8) that promotes 'engaging with bodies and institutions when individuals are at risk of homelessness to assist them to identify and respond to risk factors for homelessness, including through education and training'.
- 2) The benefits for "many disadvantaged young people who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness" for Education First Youth Foyers and to review areas for suitability and adding additional funds (Finding 22 and Recommendation 17).
- 3) Endorsement of innovative models like Kids Under Cover (Recommendation 18).

The Youth2 Alliance has worked in partnership to improve housing and support options for the Frankston and Mornington Peninsula since 2017. Signatories to the Youth2 Alliance Submission (449) are attached (p.4). The Youth2 Alliance requests funding for specific local services that:

1. Support local vulnerable young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, in the communities where they connect and belong.
2. Utilise the collaborative funded service system efficiently, by filling the gaps with both youth crisis accommodation and a Youth Foyer.



## Need

Requests for assistance	2018-19	2019-2020	COVID-19 period 6/3/20-29/6/20
Young people aged 15-25 (without dependents)	339	390	Expected request rate=97 Actual request rate =147 50% ↑

**Table 1:** 2018-2020 Information from the Specialist Homelessness Services access points in Frankston and Rosebud.

Due to the absence of local crisis accommodation and early intervention support, none of the young people included in *Table 1* were able to access crisis housing in Frankston or the Mornington Peninsula (FMP).

Young people become homeless for many reasons, including family violence or breakdown in family relationships, mental illness, alcohol and drug use, unemployment and unaffordable housing. When a young person becomes homeless and seeks help in the FMP region, there are no crisis accommodation services to provide temporary accommodation and on-site support to address the immediate crisis and establish a pathway out of homelessness.

Right now, we do not have crisis accommodation for at-risk young people in Frankston, which makes it more difficult for them to find suitable accommodation, while keeping them connected to support services and their support network.

## Local context in Frankston

The Youth 2 Alliance has a unique understanding of the strategic gaps that currently exist to supporting local homeless people and serves to create blind spots and hidden challenges, within state level data and policy.

Homelessness is a growing issue in Frankston, with young people over represented in the Victorian homeless population and over 26% of those experiencing homelessness, being under 25 years. This means that approximately 220 young people are experiencing homelessness at any point in time in the FMP region.

Frankston has historically seen increases in the rates of women, young people and children experiencing homelessness from 2017-2018. These trends are unfortunately continuing at an even higher rate post COVID-19.

The steepest increases in homelessness from 2017-2018 in Frankston included:

- Children (aged 0-9) increasing by 33.9%,
- Young persons (aged 10-19) increasing by 18.4%.
- Women (aged 30-39) increasing by 5.2%
- Women (aged 60+ years) increasing by 12%

44,152 Victorian households are waiting for social housing. In south east and east Melbourne, the situation is particularly critical, with 32% of Victorians experiencing homelessness and 40% of people on the social housing waiting list live in this region.

Single person households seeking a one bedroom property can remain on the social housing waitlist for up to 10 years in Frankston.



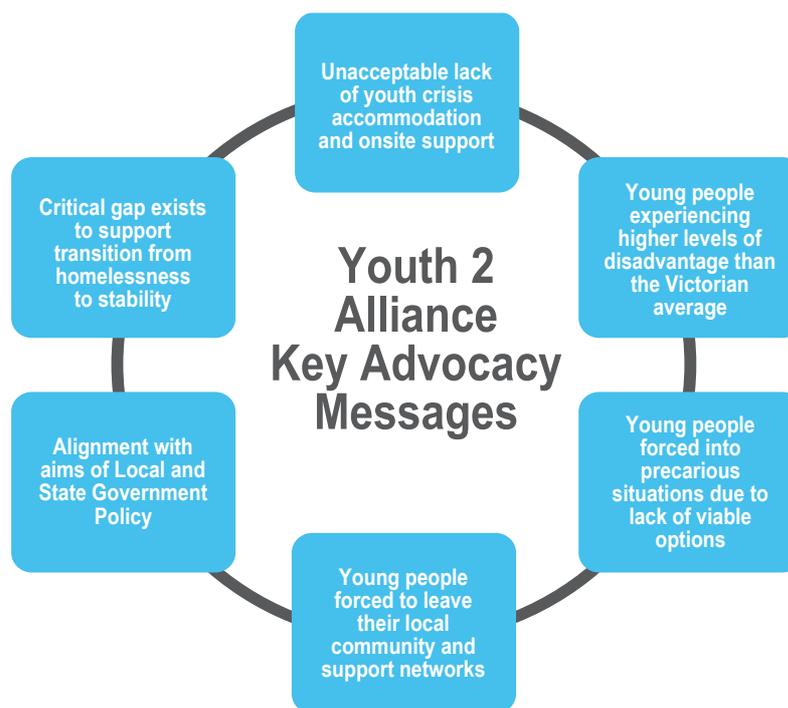
Many more young people are hidden within data collection resulting in a blind spot within statistics, as they are forced to live in precarious situations, including couch surfing and living in their cars. Local services have further data sources available upon request, quantifying the number of young people accessing their services with homelessness issues. A series of emotive narratives of youth homelessness journeys and the barriers faced have been captured by support services (see hybrid vignette story p.3)

## Key Advocacy Messages

Social and economic issues documented in the Youth2 Submission include high rates of family violence, poor access to tertiary education, high unemployment and youth suicide rates.

However, developments in accessible and flexible services for FMP young people across health, welfare, work transition and educational support have progressed in the FMP area in the past decade, with meaningful collaboration (see No Wrong Door Young Peoples Practice Principles) and wrap around approaches.

Youth2 Alliance key advocacy messages are summarised below:



**Figure 1:** Youth2 Alliance Key Advocacy Messages.

The **crucial gap** in the service system is **local access to crisis and transitional accommodation**. As noted in Recommendation 8 from the LCLSIC Homelessness Report, wrap around services can work with young people and their families to mitigate homelessness risk factors and shape pathway supports in community, education and training.

It is **unacceptable that our most vulnerable young people are forced to leave their community** and support system to seek safe crisis accommodation. Repeats what has already been said in summary.



Because of distance and poor public transport access, young people in Rosebud currently have a 2.5 hour journey (one way) to crisis accommodation in either Dandenong or Moorabbin - potentially much longer.

LCLSIC also recommends (Recommendation 17) that the Youth Foyer model be reviewed for other communities, as it is a well-established and economically and socially evaluated program. Local schools, TAFE and services would be more effective in their early intervention work and for the support of young people with more complex issues, if this pathway option was available.

## Local initiatives

Despite the gap in equitable local service access from State Government and funding bodies, the Youth2 Alliance has progressed options to create more emergency and transitional housing support options through:

1. **Partnership with the Barnett Foundation and The Salvation Army** for capital development of a local property – this will need operational funding for crisis youth housing from DHHS.
2. **Feasibility study for the Room2Spare innovative option for the Mornington Peninsula led by Melbourne City Mission** with a federal seeding grant. This could not proceed to pilot phase due to COVID-19 and would require further innovative funding, and is consistent with Recommendation 18 for Kids Under Cover by providing an option for those who cannot live with family, but could live nearby.
3. **Fusion and Mornington Peninsula Shire have a plan to expand transitional support at Mt Martha.**

## Shae's story

*Shae is a 17-year-old young parent of a 15-month-old son. She lives with her 19-year-old partner in a crowded shared household with others. There have been substance use issues in the household. Shae's education was interrupted by difficulties in her early home life and the birth of her son.*

*She has youth family support services involved and with encouragement has enrolled in the young parents VCAL Program at Chisholm TAFE; where there is family support and an integrated abecedarian approach with the babies and toddlers (through Communities for Children funding). Shy and reluctant at first, she then engages with her studies and peers and is doing well.*

*Shae is linked with GP care for herself and her baby at the headspace centre, and with support from her family worker has also linked in with the Bounce Back mental health program (funded with youth severe federal funds). She is assisted by a Centrelink in-reach worker to ensure her income and benefits are appropriate.*

*Violence issues arise in the household and Shae wishes to leave and is assisted to access The Orange Door and is linked with Detour to assist with housing support services.*

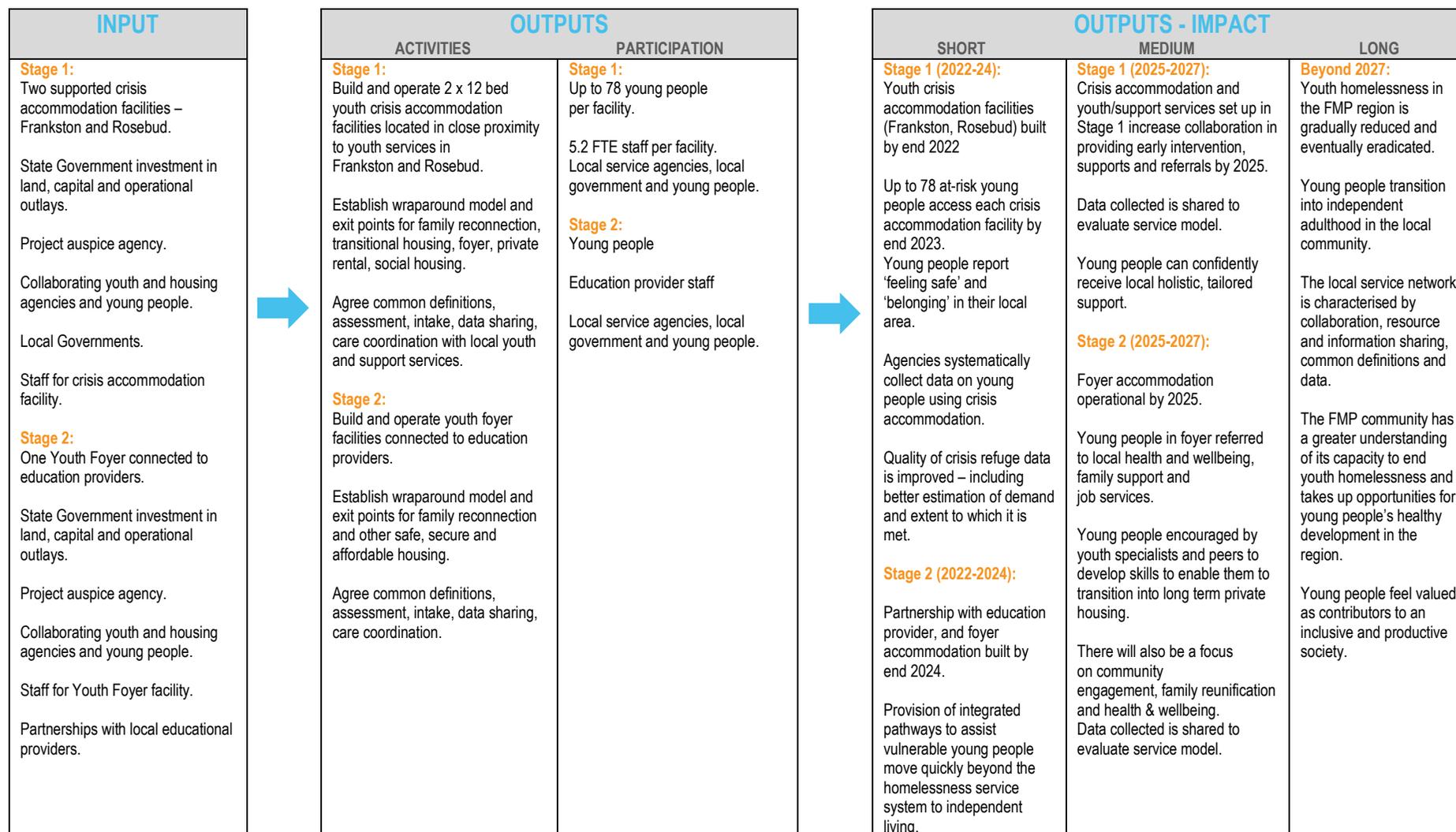
*Emergency housing is offered in Preston. This a common scenario. Consequently, her education, trauma mental health support, family support and targeted support for her young toddler are abruptly ended, in order for them to have safe shelter or she reneges and returns to an unsafe situation in order to keep the rapport, trust and links with her home and community.*



## Program Logic Model: Youth2 Campaign

### Situation: 'Homelessness is not just being roof-less or house-less. It's not having a place to belong.' (Local young person)

Each year hundreds of young people in the Frankston and Mornington Peninsula ('FMP') region experience homelessness, but very few can access supported crisis accommodation locally. Many at-risk young people have to seek support outside the region, forcing them to leave their community, family, friendship and support networks. This disrupts young people's education and employment, and negatively impacts on their safety, physical and mental health, and general wellbeing, and creates flow-on impacts for other regions. Young people and service agencies want a local solution – not one based in Dandenong or beyond.



### Assumptions

Improved local housing options will keep at-risk young people in FMP.  
Staying in the local area improves likelihood that at-risk young people overcome homelessness. Young people will participate in 'co-design' and agency workers will collaborate in multidisciplinary and integrated service partnerships.  
Investing in housing for young people saves monies later spent on health, social, and justice services.

### External Factors

Change of government impacts on availability of resources. Federal and State government initiatives to improve data quality.  
Changes in real estate market affects availability of housing options for young people in FMP region.  
FMP community identity is key to promoting local service supports.