



PeakCare
Queensland Inc.

STATEMENT ON HOUSING CRISIS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TRANSITIONING FROM CARE

19 October 2022

On 20 October 2022, Federal and State leaders from Government and community sectors will converge for a Summit to develop solutions to end the housing crisis. In welcoming the commitment and determination of the Queensland Government to addressing the unprecedented and complex challenges impacting housing supply, it is critical any new ideas reflect and embrace the voices and lived experience of those most impacted by this crisis and do not further compound the disadvantage they already experience.

Mostly unheard throughout this crisis, the voices, experiences and needs of young people transitioning from the care of the State are critical if the Summit is to deliver genuine and meaningful solutions for all Queenslanders. These young people, and their support services are facing unprecedented challenges in accessing safe and stable accommodation which is placing them at significant risk of not having access to the basic safety and care needs so essential for all young people navigating the challenges of early adulthood and independence.

This crisis being experienced by young people transitioning from care also risks diminishing the widely applauded policy shift in June 2022 by the Queensland Government to provide additional support to young people leaving care to 21, particularly for the increasing number of young people in non-family-based residential care. If the Queensland Government wants all young people transitioning from their care to succeed, access to safe and stable accommodation is non-negotiable.

Contributing factors to the housing crisis for young people transitioning from care

The following factors significantly impact on the ability of young people transitioning from care to access safe and stable accommodation:

- Unavailability and unattainability of housing stock for young people resulting from increased demand and surging rental costs
- Increasing requirement to use informal and private rental arrangements which can require young people to pay their rent and bond in cash. These private arrangements increase the risk of housing instability and given their informal nature can exclude young people from accessing appropriate financial supports as often there are no tenancy agreements in place
- Perceptions that young people transitioning from care are undesirable tenants in comparison to families and other households with higher incomes and longer rental histories
- Structural barriers which mean young people transitioning from care cannot be considered 'in crisis' until they present to a youth housing support service with their 'bags in hand and nowhere else to go'
- Restrictions on what young people can apply for through the Department of Housing and Public Works including only being able to apply for one-bedroom properties as a single tenant which have more limited stock than other property types

- Significant waitlists for community housing and lower prioritisation of young people requiring housing compared to other groups
- Restrictions on the number of housing provider waitlists a young person can be on at any time
- Increasing demand for young people accessing post-care programs which continue to be inundated with referrals.

These contributing factors are compounded by systemic issues with transition planning for young people in care which can at times occur far too late, and the significant and growing pressures faced by the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs (DCYJMA) and funded service providers to find more placements for more children entering care or experiencing disruptions to their care arrangements.

Opportunities to address the housing crisis for young people transitioning from care

PeakCare calls on the Queensland Government and all participants of the Queensland Housing Summit to urgently consider the following opportunities to address this crisis for young people transitioning from care:

1. Urgently increase investment and service flexibility in semi-independent living (SIL) arrangements and alternative accommodation options for young people in non-family-based care including opportunities for the continuation of residential care placements for young people beyond 18-years where no safe and stable housing options are available.
2. Urgently increase investment in youth housing support services and post-care programs to meet the current demand for these services and reduce barriers for young people accessing them.
3. Increase accountability for existing service providers, especially residential care providers providing 24/7 models, in the development of skills required by young people for independence to improve capacity for employment and engagement with service providers following their transition to independence.
4. Increase investment in contemporary initiatives such as the Youth CONNECT Program, a social benefit bond initiative designed to reduce homelessness and take pressure off public housing.
5. Provide more professional development opportunities for DCYJMA and child and family sector workers to better understand the challenges facing young people transitioning from care, the importance and time investment required in transition planning and the factors that constitute robust transition plans. We recommend this includes time measured actions as part of transition planning from 15 years and greater consideration of specific transition planning requirements for young people who have NDIS support.

PeakCare eagerly awaits the outcomes of the Queensland Housing Summit and the new ideas and solutions which are so critically needed for all Queenslanders. We believe every person deserves to have a safe and stable roof over their head and every young person transitioning from state care should have the opportunity to reach their full potential without the fear of homeless knocking at their door.



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