



A future where youth homelessness does not exist

Annual Impact Summary

2024 – 2025



Our Year in Review

In 2024–25, Project Youth supported 4,280 young people to be connected, safe, and achieving.

This work spanned housing, education, employment, mental health, and prevention, across the Sutherland Shire, Georges River, and Bayside areas of Sydney.

- 21,161 nights of accommodation were provided
- \$52,532 in fines cleared through Work Development Orders
- 659 young people supported through prevention programs
- 515 young people assisted with housing and homelessness support
- 3,322 young people supported through peer work
- 157 young people supported into employment and training
- 142 young people housed across crisis, transitional, and long-term accommodation
- 3,687 hours of paid employment created through Café Social and other initiatives
- 298 young people engaged in job readiness or accredited training
- 1,152 community members reached through peer-led education and advocacy
- 18,345 people reached through youth homelessness campaigns.

Our impact was made possible by 98 team members including 30% of our workforce being young people with lived experience, and the tireless support of our volunteers, funders, and partners.

At Project Youth, our approach is built on three decades of experience walking alongside young people facing homelessness, trauma, and disadvantage. We believe that with the right support, every young person can heal, reconnect, and thrive.

Our purpose is to prevent youth homelessness from occurring and where it does, to ensure it is brief and non-reoccurring. We deliver programs that integrate housing, education, employment, and wellbeing, recognising that young people's needs are interconnected.

Everything we do is underpinned by our Trauma-Informed Practice Framework, shaped through research, data, and the lived experience of young people and families.

We combine professional expertise with lived experience to design programs that are relevant and effective.

Our priorities are:

- Youth Housing Solutions – expand exit housing and supported youth-specific beds
- Sustainability – secure multi-year funding for prevention, housing and employment pathways
- Social Impact & Enterprise – reimagine our social enterprise through its next evolution
- Lived Experience Leadership – deepen governance and peer workforce pathways

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

– Margaret Mead

Our Impact

PREVENTING YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

Preventing homelessness is possible and essential. Evidence shows that early intervention reduces crisis, strengthens families, and delivers long-term social and economic benefits. Yet systems remain crisis-driven, with 958 young people turned away from local services in one year alone. Project Youth's prevention work addresses this gap by building protective factors through family support, mental health, education, and justice programs, giving young people the stability and connection they need to thrive.

Early intervention is central to ending homelessness. This year, 659 young people received support.

- 1669 interventions delivered to families and young people
- 192 referrals unmet due to demand outstripping capacity (60%)
- Project Educate achieved 100% student graduation, re-engaging students in learning
- THRIVE program for young mothers fostered community and confidence
- Culture Connect and Surf Camp strengthened cultural identity and wellbeing
- 313 young people were supported to reduce risk of homelessness
- \$52,532 in fines cleared through WDOs, removing financial barriers



**“Prevention must
be a national
priority.
Systems need to
shift from crisis
to early support.”**

Our Impact

HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS SUPPORT

Youth homelessness continues to rise across NSW, with demand for housing far exceeding supply with 79% of young people seeking support being turned away due to a lack of vacancies. Project Youth provided refuge, transitional, and long-term housing to 515 young people this year, offering safety, stability, and wrap-around support to rebuild their lives. Our continuum of care from crisis accommodation to exit housing ensures young people are not only housed but equipped with the skills and confidence to sustain independence.

“I finished my Diploma, got a job, and now live independently. Project Youth gave me stability and belief in myself.”



- 142 young people housed (79 in crisis, 87 in transitional, 16 in long-term)
- 76% of young people transitioned into safe housing
- 74 young people were provided brief interventions when we could not house them
- Willow House refuge opened, offering five refurbished 24/7 staffed crisis beds
- 65 transitional beds maintained across 3 LGAs
- Tanderra program provided affordable long-term accommodation
- 90% of young people had mental health service involvement
- 295 support plans were created providing individualised wrap around support
- Purchase of a 2-bedroom 'exit unit', a step towards sustainable housing pathways



EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING: BREAKING THE CYCLE

Ending youth homelessness requires more than housing, it means creating pathways to lasting independence. In 2024–25, Project Youth supported 157 young people to build skills, gain qualifications, and secure meaningful work. Through accredited training, social enterprise, and creative programs like Café Social, Soundwave Studios and Beyond Homelessness podcast, 73% of participants transitioned into permanent employment and over 90% reported improved confidence and wellbeing. These initiatives demonstrate that when young people are given opportunity, connection, and purpose, homelessness is far less likely to reoccur.

Education & employment remain the strongest pathways out of homelessness.

- 348 young people supported through Café Social over its 12-years in operation
- 47 young people completed accredited courses (Music, Hospitality, Workplace Skills)
- 6 young people were employed or trained through the Beyond Homelessness podcast
- 88% reported improved resilience and self-reliance
- 660 hours of work experience provided
- 41 young people undertook structured work placements

Café Social Impact (over its 12 years):

- 50,000+ hours of paid youth employment
- 43 young people employed
- \$43,000 annual cost-avoidance per participant (justice, housing, welfare savings)

“Employment is the bridge between homelessness and independence, every hour of training, every job created, and every connection made brings us closer to ending youth homelessness.”

PEER SUPPORT & LIVED EXPERIENCE LEADERSHIP



- 394 young people participated at Project Youth through consulting, decision making and leading
- 510 young people supported through the new COMPASS Point Hub with information, advice and guidance
- 113 young people supported through the COMPASS Drop-In program
- 3,322 young people supported through peer & lived experience programs
- Launch of 'Tastes Like Home', a 12 recipe video collection created by young people
- 25 young people obtained Youth Mental Health First Aid certificates
- Peer Educators reached 1,522 young people through PlaySafe Summer

30% of the workforce at Project Youth are young people with lived experience including:

- 2 x Full time lived experience roles
- 1 x lived experience youth ambassador
- 2 x Lived Experience Board Directors
- 7 x YPAC members (shared leadership)
- 1 x Company Secretary role
- 2 x young people on the Reconciliation Working Group
- 1 x young person with lived experience employed to take over our cleaning contract

Project Youth is redefining what power-sharing looks like in practice. Through YPAC (Young People Advocating Change), young people with lived experience now co-lead decisions, shape programs, and influence governance. In 2024–25, peer workers delivered over 1,500 community interactions, supported 510 young people through the new COMPASS Hub, and co-designed the Rising Together Lived Experience Framework. From initiatives like Tastes Like Home to youth-led mental health and community education, lived experience is no longer a voice to consult, it's a voice that leads, teaches, and transforms systems from within.

“We didn’t just get a seat at the table; we built a new table.”

OUR FUTURE: DRIVING CHANGE TOGETHER

As we close this year of impact, Project Youth continue to strive to be a catalyst for systemic change, proving that when young people are supported early, safely housed, and meaningfully employed, homelessness can end. Our programs have shown that prevention works, lived experience transforms systems, and genuine partnership with community delivers measurable outcomes.

Yet the broader picture is clear: without structural reform, too many young people will continue to fall through the cracks. We call on the government, funders, and communities to invest in prevention, fund the true cost of youth homelessness service delivery by paying what it takes, and prioritise youth specialist housing as critical infrastructure.

Over the next five years, our focus is bold and unwavering: to strengthen prevention, increase the amount of supported housing options, expand affordable exit housing, embed lived experience leadership across all levels of governance, and reimagine social enterprise as a sustainable pathway to independence. Guided by our values of **Courage, Compassion, Creativity, Belonging, and Exceptional**, we will continue to walk alongside young people to create a fairer, more inclusive system.

“Together, we can do more than respond to homelessness — we can end it.”



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Every highlight in this report is thanks to the courage of young people, the dedication of our workforce, the belief of our community, and the commitment of our donors and funders.

THANK YOU

