

**AbSec**

NSW Child, Family & Community  
Peak Aboriginal Corporation

# Housing solutions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people exiting care in NSW

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Research Paper

December 2025



## Acknowledgement of Country

AbSec acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout New South Wales and their continuing connections to land, waters, and communities. Our head office is located on the land of the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation, in Redfern, and AbSec operates statewide.

We acknowledge and pay our respects to the Traditional Owners of all lands and waters across New South Wales, honouring Elders past, present, and future.

We recognise and respect their enduring connection to Country, their ongoing care for community, and the preservation and practice of their culture for generations uncounted.

We acknowledge the Elders, leaders and advocates within our sector and pay our respects to them as knowledge holders within this space and every space.

AbSec also acknowledge the Stolen Generations who never came home and the ongoing impact of government policy and practice on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and families.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are warned that the following study report may contain images of deceased persons.



# AbSec

NSW Child, Family & Community  
Peak Aboriginal Corporation

AbSec is the peak organisation advocating for the rights, safety, and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people, families and communities in New South Wales (NSW).

As an Aboriginal-led organisation, we champion self-determination and work towards a child and family system that is culturally safe, community-driven and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

AbSec leads policy reform, strengthens the capacity of Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs), and ensures that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people remain connected to family, community, and culture. We are a key member of the NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations (NSW CAPO) and the primary organisation responsible for Target 12 under Closing the Gap.

Through advocacy, research, and sector leadership, AbSec works to address the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care (OOHC) and promote holistic, community-led approaches to child and family wellbeing. Our commitment is to ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people grow up strong in culture, identity, and connection.

Our vision is that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are looked after in safe, thriving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities, raised strong in spirit and identity, with every opportunity for lifelong wellbeing and connection to culture, and surrounded by holistic supports.

In working towards this vision, we are guided by these principles:

- Acknowledging and respecting the diversity and knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- Acting with professionalism and integrity in striving for quality, culturally responsive services and supports for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities.
- Underpinning the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to develop our own processes and systems for our communities, particularly in meeting the needs of our children, young people, families and carers.
- Being holistic, integrated and solutions-focused through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander control in delivering outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people, families and communities.
- Committing to a future that empowers Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities, representing our communities, and the agencies there to serve them, with transparency and drive.

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## Disclaimers

### Data privacy and protection

We are committed to protecting the privacy and confidentiality of individuals involved in our studies and consultations. Any personal data included in this report has been used with consent and in accordance with applicable privacy laws.

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## Executive summary

Aboriginal young people leaving care in New South Wales (NSW) face serious and enduring challenges as they transition into adulthood. Many are stepping into independence, with inadequate housing options, limited financial support and a shortage of culturally safe services. This leaves them vulnerable to homelessness, poverty, social exclusion and at higher risk of involvement with the criminal justice system. For those exiting statutory care, systemic barriers and intergenerational disadvantage compound the difficulties of finding a secure and stable future (*Australian Institute of Health and Welfare [AIHW], 2023; Mendes et al., 2020; SNAICC, 2022*).

This report investigates the structural drivers of these poor outcomes and sets out a roadmap for reform. It examines the current housing landscape for Aboriginal young people exiting care, extended care arrangements and available financial entitlements across Australia, while identifying best-practice initiatives within Australia and internationally. It also examines supports beyond housing such as education, employment, health and wellbeing and cultural connection—all that are essential for successful transitions to adulthood.

Despite reforms across Australia extending care supports to age 21, no jurisdiction guarantees housing for young people leaving statutory care as they do in jurisdictions such as the United Kingdom. Although there are states that set out that young people exiting care are a ‘priority’ cohort for social housing such as in Victoria, NSW is not one of them.

In 2023–24, approximately 4,300 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were discharged from out-of-home care (OOHC) nationally with more than 1,000 exiting care in NSW alone (*AIHW, 2024*). Of these, approximately 50 percent of Aboriginal care leavers in NSW aged out or transitioned to non-permanent arrangements, with estimates of 200–300 of this cohort experiencing significant housing instability and/or homelessness. (*FACSIAR 2025*).

These young people, already having experienced trauma, disconnection from family and systemic disadvantage, and in some cases are further harmed within the very system intended to protect them, are then left to navigate adulthood alone. The absence of coordinated housing, mentoring and wraparound supports exposes them to homelessness, violence, exploitation and justice involvement.

**The reality is that we are creating vulnerability by design, through systems that plan for “care exit” rather than “life transition”.**

Secure housing is foundational to achieving multiple national targets, including reducing over-representation in OOHC (Target 12), increasing engagement in education, training and employment (Target 7), and ensuring access to appropriate, affordable housing (Target 9) (*Coalition of Peaks & Australian Government, 2020*). Evidence consistently shows that stable housing reduces long-term reliance on crisis services, health care and the justice system, delivering savings to government that far exceed the cost of provision (*AIHW, 2023*).

Assured housing provides Aboriginal care leavers with the stability to heal from trauma, strengthen cultural connections, and build strong, fulfilling futures in education, employment and community life. Providing this housing is not a question of feasibility—it is a test of political will and a national priority for a fairer Australia.

This report situates these findings within the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap*, and it also aligns with the National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children 2021–2031, which recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children as a priority population and calls for Aboriginal community-led service design, delivery and evaluation.

The central issue addressed in this report is the urgent need to end the housing crisis facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people leaving care in NSW. Any solution must embed



culture in every stage of decision-making, return decision-making power to Aboriginal communities and deliver positive, sustainable outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

While securing safe and affordable housing is the immediate priority, the report also recognises that housing alone is not enough. A broader set of reforms must work together to ensure that Aboriginal care leavers can transition successfully to independence and long-term wellbeing.

These reforms include:

- The NSW Government, as the corporate parent for Aboriginal children it has placed in OOHC, will ensure that all Aboriginal young people are in suitable, long-term housing when they exit care.
- Policy changes so that Aboriginal young people exiting care are a priority cohort for social housing.
- The NSW Government should make available adequate financial assistance to meet real housing and living costs for Aboriginal young people exiting care, while ensuring care leavers receive clear information and automatic access to their full entitlements.
- Early and holistic transition planning – starting from age 15 years and co-designed with Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) to prepare young people for independence in housing, education, employment and life skills.
- Robust data collection and accountability – in line with Closing the Gap Priority Reform 4, governments must ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities have access to high-quality, transparent data on housing, education and wellbeing outcomes. Accurate, community-controlled data is critical for tracking progress, identifying gaps and holding all levels of government accountable for delivering results.
- Guaranteed housing pathways – strategies such as ring-fenced Aboriginal Housing Office properties, head-leased private rentals and expanded and dedicated transitional housing must be implemented. Amongst November 2025 Quarterly Sector Forum participants, there was strong support for exploring Tiny Homes models in NSW, as are being implemented across Queensland and parts of Tasmania.
- Cultural identity at the centre of planning – every leaving-care plan must ensure that connection to family, culture and community is a core foundation of the transition to adulthood.

The young people leaving care today will become the Elders and community leaders of tomorrow. Governments must act decisively to ensure they are not left without the stable foundations every young person deserves. By committing to Aboriginal-led solutions, adequately resourcing ACCOs and embedding housing guarantees, NSW and Australia can reduce homelessness, close equity gaps and enable young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander care leavers to thrive as strong, connected and independent adults.



***“Housing is the foundation for everything else. Without a home, nothing else in life works.”***

*– Housing First model literature (see Tsemberis, S., 2010, Housing First: Ending Homelessness).*

## Background

Aboriginal young people leaving care in NSW face a series of structural barriers that severely limit their ability to secure safe, stable and culturally appropriate housing. These challenges are not the result of individual shortcomings but stem from long-standing weaknesses within the housing system, child protection policy settings and the lack of culturally responsive service delivery.

A critical barrier is the chronic shortage of social housing across NSW. There are currently tens of thousands of households listed on the social housing register, with extremely low turnover and prolonged wait times. Even when applicants are approved for priority access due to homelessness or risk of homelessness, they can wait months—often years—before a suitable property is offered. With limited availability in the social housing system, Aboriginal care leavers are frequently pushed into the private rental market, where high costs, limited rental history, discrimination and insecure tenancy arrangements create additional instability.

Where neither social housing nor affordable rental options are available, young people often rely on temporary homelessness support or emergency accommodation services, which are designed to respond to crisis rather than facilitate long-term transition to independence (AIHW, 2023; AHURI, 2023). Feedback from young people with lived experience reveals that these settings can be unsafe, culturally inappropriate and distressing. This includes exposing care leavers to environments that exacerbate trauma rather than support recovery.

Housing outcomes are further undermined by inconsistent and poorly coordinated pre-exit planning across child protection, housing and related systems. Incomplete or late Housing Pathways applications, delays in bond or rental assistance, and limited access to tenancy sustainment support frequently result in young people exiting care without confirmed accommodation in place.

The cessation of statutory care orders at age 18 often triggers what is commonly referred to as the 'transition cliff'. While NSW and other jurisdictions have introduced extended care arrangements, these measures primarily offer financial or casework assistance and do not guarantee access to secure housing. Without a tenancy or supported accommodation negotiated before exit, many Aboriginal young people face immediate housing instability despite being technically 'supported'.

Financial pressures are a significant contributing factor. Transitioning from care requires substantial upfront expenses—such as rental bonds, advance rent, household items and relocation costs—often at a time when income from employment or government payments is uncertain. While one-off support such as the Transition to Independent Living Allowance (TILA) is available, these payment levels have not kept pace with cost-of-living increases and remain inadequate to meet actual housing and establishment needs.

Finally, cultural disconnection and gaps in culturally safe service provision intensify the risks faced by Aboriginal care leavers. Many have experienced disruption to kinship networks and community relationships throughout their time in care, limiting opportunities to access informal housing support. Mainstream housing services do not always engage in culturally safe practices, leading to reluctance to seek support or early tenancy breakdown.

Taken together, these systemic barriers result in disproportionately poor housing outcomes for Aboriginal young people exiting care. Without urgent reform—anchored in Aboriginal-led solutions, housing guarantees and culturally informed support models—this cohort will continue to face avoidable instability, homelessness and social exclusion during one of the most vulnerable transitions in life.

## Current landscape in NSW

In NSW, young people leaving OOHC face substantial and persistent barriers to securing safe and stable housing. For many, the transition out of care is marked by uncertainty, inadequate support and a heightened risk of homelessness. Despite all Australian jurisdictions having extended care programs up to age 21 (which commenced in 2021), these programs do not guarantee housing for young care leavers (*Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2023*). As a result, the promise of extended care remains limited, with many young people continuing to fall through the cracks once formal care arrangements end.

The situation is particularly concerning in NSW, where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children remain significantly overrepresented in the OOHC system. While Aboriginal children make up approximately 6 per cent of the total child population nationally, they comprise 43 per cent of all children in OOHC across Australia (*AIHW, 2023*). In NSW, this inequity is even more pronounced, with Aboriginal children being almost 11 times more likely to be in OOHC than non-Indigenous children.

Despite ongoing reform efforts, NSW records one of the lowest family reunification rates nationally, with only around 2 per cent of Aboriginal children restored to their families each year. This reflects systemic challenges in achieving culturally safe restoration and highlights the urgent need for Aboriginal-led models of prevention, early intervention and family reconnection.

Recent data provided by FACSIA (October 2025) shows us that between 2020–21 and 2022–23, 1,421 Aboriginal young people aged 15 years and over exited care in NSW (without re-entry up to 30 June 2024).

Of these, 996 young people aged out of care upon turning 18, while others exited for reasons such as moving to independent living or self-placement. Although these figures represent young people who did not re-enter the care system, many remain under parental responsibility to the Minister, and some may have re-entered care after June 2024.

**Table 1: Aboriginal young people aged 15 and over who exited care in NSW (2020–21 to 2022–23)**  
(Data source: FACSIA, October 2025)

Year	Type of Exit				Total
	Adoption/Guardianship	Restoration	Turning 18	Other	
2020-21	25	5	333	116	479
2021-22	7	5	335	93	440
2022-23	5	13	328	156	502
Total	37	23	996	365	1,421

Source: The data are from LinDA.

The table shows:

- The majority of the young people exited OOHC for reasons other than adoption, guardianship or restoration.
- 996 of the 1,421 young people aged out of care (i.e. reaching 18 years old at the time of exit).
- Other reasons include moving to independent living or self-placement. A breakdown of counts by these reasons has not been provided due to data quality issues.
- Note that some of these young people may be on a legal order with Parental Responsibility to the Minister, even though they are not in care and some may have re-entered care after 30 June 2024.



**Table 2: Number of Aboriginal OOHC leavers by district and type of exit during this period**  
**Aboriginal young people aged 15 and over who exited care in NSW (2020–21 to 2022–23)**  
**(Data source: FACSIAR, October 2025)**

District	Type of exit				Total
	Adoption/Guardianship	Restoration	Turning 18	Other <sup>^</sup>	
Hunter	< 10	< 5	139	32	181
Western NSW	7	6	107	43	163
New England	< 5	< 5	93	35	129
South Western Sydney	< 5	< 5	89	31	128
Nepean Blue Mountains	< 5	< 5	78	28	109
Murrumbidgee	< 5	< 5	66	35	107
Illawarra Shoalhaven	< 5	< 5	80	19	103
Northern NSW	< 5	< 5	62	28	95
Mid North Coast	< 5	< 5	63	26	91
Central Coast	< 5	< 5	64	17	83
Statewide Services*	< 5	< 5	37	22	61
Western Sydney	0	0	39	15	54
South Eastern Sydney	< 5	< 5	27	8	38
Southern NSW	0	0	21	12	33
Sydney	0	0	16	9	25
Far West	0	0	< 15	< 5	16
Northern Sydney	0	< 5	< 5	< 5	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>996</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>1,421</b>

Source: The data are from LinDA.

\* Includes District recorded as 'Other'.

<sup>^</sup> The 'Other' exit type includes young people who have aged out of the system. Other reasons include moving to independent living or self-placement. A breakdown of counts by these reasons have not been provided due to data quality issues.

**Table 3: Aboriginal OOHC leavers by priority placement type prior to exit.**

Placement type	No.	%
Foster Care	376	26.5
Relative/Kinship Care	605	42.6
Residential Care*	154	10.8
Independent Living	225	15.8
Other*	61	4.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,421</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: The data are from LinDA.

\* Includes 'Intensive Therapeutic Care'.

\*\* Includes 'Non-related Person', 'Supported Accommodation', 'Parents', 'System Missing' and 'Others'.

Table 3 shows:

- 42.6 percent and 26.5 percent of the young people were in relative/kinship care and foster care, respectively, prior to exiting OOHC.
- 225 young people were living independently prior to exit.

Note that this reflects the last known placement type (grouped) prior to exit. The 'Other' category includes young people who may have left their placement and self-placed with their parent/s. Independent Living' includes both 'Supported Independent Living' and 'Therapeutic Supported Independent Living'.

The data shows that nearly 60 percent of Aboriginal care leavers in NSW either age out or transition to non-permanent arrangements. It highlights an urgent need for reform that bridges the gap between statutory care and independent living.

The numbers are not static and the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people entering care in NSW continues to rise.

The challenges faced by Aboriginal care leavers extend well beyond exiting care. Research consistently demonstrates that these young people are at greater risk of homelessness, unemployment and involvement in the youth justice system than their non-Indigenous peers (*ScienceDirect*, 2022; *AIFS*, 2023). The lack of culturally appropriate supports and consistent and early transition planning further compounds these risks, leaving many without the tools or networks to establish stability in early adulthood.

The wider housing landscape exacerbates inequalities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Across Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders experience housing insecurity at rates far greater than the general population with nearly one in three (29 percent) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 and over having experienced homelessness in their lifetime, and children and young people (aged 0–24) accounting for 37 percent of Australia’s homeless population (*ABS*, 2023; *NHSAC*, 2025).

The statistics underline the urgency. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people remain dramatically overrepresented in Australia’s homeless statistics and are 8.8 times more likely to experience homelessness than non-Indigenous Australians.

According to the 2021 Census, an estimated 24,930 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were experiencing homelessness (*ABS*). Specialist Homelessness Services data for 2022–2023 reinforces this crisis, with more than 74,700 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people seeking assistance that year alone, (*NHSAC*, 2025).

Evidence shows that experiencing homelessness before age 16 is one of the strongest predictors of chronic homelessness in adulthood (*State of Housing System Report*, 2025).

**Table 4: Housing services accessed after leaving care – Aboriginal OOHLC leavers by housing and homelessness services accessed in the 12 months after leaving care (FACSIAR Data received 2025).**

Housing service	No.	%
PH/AHO Tenancy	217	15.3
NSW Housing Register*	189	13.3
PRA	55	3.9
TA	176	12.4
SHS	263	18.5
No service accessed	824	58.0
<b>Total cohort**</b>	<b>1,421</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: The data are from LinDA.

\* Excluding those who subsequently received PH/AHO tenancy during the follow-up period.

\*\*Counts do not sum to the total cohort and proportions do not sum to 100 per cent as young people can access multiple housing services during the follow-up period.

Table 4 shows that within one year after leaving care:

- 58.0 percent of the young people had not been on the NSW Housing Register or did not access public housing (PH)/Aboriginal Housing Office (AHO) tenancy, private rental assistance (PRA), temporary accommodation (TA) or specialist homelessness service (SHS)
- 15.3 percent of the young people were in PH/AHO tenancy

- 13.3 percent of the young people were on the NSW Housing Register and had not received PH/AHO tenancy during the follow-up period
- 3.9 percent (55) of the 1,421 young people received PRA, including 19 who received Rent Choice Youth (RCY) subsidy. None had accessed Rent Choice Family Assist (FA) subsidy
- 12.4 percent of the young people received TA assistance; and
- 18.5 percent of the young people received SHS support.

Note that the figures presented reflect the number of young people who accessed individual housing services or products at any point during the one-year follow-up period. It is important to note that some individuals accessed multiple services, which explains why the total number of service access occasions exceeds the size of the cohort. However, this does not necessarily imply concurrent use of services. For instance, a young person who ultimately secured housing through a PH or AHO tenancy may have previously accessed other forms of support such as PRA, TA, or SHS. Note that SHS does not capture unexpressed demand, i.e. young people in need of homelessness services but did not present to SHS. The 225 young people living independently prior to exit includes 146 young people in Supported Independent Living/Intensive Therapeutic Care.

This cohort of people living independently may interact with housing and homelessness services at a later timeframe.

The NSW Housing Register captures expressed demand only. It does not account for unexpressed demand from households or individuals who need housing but have not presented for housing services. These young people may have accessed other housing services/assistance not captured in the LinDA.

**Table 5: Number of Aboriginal OOHC leavers who accessed housing and homelessness services in the 12 months after leaving care by district.**

District	Housing service						Total**
	PH/AHO Tenancy	On waitlist	SHS	PRA	TA	None	
Hunter	25	25	19	5	21	114	181
Western NSW	28	14	32	9	19	97	163
New England	17	24	21	< 5	19	70	129
South Western Sydney	26	8	21	5	12	74	128
Nepean Blue Mountains	22	11	13	< 5	7	67	109
Murrumbidgee	13	23	24	< 5	15	63	107
Illawarra Shoalhaven	16	13	21	8	13	58	103
Northern NSW	8	8	19	0	8	66	95
Mid North Coast	5	19	28	6	17	44	91
Central Coast	11	10	13	< 5	10	51	83
Statewide Services*	8	12	20	< 5	14	30	61
Western Sydney	16	7	8	< 5	< 5	27	54
South Eastern Sydney	11	< 5	7	< 5	5	19	38
Southern NSW	< 5	5	10	< 5	11	16	33
Sydney	6	6	6	0	< 5	< 15	25
Far West	0	< 5	< 5	< 5	0	14	16
Northern Sydney	< 5	0	< 5	0	0	< 5	5
<b>Total**</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>824</b>	<b>1,421</b>

Source: The data are from LinDA.

\* Includes District recorded as 'Other'.

\*\* Counts for each housing service do not sum to the total cohort for each district as young people can access multiple housing services during the follow-up period.



For many Aboriginal families, homelessness does not always mean sleeping rough—it frequently takes the form of severe overcrowding, where multiple families share housing that is inadequate for their needs. Overcrowded living conditions not only increase health and safety risks but can also trigger Risk of Significant Harm (ROSH) reports to child protection authorities, further entrenching the cycle of housing insecurity and family separation.

These figures highlight the urgent need for culturally safe housing solutions that reduce overcrowding and break the intergenerational links between housing instability and child protection involvement.

However, there are critical gaps in data and reporting that obscure the lived experiences of Aboriginal young people as they leave care. Despite long-standing concerns about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander overrepresentation, very little research has examined their experiences of leaving care and the exact number of Aboriginal young people exiting care who are homeless each year remains unknown. In short, there is an absence of reliable, comprehensive data.

This data gap extends beyond simple counts of young people on statutory orders. To properly inform policy, information must also include access to leaving-care programs, post-care services and other social supports for Aboriginal young people in each region. At present, this data is not collected and/or integrated with other child protection data to build a more comprehensive and complete understanding of the nature and scope of the challenge.

Service providers—particularly those in regional areas—report that many Aboriginal young people leave care before they are formally eligible for after-care services. Some exit placements prematurely, either by running away to homelessness or to insecure arrangements (such as couch-surfing), or by returning to kinship placements that were initially assessed as stable but later broke down.

Employees from both ACCOs and mainstream agencies have observed that these pathways often result in Aboriginal young people “falling through the cracks.” Many later reappear in homelessness services or the criminal justice system after their circumstances deteriorate, but by then they are no longer counted within official leaving-care statistics. Without urgent action to close these data gaps, policy responses will remain incomplete, and the cycle of disadvantage will continue (*Mendes et al., 2020; SNAICC, 2022; AIHW, 2023*).

Addressing these issues requires more than temporary or one-size-fits-all solutions — it demands systemic reform, Aboriginal community-led service delivery and long-term flexible funding in culturally safe housing and supports.

ACCOs are best placed to provide leaving-care services that are culturally safe, locally informed and responsive to the needs of young people (*SNAICC, 2022*). To achieve this, ACCOs need adequate funding to deliver housing and transition supports, and to design, implement and monitor meaningful transition and cultural plans for every Aboriginal care leaver.

## Existing support for young people leaving care in NSW

### Extended care

Extended care was heralded as a major reform across Australia. Yet, without guaranteed housing and stronger cultural supports, its promise remains unfulfilled. The following section examines the current landscape of extended care and its impact on Aboriginal young people leaving care in NSW.

Until recently, young people in Australia were required to leave OOHC at 18, regardless of whether they were ready to live independently. Recognising the risks this posed, all Australian states and territories introduced extended care arrangements up to age 21, with the NSW Government the last to do so (*Commonwealth of Australia, 2021*).

These programs aim to provide continuity of support for young people as they transition into adulthood. However, the scope of extended care in Australia is limited. While jurisdictions offer continued case management, allowances and in some cases housing assistance, there is no guarantee of secure housing. This gap is particularly harmful for Aboriginal young people, who already face significantly higher risks of homelessness and social exclusion upon leaving care (*AIFS, 2023*).

Moreover, access to extended care is inconsistent. Eligibility often depends on whether the young person was in a formal foster or residential placement at 18, excluding those who may have already drifted from the system or experienced unstable placements. For Aboriginal care leavers, whose care journeys are often marked by disruption and disconnection, this eligibility barrier further entrenches disadvantage (*Productivity Commission, 2021*).

While young people may receive financial entitlements, they struggle to find safe and affordable housing in the private rental market and/or face extending waiting times for social housing (*NHSAC, 2025*).

In practice, extended care generally means young people receive caseworker check-ins and/or financial stipends but are still left without the foundations for independence. This is in contrast to the commitments set out under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, where governments committed to improved housing outcomes (Target 9), reductions in youth justice involvement (Target 10), and full participation in education and employment (Target 7) (*Joint Council on Closing the Gap, 2020*).

For Aboriginal young people, extended care in its current form does not adequately address cultural needs or structural disadvantage. Transition planning rarely prioritises connection to family, community, culture and Country despite this being central to wellbeing and resilience (*SNAICC, 2022*). Additionally, many extended care programs are delivered by mainstream services rather than ACCOs, limiting their cultural safety and effectiveness.

Without significant changes, extended care will not close the equity gap for Aboriginal young people leaving care.

### Financial supports for care leavers

Young people leaving OOHC in NSW are eligible for a range of financial supports, but these payments are often fragmented, inadequate and difficult to access. The *Children and Young Persons (Care*

and Protection) Act 1998, s.165 requires the Minister to provide assistance to eligible care leavers until the age of 25 where necessary to support their safety, welfare and wellbeing. This support is intended to ensure that young people transitioning from OOHC are not disadvantaged and are provided the opportunity to achieve outcomes comparable to their peers.

Central to this process is the *Leaving Care Plan*, which is required under Section 166 of the Act. Planning must begin from the age of 15 and be personalised to reflect each young person's circumstances, needs and aspirations. Developed collaboratively with the young person, carers, caseworkers and relevant support networks, the plan should outline practical steps toward independence and must consider housing, education, employment, financial management, health, cultural identity, reconnection with family (where appropriate), and the development of life skills. The plan must specify service providers and support pathways and is expected to be reviewed regularly as the young person's circumstances evolve. Where a young person exits without a plan, there is an expectation that one is created at the time they seek aftercare assistance.

To support successful implementation, a range of financial allowances and assistance are available in NSW depending on the young person's living situation, assessed needs and level of independence:

### **Independent Living Allowance (ILA)**

Paid directly to young people aged 18–20 who are living independently and require assistance with essential living and accommodation costs. Care leavers may access ILA even when in receipt of other Commonwealth supports such as Youth Allowance or Rent Assistance. As at 1 July 2024, this was \$276 per fortnight.

### **Aftercare Allowance**

Available to young people aged 18–24 who are engaged in full-time training or education and would be at risk of homelessness without financial support. Paid at the same rate as ILA but offered for short-term periods (typically three months at a time), it assists while longer-term housing and support arrangements are secured. As at 1 July 2024, this was \$276 per fortnight.

Other entitlements include:

### **Rent Choice Youth**

A government-run program that helps young people aged 16 to 24 cover the cost of renting for up to three years. For the first 12 months, the young person pays 25% of their weekly household income, plus 100% of their Commonwealth Rent Assistance. Homes NSW will cover the rest as a subsidy and pay it directly to the young person's landlord or real estate agent. After 12 months, the rent contribution will gradually increase. Every three months, Homes NSW will review the need for the subsidy.

### **Rentstart Bond Loan**

An interest-free loan that can cover some or all of the rental bond.

### **Transition to Independent Living Allowance (TILA)**

A one-off Commonwealth payment designed to support young people leaving OOHC as they move towards independent living. Eligible young people aged 15 to 25 can receive up to \$1,500 to help cover the costs of establishing themselves in the community. This may include expenses such as bond payments, household items, education materials, transport, employment-related costs or basic living essentials. TILA is not income support, but a practical financial contribution intended to assist with initial transition needs.

### **Commonwealth Supports**

Care leavers may be eligible for federal payments such as *Youth Allowance*, *JobSeeker allowance*, *Abstudy* (depending on age, education and employment status). They may also access



Commonwealth Rent Assistance if they are renting privately or in community housing. However, even when combined, these payments often fall below the poverty line (ACOSS, 2023).

### **The Victim Support Scheme**

Under the *Victims' Rights and Support Act 2013*, children and young people in statutory care who have been harmed by crime can apply for support. This support can include counselling, financial assistance and recognition payments. Caseworkers are mandated to identify victims in OOHC and assist with applications—even after leaving care—ensuring those who have suffered trauma are not left without redress.

### **The No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS)**

Offers interest-free loans (up to about \$2,000–\$3,000 depending on provider and purpose) to eligible low-income individuals for essentials such as rent bond, whitegoods, technology and educational expenses. These supports are especially important for care leavers for accessing goods or covering small upfront housing costs.

In addition to regular allowances, care leavers with identified needs may receive one-off contingency payments to support transition costs, including establishing accommodation (up to \$1,660 when in a shared tenancy, or \$2,380 for single tenancies), purchasing course materials or uniforms, accessing legal advice, or securing childcare to enable employment. Assistance for medical expenses may also be provided where timely access cannot be achieved through public health services.

### **Specialist Aftercare Program**

The *Specialist Aftercare Program* provides targeted support for care leavers aged 17–24 with moderate to high needs. This service offers tailored assistance—such as intensive case management, mentoring, outreach and Aboriginal cultural consultation—to help young people achieve transition goals where standard aftercare provisions are insufficient.

Follow-up support is mandatory after exit from care and may include review of the leaving care plan, advocacy, assistance to access universal services, and early intervention where challenges emerge.

### **Many young people are unaware of these supports**

Despite the availability of financial and transition supports, navigating eligibility remains complex, and many young people are not fully aware of their entitlements. This challenge is particularly acute for Aboriginal care leavers, who frequently encounter fragmented, inconsistent and culturally unsafe service systems. The impact of these supports is significantly reduced when access is dependent on a young person's knowledge of entitlements and the knowledge of caseworkers, many of whom are unaware of what housing and related supports are available for young people exiting care.

Consultation with young people with lived experience highlighted that leaving care plans were often developed very late—sometimes only shortly before the young person exited care—and were frequently incomplete, outdated or misaligned with their actual needs. High staff turnover among case workers contributed to plans being poorly prepared or not finalised at all. Critically, many of these plans lacked any meaningful cultural planning, despite the central importance of connection to culture, community and Country for Aboriginal young people.

To ensure these schemes achieve their intended outcomes, supports must be readily accessible, well-publicised and administratively simple. Early, proactive and culturally informed planning—undertaken in partnership with the young person, ACCOs and support networks—is essential to ensure that entitlements translate into real-life stability and opportunity for every Aboriginal young person exiting care.

Carers of young people in OOHC are also entitled to allowances while the child or young person is in their care. These include:

## Carer payments/allowances

Provided by state governments to cover the costs of raising a child in care.

## Extended care carer payments

In some jurisdictions, carers can continue receiving allowances if a young person remains in placement after turning 18 under extended care agreements. In NSW, carers can apply for the Staying On Allowance which is for carers of young people who 'stay on' with them after they turn 18. Across October–December 2024, there are 283 Aboriginal young people aged 18–21 years that remain with foster carers who receive the allowance. Alternatively, the young person may opt to receive the Independent Living Allowance. For the period ending October–December 2024, there are 588 Aboriginal young people aged 18–21 years accessing this allowance.

## Post-care education financial support

A non-means-tested payment aimed at helping young people aged 18 to 24 complete their NSW Higher School Certificate. This payment provides financial support to their carer to maintain the current living and support arrangements. As at 1 July 2024, this payment is \$601 where a young person is assessed as having standard care requirements, and rises to as much as \$1,483 for a young person assessed as having complex care needs.

While these payments offer continuity, these also highlight inequity: a young person leaving care often receives significantly less financial support when living independently compared to when in placement with a carer. This creates a gap where independence is penalised rather than supported, leaving many care leavers below the poverty line (*Productivity Commission, 2021*).

**Table 6. Current Policies of Extended care to 21 years of age – Australia**

### Current policies of extended care to 21 years across Australia

Jurisdiction & year of rollout	Number of care leavers p.a.	Foster/Kinship Care	Residential Care	Case Worker	Brokerage	Comments	Legislation
<b>VIC</b> <a href="#">Home Stretch 2021</a>	937 (age 15–17)	\$653 a fortnight (\$17k annually) until age 21 or until young person moves out	\$653/fortnight (\$17k annually) until age 21, brokered through a worker	Yes, through Better Futures	\$1599 per year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All young people leaving care are eligible with the exception of young people on TCP (targeted care packages).</li> <li>Young Person can leave and return to receive extended care until age 21</li> </ul>	In draft
<b>NSW</b> <a href="#">Your Choice, Your Future 2023</a>	1329 (15–17)	\$544/f/n 1st year \$400/f/n 2nd year \$250/f/n until 21 years	\$250/fortnight until age 21 paid by DCJ directly into young person's bank account	Package to include: funding for more caseworkers to support young people plan their transition out of care	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Independent Living Allowance gets paid into the young person's account directly</li> <li>The Independent Living Allowance is taxable income</li> <li>Young person may not be eligible if they are accessing supported independent living programs (SILP's)</li> <li>Young people aged 18, 19 and 20 years are eligible</li> </ul>	
<b>WA</b> <a href="#">Staying on Subsidy 2022</a>	356 (15–17)	\$450/f/n 1st year 75% (\$337) 2nd year 50% (\$225) 3rd year	\$450/fortnight until age 21, brokered through a worker	Yes, 1 on 1 Transitional Coach	\$2500 per year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uptake is at 90%</li> </ul>	
<b>SA</b> <a href="#">Stability in Family-Based Care (SFBC) 2018</a>	291 (15–17)	\$831 a fortnight until age 21 or until young person moves out	Next Steps Pilot Program. 20 young people, launched in Jan 22 until Jun 25.	No	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education grant \$275 per term until age 25</li> </ul>	Revised Act in draft
<b>TAS</b> <a href="#">Transition to Independence Program 2018</a>	61 (15–17)	1st year - Payments are maintained at the existing 12–17 age rates. 2nd year - Base rate for foster care 3rd year - 50% of the base rate until 21 years	Financial support capped at \$2500 per year, brokered through a case worker	No		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning Incentive Allowance \$2500 upon completion of Year 12 for the carer</li> </ul>	
<b>QLD</b> <a href="#">Extended Post Care Support July 2023</a>	918 (15–17)	\$615 a fortnight until age 21 or until young person moves out	\$617/fortnight until age 21, brokered through a worker	Yes, through Next Steps Plus	Not specified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Young Person can leave and return to receive extended care until age 21</li> <li>Eligibility for young people turning 18 on 1st July 2023</li> </ul>	

## Current policies of extended care to 21 years across Australia, cont.

Jurisdiction & year of rollout	Number of care leavers p.a.	Foster/Kinship Care	Residential Care	Case Worker	Brokerage	Comments	Legislation
<b>NT</b> <a href="#">Transition to Independence Policy 2022</a>	200 (15-17)	Carer reimbursements continue at same level as up to 18 years, and available until age 22.	Financial assistance available. Amount not specified - case by case	Not specified	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Care leavers are on priority list with Housing Dept.</li> <li>Financial assistance available but not promoted. Amount not specified</li> </ul>	Legislated
<b>ACT</b> <a href="#">Continuum of Care 2018</a>	51 (15-17)	\$594.44 a fortnight until age 21 or until young person moves out	Under review	Yes until 25			Legislated

## Gaps and shortfalls of current financial assistance

The limitations of current financial assistance for care leavers are clear:

### Below the poverty line

A combination of Youth Allowance or JobSeeker and Rent Assistance is insufficient to cover the cost of rent, food, transport and utilities in most parts of Australia (ACOSS, 2023).

### Inconsistency across jurisdictions

Extended care payments vary between states and are not guaranteed in the same way as United Kingdom (UK) entitlements. See Chapter 8.

### One-off support

Schemes such as TILA are short-term and do not address ongoing financial pressures.

### Cultural relevance

Very few financial supports are designed specifically for Aboriginal care leavers, despite their higher risks of homelessness and poor life chance outcomes and systemic overrepresentation at every stage of the child protection continuum in NSW.

These gaps mean that Aboriginal care leavers are disproportionately pushed into cycles of debt, housing insecurity and unstable employment. Financial stability is not just about income — it is about creating a foundation for housing, education and community connection.



*“Secure housing is the platform from which people can pursue education, work and wellbeing; without it, every other goal becomes secondary to survival.”*

– Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS), *Poverty in Australia 2023*



## Housing insecurity for care leavers

Housing is one of the most pressing challenges facing young people leaving care. In Australia, no state or territory provides a statutory guarantee of housing for care leavers. This means that young people often face extended waiting lists for social housing or are forced into the private rental market, where affordability and discrimination present significant barriers (NHSAC, 2025).

While social housing provides a safety net, access remains constrained, fragmented and often poorly aligned with the needs of care leavers.

Social housing encompasses both public housing, (owned and managed by state or territory governments) and community housing, which is delivered through not-for-profit organisations. Across jurisdictions, eligibility settings and age thresholds vary. In most states, applicants must be at least 18 years old to apply independently for social housing.

For care leavers and vulnerable young people, navigating these systems is complex. Youth workers, case managers and support services play a critical role in guiding applications—helping young people gather documentation, understand eligibility rules, and to advocate on their behalf. For young people leaving statutory care, escaping unsafe homes, or living without family support, these services are often the only link to stable accommodation.

The current housing environment presents systemic challenges. Long waiting lists, limited youth-specific properties, and strict eligibility requirements mean that many care leavers remain in insecure, temporary or unsafe living arrangements. Short-term or transitional accommodation is often unsuitable for young people, particularly those leaving care, as these can lack safety, privacy and stability. For Aboriginal young people, these environments may also be culturally unsafe or disconnected from Country and community, further compounding vulnerability.

### Indigenous housing governance and strategy NSW

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, housing insecurity is shaped by a complex history of dispossession, systemic exclusion and under-investment in housing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. In NSW, the AHO—established in 1998 as a statutory authority—plays a key role in managing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social housing. The AHO operates under an Aboriginal-governed Board of Directors and holds the assets of the State Owned and Managed Indigenous Housing (SOMIH) program. It also supports ACCOs and Indigenous Community Housing Organisations (ICCHOs) that deliver culturally responsive property management, tenancy services and housing support.

The AHO's 10-year strategy, *Strong Family, Strong Communities (2018–2028)*, aims to improve Aboriginal family and community wellbeing through safe, secure and affordable housing. The strategy emphasises collaboration with ACCOs, Aboriginal Land Councils and local communities to ensure culturally safe housing design and management.

Nationally, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing is primarily managed by state and territory governments, with funding contributions from the Australian Government through programs such as the *National Agreement on Social Housing and Homelessness (NASHH) 2024–2029*. This Agreement provides \$7.2 billion in general housing funding and \$2.1 billion for homelessness services over five years, identifying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as a priority homelessness cohort. However, the cessation of earlier national programs—such as the *National Partnership Agreement on*

*Remote Indigenous Housing (NPARIH, 2008–2018)*—has left a significant gap in targeted funding, with the development of Aboriginal-specific housing strategies now largely dependent on individual state initiatives.

Despite progress, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled housing sector remains small and under-resourced in most jurisdictions and supply remains inadequate. Overcrowding, housing shortages and poor-quality infrastructure persist, especially in remote communities where approximately 17 percent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians reside. These conditions are among the primary drivers of homelessness, intergenerational poverty and poor health outcomes.

Without dedicated investment and a coordinated national framework, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households will continue to face severe housing disadvantage—impacting young people exiting care most acutely.

In NSW, the AHO's community housing portfolio demonstrates the potential for partnership approaches. Larger Aboriginal housing providers manage tenancy and property services under contract, often working alongside local Land Councils or regional housing organisations. However, demand far exceeds supply, and many Aboriginal care leavers are still unable to access suitable accommodation within their communities, leaving them at heightened risk of homelessness or relocation far from Country.

A more robust national response grounded in cultural safety, regional equity and Aboriginal governance, is urgently needed to address these housing gaps and ensure that no Aboriginal young person leaving care faces homelessness or displacement from their community.

## Public and social housing access and priority status

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people remain significantly overrepresented in social housing across Australia, yet continue to face major barriers in accessing safe, secure and culturally appropriate accommodation. Despite comprising around 3% of the population, Aboriginal households make up a disproportionately large share of social housing tenants.

In NSW, access to public and community housing is managed through the Housing Pathways system, which consolidates the waiting lists of the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) and participating community housing providers. Applicants are assessed according to their level of housing need and may be placed on the priority housing list or general housing wait list.

Unlike Victoria and the UK, where care leavers are explicitly recognised as priority housing applicants, young people in NSW are not explicitly identified as a priority housing group. NSW requires them to apply under existing categories and meet standard eligibility criteria. The chronic shortage of social housing means that even high-priority applicants often wait extended periods before secure accommodation becomes available.

As of 31 July 2025, a total of 66,556 households were on the NSW Housing Register, with no current publicly available breakdown showing how many are Aboriginal care leavers. Although the indicator “Number of Aboriginal social housing applicants” is tracked by DCJ, detailed data about young people exiting care remains limited. This lack of transparency underscores a critical gap in reporting and accountability, leaving Aboriginal care leavers largely invisible within official statistics.

Of the 66,556, 11,659 households were assessed as priority applicants, reflecting urgent or complex housing circumstances, while 54,897 were classified as general applicants. Despite priority status indicating a higher level of need, significant delays remain for both categories.

Data from 30 June 2025 shows that the median waiting time for priority applicants that were Aboriginal care leavers is 4 months, compared with 14.4 months for general applicants. However,

these averages mask substantial variability across the NSW. In high-demand locations, such as parts of metropolitan Sydney and regional growth areas, wait times can extend beyond 10 years, even for applicants with priority approval.

Data provided from FACSIA October 2025 shows the number of OOHC leavers who were housed within 12 months of exiting care and the number of applicants (general and priority) broken down by district as at 30 June 2024.

**Table 7: Mean and median wait time (in months) for Aboriginal OOHC leavers who were newly housed in social housing within 12 months of care exit (FACSIA 2025).**

Priority status	No.	Wait time (in months)	
		Mean	Median
General	< 5		
Priority	26	4.4	3.4

Source: The data are from LinDA.

**Table 8: Mean and median wait time (in months) for Aboriginal OOHC leavers who were on the NSW Housing Register as at 30 June 2024 by district and priority status (FACSIA 2025).**

District	Priority status					
	General			Priority		
	No.	Mean wait time	Median wait time	No.	Mean wait time	Median wait time
Western NSW	15	18.3	17.2	9	12	5.5
Mid North Coast	15	16.2	10.7	5	12.6	13.2
Hunter	18	17.2	13.3	< 5	-	-
New England	17	19.8	19.4	< 5	-	-
Illawarra Shoalhaven	15	21.3	17.4	< 5	-	-
Murrumbidgee	12	29.4	31	< 5	-	-
South Western Sydney	13	22.5	18.5	0	-	-
Statewide Services*	11	16.5	11	0	-	-
Central Coast	10	17.9	17.6	0	-	-
Nepean Blue Mountains	7	20.1	20.8	< 5	-	-
Northern NSW	6	23.9	18.5	< 5	-	-
Southern NSW	6	19.1	19.3	0	-	-
Western Sydney	5	19.9	19.4	< 5	-	-
South Eastern Sydney	< 5	-	-	< 5	-	-
Sydney	< 5	-	-	0	-	-
Far West	0	-	-	< 5	-	-
Northern Sydney	0	-	-	0	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>20.4</b>	<b>17.7</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5.7</b>

Source: The data are from LinDA.

\*Includes District recorded as 'Other'.

These figures underscore the chronic shortage of social housing and the urgency for increased supply, particularly for vulnerable cohorts such as young people exiting care. The backlog demonstrates that even when applicants meet eligibility and priority criteria, timely access to suitable housing remains significantly constrained.

The scale of unmet housing need is stark. While Aboriginal care leavers may meet the criteria for housing assistance, the persistent shortfall in available dwellings—and limited culturally appropriate options—means many continue to fall through the cracks during their transition to independence.



Best practice indicates that housing referral pathways and formal pre-exit applications should commence well before a young person reaches the age of 18, ideally from the age of 15. Early collaboration between caseworkers, ACCOs and support services enables housing applications to be supported by strong, comprehensive evidence, including the young person's care history, homelessness risk, and any relevant medical or social vulnerabilities.

To support this, policy reform is needed to allow young people in OOHHC aged 15 and over to lodge housing applications at least a couple years before exiting care, ensuring adequate lead time for assessments and allocations. Implementing early housing planning—combined with culturally informed advocacy and Aboriginal-led involvement—significantly improves the chances that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander care leavers can transition into safe and stable housing immediately upon exit, rather than become homeless or rely on emergency accommodation.

Without sustained investment in Aboriginal-led housing initiatives and increased public and social housing supply, these young people remain at disproportionate risk of homelessness. A system-wide commitment to culturally safe housing pathways—and recognition of care leavers as a defined priority cohort—is essential to closing this gap.

## Temporary, emergency and transitional housing programs

Across NSW, temporary, emergency and transitional accommodation form important—though inconsistent—parts of the housing continuum for young people leaving OOH. While these pathways are designed to provide safety and stability, in practice only transitional housing supports a structured move toward independence. Clearly distinguishing between these models is essential to understanding gaps and future opportunities.

Emergency and temporary housing provide immediate refuge for people experiencing acute housing crisis—such as homelessness, domestic or family violence, or sudden eviction. Accommodation may include short-term stays in crisis centres, motels or community-managed facilities, typically lasting only days or weeks.

In 2023–24, more than 280,100 people accessed specialist homelessness services in Australia (AIHW, 2024), including young people exiting care. These services are designed primarily for crisis response, focusing on immediate safety rather than long-term planning or skills development.

Young people with lived experience raised significant concerns about temporary and emergency accommodation in our consultation with them. Many reported feeling unsafe and unsupported, with some describing placements as “scary” and “overwhelming”. Young people recounted being housed alongside adults with very complex needs, including individuals with histories of violence and/or substance misuse. These environments often lacked privacy, cultural safety and basic stability, placing them in situations that felt dangerous or deeply uncomfortable.

Transitional housing, while also intended as a temporary arrangement (typically 3 to 24 months), operates very differently. Transitional models offer a bridging pathway from care to independent living, supported by wraparound case management. These programs focus on stabilising circumstances, developing independent living skills, and engaging the young person in education, training or employment prior to transitioning into long-term accommodation. Supports may include tenancy readiness, budgeting, mentoring and assistance with accessing health and social services.

Despite its importance, access to transitional housing in NSW is limited and inconsistent. The majority of regions lack dedicated pathways for care leavers, and available programs are often underfunded or oversubscribed. As a result, many young people must navigate general homelessness systems, which are not developmentally or culturally appropriate.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, this gap is particularly concerning. Effective transition requires housing models that embed cultural safety, connection to community and Country and trauma-informed care. Evidence shows that Aboriginal-led housing approaches deliver stronger long-term results, but current availability is insufficient to meet demand.

For Aboriginal care leavers, the continuation of culturally unsafe housing models perpetuates cycles of homelessness, instability and disconnection. Early intervention through culturally grounded, youth-specific transitional housing is essential to ensure that young people do not merely exit care, but move forward into safe, stable and independent adulthood.

## Housing initiatives in NSW

In NSW, Foyer Central in Chippendale represents one of the state's most prominent initiatives supporting young people aged 18–22 who are exiting OOHC. Developed through a social impact investment partnership between the NSW Government, Uniting, Social Ventures Australia (SVA), St George Community Housing (SGCH) and the City of Sydney, the program offers an integrated housing and support model designed to promote independence and prevent homelessness.

Opened in early 2021, Foyer Central is a purpose-built, five-storey facility comprising 73 units—53 self-contained studio apartments for young care leavers and 20 affordable housing units.

Located in Sydney's inner city, the site provides residents with stable housing for up to 2 years, proximity to public transport and wraparound supports focused on education, employment readiness, and tenancy sustainment. While not designed exclusively for Aboriginal young people, approximately one-third (34 percent) of residents identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Early evaluations have highlighted positive outcomes, with 80 percent of participants transitioning into stable housing on exit, and 72 percent entering private rental accommodation.

Similarly, the Illawarra Foyer Project (operating under the Illawarra Youth Homelessness Service and funded through the joint Commonwealth–State Homelessness Action Plan) provides transitional housing and support to young people leaving care and at risk of homelessness. While this program has achieved positive outcomes and engaged several Aboriginal participants, it is also a mainstream service.

Despite its success, Foyer Central remains unsuitable for many Aboriginal young people transitioning from care. Located in a dense urban environment—far removed from family, community, and Country—it is challenging to meet the cultural, emotional and/or environmental needs of some participants, particularly those from regional or remote areas. The high-rise, inner-city setting can be overwhelming, and some Aboriginal young people have disengaged due to disconnection from familiar surroundings and support networks.

Feedback indicates that some Aboriginal young people—particularly those relocating from regional communities—have struggled to adapt to the urban, structured living environment, sometimes choosing to leave the program prematurely.

These experiences highlight a significant service gap in NSW: while general youth foyers play an important role in addressing homelessness and providing transitional support, they are not designed around the cultural, geographic and social realities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in NSW. Many Aboriginal care leavers prefer to remain close to their communities, kinship networks and Country, where culturally safe supports can be delivered in environments that align with their identity and connection to place.

To achieve equitable outcomes, NSW must invest in Aboriginal-led and regionally based transitional housing initiatives. These should be co-designed with ACCOs to ensure that culture, community and self-determination are central to the transition process.

## Aboriginal-led transitional housing initiatives

Across NSW, ACCOs are developing culturally safe housing initiatives designed specifically for Aboriginal young people leaving OOH. One such initiative, led by the Burdekin Association in partnership with the Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Corporation (KBHAC), represents an important step forward in supporting young Aboriginal people at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

This collaboration has secured funding to assist young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander care leavers aged 18 to 24 to secure safe, suitable and supported accommodation of up to three months in the inner west of Sydney. The program is open to Aboriginal young people across the state who are transitioning from care, detention or facing housing insecurity.

The program is designed to offer a culturally safe, trauma-informed space where young people can stabilise, rebuild confidence and plan their next steps. Participants receive wraparound case management tailored to their individual needs, including rent assistance, assistance with employment readiness and gaining employment, financial literacy and life skills development. Practical supports such as cooking, budgeting and tenancy preparation are complemented by wellbeing programs and guidance on navigating public services such as housing, Centrelink and health.

Crucially, the program embeds cultural connection and healing at its core. Through partnerships with Elders and community mentors, young people are supported to reconnect with family (where safe and appropriate), participate in cultural practices and strengthen their sense of identity and belonging.

The program aims to support up to 20 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people between July 2025 and June 2026, providing early intervention to reduce reliance on crisis accommodation and prevent homelessness. As at November 2025, there are six active young people in the program. All young people have a current Housing application.

By embedding culture, community connection and long-term planning into each young person's transition, the initiative seeks to empower participants to build independent and fulfilling futures.

## Non-government funding models for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing

Across Australia, collaboration between Aboriginal community housing providers, mainstream developers and government agencies are beginning to demonstrate how non-government funding can be mobilised to expand Aboriginal housing supply. These examples show that with the right governance and policy settings, innovative funding partnerships can support culturally grounded housing outcomes while also ensuring long-term economic sustainability.

One of the most notable examples is the Pemulwuy Project in Redfern, Sydney, NSW—delivered through a partnership between the Aboriginal Housing Company (AHC) and private sector developers. The project was established on land owned by AHC at the historic site known as “The Block”, long recognised as a symbol of Aboriginal identity, resilience and activism in urban Sydney. The initiative combines mixed tenure and mixed-use development, including affordable rentals, commercial and retail premises and purpose-built student accommodation for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous students.

A key success factor for the Pemulwuy Project was its innovative financing structure. The private developer partner entered into a 99-year lease arrangement, providing upfront capital to AHC. This arrangement allowed the organisation to fully fund and retain ownership of the affordable housing component while generating ongoing revenue from commercial and retail operations across the precinct. This model has enabled AHC to maintain long-term control of the land and direct rental

income towards operating costs and future community housing initiatives (*Benedict, Gurran et al., 2022*).

The project's significance extends beyond its physical infrastructure—it represents a landmark in self-determined urban renewal. The Pemulwuy development restores Aboriginal presence to a highly gentrified area, providing culturally safe housing options for Aboriginal families while also supporting mixed community use. It stands as a model of how Aboriginal organisations can retain land ownership, generate revenue and drive community-led development through equitable partnerships with private and government sectors.

Similarly, a 2021 partnership between SGCH and Landcom, the NSW Government's land and property development agency, illustrates the potential for culturally responsive social housing within mainstream urban renewal. Located in Redfern—an area of deep cultural significance for Aboriginal people—the project delivered 160 new dwellings, 47 percent of which have been specifically designated for Aboriginal households. This allocation was designed in recognition of the historical and ongoing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander presence in the area and as a tangible step towards reconciliation in urban housing policy (*SGCH, 2024*).

This development also demonstrates how Aboriginal housing priorities can be integrated into broader state-led social and affordable housing projects, ensuring that new builds respond to community identity, location preferences and cultural safety. The success of such initiatives suggests that with intentional planning and inclusive governance, mainstream housing agencies can contribute significantly to reducing Aboriginal housing disadvantage.

While these examples were developed under unique circumstances, both projects reveal the untapped potential of leveraging private investment and public–community partnerships to deliver culturally safe and sustainable housing outcomes for Aboriginal people – young and old. They also highlight the need for enabling policy frameworks—particularly in planning, zoning and financing—that empower Aboriginal organisations to retain ownership, negotiate equitable terms, and reinvest proceeds into ongoing community benefit.



*“Evidence shows that when Aboriginal organisations lead housing initiatives, outcomes are more sustainable because services are grounded in cultural identity and self-determination.”*

– SNAICC, 2022.



## Australia's successful housing models and initiatives

Across Australia, a range of innovative housing models have been developed to support young people leaving OOHHC. Several programs demonstrate promising outcomes in facilitating stable transitions to independence. This section summarises the current landscape of effective housing initiatives

These programs and initiatives have shown that targeted, culturally safe housing models with wrap-around supports can significantly improve outcomes for Aboriginal care leavers. Whether Aboriginal-specific or designed in strong partnership with Aboriginal communities and ACCOs—these showcase what is possible when cultural connection is placed at the centre of housing support.

In this section, several successful programs that embed cultural safety, self-determination and wrap-around supports are set out.

Each of these initiatives recognises the importance of Aboriginal young people remaining connected to their identity and their communities. These also demonstrate the vital role ACCOs play in guiding service design, leading healing-centred support and ensuring that care leavers are not navigating their transition alone.

Across Australia, states and territories are increasingly adopting innovative and alternative housing solutions in response to limited availability of suitable accommodation for young people leaving care. With growing demand and long wait times for social housing, several jurisdictions have begun implementing modular construction models such as tiny homes and pod-style units to provide rapid, flexible and cost-effective transitional accommodation. These alternatives not only increase capacity in high-demand regions but also allow for the creation of small, community-based housing environments that are suited to young people who require stability, privacy and tailored support.

Together, these models offer evidence that culturally informed housing responses can create stability, belonging and long-term positive pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander care leavers—and that similar approaches could be strengthened and scaled across NSW.

### Home Stretch

The Home Stretch campaign was one of the most significant child-welfare reforms in Australia. Launched by Anglicare Victoria in 2016, it began as a national advocacy movement to end the abrupt termination of care at 18 and extend formal support to the age of 21.

This reform provides care leavers with up to three additional years of financial assistance, casework and flexible supports. Rather than being discharged into adulthood overnight, young people might remain in safe placements or supported accommodation while they complete education, secure employment and build the life skills required for independent living

#### *Western Australia's Home Stretch*

Western Australia has expanded the Home Stretch model statewide, incorporating Aboriginal cultural mentoring, early housing applications and brokerage to secure private rentals or social housing. Independent evaluations demonstrate improved housing stability, lower rates of homelessness and stronger education and employment outcomes. The WA program strongly emphasises cultural connection and self-determination, working with ACCOs to support care leavers to stay linked to family and Country.

***Yorganop Home Stretch*** (ACCO) is part of the state-wide initiative. It provides wrap around support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people exiting care from age 18 through

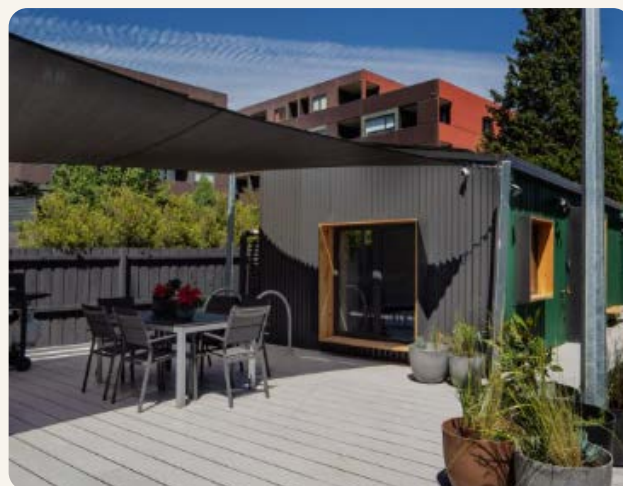
to 21. The service assists young people exiting care with access to housing, education, training, employment, connection to family and culture and support for their financial needs and health and wellbeing.

As an ACCO, Yorganop's Home Stretch service is tailored to meet the cultural and community needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. The support includes transition coaches who walk alongside young people in ways that are trauma informed and culturally safe – helping them reconnect with culture, Country and kinship networks if they wish.

The program is praised for cultural safety and responsiveness – participants say coaching that understands, supports and reconnects culture and kinship is important. Young people report feeling more supported post 18, particularly via the transition coach which helps reduce isolation and supports goal setting.

### ***Victoria's Better Futures/Home Stretch***

Home Stretch under the Better Futures program provides young people leaving care with an accommodation allowance, caseworker support and flexible funding, helping them to stay with carers or transition into other housing arrangements up to the age of 21. While the program does not currently own or supply dedicated housing stock, it does include referral pathways for Aboriginal young people to housing, underwritten by the policy commitment that recognises young people exiting care as a 'priority group' for social housing.



*Housing 21, Victoria*

### **Village 21 Housing Model – Victorian Pilots**

Building on the momentum generated by the Home Stretch reforms, Village 21 represents one of Victoria's most innovative housing responses for young people exiting care. Developed as a partnership between Anglicare Victoria and Kids Under Cover, the pilot offers a small-scale, village-style living environment designed to support young people aged 18–21 transition to independence within a safe and supported community.

Currently, there are two operational Village 21 sites in Victoria—one mainstream and one Aboriginal-specific—with two additional Aboriginal-specific villages planned for Bairnsdale and Shepparton. All sites are strategically located near transport, education and employment hubs, ensuring residents have access to essential community resources.

Funding for Village 21 comes from a mix of Victorian Government grants, philanthropic contributions and corporate partnerships.

Located in Melbourne's northern suburbs, the first Village 21 site was launched in December 2020 following a \$1.2 million investment from government and philanthropic partners. The site comprises of 6 separate buildings – two one-bedroom units, (each with ensuite), three two-bedroom units,

(each with a shared bathroom) and a communal building containing a kitchen, laundry, dining area and living room.

These are self-contained apartments integrated with communal kitchens and living areas to encourage connection and peer support. Live-in volunteer mentors' model everyday routines—such as cooking, cleaning and working—while case managers provide wrap-around support focused on education, employment, budgeting and life-skills development.

The program's design reflects growing evidence that young people leaving care benefit most from relationship-based support that combines secure housing with mentoring and skill-building. Village 21 enables participants to gain confidence and practical experience in tenancy management, work and study, while remaining connected to a caring community network.

Early evidence from the program suggests that Village 21 significantly improves housing stability, education engagement and wellbeing outcomes for care leavers. Graduates are supported to transition into long-term housing, with tenancy histories and references from their stay that strengthen their applications for social or private rentals.



*Moorumbina Mongurnallin, Frankston*

### **Moorumbina Mongurnallin – A Village 21 Model for Aboriginal Young People**

The most recent development under this model is Moorumbina Mongurnallin, located in Frankston, Victoria. This is the first independent-living Village 21 site designed specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.

Launched in 2023, the \$1.7 million project was created through a partnership between the Victorian Aboriginal Child and Community Agency (VACCA) and Kids Under Cover, with input from local Elders and young Aboriginal people to ensure cultural authenticity and relevance.

The name *Moorumbina Mongurnallin*, meaning “You are loved” in the Bunurong Boon Wurrung language, reflects the program's central philosophy of belonging, cultural safety and empowerment.

The village accommodates six young people aged 18–21 in three two-bedroom studio units, alongside two Aboriginal volunteer mentors who live onsite in single-bedroom apartments. Communal facilities include a shared kitchen, laundry and lounge area, a basketball court, native gardens and a yarning circle with a firepit—spaces deliberately designed to foster connection, storytelling and community healing.

Each resident receives individualised case management from a dedicated key practitioner. The key practitioner provides holistic support across education, employment, wellbeing and long-term housing goals. Cultural mentoring and regular on-Country activities are coordinated, with Elders visiting the site to strengthen young people's identity, belonging and links to community.

Residents may stay until the end of their 21st year, ensuring a gradual and supported transition to independent living rather than an abrupt exit from care.

From a sustainability perspective, *Moorumbina Mongurnallin* models environmentally responsible design. The dwellings incorporate rooftop solar panels, water-sensitive landscaping, rainwater harvesting and carbon-storing building materials. Young residents are encouraged to personalise their spaces, selecting furnishings through Better Futures or Home Stretch funding which they can take when they move into permanent accommodation—reinforcing autonomy and a sense of ownership. The relocatable nature of Village 21 structures also provides future scalability, allowing new sites to be established in regional and remote locations as demand grows.

Residents at *Moorumbina Mongurnallin* pay fortnightly rent which also covers utilities and Wi-Fi. Each occupant signs an occupancy licence—similar to a tenancy agreement—and receive a rental ledger and reference upon exit, supporting future applications for long-term housing. Referrals are typically made by Child Protection teams and Better Futures workers, with preference given to young people who have existing ties to the local community. While the standard intake age is 18–21, younger applicants may be accepted where appropriate. High-needs young people are also considered if they can engage safely within the communal environment. Prior to placement, candidates meet current residents through informal introductions to ensure compatibility and community cohesion.

The inclusion of cultural mentors and Elder involvement at *Moorumbina Mongurnallin* has enhanced young people's connection to identity and Country—key protective factors for Aboriginal wellbeing.

## Youth Housing First (YHF) Victoria

The Youth Housing First (YHF) Partnership pilot launched in 2025 applies the international Housing First model to young people leaving care. Developed by Melbourne City Mission (MCM) in collaboration with Junction Support Services and Quantum Support Services and funded by the Victorian Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH), this five-year initiative will provide secure housing and tailored support for 67 care leavers across South-East Metro Melbourne, Inner and Outer Gippsland, Ovens Murray and the Goulburn regions.

The YHF Partnership offers housing for at least two years with the option of longer tenancies (up to three years or more if needed), supported by:

- Flexible, trauma-informed case work that addresses needs related to health, wellbeing, education and employment
- Tenancy management and sustainment support, including help with rent payments and property maintenance
- Access to social housing properties as early as possible and ideally within the first six months of entering the program
- Integration with existing supports such as Better Futures, Home Stretch and the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

The model is built on Housing First, Advantaged Thinking and Sustaining Tenancies principles, recognising that stable housing is the foundation for achieving goals in education, employment and personal development.

YHF supports three main cohorts of young people aged 16.5 to 18 years at the time of referral:

1. Leaving residential care (including lead-tenant arrangements) and have been on an eligible order after their 16th birthday;
2. Exiting a custodial facility and who have been on an eligible order after their 16th birthday; or
3. Leaving or recently left residential, kinship, foster or permanent care and are at immediate risk of homelessness within six months.



Eligible orders include long-term care, Care by Secretary, permanent care or family reunification orders.

A dedicated number of places are reserved for Aboriginal young people, with ACCOs engaged to deliver culturally safe, client-led supports.

Flexible brokerage funding allows Aboriginal participants to access cultural services, reconnect with community and Country and pursue personal aspirations while establishing a long-term housing pathway.

The YHF Partnership represents Australia's first large-scale Housing First model tailored for care leavers. By securing housing first and providing sustained, flexible support, the program demonstrates how Victorian policy is moving to guarantee safe, secure housing for young people leaving care—directly supporting Closing the Gap targets on housing, education and youth employment.

MCM engaged the services of SVA to analyse the financial costs of the program, based on outcomes metrics, against the expected fiscal savings to government. The YHI target cohort are high consumers of government services and support across a range of expenditure areas. SVA predicts that governments will make savings through expenditure that was avoided of \$15.6m or \$222,000 per person through this vital project.

### **Youth Foyers (National – WA, QLD, SA, VIC, NSW, TAS)**

The Youth Foyer model provides integrated housing and education pathways for young people aged 16–24, including care leavers. Young people sign tenancy agreements and pay affordable rent, allowing them to build a rental history that supports future access to private or social housing. They live in purpose-built, fully supported accommodation for up to two years. The integrated Foyer approach breaks the cycle of disadvantage for young people, supporting them to achieve positive, thriving futures.

There are currently 16 accredited Youth Foyers established and operating around Australia with more Foyers under development. As discussed previously, NSW currently has two (one in Chippendale and one in the Illawarra region).

Originating in France, the Foyer approach has been adapted in Australia to meet local needs, offering young people a stable home while they complete study or training, build work readiness and develop the practical skills required for independent living.

Evaluation of Australian Youth Foyers consistently show improved housing stability, education participation and employment outcomes, especially when services are culturally safe and integrated with mainstream education and training systems (*Foyer Foundation, 2024; Shelter NSW, 2021*).

Outcomes from Youth Foyers across Australia are compelling:

- 80 percent of residents exit into safe, stable housing
- 65 percent gain secure employment; and
- Participants are 60 percent less likely to become involved in the justice system.

The *Under One Roof* report found that Youth Foyer programs deliver \$172,000 in savings to governments per person. This saving is attributable to reductions in housing, health, welfare and justice costs throughout a young person's life. On average, 52 percent of the benefits of Youth Foyers go to the State and 48 percent to the Federal Government.

While these figures are indicative rather than site-specific, these underscore the potential value of such initiatives when properly funded and implemented.

The following outlines the key Foyer programs operating in various states in Australia, highlighting where Aboriginal participation and culturally safe practices are incorporated.





*Education First Youth Foyers (EFY); Holmesglen and Kangan TAFE*

**Victoria** hosts some of the most established Youth Foyers in the country. The Education First Youth Foyers (EFY) at Holmesglen and Kangan TAFE campuses each provide around 40 studio apartments for young people aged 16–24. These foyers integrate housing with accredited training, employment pathways and life-skills coaching. These have staff based within the Foyer 24 hours per day. A third EFY site operates in Shepparton, and the state government has funded new regional foyers in Wodonga and Wangaratta. Intake procedures include discussion of cultural identity and connection to Country, and program materials emphasise flexible, culturally responsive support for Aboriginal residents (Launch Housing, 2024).

Evaluations show that around 11 percent of EFY residents identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, (*Shelter NSW, 2021*).

Victoria has also piloted the Village 21 model (*Moorumbina Mongurnallin*) in Frankston (as mentioned above). Village 21 demonstrates how the Foyer model can be adapted to place Aboriginal culture, mentoring and connection to community at the centre of transition planning.



*Townsville Youth Foyer*

**Queensland** currently operates foyers in Gold Coast, Logan and Townsville, each offering supported accommodation linked to education and employment programs. The Queensland Government has committed to building eight new foyers across the state, with initial sites in Cairns, Hervey Bay and Moreton Bay scheduled for delivery within the next three years. Over the next decade these foyers are expected to assist nearly 3,000 young Queenslanders at risk of homelessness (*Foyer Foundation, 2024*).

The service model emphasises individualised support and provides opportunities for local partnerships with Aboriginal organisations to strengthen cultural safety.



*Southport Foyer, Queensland*

### ***Foyer Southport***

The Gold Coast Youth Foyer (Foyer Southport) serves as a leading example of an integrated housing and support model for young people transitioning from care into independent living. Established in 2021 and managed by Gold Coast Youth Service Inc. in partnership with Community Housing (Qld) Ltd, the Foyer operates with 40 one-bedroom apartments, providing accommodation and holistic wrap-around supports for young people aged 16 to 25 years.

The Foyer is inclusive of all care leavers with approximately 18 percent of residents identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, and 28 percent of participants have transitioned from OOHHC. The program is state funded through the Queensland Government's Department of Housing and operates under a formal joint action plan between departments of Housing and Child Safety. All residents must hold an approved housing application and the majority are listed as high-priority clients on the social housing waitlist.

This Foyer model is built on the principles of "Advantage Thinking", focusing on young people's strengths, ambitions and potential. Residents are supported to engage in full-time education, training or employment while developing the life skills needed to live independently. The service provides 24-hour on-site support, coaching and mentoring, with staff acting as "critical friends" who empower young people to become the CEOs of their own lives.

Cultural safety is embedded in the program through partnerships with Kalwun, an Aboriginal organisation that supports Aboriginal residents to maintain connection to culture and country. The Foyer also employs an Aboriginal staff member and is developing a dedicated Cultural and Identity Program as part of its wellbeing framework.

The outcomes of Foyer Southport have been exceptional, achieving a 100 percent success rate in housing stability upon exit:

- 66 percent transition to private rental.
- 20+ percent return to family homes.
- the remainder secure social housing placements.



### *Youth Foyer in Townsville*

In June 2024, Mission Australia opened the Townsville Youth Foyer, one of Australia's newest purpose-built transitional housing facilities for young people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. The service accommodates 40 young people aged 16–24 years, with capacity to support up to 350 individuals over the next decade.

The Townsville Youth Foyer comprises of over 55 percent of participants identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. The Youth Foyer works in partnership with community organisations to provide culturally safe and practical pathways to independence for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.

The Townsville Youth Foyer involves 24-hour onsite support with professional tenancy management. The facility offers self-contained apartments designed to feel like home, featuring communal kitchens, shared spaces and recreational areas to encourage connection, learning and wellbeing.

Each young person receives individual coaching and mentoring tailored to their personal goals, enabling them to build resilience, financial capability and confidence to live independently.

The Townsville model is strengthened by local collaboration and community input throughout its design and delivery. Located adjacent to NRL Cowboys House, a culturally safe boarding facility for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, the proximity supports continued connection to culture, education and community.



*Foyer Oxford, Perth*

**Western Australia** is home to Foyer Oxford in Perth, one of the largest youth foyers in the southern hemisphere. A partnership between Anglicare WA and Foundation Housing, Foyer Oxford accommodates up to 98 young people, including places for young parents and provides education, employment and life-skills support. Approximately 20 percent of residents identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (Shelter NSW, 2021).

Building on this success, a new Regional Foyer Model is being developed in Broome in partnership with the Nirrumbuk Aboriginal Organisation to meet the specific needs of Aboriginal young people in the Kimberley. The Broome project will embed Aboriginal governance and local cultural knowledge in design and service delivery.

**South Australia** operates a single youth foyer, Foyer Port Adelaide, which stands as the state's first and only accredited model under the national Advantaged Thinking framework. The service was established in 2011 through a partnership between the Department of Human Services and St John's Youth Services and provides accommodation and wrap-around support for young people aged 16–25 who are at risk of, or experiencing homelessness—including those leaving care.

Located in the heart of Port Adelaide, the Foyer comprises of 23 fully independent apartments, each designed to support young people to transition from crisis or care environments into stable housing while re-engaging in education, training or employment. Since its inception, the program has supported more than 230 young people, achieving strong outcomes with around 90 percent of participants engaged in education, training or employment upon exit.

The Foyer provides access to community connections, employment coaching, mentoring, mental-health supports and education pathways, creating an integrated environment that promotes stability and belonging.

While not an Aboriginal-specific program, Foyer Port Adelaide works closely with local Aboriginal communities to ensure services reflect the values and needs of Aboriginal young people.



*Homes Tasmania project, Launceston*



## **Homes Tasmania – Youth2Independence (Y2I) Program**

In Tasmania, there are currently approximately 1,000 children and young people in OOHC, of whom around 45 percent identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. The Department for Education, Children and Young People (DECYP) is working to reduce the number of children entering or remaining in care through a strengthened focus on safe, supported and culturally informed practice.

A central priority of this approach is reunification, with efforts made to return children safely to family, kin and community. ACCOs—particularly the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre—are increasingly playing a leading role in the care, planning and decision-making processes for Aboriginal children.

This work is guided by the *Nukara Strategy (2025)*, Tasmania's framework for Aboriginal child safety and wellbeing, underpinned by the Safe and Supported: National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children. The accompanying Practice Approach, "Feel Safe. Are Safe.", promotes relational practice, cultural safety, child participation and holistic support, and defines DECYP's responsibility to ensure stability and care regardless of whether a child is placed with family, in foster or residential care, or within a transitional housing program.

As young people approach care exit (generally from age 15), they are supported to apply for housing through Housing Connect. Where priority status is not granted, DECYP activates a dedicated advocacy team to negotiate priority status and corresponds directly with Homes Tasmania to secure access to housing. DECYP and Homes Tasmania have also developed shared protocols and resources

to improve housing pathways for unaccompanied minors and care leavers, reflecting a strong commitment to cross-agency collaboration to prevent homelessness among this highly vulnerable group.

Tasmania currently operates one of the most structured and comprehensive youth transitional housing systems in Australia through the Youth2Independence (Y2I) Program, delivered by Homes Tasmania in collaboration with community housing providers and specialist youth support organisations. Designed for young people aged 16–24 who are at risk of, or experiencing homelessness, the program supports participants to transition safely into independent adulthood.

Y2I is based on the international Education First framework, which combines secure accommodation with education, training and personal development. A distinguishing feature of the program is its staged housing pathway model, which enables young people to progress through different types of accommodation depending on their level of readiness and support needs.

Homes Tasmania invests more than \$5 million annually into the Y2I program, providing accommodation and support for over 200 young people across the state. The program's core accommodation stream comprises five purpose-built Y2I facilities statewide:

- Thyne House, Launceston (50 beds).
- Eveline House, Devonport (25 beds).
- Burnie (Mooreville Rd) (26 beds).
- Trinity Hill, Hobart (46 beds).
- Campbell Street, Hobart (26 beds).

Rent is capped at 25 percent of the young person's income, and accommodation can be accessed for up to two years per housing phase, allowing for a gradual and sustainable transition toward independence.

The first stage of accommodation is provided through Y2I Supported Accommodation facilities listed above. These are purpose-built properties designed for young people who are ready to engage in education, training or employment. Five facilities operate across Tasmania providing a total of 173 beds.

The Launceston, Hobart and Devonport facilities are managed by Anglicare Tasmania, while the Burnie facility is operated by Youth, Family and Community Connections. During their stay, young people complete a Certificate I in Developing Independence through TasTAFE, which strengthens their life skills, educational readiness and employment capability. Participants may remain in these facilities until the age of 24, progressing to other housing models as they develop greater independence.

Young people with higher or more complex support needs may access accommodation through the Y2I cluster homes model. These consist of small, pod-style or modular 1 bedroom units—typically six per site, with five pods for the young people and one allocated for the on-site staff member.

Located in Hobart, Launceston, Devonport and Burnie, cluster homes operate on a 24/7 support basis and are designed for young people who are not yet ready to engage in education, training or employment. This pathway is particularly suited to individuals transitioning from statutory care, youth detention or emergency shelter settings who require a period of stabilisation before they can focus on longer-term goals. The modular nature of the housing, constructed locally by Podmatrix, allows for rapid delivery and supports the creation of small, community-style environments.

The final stage of progression is offered through Y2I share homes, which provide a lower support, shared living environment for young people who have achieved stability and are preparing for independent living. There are currently ten public housing properties (three in Hobart, three in Launceston, two in Devonport and two in Burnie). These properties are located close to cluster home sites to enable in-reach support if required. The model replicates a conventional share accommodation setting and is designed to build tenancy management and independent living skills. Early outcomes indicate that some young people successfully transition into long-term housing,



including shared private rentals with peers they met through the program.

The pathway progression is flexible and may involve multiple accommodation types, such as transitioning from a supported facility to a cluster home and later into a share home. Housing planning begins early and is integrated into the young person's Leaving Care Plan.

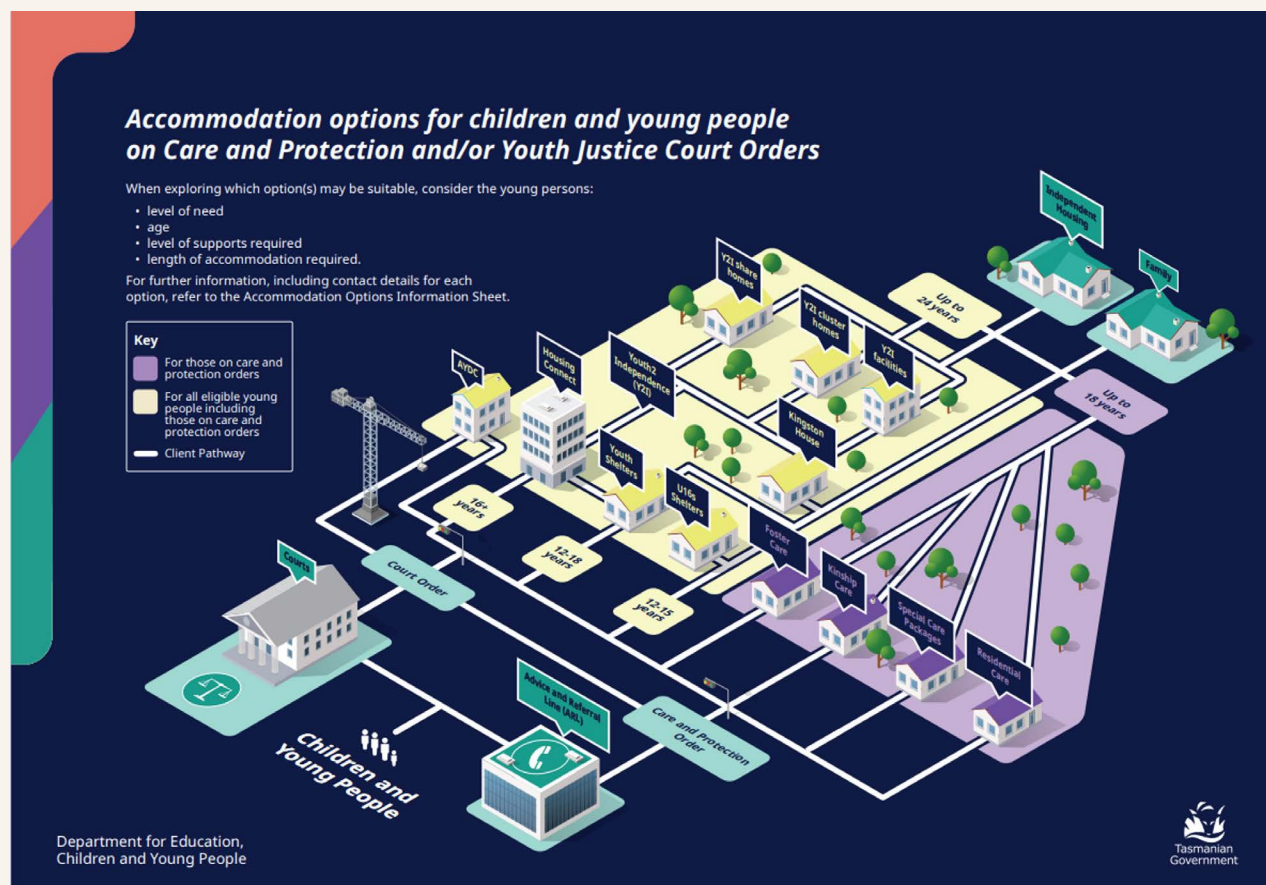
Referrals are made through Housing Connect, which acts as the statewide entry point for housing assistance for individuals aged 16 years and over. Where reunification with family or kin is considered safe and viable, this pathway is prioritised before transitional housing is recommended.

All Y2I housing pathways are currently operating at full capacity, with low turnover due to the extended transition periods, resulting in high demand for additional facilities. Both Homes Tasmania and DECYP are actively exploring opportunities to co-design Aboriginal-led transitional housing options with ACCOs, consistent with Tasmania's commitments under the Closing the Gap strategy.

The Tasmanian Government continues to invest in the Y2I model as part of its Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future, with plans to deliver 20 new modular one-bedroom units and 10 larger public housing properties across four regional sites. The expansion will assist approximately 50 young people every two years, providing 24/7 on-site and outreach support to help them achieve long-term stability.

Y2I has already demonstrated strong outcomes: in the past year, 83 percent of participants achieved employment outcomes.

**Table 9: Tasmania Transitional Housing Pathways.**



## Key insights from these housing models

Analysis of transitional housing models across Australia demonstrates that the most effective solutions for young people exiting care—particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people—are those that provide safe, stable accommodation embedded within a holistic support framework.

The programs such as those featured in this report highlight that long-term outcomes improve where housing is combined with wrap-around supports focused on education, life skills, health, employment readiness, trauma recovery and connection to culture. These models reinforce that housing alone is not enough; success is driven by the integration of secure accommodation with individualised case management that prepares young people for sustainable independence.

A common feature of successful programs is their flexible, staged approach, allowing young people to move through different accommodation settings based on their readiness and support needs. Tasmania's three-tier model—transitioning from supported facilities to cluster homes and then to share homes—is a leading example of how extended timeframes and gradual transition support can reduce reliance on crisis services and improve long-term housing outcomes.

Early planning also plays a critical role, with best practice involving the integration of housing considerations into leaving care plans from the age of 15, alongside coordinated referral pathways. In Tasmania, this is supported by strong advocacy mechanisms where DECYP actively negotiate housing priority where standard allocations are not granted.

Due to limited availability of traditional housing options, several states are increasingly utilising alternative construction methods, including modular units, pod-style dwellings and tiny homes. These approaches provide rapid, scalable and cost-effective solutions that create small community-based environments conducive to healing and adjustment. These also have the benefit of being more easily movable to other locations in response to changes in demand.

Finally, programs that operate through cross-sector partnerships—involving housing authorities, child protection services, community providers and ACCOs—achieve stronger continuity of care and better transition outcomes.

## International comparison: United Kingdom

The United Kingdom (UK) provides one of the clearest international examples of how strong statutory duties can significantly improve the transition from care to adulthood.

### Legislative framework

The UK guarantees housing for young people leaving care. Under the *Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000*, the *Housing Act 1996* and the *Children and Social Work Act 2017*, local authorities have a statutory duty to meet the housing needs of care leavers. This duty is not limited to children's services but applies to all parts of the local authority—including housing departments—who must act as a corporate parent and provide the same level of care and planning a reasonable parent would offer their own child (*UK Government, 2023*).

A key feature of the UK framework is the recognition that anyone leaving care from age 16 is automatically treated as a priority case for housing assistance. Young people who were looked after between the ages of 16 and 18 remain in priority need until at least age 21 and can continue to qualify beyond that age if they are assessed as vulnerable because of their care history. Housing authorities are legally required to secure suitable accommodation for these young people, taking account of their individual needs, safety, proximity to support networks and preferences. Bed and breakfast or hotel accommodation is deemed unsuitable for care leavers under 25 except in emergencies, reinforcing the expectation of stable, quality housing rather than temporary shelters.

The UK approach also mandates joint planning between housing authorities, children's services and the young person's Personal Adviser. Each care leaver must have a statutory Pathway Plan and a Personal Adviser who remains involved until at least age 25. Local housing authorities are required to work directly with the young person and their Personal Adviser to develop a personalised housing plan that prevents homelessness, supports education and employment and provides a clear pathway to long-term independence. This includes joint housing protocols, early identification of risk and senior-level sign-off before any decision that could leave a care leaver without accommodation.

By embedding housing rights into law and requiring coordinated planning, the UK ensures that secure housing is treated as a legal entitlement rather than a discretionary service. These statutory safeguards—combined with innovative programs such as Staying Put (allowing young people to remain with foster carers beyond 18) and Staying Close (offering supported accommodation near former residential placements)—create a more fulsome system where housing stability is the foundation for education, employment and wellbeing.

Unlike in NSW, where support is available but not explicitly defined as a legal right, UK law sets out enforceable entitlements and gives care leavers the ability to challenge inadequate services through formal complaints and review mechanisms. For Australian jurisdictions, the UK model demonstrates how enforceable housing duties, and early planning could transform outcomes for care leavers and meet Closing the Gap commitments to safe, suitable housing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.

Key UK programs include:

- Staying Put, which allows young people in foster care to remain with their carers until at least age 21, with financial support to the carers to maintain the placement.
- Staying Close, which offers supported accommodation near former residential placements, enabling young people leaving group care to retain trusted relationships and receive daily practical support.
- Pathway plans and personal advisers, which guarantee that every care leaver has a personalised plan and a dedicated adviser until at least 21, and up to 25 on request and/or for those young people with disabilities and/or long-term health conditions. These plans cover housing, education, health, employment and relationships, and are regularly reviewed to ensure stability.

Financial assistance is also embedded within the statutory framework. Care leavers are entitled to education bursaries, housing allowances and in many areas are exempt from local council taxes—supports designed to reduce the financial shock of independence and prevent homelessness.

### Key differences with NSW

While NSW law (*Children and Young Persons [Care and Protection] Act 1998, s.165*) requires assistance to age 25 where needed, it does not guarantee specific housing outcomes or establish a legally enforceable duty equivalent to the UK's corporate parenting framework.

There is no universal entitlement to remain in a foster placement beyond 18, nor an equivalent to the UK's personal adviser system that guarantees a single, ongoing point of contact for every care leaver.

For Aboriginal young people, these gaps are especially significant. The absence of guaranteed housing and culturally governed extended care means that Aboriginal care leavers remain more vulnerable to homelessness and forced disconnection from family, community and Country—outcomes that UK legislation specifically seeks to prevent through enforceable rights and locally tailored support.

The UK's Staying Close program is particularly relevant to housing. It provides care leavers leaving residential homes with supported accommodation located near their former placement. This ensures continuity of relationships, access to community and stable housing. Evaluations of Staying Close have shown positive impacts on reducing homelessness and improving employment outcomes (*UK Government, 2021*).

By contrast, in Australia, young people leaving residential care often face abrupt exits without guaranteed housing or continued support. Embedding a similar approach here — adapted through Aboriginal-led models — could significantly improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander care leavers.

The UK experience shows that enforceable entitlements drive better outcomes. By legislating a corporate parenting duty that includes obligations in relation to housing and ensuring every young person has a long-term adviser, the UK has shifted care leaving from a discretionary welfare service to a rights-based system. Adapting these principles to the NSW context (particularly through ACCOs) as the lead providers—would strengthen accountability and ensure that Aboriginal care leavers receive culturally safe housing, mentoring and transition planning as a right rather than at the discretion of changing government policies and priorities.

The UK experience demonstrates that stronger legislative and governance mechanisms can prevent poor outcomes. Key opportunities for Australia include embedding corporate parenting responsibilities across the statutory service system so that housing, education and health departments share accountability for care leavers' outcomes. Joint housing protocols, similar to those in the UK, could mandate early housing assessments, culturally appropriate tenancy planning

and senior-level review before any decision that risks homelessness. Importantly, Australian reforms must go further by ensuring Aboriginal-led co-design and governance in the development, implementation and evaluation of these protocols, consistent with Closing the Gap Priority Reforms on shared decision-making and strengthening the community-controlled sector.

Adopting elements of the UK statutory framework would reduce homelessness among care leavers and align with NSW Government commitments under Closing the Gap Target 9 (safe and suitable housing) and Target 12 (reducing the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children in OOHC).



## Beyond housing: Holistic supports

Securing stable housing is only the beginning of a successful transition from care. Aboriginal young people leaving OOHHC require comprehensive wrap-around supports to build independence, engage in education and employment, maintain health and wellbeing and remain connected to culture, community and Country. Without these supports, even those who obtain safe housing remain at increased risk of social exclusion and long-term disadvantage. The most successful housing models for young people are those that integrate support, such as the Housing First and Youth Foyer schemes.

Access to education and training helps young people re-engage in learning and develop pathways into employment, particularly when supports include mentoring, financial assistance and culturally safe environments. Employment programs, such as supported apprenticeships and traineeships, contribute to financial security and independence and are most effective when developed alongside Aboriginal organisations and local employers.

Health and wellbeing supports are essential, as many care leavers experience complex trauma and ongoing mental health challenges. Culturally informed, trauma-aware services—ideally delivered by Aboriginal health workers—play a vital role in healing and resilience.

Above all, connection to culture, community and Country is central to identity and wellbeing and must be embedded in all transition planning. Supporting young Aboriginal people to maintain cultural ties strengthens belonging, improves life outcomes and helps safeguard knowledge and traditions for future generations.

For meaningful and lasting outcomes, ACCOs must lead the delivery of holistic wraparound services, integrating housing with education, employment, health and cultural supports within a culturally safe framework. This approach aligns with Closing the Gap commitments and ensures Aboriginal young people do not just exit care—but transition into independence with strength, dignity and opportunity.

## Moving forward

Poor housing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander care leavers are not inevitable. The NSW Government can change the trajectory and ensure that the children it removed from their families go on to live in safety with secure, stable housing when they exit care.

### A legal framework already in place

The NSW Government could amend existing legislation to require that no young person exits statutory care without housing in place, similar to arrangements already operating in the United Kingdom. Embedding guaranteed housing within extended care legislation—supported by appropriate funding, housing supply allocation, and culturally informed program design—would ensure that care leavers are not simply “assisted” into adulthood but properly housed as a legal right.

In this way, NSW can move beyond symbolic commitment and implement a statutory guarantee that ensures every young person leaving care has a safe home to step into, not a system to fall out of.

### Proven models show what works

Domestic and international evidence shows that combining secure housing with intensive, wraparound supports dramatically improves outcomes for care leavers.

Programs and housing initiatives such as Youth Foyers, Village 21 in Victoria, and the UK’s Staying Close all demonstrate that when young people have a home and relevant and personalised casework support, they achieve greater housing stability, higher rates of education participation and better employment outcomes.

NSW is well-placed to build on these proved models through working with ACCOs to develop and scale up culturally safe housing options for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people exiting care.

### Unlocking supply through targeted policy

A chronic shortage of social housing is often cited as an insurmountable barrier, but supply and allocation are policy levers that can be strategically adjusted. NSW can draw on a mix of practical strategies to create housing pathways for Aboriginal care leavers, including:

- Separating youth-specific housing stock within the AHO and community housing providers, ensuring a dedicated supply of culturally safe properties.
- Long-term head-leasing of private rentals with enhanced rent subsidies to guarantee affordability and overcome discrimination in the private market.
- Capital investment in Foyer-style and cluster Tiny Homes/Pod developments throughout NSW that integrate housing with education, employment and mentoring supports, delivered in partnership with ACCOs.
- Fast-track allocations within the Housing Pathways system for care leavers, supported by formal referral pathways and early application processes.

These strategies do not require a complete rebuild of the housing system. Instead, they demand targeted funding, flexible partnership frameworks and policy coordination to ensure that existing housing resources are prioritised to meet the urgent needs of Aboriginal care leavers.

Embedding ACCOs in every stage of design and implementation, ensures that housing supports are not only stable and suitable but also strengthen cultural identity and self-determination.

NSW does not need to wait for new legislation or untested pilots. The legal framework already exists, the evidence base is clear, and the policy levers—supply creation, targeted allocation and cultural governance—are all within the state's control.

By combining these tools in a coordinated, Aboriginal-led housing strategy, NSW can guarantee housing outcomes, closing the gap for Aboriginal care leavers and setting a national benchmark for reform.

Housing is not simply a roof over a young person's head; it is the foundation for safety, participation in education and employment, and connection to community. Without secure housing, other supports become ineffective.

Ensuring Aboriginal care leavers have guaranteed, culturally safe housing is therefore central to achieving Closing the Gap targets and building pathways to long-term independence.

## Steps towards a solution

The following recommendations are structured in line with Closing the Gap Priority Reforms and the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021–2031, and reflect outcomes from community consultations, co-design workshops with ACCOs, and feedback from the November 2025 AbSec Forum. Following extensive engagement, three reforms emerged as urgent priorities:

### **Reform one: Statutory Housing Guarantees and Automatic Priority Access to Social Housing.**

**Legislative and policy reform, underpinned by capital investment and Aboriginal-led implementation.**

To prevent Aboriginal care leavers from entering homelessness or insecure housing, NSW must introduce legislative reform to provide statutory housing guarantees for Aboriginal young people leaving OOHC, ensuring access to secure, culturally appropriate accommodation until at least the age of 21, with flexibility for extensions where needed. These guarantees should be embedded within leaving-care and extended-care agreements, ensuring no young person exits care into homelessness.

In addition, NSW must adopt a legislated automatic priority pathway to public, social and community housing, following best-practice examples from Victoria and the United Kingdom. In the UK, care leavers from age 16 are automatically recognised in law as a priority housing group, and local authorities are legally required to secure suitable accommodation in partnership with the young person and their Personal Adviser. Similarly, Victoria's Housing Pathways system explicitly includes care leavers as a priority category, fast-tracking access to public and community housing once their transition plan is complete. Aligning NSW with this approach will reduce homelessness and instability, support sustainable transition planning, and make progress on Closing the Gap Target 9 (safe and suitable housing) and Target 12 (reducing over-representation in care).

As part of this reform, targeted capital investment must occur to develop Aboriginal-specific housing solutions—such as foyer-style, Tiny Homes and Village 21 transitional accommodation—strategically located in urban, regional and rural areas to ensure young people remain connected to Country, family and cultural networks. These housing models must be designed and delivered by ACCOs.

These changes represent a move away from discretionary or crisis-based responses, and towards a legislated entitlement to safe, stable housing as a foundation for long-term wellbeing, setting a clear expectation that no Aboriginal young person leaving care should enter adulthood without a place to call home.

## **Reform two: Aboriginal-led design, oversight and delivery of care-leaving services.**

### **Policy reform, program investment and alignment with Closing the Gap Priority Reform 1.**

To achieve culturally safe and sustainable outcomes for Aboriginal young people exiting care, it is imperative that ACCOs lead the design, implementation and oversight of leaving-care services. Community consultation and co-design workshops demonstrated overwhelming support for shifting from mainstream-led interventions to Aboriginal-led models grounded in self-determination, cultural identity and place-based practice. This requires policy reform to embed ACCO leadership across all stages of service delivery—planning, governance, funding allocation and program evaluation—and program investment to build capacity within the Aboriginal-controlled sector.

In line with Closing the Gap Priority Reform One (formal partnerships and shared decision-making), governments must establish mechanisms that ensure Aboriginal voices are central in decision-making processes and that ACCOs act as equal partners in designing reforms. This includes long-term funding for ACCOs to deliver integrated leaving-care programs covering housing, financial assistance, education, employment, health and wellbeing, within environments that promote cultural safety and connection to community.

To ensure accountability and improve transparency, a strengthened reporting framework should be introduced that measures outcomes for Aboriginal care leavers against relevant Closing the Gap targets (7: Education and Employment, 9: Housing, 10: Youth Justice, and 12: Over-representation in care). Independent monitoring by Aboriginal-led bodies is necessary to track progress and ensure that reforms are implemented with integrity and align with Aboriginal community expectations.

By investing in and prioritising Aboriginal-led solutions, NSW can ensure that leaving-care reforms not only address immediate needs but build long-term pathways grounded in cultural strength, community connection and self-determination—ultimately delivering better life outcomes for Aboriginal young people as they transition into adulthood.

## **Reform three: Increased and Indexed Financial Assistance for Care Leavers**

### **Policy reform and financial investment.**

Young people transitioning from care consistently report severe financial strain during their first years of independence, with many living below the poverty line despite being eligible for support. Consultation with ACCOs, community stakeholders and young people highlighted a strong consensus that current financial assistance is inadequate and fails to reflect the real cost of living.

The introduction of a guaranteed minimum income standard for care leavers, aligned with national living cost benchmarks, is critical. Extended care allowances and relevant Commonwealth payments—including Youth Allowance, JobSeeker and Rent Assistance—should be calibrated and indexed to ensure they meet the actual expenses associated with housing, transportation, food, utilities and cultural obligations. Financial support must be framed as a necessary foundation for safe and successful transition into adulthood.

To reduce structural barriers and prevent young people falling through administrative gaps, automatic enrolment into available financial entitlements should be implemented, rather than requiring self-navigation of complex application processes. This is particularly important for Aboriginal care leavers.

By implementing these measures, NSW can ensure that Aboriginal care leavers transition into adulthood with the financial stability necessary to maintain housing, engage in education and employment, and build strong futures beyond care.



## Conclusion

**It should not be beyond the capacity of our governments to ensure that every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young person leaving care has a safe place to call home.**

The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people exiting OOHC each year is not vast, yet their overrepresentation amongst the homeless youth population is alarming, and the consequences of inaction are profound.

The housing crisis faced by Aboriginal young people leaving care is not an unavoidable outcome of the child protection system but the result of policy choices that can—and must—change.

Meeting the Closing the Gap targets requires more than acknowledging overrepresentation in the child protection system. Governments must partner with Aboriginal communities to create responses that reflect the diversity of Aboriginal culture and circumstances. Listening to ACCOs, Elders, communities and families is essential to designing services that are trusted, culturally safe and tailored to local realities.

With legislative reform, targeted funding, early planning and Aboriginal-led governance, NSW can set a national benchmark for supporting Aboriginal care leavers—ensuring that these young people do not merely exit care, but enter adulthood with the safety, dignity and opportunities they deserve.

This is an opportunity for NSW to lead nationally by embedding a “no exit into homelessness” commitment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander care leavers.

The young people leaving care today will become the Elders, parents and community leaders of tomorrow. Guaranteeing their right to housing is an investment in the strength and future of Aboriginal communities and of our shared society. Together, we can make sure no Aboriginal young person in NSW leaves care into homelessness.

This isn't just about changing policy — it's about changing futures.

“

*“We are not leaving care—we are stepping into our rightful place in family, culture and Country. Give us a home and we will give back a future.”*

– Anonymous

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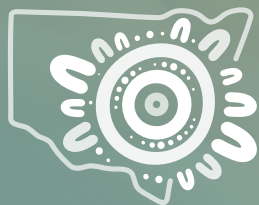
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## Glossary of acronyms

<b>ABS</b>	Australian Bureau of Statistics
<b>AbSec</b>	Aboriginal Child, Family and Community Care State Secretariat
<b>ACCO</b>	Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisation
<b>ACOSS</b>	Australian Council of Social Service
<b>AHC</b>	Aboriginal Housing Company
<b>AHO</b>	Aboriginal Housing Office
<b>AHURI</b>	Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute
<b>AIFS</b>	Australian Institute of Family Studies
<b>AIHW</b>	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
<b>CEI</b>	Client Experience Initiative
<b>CH</b>	Community Housing
<b>CHP</b>	Community Housing Provider
<b>CtG</b>	Closing the Gap
<b>DCJ</b>	NSW Department of Communities and Justice
<b>DECYP</b>	Department for Education, Children and Young People
<b>DFFH</b>	Victorian Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
<b>DHS</b>	Department of Human Services
<b>EFS</b>	Eligibility for Services
<b>EFY</b>	Education First Youth Foyers
<b>FA</b>	Family Assist
<b>FACSIAR</b>	Family and Community Services Insights, Analysis and Research
<b>FC</b>	Foyer Central
<b>FYW</b>	Finding Your Way Transitional Housing Program
<b>ICCHO</b>	Indigenous Community Housing Organisation
<b>ILA</b>	Independent Living Allowance
<b>KBHAC</b>	Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Corporation
<b>LinDA</b>	DCJ Linked Data Asset
<b>MCM</b>	Melbourne City Mission
<b>NASHH</b>	National Agreement on Social Housing and Homelessness
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Government Organisation
<b>NHSAC</b>	National Housing and Homelessness Agreement Council
<b>NILS</b>	No Interest Loan Scheme
<b>NSW</b>	New South Wales
<b>OOHC</b>	Out-of-home care
<b>PH</b>	Public Housing



<b>PRA</b>	Private Rental Assistance
<b>PSP</b>	Permanency Support Program
<b>RAP</b>	Reconciliation Action Plan
<b>RCY</b>	Rent Choice Youth
<b>RIKI</b>	Rent It Keep It
<b>ROSH</b>	Risk of Significant Harm
<b>SAP</b>	Specialist Aftercare Program
<b>SGCH</b>	St George Community Housing
<b>SHMT</b>	Social Housing Management Transfer
<b>SHS</b>	Specialist Homelessness Services
<b>SIL</b>	Supported Independent Living
<b>SJYS</b>	St John's Youth Services
<b>SNAICC</b>	Staying on Allowance
<b>SOMIH</b>	State Owned and Managed Indigenous Housing
<b>SOW</b>	Services Our Way
<b>SVA</b>	Social Ventures Australia
<b>TA</b>	Temporary Accommodation
<b>THP</b>	Transitional Housing Plus
<b>TILA</b>	Transition to Independent Living Allowance
<b>YHF</b>	Youth Initiative
<b>Y2I</b>	Youth2Independence Program
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom
<b>VACCA</b>	Youth Housing First



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