

Census data helps get young people experiencing homelessness on a path to living in a stable home

Since the 1950s, not-for-profit organisation SYC has been providing housing, education, employment and youth services in South Australia. Over the past 12 years, SYC has expanded its reach to Victoria, NSW and Queensland.

Its aim is to empower people to overcome disadvantage and create a life with independence, personal wellbeing and opportunity.

SYC's Helping Young People Achieve (HYPA) Housing service offers safe and affordable mid-term housing for people aged 17 to 25 who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness. This helps young people work towards independent housing and permanently exit homelessness.

HYPA Housing uses a wide range of Census data to get a picture of housing, learning, working, justice and disability.

Kirsten Sandstrom from HYPA Housing said the Census reflects the broad spectrum of people in Australia and their characteristics.

"Our vision is to support all Australian people, irrespective of their background, location, ability, ethnicity, gender or age," Ms Sandstrom said.

"It's important to raise awareness of community circumstances. The Census does this every five years.

"Youth homelessness is notoriously under reported. Without Census data, it would be even more challenging to provide safe and affordable housing to young people in vulnerable sleeping and accommodation situations.

"The data collected in the Census drives political decision making about policy, which in turn drives funding.

"We encourage young people to complete their Census form in such a way that truthfully records their housing status. This provides the evidence organisations like ours need to provide services, and to evaluate and redesign if necessary," Ms Sandstrom said.