



MEDIA RELEASE

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Vinnies' Castletown appeal for youth homelessness

Almost 100 young people facing homelessness in Townsville have been helped into stable housing by Vinnies in the past 12 months.

Vinnies Townsville's Homeless Youth Support Team say the figure is more than double the number they expected, and was required by their government funding arrangement.

In an effort to raise vital funds to help more youth in crisis, the team will showcase their program and ask the public for donations at Castletown Shopping Centre from 6-12 August.

Vinnies Youth Homeless Support coordinator Rachel Nelson said demand for Vinnies' services among young people in Townsville has never been higher.

"It costs up to \$500 to move a young person from a crisis situation where they are at risk of becoming homeless into stable long term housing," she said.

"We are calling on Townsville residents to visit us at Castletown and make a donation in cash or via eftpos, as all funds raised will help us to assist young people at risk in their community.

"Donations of food items are also very useful, as food is one of our most commonly requested items."

Ms Nelson said the reasons young people find themselves in crisis were complex.

"We're finding young people are turning to us for help for a variety of reasons, including family breakdown, mental health, domestic violence, and unemployment," she said.

"One of the largest factors is unemployment – now at a high of 18.6 per cent for our youth aged 15 to 24.

"We're overwhelmed by the number of young people aged 16 to 25 we've helped so far this year. With the community's support we could double that number again next year."

Note: Vinnies Youth Homelessness Support Coordinator Rachel Nelson is available for interview upon request. The program has been operating in the city for two years. The display will be located at the Woolworths entrance of the centre.

ENDS.

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