



MEDIA RELEASE

19 May 2016

For immediate release

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE INVISIBLE IN HOMELESS NUMBERS

“Does the Government have a clear grasp on the number of children and young people who are homeless in New Zealand?”

This is the latest concern raised by Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa (ACYA), an organisation responsible for promoting the rights and wellbeing of children and young people in New Zealand.

ACYA Chairperson, Dr Sarah Te One, says statistics around the number of children and young people without housing are inconsistent and incomplete in government reporting.

“Numbers have been quoted about applications to WINZ and on Housing New Zealand waiting lists, but it is not clear how many children and young people this involves or what the impact is for their wellbeing.”

One of ACYA’s primary functions is to present non-governmental reports to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC). In a report submitted late last year, ACYA raised the issue of children and young people whose rights to safe and secure housing are not being met.

“Homelessness has serious implications on children’s rights to education, health and welfare,” says Dr Te One. “How do you go to school, enrol with a doctor, make and play with friends if you have no home? This is hard for children now and damaging over the long-term.”

For 23 years the United Nations has said that to meet its obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, New Zealand must improve the way it collects data about children and the impact social policies have on them.

ACYA is concerned that the Government still does not have the information it needs. In its 2015 report to the UNCROC, ACYA said that while it is clear that young people are experiencing homelessness by being separated from parents and family, there is limited information on why a young person is motivated to separate from their family. This makes it difficult to quantify how many young people are directly (and independently of their families) affected by homelessness.

“How can the Government meet its obligations to provide safe housing for families if it does not have accurate information to prioritise and deliver the services that all children are entitled to?” says Dr Te One.

ENDS

For further information

Effie Lochrane, effie.lochrane@axiompr.co.nz, 027 433 6373



MEDIA RELEASE
19 May 2016

For immediate release

About Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa

Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa (ACYA) is a non-profit coalition of non-governmental organisations, families and individuals, whose purpose is to promote and enhance the wellbeing of children and young people in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

ACYA promotes the rights of our children and young people through advocacy and monitoring of the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international human rights instruments.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child covers all those aged under 18.

Website: www.acya.org.nz