

# MEDIA RELEASE

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New Canberra Initiative Tackles **Youth Homelessness**:

## **\$200,000 available for the 'Pathways Challenge'**

Canberra Innovation Network, The Snow Foundation, Hands Across Canberra and the Mill House Ventures, are pioneering a new and innovative business model. This new pragmatic approach has been designed to engage the youth homelessness sector. A Pathways Challenge delivered in a hackathon style will encourage members of the community to demonstrate their ideas collaboratively and have the opportunity to receive a portion of the available \$200,000.

The path to youth homelessness is always a complex one, however common issues identified to lead to such extremes are often a result of mental health, family, economic and legal issues.

It is for this reason that a unique collaboration has formed in Canberra which seeks to find a new path to dealing with these complex issues that leads to youth homelessness. With the complexities of 2020 nothing is normal; we are approaching *the issue of youth homelessness in an entirely new way by bringing business innovation systems to the community sector.*

The Youth Homelessness Pathways Challenge is a two-day exploration of collaborative and innovative solutions that address the big questions. The team that is most successful with their innovative idea will be invited to apply for funds specifically set aside for this project. The successful team will be expected to include a *diverse set of collaborators* who are committed to making a difference to young homeless people's lives.

Georgina Byron, CEO of The Snow Foundation in announcing the challenge said " Whilst there are many service providers doing excellent work that is focused on specific youth interventions, the problem of youth homelessness remains and despite all the good work some young people fall through the cracks".

The Snow Foundation and Hands Across Canberra have formed a long-standing partnership as each seek to address the needs of those experiencing disadvantage in our community. These two foundations are offering up to \$200,000 to the sector and together with the Canberra Innovation Network and the Mill House Ventures, they will work with the sector and those with lived experience to see if we can find a new way of addressing this wicked problem.

Peter Gordon, CEO of Hands Across Canberra said that this exercise is a great example of why community organisations exist. "Hands Across Canberra draws attention to need in our community and youth homelessness is an area of very specific attention. What we are seeking to identify is a group of expert service providers who are willing to work together to create a new and different outcome".

The Canberra Innovation Network and The Mill House Ventures are very experienced at running a process of engagement which leads to innovative solutions. CEO of The Mill House Cindy Mitchell said " At Mill House and The Canberra Innovation Network we are



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seeing a significant increase in social innovators interested in using market-based tools, approaches, and other forms of organising that are more typically associated with the private sector or for-profit enterprises. This Challenge event is a novel way to bring experts in evidence-based service delivery, individuals with lived experience and for-purpose entrepreneurs together in the same room and support them with a common language and tools for genuine collaboration.

Georgina Byron concluded that “the Youth Homelessness Pathways Challenge hopes to inspire teams to work together with the aim of creating or fast-tracking sustainable solutions built on innovative, inclusive, achievable and culturally-appropriate solutions that when implemented, will have a big impact on youth homelessness in the ACT.

This is the challenge that the proponents of this project are seeking to address. How can we incentivise novel solutions, delivered collaboratively by multiple service providers with different approaches and ideas informed by the latest evidence?”

The Hackathon will run from **Thursday 15th to Friday 16th October** and participants can register at [cbrin.com.au/youth-homelessness-pathways-challenge](http://cbrin.com.au/youth-homelessness-pathways-challenge)

Professionals from the youth sector are encouraged to form a collaborative team and individuals including academics and businesspeople are also invited to bring a fresh perspective to the process.

The website provides all the details and opportunities  
[cbrin.com.au/youth-homelessness-pathways-challenge](http://cbrin.com.au/youth-homelessness-pathways-challenge)

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