



News Release

For Immediate Release

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VANCOUVER – The provincial government should create and implement a distinct plan to end youth homelessness in British Columbia that is informed by youth with lived expertise, recommends a report issued today by Katherine McParland.

The Office of the Representative for Children and Youth, which assisted the author and her advisory group Youth Against Youth Homelessness B.C. in creating the report, echoes their recommendation and calls on government to listen and incorporate the voices of youth when developing and implementing the plan.

“This report magnifies the voices of 231 marginalized youth to ensure that their lived expertise is heard by government,” McParland said. “B.C. now has an unprecedented opportunity and policy window to develop a plan to eradicate youth homelessness so that no youth is left behind. There is an urgency to this issue. The longer a young person is homeless, the more trauma and victimization they experience. There is no time to wait.”

The report, *From Marginalized to Magnified: Youth Homelessness Solutions From Those With Lived Expertise*, was released today at an event in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside. The report uses the input gathered from youth at 13 forums held across the province as well as data from an online survey and research by the author.

Through the report, youth identified the pathways that can lead to youth homelessness, the impacts of homelessness on young people, the barriers that exist to receiving services and supports necessary to avoid or escape homelessness and, most importantly, suggested solutions for ending the problem in B.C.

“Many young people spoke about the end to homelessness being so much more than bricks and mortar, but also a sense of belonging and connections to their communities,” McParland said. “We’re asking government to champion a provincial plan that will provide the resources youth so desperately need. If one ministry takes on the role of parent, we need other ministries to be extended family. We can and we must prevent and end youth homelessness in our communities.”

The report includes direct messages from Youth Against Youth Homelessness B.C. and photos and artwork contributed by the young people who participated. Although RCY supported and facilitated production of this report, it is truly the product of those who have lived expertise with various forms of youth homelessness.

“This report is, in many ways, an extension of our advocacy work,” said Representative for Children and Youth Jennifer Charlesworth. “By assisting with its creation, RCY staff have helped to bring forward the voices of young people who are too often marginalized in our society. That is one of the key roles of our organization.”

The report’s lone recommendation calls for the provincial government to develop a distinct plan to end youth homelessness and to involve youth with lived expertise in the development of that plan.

“I agree with that recommendation and echo these young peoples’ call for a youth-specific plan to address the issue in B.C.,” Charlesworth said. “I also call on government to include youth in the development of that plan and, as part of that process, to carefully consider the solutions offered in their report.”

You can find the full report here: www.rcybc.ca/reports

The Representative and McParland will present this report to the Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth at the B.C. Legislature on Monday, Feb. 24.

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