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Media Release

Growth in child homelessness confirmed by Commission

A spike in child homelessness in Queensland has been confirmed by the Commissioner for Children and Young People following the release of national figures late last week.

Elizabeth Fraser said a new report out today shows a sharp rise in the number of children and young people accompanied by an adult using homeless services in Queensland in 2006-07.

The Commission's *Snapshot 2008* report provides a comprehensive overview of the status of our children in Queensland. It shows accompanied children accessing Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) services jumped 46% from 7,550 in 2005-06 to 11,000 in 2006-07.

"These figures show a need for an independent assessment of the costs of SAAP funding, and a commitment to provide realistic funding for crisis and long term accommodation," the Commissioner said.

The Commission's report found children seeking homelessness services were most likely to be accompanied by females (5,200), followed by couple families (1,600) and then males (500).

"We need a national approach by government and the sector to respond to the complex needs facing homeless people," the Commissioner said.

The Commissioner said the figures demonstrate the need for an integrated approach which provides personalised responses to help vulnerable young people.

The rise was the steepest in the 0-4 age group, with 4,900 children requiring SAAP services, compared with 3,350 last year.

"Stability is vital to the positive growth and development of children in the early years, and statistics like this indicate there's a problem we need to address to avoid long-term consequences for those affected," the Commissioner said.

"We need to address service gaps, increase the supply of appropriate accommodation and develop more effective prevention and early intervention services."

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