

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**Tuesday, 25<sup>th</sup> August 2020**

# **Preventing youth homelessness in schools**

**Young people at risk of homelessness or disengagement from high school are being supported as part of a new program being delivered by Barnardos Australia in Western Sydney.**

On Monday 24 August, Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services Gareth Ward and Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning Sarah Mitchell joined Barnardos CEO Deirdre Cheers at the launch of the Universal Screening and Supports program at Chifley College Dunheved Campus.

This screening program is designed to identify students in need of additional help in the areas of homelessness, school disengagement and mental health, with the initial trial being delivered by Barnardos and to be followed by a progressive rollout at three other Chifley College campuses in Western Sydney.

Students are screened using the Australian Index of Adolescent Development survey, which covers their living situation, family structure, cultural background, physical and mental health.

Barnardos CEO Deirdre Cheers said caseworkers would work intensively with young people at-risk of homelessness or disengagement.

“Our organisation has decades of experience working with vulnerable children and families and we are excited to be involved in this project which we hope will deliver great outcomes for young people in Western Sydney,” Ms Cheers said.

The Ministers and Barnardos CEO met with a group of students at the College to discuss the issues facing young people in Western Sydney, and how the program will support young people and their families (pictured L-R Front row - Student leaders Chifley College, Back row Minister Sarah Mitchell, Jennifer Ribeiro - Principal Chifley College, Minister Gareth Ward, Deirdre Cheers- CEO Barnardos Australia).



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**For more information or to arrange media interviews, contact:** Irene Saunders, Head of Communications, Barnardos Australia [isaunders@barnardos.org.au](mailto:isaunders@barnardos.org.au)

#### **About Barnardos Australia**

Barnardos Australia believes all children deserve caring families to grow safely and fulfil their potential. We keep children safe by supporting families and strengthening communities facing issues such as violence, poverty, mental illness and homelessness. Our wrap-around services include family support and preservation, domestic violence support, youth and family homelessness services, drug and alcohol support, parenting and early learning programs, foster and kinship care and open adoption. We work together with children, young people and families to break the cycle of disadvantage, creating safe, nurturing and stable homes, connected to family and community. [www.barnardos.org.au](http://www.barnardos.org.au)