

MEDIA RELEASE

3 APRIL 2017

YOUTH HOMELESSNESS MATTERS DAY

Anglicare NT is supporting *Youth Homelessness Matters Day* to raise awareness of the 26,000 young people across Australia who have no place to go. Anglicare NT, in collaboration with City of Darwin and the NT Government's Office of Youth Affairs, is organising the annual Couch Surfing event in Darwin and Katherine's first ever *Youthfest*.

In the Northern Territory, 52% of homeless people are under 24 years of age (*Department of Housing and Community Development, NT Government, 2016*). This equates to approximately 3,947 young Territorians aged between 12 – 24 years who are homeless (*ABS, 2012*). The majority of these young people are living in overcrowded accommodation or couch surfing. Couch surfing – staying temporarily in a series of other people's homes – is the first and most common way young people experience homelessness.

"Youth Homelessness Matters Day is a national campaign which aims to raise public awareness of youth homelessness and celebrates the resilience of young people who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness in Australia. Youth Homelessness Matters Day is an important component of National Youth Week, and will be held on Wednesday 5th April 2017," said Anglicare NT CEO Dave Pugh.

"In Katherine, Anglicare NT is hosting YouthFest on 5th April at Mimi Arts. Young people can join in cooking, boxing, painting and weaving workshops, get a free meal and learn about youth homelessness and local homelessness services."

"In Darwin, the sixth Youth Homelessness Matters Day Couch Surfing Races will take place on Wednesday 5th April from 10.30am – 3pm at Parliament House Car Park in Bennett Street. More than 20 teams of young people have been decorating couches, getting ready to battle it out for the race of the year."

"Youth services and schools in the Darwin, Palmerston and rural regions will come together for Couch Surfing in an exhilarating celebration of youth that highlights the challenges facing young people who are at risk of, or who are homeless."

Anglicare NT and the City of Darwin have been leading the organisation of Couch Surfing with the support of the Office of Youth Affairs, CatholicCare NT, the Red Cross and local schools. The group aim to highlight three key messages in relation to youth homelessness:

- Homelessness is not just rough sleeping, many young people experience couch surfing or living in severely overcrowded conditions.
- Homeless young people don't just need accommodation. They need assistance to address complex issues and needs to support them to break the cycle of homelessness.
- Young people transitioning from Out of Home Care, young people involved in the youth justice system and young families have a right to access safe and affordable accommodation.

NOTES FOR EDITOR

Media welcome to photograph / film at Parliament House Carpark Wednesday 5 April 2017. Welcome and speeches from 11am and Couch Surfing Races commence at 12pm.

FOR COMMENTS OR INTERVIEWS

To arrange interviews with Anglicare NT CEO Dave Pugh regarding Youth Homelessness please contact Anglicare NT Communications.

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