

MEDIA RELEASE

14 April 2022

10 YEARS OF COUCH SURFING

Still calling for more action on youth homelessness

Held on National Youth Homelessness Matters Day each year, Couch Surfing brings the community together and raises awareness of young people affected by homelessness. This year marks 10 years of the annual Couch Surfing event.

“The Northern Territory has 12 times the national average of people who are without a home – and the highest rate of youth homelessness in Australia,” Anglicare NT CEO Dave Pugh said.

“On any given night, thousands of young people across the Territory have no home to go to.”

On Wednesday 20 April, Anglicare NT and the City of Darwin are hosting the tenth anniversary Couch Surfing event.

Together with local schools and community service providers, teams of young people will race on brightly decorated couches and learn about what they can do to help their friends and themselves if they experience problems.

“Over the past 25 years, Anglicare NT has played a critical role in supporting young people impacted by homelessness,” Mr Pugh said.

“For the past decade we have organised the annual Couch Surfing event with key partners as a practical way to highlight the extent of youth homelessness and the unique challenges young people face.”

“We as a community, network of service providers, and government agencies have more work to do. Young Territorians need a strong start, stable family and support system, opportunities to learn, jobs, access to affordable housing and importantly hope for the future.”

Ten years of couch surfing races provides the opportunity to reflect on what has been achieved for young people and to advocate for what else still needs to be done. According to the last Census data, almost half of all people experiencing homelessness in the NT are under 25 years of age.

With a safe home, young people can thrive, build relationships, grow independent living skills and pursue study or work.

Many young people live in overcrowded accommodation or are couch surfing, moving from place to place with limited support.

Spectators are welcome to watch the action, take part in free activities and visit the information stalls promoting local support services. First Nations Radio will broadcast live from the event that runs from 10.30am - 3pm on Wednesday 20 April at Civic Park, Darwin.

Youth Homelessness Matters Day Campaign Key Objectives

Youth Homelessness Matters Day (YHMD) is a national campaign that aims to raise awareness and increase public discussion on the issue of youth homelessness.

1. Improve access to support – well-resourced services ensure health and wellbeing, safety and stability, re-engagement, education and employment.
2. Reduce stigma – YHMD challenges stereotypes because the stigma attached to homelessness often prevents many young people from seeking help.
3. Engage decision makers – with the support of government and other key stakeholders, sustainable solutions can be developed to ensure all young people get the help they need.

NOTES FOR EDITOR

Media welcome for photographs, film or audio at Civic Park, Darwin City on Wednesday 20 April 2022. Speeches commence at 10.30am and Couch Surfing Races at 11am.

FOR COMMENTS OR INTERVIEWS

To arrange an interview, please contact the Anglicare NT media team.

MEDIA CONTACT

Lila Loveard – 0409 222 143 or media@anglicare-nt.org.au