

MEDIA RELEASE

12 April 2023

COUCH SURFING RAISES AWARENESS OF YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

The annual Couch Surfing event, held on National Youth Homelessness Matters Day, brings the community together to raise awareness about young people affected by homelessness and to recognise young people's strengths.

Couch Surfing, hosted by Anglicare NT and City of Darwin, will be held on Wednesday 19 April 2023 from 10.30am – 2.30pm in Civic Park, Darwin.

The Northern Territory has almost 12 times the national rate of people experiencing homelessness. On any given night, there are more than 3,000 young Territorians sleeping rough in overcrowded conditions, couch surfing or sleeping on the streets. Almost half of all people experiencing homelessness in the NT are under 25 years of age (ABS 2021).

At Couch Surfing, teams of young people race on decorated couches to take out trophies and prizes donated by local businesses. Young people and their families can connect with organisations to learn about what they can do to help friends or themselves. We also hear directly from young people who have experienced homelessness and can be inspired by the many young people committed to supporting their peers.

"Anglicare NT has been helping young people impacted by homelessness for over 30 years. With support and a secure place to live, young people can feel safe, re-engage with education and employment options and reconnect with family, friends and the wider community," said Jemma Wood, A/Executive Manager Homelessness and Social Inclusion.

"We need sustainable solutions to help young people experiencing homelessness - this investment in the future is critical. On Youth Homelessness Matters Day, we call on the Australian Government to develop a National Child and Youth Homelessness and Housing Strategy. Well-coordinated local approaches will ensure support is available to young people and young adults at each stage of their journey to adulthood," said Craig Kelly, CEO Anglicare NT.

Many organisations, schools, local businesses and sponsors combine efforts with over 20 teams of young people to help make this event happen.

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 – 2.30pm on Wednesday 19 April at Civic Park, Darwin.

Youth Homelessness Statistics

- 28,000 young Australians aged 12-25 years are homeless each night¹
- The NT has almost twelve times the national average rate of homelessness and the second equal highest rate of youth homelessness in Australia¹
- On any given night over 3,000 young people aged 12-25 years in the NT are experiencing homelessness¹
- Almost half of *all* people experiencing homelessness in the NT are under 25 years of age¹
- The majority of homeless people in the Northern Territory are living in 'severely' crowded dwellings¹
- In 2021-22, around 1,400 young people accessed specialist homelessness services in the NT²
- Through 2022 in the NT, each day there was an average of 320 young people (aged 15-24) who attended specialist homelessness services by themselves. In addition, 720 children in families were supported each day²
- Each day around 23 requests for specialist homelessness assistance go unmet in the NT²
- Almost one-third of young Australians (15-24 years) presenting alone to a homelessness service were couch surfing before they turned up³
- Over one-third of young Australians presenting alone to a homelessness service had experienced domestic or family violence³

NOTES FOR EDITOR

Media welcome for photographs, film or audio at Civic Park, Darwin City on Wednesday 19 April 2023. 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

¹ ABS Census Data 2021

² AIHW – NT Specialist Homelessness Services 2022 [NT \(aihw.gov.au\)](http://aihw.gov.au)

³ YHMD Campaign Resources 2023 <https://www.yfoundations.org.au/yhmd-resources>