

## MEDIA RELEASE

10 April 2024

### COUCH SURFING PUTS SPOTLIGHT ON YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

This Youth Homelessness Matters Day – 17 April 2024 – Anglicare NT and City of Darwin are coordinating the annual Couch Surfing event. We will bring together young people, families, schools, community organisations and supporters for couch races, best decorated couch displays and information stalls to raise awareness of youth homelessness.

Too many children and young people in Australia live in unsafe or overcrowded home environments, couch surf or sleep rough. In the Northern Territory there are over 3,000 young people aged 12- 25 years who are homeless on any given night (ABS 2021). That's almost twelve times the national average.

At the Couch Surfing event, more than 20 teams of young people will compete in fast-paced race heats, with several teams travelling from Katherine and Nhulunbuy to take part. More than 30 local organisations will be on hand to provide information and advice in a non-judgemental space.

Couches decorated with beautiful artwork and important messages will vie to win the best-decorated award. With free food and drinks, music, speeches, prizes and lots of media present, Couch Surfing is a great day and important lever for awareness raising and advocacy efforts.

Anglicare NT CEO Craig Kelly said "although it is exciting to hold the 12<sup>th</sup> annual Couch Surfing race event this year, much still needs to be done at the national and local levels to end youth homelessness. All young people need a safe place to call home. Sleeping on the street, in overcrowded conditions or on someone's couch is not OK! We need real action, evidence-based solutions and needs-based funding now. With support, young people can feel safe, re-engage with education and employment and connect with family, friends and the wider community."

Everyone is invited to watch the action, take part in free activities and visit information stalls promoting local support services. Our major sponsor First Nations Broadcasting will broadcast live from the event that runs from 10am – 2pm on Wednesday 17 April at Civic Park, Darwin.

#### NOTES FOR EDITOR

*Media welcome for photographs, film or audio at Civic Park, Darwin City on Wednesday 17 April 2024. View couches from 10am, speeches commence at 10.30am and Couch Surfing races start at 11am.*

#### FOR COMMENTS OR INTERVIEWS

To arrange an interview, please contact the Anglicare NT media team.  
Anna Greer – 0434 873 995 or [media@anglicare-nt.org.au](mailto:media@anglicare-nt.org.au)

## Youth Homelessness Statistics

- 28,000 young Australians aged 12-25 years are homeless each night<sup>1</sup>
- The NT has almost twelve times the national average rate of homelessness in Australia<sup>1</sup>
- On any given night over 3,000 young people in the NT are experiencing homelessness<sup>1</sup>
- Almost half of *all* people experiencing homelessness in the NT are under 25 years of age<sup>1</sup>
- Through 2023 in the NT, each day there was an average of 265 young people (aged 15-24) who attended specialist homelessness services by themselves. In addition, 525 children in families were supported each day<sup>2</sup>
- Each day around 26 requests for specialist homelessness assistance go unmet in the NT<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> ABS Census Data 2021

<sup>2</sup> AIHW – NT Specialist Homelessness Services 2023 [NT \(aihw.gov.au\)](https://aihw.gov.au)