



The Couch Project 2016: Shine a light on the 'hidden homeless'

The Salvation Army is encouraging the Australian public to get involved in The Couch Project, a powerful initiative in the fight against youth homelessness.

The Couch Project aims to raise awareness of the more than 44,000 young people experiencing homelessness*, by encouraging people to sleep on their couches on Friday 16 September 2016 to fundraise for The Salvation Army's youth services.

"You can help the Salvos support young Australians doing it tough by sleeping on your couch and raising money to fight youth homelessness. Together we can give young people who are experiencing homelessness food, blankets, counselling and support to get them back on their feet," says Jason Poutawa, The Salvation Army's Youth Foundation Coordinator.

Sadly, about 42% of Australia's homeless community are young people (under the age of 25) and of the 44,000 who are currently homeless, only 3% are sleeping "rough" on the streets, in tents, or in an impoverished dwelling.* The rest are "hidden" from the outside world because they are staying temporarily with other households on couches, in refuges or sleeping in their car.

"This is why it is vital that we raise awareness on this hidden form of homelessness, otherwise this issue will remain out of sight and out of mind," Jason Poutawa says.

The 2016 Cost of Youth Homelessness report, a national survey led by Swinburne University and conducted with a number of organisations including The Salvation Army, highlights the urgent need to address the issue of youth homelessness in Australia. The report found that early intervention in preventing youth homelessness could save the Australian Government \$626 million per year.

Jason Poutawa says: "The high cost of youth homelessness demonstrates that not enough has been done to develop Australia's early intervention initiatives. But through your support of The Salvation Army, we can help address these shortfalls and change the lives of thousands of vulnerable young Australians."

You can help fight youth homelessness by signing up to sleep on your couch on Friday 16 September 2016 and asking your friends and family to sponsor you. Fundraisers who raise over \$300 will receive a Couch Project t-shirt.

*ABS, 2012, *Census of Population and Housing: Estimating Homelessness 2011*.

Organisation name:
is hosting:
to help the Salvos fight youth homelessness.

Date:
Time:
Venue:
For more info contact:

To sign up to fundraise, donate to The Salvation Army's Couch Project or for more information, please visit thecouchproject.com.au or call 13 SALVOS (13 72 58).

For more information or media comment please contact:
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