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A splendid use for camping gear

Social Futures and OTCP are eagerly awaiting the Northern Rivers festival event of the year having joined forces with Splendour in the Grass. A campaign is underway to encourage festival punters to donate their unwanted camping gear to those who can use it after the festival's end. Social Futures and OTCP will collect the donations, ensure they are cleaned and distribute them to organisations who work with people experiencing homelessness in the Northern Rivers.

"Festival goers can donate unwanted items including tents, sleeping bags, camping tables, blow up mattresses, blankets and pillows at clearly marked drop off points in the campground. Items which are in good condition, but are no longer needed, will be given a new lease on life" says Cathy Serventy from Social Futures.

"Obviously a tent for someone experiencing homelessness is not the ultimate aim. We want to ensure that everyone has access to safe, affordable, appropriate housing. However the reality is that many people have no other option but to sleep rough, and cold winter weather is here," adds Cathy "so though it is not a perfect solution, it is something. It's also a much better destination for these items than landfill, which is where they would otherwise be headed."

"Each year the volunteer numbers are growing, and more and more socially conscious campers are leaving their gear packed up and ready to be re-homed" says OTCP Homelessness Service Manager Sarah Walker.

"We hope that this initiative might also encourage those attending Splendour to think about homelessness in Australia, particularly for young people. On any given night around 43,500 teenagers and young adults under are homeless. That's about one and a half times the number attending Splendour in the Grass, which is staggering," remarks Cathy.

"Our Connecting Home program works with more than 800 young people every year in the Northern Rivers and with very few affordable rental properties, homelessness is a huge issue for the region, it's not just an issue for cities."

Many young people attending Splendour may know someone facing homelessness who travels from one mate's couch to another, or lives in their car, or is always looking for a new place to stay. It's more common than you'd think and affects so many. So it's great that Splendour has come on board again this year to help local young people in need."

If you or someone you know is experiencing or at risk of homelessness, you can contact Connecting Home on 02 6620 1800 or OTCP 1300 355 305

To donate to Connecting Home go to www.socialfutures.org.au/donate

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SOCIAL FUTURES is a community-based not-for-profit organisation that promotes fairness and social inclusion in the Northern Rivers region of NSW. socialfutures.org.au



We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land where we live and work and their continuing connection to land, water, sea and community. We pay respects to Australia's First Peoples, to their unique and diverse cultures, and to Elders past, present and future.