



# MUNGA-THIRRI CHALLENGE

· SIMPSON DESERT ·

A Life-Changing Adventure



**22 May - 1 June 2025**

Join team Youngcare on an adventure of a lifetime where you'll be taken out of your comfort zone, to raise much needed funds and awareness for young people with complex physical disabilities.

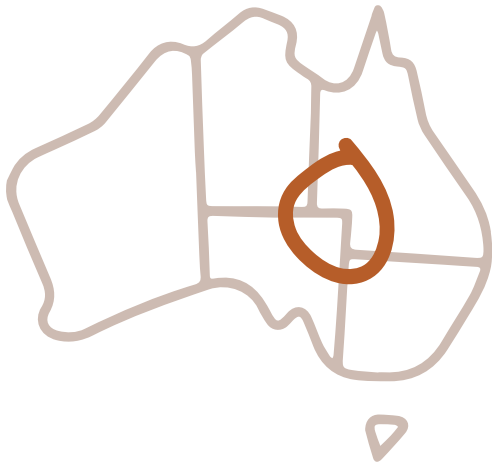


# INFORMATION BOOKLET



## *The 2025 Munga-Thirri Simpson Desert Challenge: A Life-Changing Adventure*

For nine days, in what is the ultimate Australian adventure challenge, bold Youngcare supporters conquer harsh weather conditions and endless sand dunes whilst walking close to 230km across the Munga-Thirri Simpson Desert. The completely isolated environment, where there is little control over personal choice, provides a striking reflection of the challenges that young people with complex physical disabilities face on a daily basis.



**125 trekkers**  
have walked **30,000km** across the  
desert  
over **9 challenges**

### *The Location*

The Munga-Thirri Simpson Desert is right in the heart of Australia, a vast, rugged landscape with harsh weather and endless horizons.

The desert spans the corners of three Australian states – the Northern Territory, Queensland and South Australia, located within the driest region of Australia. It is over 460,000 acres, making it the fourth largest desert in Australia.

Normally a 4WD destination, the surface of the desert is mostly lightly vegetated, red sand dunes or salt-crusted lakes. The top of each dune is usually windblown sand that is soft underfoot. The desert is home to more than 150 species of birds, camels, foxes, reptiles (Australia's biggest lizard - Perentie) and many more creatures.



*“The best moment is that sunrise in the morning; waking up, seeing the sun come up over the Simpson, shining off the red sand. You wouldn't want to be anywhere else at that moment in time.”*

**- DAN**

# CONNECTION TO CAUSE



## About Youngcare

Youngcare is a not-for-profit organisation creating choice, independence and dignity for young people (aged 16-65) with complex physical disabilities.

For two decades, Youngcare has been advocating for equality for young people with complex physical disabilities, providing much-needed grants, designing and building quality specialist disability accommodation, and supporting people to navigate the disability sector.

*This is your chance to be a part of the solution as Youngcare works towards a future where every young Australian with physical disabilities has the freedom to choose where they live, who they live with and how they live their lives.*

## The Issue

Young Australians with complex physical disabilities are being left behind in institutions, hospitals, rehabilitation centres, and other inappropriate housing that is not suitable for their age or care needs. Even more experience inequality, exclusion and social isolation through limited access to their communities and lack of representation.

Young people with complex physical disabilities deserve to feel equal, embraced and included in their communities, and it's up to all of us to make that happen.



*“This challenge is what it says it is, a ‘challenge’ but for me this will end in seven more days and I will return to my everyday life. For so many young Aussies they remain hurt, isolated, in pain, embarrassed. I am proud to have had the opportunity to take part.”*

**- BRENDAN MAYLES**

**2 X SDC TREKKER**

## WHAT'S INVOLVED?



### Fundraising

To be eligible to take part in the Munga-Thirri Simpson Desert Challenge, trekkers must raise \$40,000. Trekkers will have fundraising milestones they will need to reach along the way, in order to secure their place.

*To assist you in your fundraising efforts, Youngcare will provide one-on-one support so you are able to achieve your fundraising goals.*

### What's Included

- A minimum 12 week pre-challenge training program to prepare you both physically and mentally to take on the desert
- Experienced trek leader and medical professionals on the trek
- Flights and all transportation
- One night's accommodation in Birdsville
- All meals on the trek
- Official training and trekking shirts
- Personal travel insurance

**Over \$5.7 million**  
fundraised since 2011

#### TAX DEDUCTIBILITY

*Youngcare is a nationally registered charity and holds Deductible Gift Recipient Status as endorsed by the Australian Taxation Office. Tax deductibility is available on amounts made as donations, except where the participant makes a personal contribution.*

Please note this amount does not include personal trekking gear, expenses or additional personal costs at the Birdsville Hotel.

### How Your Dollars Count

By taking on the Munga-Thirri Simpson Desert Challenge 2025, you are helping Youngcare to;

- Design and build purpose-built specialist disability accommodation
- Provide grants for young people to remain living in their home or to move into more appropriate housing
- Provide free advice and information to assist young people and their families to navigate the complexities of the disability sector
- Create awareness and advocate for societal change through collaboration with government and communities

*“As each day passes, I feel we are getting to experience some of the true beauty in the bush. I am loving the environment, the personal reflection and the development and companionship by all involved. A few minutes in darkness and silence on the dunes is really remarkable. You are seeing stars that other people will never get to see.”*

**- MATT TUTTLE** 2017 TREKKER



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# TREKKER TESTIMONIAL



***"It dawned on me that this was going to be the most challenging thing I had ever done in my life, yet also the most rewarding."***

I was over the moon when Youngcare advised that I had been selected. Right then, I made the decision to not think too far ahead. Concentrate only on the training and not about what I may endure in the desert because I knew I needed to relinquish all control over my life, which doesn't come naturally to me. I plan everything down to the tee (goodness, I had a spreadsheet for the packing).

January 28th 2023, our first training session was held at Mount Coot-Tha. A mere 10 minutes into the training, my mind went wild. What had I gotten myself into? How on Earth would I ever be able to walk 9 days, 225km through the Simpson Desert. We were walking up a vertical hill with no end in sight. I was hurting, out of breath and far behind the rest of the group. For a moment I thought about giving up, but reminded myself why I was there. It was then, I made the decision to push myself as hard as I could every training session, to be at the front of the pack; hurting. For the pain I felt was only temporary yet the pain and struggle many young people living in inappropriate housing like aged care go through on a daily basis was lifelong.

Fast forward almost 3 months and we were ready to embark on our adventure of a lifetime to raise money and awareness for Youngcare. The unknown was before us, the only certain; the strangers from the first training were now family. Family I would lean on for the next 9 nights.

We walked 32kms on our first day. It was hot, the flies were out in droves and the sun was relentless. We would stop for a quick lunch. Going to the bathroom consisted of finding a small shrub. All dignity and control was gone yet spirits were high.

The physical impact of walking 8 hours per day, over 30km's each day took its toll by Day 6. We walked 22km on gibber stone by lunchtime, with no end in sight. My achilles aching, an 8 out of 10 pain. Tears streaming down my face. No amount of training or advice prepares you for what we did on a daily basis. No matter how mentally and physically fit you are, the desert is a place that will push you past your limits, further than you ever thought was possible.



**CASEY MCGRATH**  
2023 TREKKER

The comradery of the 15 trekkers is what helped get me through. I found appreciation for the small things in the desert, like the stars, sunrises, being asked how I slept, a hug after a tough day, some banter, laughs and the need to read social cues.

***"My experience in the Simpson Desert reminded me what a fortunate life I have led. A beautiful family, great friends, good health, a successful career, there isn't much more I could hope for. I'm committed to continuing to advocate for Youngcare and helping those who live each day without the choice and dignity they deserve."***

**-CASEY**

# A ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME OPPORTUNITY



*Pull on your 10kg backpack and embark on the test of a lifetime to raise awareness and create a future where every young person has the freedom and choice to live the lives we all deserve.*

## You Will...

- Carrying your own 10kg backpack, trek approximately 230km
- Spend 9 full days and nights in the desert, exposed to the elements
- Have your supplies replenished every 24 hours via ground support
- Have NO access to toilets, showers, beds or any other luxury



## WHERE DO YOU SIGN UP?

For more information or to become a part of this once in a lifetime challenge, please contact the Youngcare events team: [events@youngcare.com.au](mailto:events@youngcare.com.au) or phone 07 3041 3400

“A typical day is walking a lot, up and down over sand dunes. It's painful, it's isolating, but that's what we're here to experience. The pain and the sore feet that we feel are nothing compared to the young Australians that we are trying to help, and what they feel on a daily basis.”

**- JOE**

“Making thousands of people's lives much better. It's all worth it.”

**- MICHAEL ATKINSON 2021 TREKKER**

**CONTACT US:** (07) 3041 3400 | [youngcare.com.au](http://youngcare.com.au) | search Youngcare on





# MUNGA-THIRRI CHALLENGE

· SIMPSON DESERT ·

## 2025 Registration Form

### Personal Details

Mr  Mrs  Ms  Other

First name

Surname

Address

Contact number

Date of birth

Email

How did you hear about this challenge?

Dietary Requirements

T-shirt size

XS  S  M  L  XL  XXL

### Emergency Contact 1

\*Please note, your emergency contacts are who Youngcare will contact for any updates during the trek

Full name

Full name

Relationship

Relationship

Best contact number

Best contact number

Email

Email

### Challenge Pledge

- I pledge to raise a minimum of \$40,000 and partake in the dedicated training program, including the extended training weekend. I understand failure to reach my fundraising target or commit to the training may result in forfeiture of my place on the challenge.

Please return this completed form to Youngcare via email: [events@youngcare.com.au](mailto:events@youngcare.com.au)

Munga-Thirri Simpson Desert Challenge 2025  
Registration form