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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Monday, 8 November 2021

### **ACT residents help social enterprise break mattress recycling record**

ACT residents helped national social enterprise Soft Landing collect and recycle a record 538,000 mattresses and ensemble bases in 2020-21.

Announcing the results during National Recycling Week 2021, Soft Landing ACT Manager Kylie Roberts-Frost said 2020-21 was the biggest year the social enterprise had ever had, with mattress volumes 16 per cent higher than the year before. The volumes included 44,855 mattresses and ensembles across the ACT.

“The huge volumes were largely driven by the impacts of COVID-19 as industry and community members replaced mattresses at a higher rate during the pandemic,” Ms Roberts-Frost said.

“It also highlights growing community awareness of the importance of recycling and reducing landfill.”

Soft Landing diverts mattresses and ensemble bases from landfill and recovers the components to recycle, and provides stable and meaningful jobs for people with barriers to employment. Of the 260 people employed in 2020-21, 79 per cent had faced some sort of challenge in entering the workforce.

Soft Landing’s site at Hume services the ACT Government and most of its employees are long-term unemployed or from ACT Corrections. Other target groups for the social enterprise are young people, Aboriginal people and former refugees.

Soft Landing’s business model is to create jobs while doing the right thing by the planet.

***Creating local jobs that care for the planet***

“We don’t send materials overseas for disposal; we keep our by-products in Australia, support local companies, reduce transport mileage and maximise reuse of materials,” Ms Roberts-Frost said.

“We send foam to Australian carpet-underlay manufacturers, steel to Australian scrap steel merchants, and timber bed bases to local industry for mulch.

“In 2020-21 we diverted 9,124 tonnes of waste from landfill, recycling 7,127 tonnes of steel, 924 tonnes of timber and 1,073 tonnes of foam.

“As well as protecting the environment, we’re about providing stable employment for people who have been out of the workforce for a long time or have struggled to get into the workforce.

“Most of these people haven’t had access to the opportunities and support that many of us take for granted. Stable employment can change lives and has huge flow-on benefits for the whole community.

“Because we are a not-for profit, our revenue goes entirely to delivering our work.

“For every 35 mattresses that we collect and recycle each day, we can create a job for someone who really needs one.”

#### **FOR MEDIA ENQUIRIES CONTACT**

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