



**EMBARGOED**  
**19 April 2018**

## VINNIES CEO SLEEPOUT: EXPOSING THE HOME TRUTHS OF POVERTY

The St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria (Vinnies) has today launched a campaign to support recruitment for the 2018 [Vinnies CEO Sleepout](#) in Melbourne - **#PovertyHomeTruths** - which will educate the community about the real, lived experiences of poverty in Victoria and the invaluable role of Vinnies volunteers in helping people to rebuild peoples' lives.

This is the second time the Vinnies CEO Sleepout has been generously supported by event sponsor, [The University of Melbourne](#), and will be hosted at the Parkville Campus inside the South Lawn Underground Carpark. This is an iconic venue, well known for its distinctive architecture and gritty ambience.

"We are so grateful for The University of Melbourne's support again in 2018 and look forward to providing another night of eye-opening discomfort for the city's business and community leaders – a key part of our goal to raise awareness of the lived experiences of over 725,000 Victorians living below the poverty line," said St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria CEO, Ms Sue Cattermole.

The Vinnies CEO Sleepout was initiated in 2006 by a St Vincent de Paul Society volunteer in Sydney and has now grown into a successful national event, hosted annually during winter in every state and territory around Australia.

Vinnies is calling on business, community and political leaders to register now by visiting [ceosleepout.org.au](http://ceosleepout.org.au). Each participant is challenged to raise at least \$5,000, to help Vinnies meet a collective target of \$1,000,000 in Victoria, and to sleep outside for one night – on 21 June in Melbourne or the 28 June in Geelong.

"The event is underpinned by a peer-to-peer fundraising campaign, which culminates with participants sleeping on a piece of cardboard at the event and listening to the stories of real people who are experiencing poverty and homelessness," said Ms Cattermole.

"This year, in Victoria, the event is raising money to support Vinnies' local home visitation services, which is one of the primary ways our volunteers alleviate poverty and ensure people are empowered to keep a roof over their heads. We help with the basics, when people have nowhere else to turn, including food, utilities, education and more."

Ms Cattermole said one of the main goals of the Vinnies CEO Sleepout is to encourage open and constructive conversation about the issue of poverty and to enhance the community's understanding of pathways into homelessness. Poverty, she says, is at the core of the problem.

"People who are impacted by housing insecurity or homelessness all have one thing in common – a lack of adequate resources to live in comfort and safety, with the essential things they need to survive. At Vinnies, we focus on alleviating poverty as a primary way to prevent homelessness and give people the opportunity to participate in their communities," she said.

"We are encouraging leaders not only to fundraise, but to identify ways that community, government, not for profit and business leaders can work together to collectively address the real drivers of disadvantage."

Vinnies helps people via its Vinnies Soup Vans, which provide a nightly meal and friendship for people experiencing poverty and homelessness on streets, in homes, and in boarding houses. In the last financial year Vinnies Victoria delivered over 200,000 meals via Vinnies Soup Vans and a further \$14.9m in material aid via Vinnies Shops and face-to-face home visitation.

"Participants in the Vinnies CEO Sleepout play a crucial role in helping to sustain our volunteer services. We extend our utmost gratitude to leaders who participated in 2017, who helped to fund the recent purchase of five new Vinnies Soup Vans for the state of Victoria. The vans new will replace part of an ageing, but well-loved fleet of vehicles, that have been on the road for up to two decades," said Ms Cattermole.



In addition to fundraising and donating generously, the community is encouraged to pause and observe the home truths of poverty that Vinnies is sharing in market as part of 2018 campaign.

See [HERE](#) a film which captures a group of Vinnies CEO Sleepout participants reading #PovertyHomeTruths for the first time.

“Many of the stories we’ve collected through our work are eye-opening and heart breaking. No one wants or chooses to experience homelessness or poverty and it’s important for us to be aware of the stereotypes that so commonly hold these individuals back from a full recovery and to give generously of the resources we have to help.

“Join us for one night to learn how you can personally make a difference.”

**CEOs, politicians, business leaders, and community leaders are invited to sign up for the 2018 Vinnies CEO Sleepout on 21 June 2018 (Melbourne) or 28 June 2018 (Geelong), either individually or as part of a senior management team. Visit [www.ceosleepout.org.au](http://www.ceosleepout.org.au) to register now.**

**- ENDS -**

**MEDIA:** For further information or resources to assist with your story, please contact:

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#### **ABOUT THE VINNIES CEO SLEEPOUT:**

The Vinnies CEO Sleepout was initiated in 2006 by a St Vincent de Paul Society volunteer in Sydney and has now grown into a successful national event, hosted annually during winter in every state and territory around Australia.

It collectively raises around \$6.5m across the country every year, which is used to support vital services for people experiencing homelessness and poverty, including crisis accommodation, food vouchers, soup vans, rent assistance, referral services and more.

The event is experiential, allowing participants to reflect on the experiences of people living below the poverty line or without secure accommodation, by sleeping outside for one night on a piece of cardboard. To find out more visit [ceosleepout.org.au](http://ceosleepout.org.au).

#### **ABOUT THE ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY VICTORIA:**

The St Vincent de Paul Society and its wide network of members and volunteers provide practical frontline support, advocacy and friendship for the most vulnerable members of our community.

Key services include home visitation; Vinnies Shops; youth programs; soup vans; assistance for asylum seekers and refugees; compeer programs for people experiencing mental illness; education and tutoring; and professional accommodation and health services through VincentCare.

The St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia has more than 60,000 members and volunteers. Internationally, the Society operates in 149 countries and has over 950,000 members. To find out more visit [vinnies.org.au](http://vinnies.org.au).