VINNIES CEO SLEEPOUT: VICTORIA

These facts have been sourced from Vinnies Victoria and a select group of reputable industry and government bodies. More information is available upon request by emailing media@svpd-vic.org.au

FUNDRAISING GOAL

Participants in the 2018 Vinnies CEO Sleepout in Victoria will be helping to raise $1,000,000 ($800,000 in Melbourne, $200,000 in Geelong) to support Vinnies' local, volunteer-run community services which alleviate poverty and prevent homelessness. In other states and territories, the event will support general homelessness support services.

The St Vincent de Paul Society is a volunteer-run organisation, underpinned by local volunteer groups – known as conferences, run by conference members – which have an active presence in most suburbs and country towns throughout Australia. Conferences support local people in need in their homes as part of home visitation or in dedicated community assistance centres.

Conference members aim to take the pressure off by providing compassionate face to face support, and access to the basics like food, petrol, education, utility bills, medical needs, and more. This support model is designed to give people a compassionate hand up, with human connection, in times of crisis. Every dollar raised as part of the Victorian Vinnies CEO Sleepout events will support this activity.

VINNIES CEO SLEEPOUT

- The Vinnies CEO Sleepout was initiated 12 years ago by a St Vincent de Paul Society volunteer in Sydney and has now grown into a successful national event, hosted annually during winter across a number of capital cities and regional centres.
- It collectively raises around $6.5m every year, which is used to support Vinnies services for people experiencing homelessness and poverty, including crisis accommodation, food vouchers, rent assistance, referral services and more.
- The event gives business, community and political leaders an opportunity to be part of an advocacy and fundraising campaign, which culminates in sleeping outside their comfort zone for one night at the event and hearing real stories from people who have experienced poverty and homelessness.
- The Victorian Vinnies CEO Sleepout campaign will be supported by a local tagline, Poverty: Home Truths. This seeks to expose the real, lived experiences of poverty that Vinnies volunteers see every day – often hidden, behind closed doors.

Vinnies CEO Sleepout: what we achieved in 2017

- Campaign tagline: Face to face with poverty
- Amount raised: $788,021
- Number of participants: 223
- Use of funds: Participants fundraised to support the Vinnies Soup Van Program, a volunteer-run service which works across six locations in metropolitan, suburban and regional areas of Victoria to provide a nightly meal and conversation for people doing it tough. The funds raised were used to purchase five new soup vans.
**Vinnies CEO Sleepout: our goals for 2018**

- **Campaign tagline:** Poverty: home truths
- **Fundraising target:** $1,000,000 ($800,000 in Melbourne, $200,000 in Geelong)
- **Number of participants:** 330 (230 in Melbourne, 100 in Geelong)

**Use of funds:** The funds raised will be used to fund ongoing home visitation and/or special projects across the state of Victoria (Melbourne CEOSO) and in the greater Geelong region (Geelong CEOSO).

**HOMELESSNESS AND POVERTY**

**Poverty**

- **The definition:** Poverty is the state of being without the means, resources, essential goods and services that are generally accepted as the standard of living enjoyed by the broader community. The causes of poverty are reinforced by inequality in the way people have access to work and income, education, housing, health and broader services.
- **Describing poverty:** Poverty can be measured in different ways, including as a measure of income or wealth, using ‘poverty lines’; or by looking at what essential items people are missing out on through lack of income, or by having to spend more of their income on certain costs. For example, spending on housing or medical bills, instead of food. This is known as ‘deprivation’. ([source](#))
- **The social impact:** Poverty, inequality and disadvantage impose a heavy social and economic cost. When people cannot fulfil their potential, social cohesion is fragmented, their valuable skills go underutilised, and they struggle to live a fulfilling life.
- **Poverty and work:** The majority of people experiencing poverty receive social security payments as their main source of income. A third of people living in poverty also rely on wages as their main source of income and the evidence is clear that a job does not safeguard people against poverty. Social security settings, labour market policies and jobs growth policies are all important considerations for addressing poverty.

**Poverty Facts**

- An estimated 2.9million or 13.3 percent of people are living below the poverty line in Australia ([source](#)).
- 725,000+ Victorians are living below the poverty line in Australia.
- 17.7 percent of all children are living below the poverty line in Australia.
- According to the 2015-2016 Household Expenditure Survey from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS):
  - The average Australian family spent $1425 a week on housing, food and education costs.
  - 11 percent more spend on power and energy in the past six years.
  - 30 percent of Australian Households were over-burdened with debt, with mortgages the primary cause.
  - 24 percent increase for education costs – the largest proportional increase of any spending category.

**The role of Vinnies volunteers**

- **Vinnies volunteers:** Vinnies volunteers support people when they are experiencing social and/or financial hardship, and help to alleviate the impacts of social isolation and poverty. Over 12,000 Vinnies volunteers in Victoria (2200 in the greater Geelong district) spend time with people on the frontline, face to face, to rebuild lives.
- **Vinnies support:** In the last financial year, Vinnies has provided $14.9 million of welfare assistance to adults and children in their local communities; food, clothing, furniture, education, and much more. Vinnies Soup Vans provided nearly 200,000 meals across its six locations in regional and metropolitan Victoria.
• **Rising demand on charity:** Vinnies Victoria has experienced an average 40 percent rise in the demand for welfare support in Australia over the past three years and in some parts of the state (the greater Geelong district), the rise has been as high as 68 percent.

• **Responding to deprivation:** Vinnies services a number of people experiencing ‘deprivation’, which means they are forced to choose between basic essentials to live. This is an important and critical distinction, from absolute poverty or homelessness.

### Homelessness and housing stress in Victoria

According to the latest Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) figures:

- In Australia, people living in ‘severely’ crowded dwellings comprise the largest homeless group, which was up 23 percent from 2011.
- The number of people living in crowded dwelling who had arrived in Australia in 2011, or earlier, rose by 61 percent.
- There had been an 11 percent increase in homelessness in Victoria over the past five years.

Data from the Australian Institute for Health and Welfare (AIHW) assessing specialist homelessness services 2016–17 in Victoria shows:

- One in 56 people in Victoria (Vic) received homelessness assistance, higher than the national rate (1 in 84).
- The top 3 reasons for clients seeking assistance were: domestic and family violence (44 percent, compared with 37 percent nationally); housing crisis (40 percent, compared with 44 percent); financial difficulties (39 percent, compared with 38 percent).

- According to the Melbourne Rent Index (MRI), September 2017, the median rent for metropolitan Melbourne is $400 per week – a 3.5 percent annual rise.
- According to the Regional Rent Index (RRI), September 2017, the median rent for Regional Victoria is $290 per week – a 3 percent annual rise.
- According to the Rental Affordability Index (RAI), a price index for housing rental markets, there is currently not a single neighbourhood in Melbourne or Victoria’s regional cities that is affordable for a single person on Centrelink, a single pensioner, or a single parent on a low part-time income. It shows:
  - Every suburb in Melbourne, Geelong, or Bendigo is rated as “extremely unaffordable” for people on Newstart, meaning they would have to pay at least 60 per cent of their income on rent and, in some areas, over 100 per cent.
  - All of Melbourne is either “extremely” or “severely unaffordable” for single pensioners, who would have to pay nearly 70 percent of their income for a new lease.
  - A single parent working part-time and relying on some benefits cannot afford to live anywhere in Melbourne, the major regional cities, and even in major regional centres like Warrnambool.
  - The closest areas for a $50K p.a. income household to live without being in rent stress are Seymour (115kms from Melbourne), Moe (160kms from Melbourne), and Ballarat East (113kms).

### The Victorian Government’s response to homelessness

- The Andrews Government announced *The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Plan* in January 2018. It includes a raft of measures aimed at intervening early in the cycle of homelessness, particularly in high-need regional centres including Ballarat, Bendigo and Geelong. The government will spend $13 million on 106 new accommodation units, $9 million to develop teams to support vulnerable people once they are housed, $19 million for outreach teams and $4.5 million for therapeutic services to improve health and wellbeing.