

Leading with compassion



MEDIA RELEASE

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EMBARGOED

08 May 2019

LEADING WITH COMPASSION: VINNIES CEO SLEEPOUT GEELONG

St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria (Vinnies) will launch its campaign to support recruitment for the 2019 [Vinnies CEO Sleepout](#) in Geelong with a corporate lunch at **GMHBA Stadium** on **Wednesday 8 May**.

Some of Geelong's most influential business and community leaders – including new Chamber of Commerce CEO Ben Flynn – will hear why it's more urgent than ever to sleep out on one of the longest and coldest nights of the year to help change the lives of more than 21,000 people in the City of Greater Geelong living in poverty.

"This year, we aim to raise \$200,000, which will allow Vinnies to continue to help provide shelter, put food on tables, ensure lights stay on in the households of people in Geelong doing it tough," said St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria CEO, Ms Sue Cattermole.

Ms Cattermole said one of the main goals of the Vinnies CEO Sleepout is to encourage open and constructive conversation about the linkages between poverty and homelessness which, in and around Geelong, has risen almost 23 percent since 2011, according to the latest ABS figures. While the causes of homelessness are varied, a strong causal link is poverty.

Too many Geelong families on a low income and paying too much for housing are forced to go without basic necessities, and are often one pay away from eviction and homelessness. With the reach and scope of the work of Vinnies there is a good chance that a significant number of these households will seek assistance from Vinnies volunteers.

"Over the past three years, in the greater Geelong region, Vinnies volunteers have seen the need for assistance rise significantly in the following areas: utilities (more than 50 percent), education (75 percent), food (48 percent) and medications (38 percent)," said Ms Cattermole.

Vinnies is calling on business, community and political leaders to register now by visiting ceosleepout.org.au. Each participant is challenged to raise at least \$3,000, to help Vinnies meet a collective target of \$200,000 in Geelong, and to sleep outside for one night at GMHBA Stadium in the thick of winter on 27 June 2019.

Our 2019 theme – "**Leading with compassion**" – builds upon the idea that the Vinnies CEO Sleepout has moved beyond a fundraiser; it's a meeting of minds where CEOs are well positioned to help address some of the issues that the people we assist face.

Local leaders such as President of Bell Park Sports Club and 2019 Vinnies CEO Sleepout ambassador Rose Pirrottina, who was last year's highest fundraiser.

"The Vinnies CEO Sleepout opened my eyes to really understand how many children in and around Geelong were homeless," said Ms Pirrottina. "This really touched my heart and I thought I have to go out there and use the network that I have and put it towards a good cause."

She adds that on the night participants get to hear from speakers who know what it means to live on the fringes and chat to Vinnies soup van volunteers – onsite to provide a simple meal of soup and sandwiches – who are more than happy to talk about their experiences.



St Vincent de Paul Society
VICTORIA

good works

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"#Leadingwithcompassion isn't just our theme, it's a challenge for the ages," adds Ms Cattermole. "And it's a challenge we're issuing to business and community leaders throughout Victoria this year. Join us for one night to learn how you can personally make a difference."

Geelong CEOs, business and community leaders are invited to sign up for 27 June 2019, either individually or as part of a senior management team. Visit www.ceosleepout.org.au to register now.

– ENDS –

MEDIA ENQUIRIES: For further information or resources to assist with your story, please contact:
St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria Marketing & Communications Manager
Jen Vuk | jen.vuk@svdp-vic.org.au | 0418 863 719 | 03 9895 5877

PHOTO OPPORTUNITY: The media is invited to attend the launch on:

When: 11.45am – 2:00pm on Wednesday 8 May 2019
Where: Captains room, GMHBA Stadium

VINNIES CEO SLEEPOUT 2019 AMBASSADORS (GEELONG):

See [HERE](#) for a group shot of our Vinnies CEO Sleepout Geelong ambassadors who have generously donated their time to lead recruitment, fundraising and advocacy for the campaign, and are available for media interviews upon request [L to R]: Joanne Plummer, Executive Director Business in Heels, Rose Pirrottina, President of Bell Park Sports Club and Samantha Krajina, Director Geelong Women in Business

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.

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; education and tutoring; and accommodation and support services through VincentCare.

The St Vincent de Paul Society in Victoria has 12,000 members and volunteers. Nationally, the Society has more than 60,000 members and globally operates in 149 countries. To find out more visit vinnies.org.au.



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VICTORIA
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