



St Vincent de Paul Society
CANBERRA/GOULBURN
good works

4 April 2019

**Business, Community and Government Leaders to brave the Canberra cold for the
2019 Vinnies CEO Sleepout**

The 2019 Vinnies CEO Sleepout will be launched today, Thursday 4 April 11am, at Canberra Airport.

Barnie van Wyk, CEO of St Vincent de Paul Society Canberra/Goulburn, said, "This is the tenth anniversary of the CEO Sleepout here in Canberra, so we were looking for something a little different. I'm delighted to announce Stephen Byron and his team here at Canberra Airport have graciously offered us the use of Hangar 47 for the night.

"While sleeping out for one night will never be a true experience of homelessness, it is a chance to gain an insight into what that experience might be like, and here at the airport where it's frequently colder than other parts of Canberra, and with the noise of planes and trucks and crew, our participants will gain a greater understanding of the realities of what it is to sleep rough."

Homelessness rates in Australia continue to rise, with the 2016 census showing a 14% increase since 2011.

The Vinnies CEO Sleepout serves to raise awareness of this and other issues, and to raise much-needed funds so Vinnies can continue to assist those at risk of or experiencing homelessness, and continue to expand services designed to break the cycle of poverty.

"Homelessness is a very significant problem in our society, and in Canberra. It can affect any of us. But with the right support and the right funding there are programs that can help people through this period, to a place where they can have a home," said Stephen Byron.

The Anniversary Ambassadors of the CEO Sleepout, including Barnie van Wyk and Stephen Byron, will be announced at the launch. These champions of the cause have slept out a number of times in the past, and also support Vinnies in various other ways.

Greg Hood, CEO and Chief Commissioner, Australian Transport Safety Bureau:

"This will be my third CEO Sleepout for Vinnies. The first year was -4, last year was -7, so I'm really hoping for -10 this year because it really gives you a real feeling for what it's like to sleep on the streets."

Neville Tomkins, Chief Commissioner, Scouts Australia (NSW):

"I have returned every year because I am passionate about helping those less fortunate than ourselves, especially the homeless. In my mind, having somewhere safe to sleep each night is a right. It is not a privilege."

Catherine Rey, Principal, John Paul College, Gungahlin:

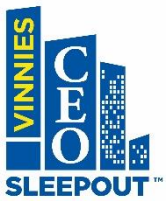
"It's a wonderful privilege for me, because working as I do with young people it's an opportunity to raise awareness with them about the issue of homelessness, and particularly the homelessness of young people."

Mirko Milic, Dealer Principal, Canberra Toyota:

"I enjoy supporting Vinnies, they're a great cause. They're always out there in the community doing the hard things, while most of us are at home and asleep."

David Tyack, Managing Director, Canberra Milk:

"I'm proud to also be part of the Canberra Milk crew that man the Night Patrol van once a month."



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Event details:

Thursday 4 April

11am-12.00pm

Canberra Airport Terminal, Departures Level 2, In front of the flight information display screen

Opportunities for media interviews and photographs 11.30am

Media contact: Kathryn Maiden kathryn.maiden@svdp-cg.org.au or 0417 836 494

Interviews available:

- Mr Bernie van Wyk – CEO, St Vincent de Paul Society Canberra/Goulburn
- Mr Stephen Byron – Managing Director, Canberra Airport
- Mr Mirko Milic – Dealer Principal, Canberra Toyota
- Mr David Tyack – Managing Director, Canberra Milk
- Mr Greg Hood – CEO and Chief Commissioner, Australian Transport Safety Bureau
- Mr Neville Tomkins – Chief Commissioner, Scouts Australia (NSW Branch)
- Ms Catherine Rey – Principal, John Paul College Gungahlin

Registrations for the Vinnies CEO Sleepout are now open at <http://www.ceosleepout.org.au>