

Media Release



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Brisbane leaders raise their voice against homelessness

A choir comprised of formerly homeless and disadvantaged Brisbane residents will be the guest entertainers at the 10th Vinnies CEO Sleepout in Brisbane on 20 June, at the Brisbane Powerhouse.

The Absolutely Everybody Brisbane Choir is a choral group providing those with a history of hardship the chance to be part of a supportive and community-driven network.

Choir Operations Manager, Susan Gilmartin, said opportunities like this year's Vinnies CEO Sleepout allow choir members to give back to service providers that helped them in their time of need.

“Organisations like Vinnies are vital in referring disadvantaged community members to join our network, and it's such a rewarding experience to watch our members gain confidence and develop new skills as part of participating in the choir,” she said.

“The Absolutely Everybody Brisbane Choir which is a program run by Upbeat Arts, promotes inclusion, respect and friendship — values that provide choir members with purpose and a sense of belonging.

“We sing songs from a variety of different genres, with each song specially chosen to tell a story. When our members come together to sing, you can't help but be carried along on their journey.”

Funds raised through events like the Vinnies CEO Sleepout also help Vinnies provide support to people like members of the Absolutely Everybody Brisbane Choir with opportunities for personal development.

“The difference in our members from when they arrive on a Friday morning to when they leave in the afternoon is incredible — let alone the development in skills and mental wellbeing we see across an entire year,” Ms Gilmartin said.

“Knowing we've provided transferable skills that allow these individuals to gain meaningful employment or further education is so rewarding.”

Choir member, Conrad Sanders, says his three-year involvement in the group has allowed him to experience firsthand the impact community support services can make on an individual's life.

“I'm very excited about performing at the Vinnies CEO Sleepout to share what we've been working on, and to show support for support services like Vinnies that are so important in helping disadvantaged Australians,” he said.

“Being a part of the choir means an incredible amount to me, and it has improved my quality of life enormously. We come together to learn music, have fun, and spend time together.”

This year's Sleepout in Queensland aims to raise a record \$1.4 million across the Brisbane and Gold Coast events, with Vinnies CEO Sleepout Gold Coast also taking place on 20 June at Cbus Stadium.

To register or donate to the Vinnies CEO Sleepout visit www.ceosleepout.org.au

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INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITIES:

The Absolutely Everybody Brisbane Choir is available for photography at a Friday rehearsal upon request.

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