

Participants' Communication Guide

Thank you for participating in the Vinnies CEO Sleepout. This document provides some quick facts, figures and messages to help you share news about your sleepout experience with your social networks. This information is to be used as a suggested guide - we encourage you to use your own unique voice in spreading the word about #CEOSleepoutAU

ABOUT THE VINNIES CEO SLEEPOUT

- The Vinnies CEO Sleepout raises money for crisis accommodation, food, healthcare, counselling, education, employment, and support to find a permanent home for thousands of people across the country.
- Hundreds of business, government and community leaders sleepout on one of the longest and coldest nights of the year, gaining a small glimpse into the daily reality for tens of thousands of Australians.
- As well as fundraising for essential services, participants hear from people with lived experience of homelessness and learn about the factors that contribute to the growing number of people facing housing instability.
- In 2021 each States and Territory will have a physical or a hybrid event. Please contact each event to see options available.
- Nationally, almost \$64 million has been raised since the Vinnies CEO Sleepout first started 16 years ago in Sydney. This year's fundraising goal is \$7.98 million nationally.

ABOUT HOMELESSNESS IN AUSTRALIA

- More than 116,000 people in Australia don't have a safe and secure place to live, including an increasing number of young people and older women.

Homelessness is a complex issue that cannot be solved with simplistic, short term solutions. It affects people of all ages and backgrounds who find themselves without a safe and stable place to live; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as well as recent migrants are disproportionately affected.

- Of those people experiencing homelessness in Australia, around 8,200 'sleep rough' in improvised dwellings, tents or outdoors. But the majority of people facing homelessness are living in cars, on the couches of friends or family, or in overcrowded, temporary or unsuitable accommodation or caravan parks.

- There is no single cause of homelessness. A shortage of affordable and available rental housing, domestic and family violence, poverty, unemployment, mental illness, drug and alcohol abuse, financial crisis, exiting state care and/or prison, and economic and social exclusion are all factors that contribute to the current state of homelessness in Australia.

ABOUT VINNIES

- The St Vincent de Paul Society was founded by a 20-year-old student named Frederic Ozanam in 1833. Frederic and his friends put their faith into action by alleviating the suffering in the slums of Paris.
- Our founder showed that determined individuals can make a difference in the lives of others, and we carry on this vision today. Vinnies has close

to 50,000 members, volunteers and staff across Australia, helping people to overcome homelessness, poverty, domestic and family violence, addiction and other forms of hardship.

- We offer “a hand up” to those in need; respecting their dignity, sharing our hope, and encouraging them to take control of their own destiny.
- We don’t just want to help individuals, but to transform our community into a place built on compassion and justice. Vinnies advocates for several pressing social justice issues, including the urgent need for more government investment in social housing.

SHARING YOUR #CEOSLEEPOUTAU EXPERIENCE

You’ll get the most engagement on social media platforms by sharing news both in the lead-up to the Vinnies CEO Sleepout (with increasing frequency the closer we get to the big night), and during the event itself (post as often as you can to get the event trending!).

Don’t forget to link to your fundraising page so that friends and colleagues can support your efforts.

Remember to use the hashtag #CEOSleepoutAU and tag us in your posts:

- **Facebook:** @VinniesCEOSleepout and @VinniesAU
- **Twitter:** @CEOSleepout and @VinniesAust
- **Instagram:** @CEOSleepout and @vinniesshops
- **LinkedIn:** Vinnies Australia
- **YouTube:** Vinnies Australia

During the big night, take your followers along on the journey by snapping selfies and photos, sharing quotes from the speakers, and reflecting on what it’s like to be out in the cold. You could take your followers on a photo or video tour of the sleepout site, or record a few video diaries as the night goes on, sharing what you’re learning and how you’re feeling.

It’s human nature that we’re always most interested in the personal angle. Consider sharing what inspired you to become involved with the CEO Sleepout in the first place, or how your personal understanding of homelessness has changed and evolved.

Here are a few suggested social media posts to get you started:

1. More than 116,000 people will be homeless across Australia tonight. I’m fundraising for vital services to support them by taking part in the #CEOSleepoutAU

Please help me raise money to keep our fellow Australians safe and sound: [link to your fundraising page]

3. I’ll be sleeping out in the cold later this month for #CEOSleepoutAU, but I’ll have warm clothes, a sleeping bag and a hot meal – which is sadly more than many people can rely on. Please help me raise money to ensure @Vinnies can continue to be there, providing support services to get people experiencing homelessness back on their feet. [Link to your fundraising page]

4. On 17 June I’ll get a small glimpse into what it’s like to sleep rough, when I do the @Vinnies #CEOSleepoutAU. But homelessness isn’t just what you see on the street – there are many tens of thousands of Australians who are caught in a cycle of insecure housing or live in severely overcrowded conditions. It’s up to all of us, especially leaders in business and government, to advocate for affordable housing and robust community services. <https://www.ceosleepout.org.au>

5. Tonight I’m spending a night out in the cold to raise funds for food, shelter and support for people who are homeless or at risk. While it won’t be a comfortable night, it’s worth it to help make a difference in the lives of those who go without, every night of the year. Help me make a difference at [link to your fundraising page].

EMAIL TEXT

If you haven't done so already, we suggest sending an email to your colleagues and contacts to let them know you'll be participating in the CEO Sleepout and ask for their support.

Even if you've already sent an email a while back, it might be worth reminding them that the big night is coming up soon, and time is running out to donate.

Here is some suggested text that you might like to use:

Dear colleagues,

As you might already know, I'm participating in the CEO Sleepout on 17 June.

The CEO Sleepout is an annual event to raise money for people experiencing homelessness or at risk of finding themselves without a safe place to call home. Every dollar we raise goes to Vinnies' not-for-profit services, which include food, accommodation, education, counselling, employment and health programs.

I'll be joining business, government and community leaders across Australia in sleeping out. Our goal is to ensure that Vinnies' vital services can stay up and running – meeting the increasing demand due to COVID-19, job losses, sky-rocketing energy prices along with other social and economic pressures keep homelessness on the rise.

I would greatly appreciate your support for this important cause. The Vinnies CEO Sleepout happens for just one night, but it raises vital funds to support people all year round. Please feel free to make a donation at <https://ceosleepout.org.au/donate>.

CURLY QUESTIONS

The facts and figures at the top of this document should equip you to answer most questions about the CEO Sleepout that come your way.

However, from time to time our participants have to field some curlier questions. Here are some suggested ways of answering:

How does sleeping out for one night help people who experience homelessness year-round?

The CEO Sleepout isn't intended to be a real experience of homelessness, but a way of encouraging empathy and awareness, while raising money for vital support services. While the Sleepout does not expose participants to the longer-term impacts of homelessness – such as the social isolation, physical danger, and long-term

mental and other health impacts – it does provide a glimpse into what tens of thousands of Australians experience every day. The money raised through the CEO Sleepout helps Vinnies provide important homelessness services all year round, including food, accommodation, education, counselling, employment and health programs. Since the annual event began in 2006, almost \$64 million has been raised for Vinnies homelessness services across Australia.

How much does the Vinnies CEO Sleepout really 'raise awareness'? How much can you learn about real homelessness by sleeping outside for one night?

Sleeping out is just one aspect of the Vinnies CEO Sleepout. Participants also hear from real people who've experienced homelessness, and learn about ways to use their power and privilege to make an ongoing impact. Research conducted by Western Sydney University, consisting of interviews with CEOs who took part in the Vinnies CEO Sleepout in Sydney, found that the impact of the event extended far beyond the money raised. Besides affecting participants emotionally, many reported taking practical steps to effect change within their companies, their communities, and their homes.

By focusing on 'sleeping rough', does the Vinnies CEO Sleepout give a misleading impression of what homelessness really looks like?

More than 116,000 Australians experience homelessness, and of these, around 8,200 people are 'sleeping rough' in improvised dwellings, tents or outdoors. People sleeping out on the street, in parks, caravan parks and other public places are often the most visible members of the homeless population. In 2021, we are drawing more attention to the majority of people experiencing homelessness who sleep under shelter, but nonetheless lack a suitable home. Many of these people live in overcrowded dwellings, sleep on the couch of a friend or family member, or reside in crisis accommodation or boarding houses.

How can I find out where the money goes?

This information is available on the Vinnies CEO Sleepout website at <https://www.ceosleepout.org.au/where-your-money-goes>.

As a not-for-profit organisation registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission, Vinnies fully complies with transparency and reporting requirements. Our annual reports are a good source of information about our impact and responsible stewardship of donor funds.