



HOST

HANDBOOK

A HOW TO GUIDE

#VINNIESCOMMUNITYSLEEPOUT

WELCOME

Thank you for hosting a Vinnies Community Sleepout! You will find everything you need in this information pack to implement a rewarding and successful event.

Hosting a Vinnies Community Sleepout gives residents in your local community a glimpse into the realities and complex issues of homelessness on a personal level by 'sleeping rough' for a night.

The Vinnies Community Sleepout not only aims to raise awareness and provide vital funds towards programs to eliminate homelessness; but encourages communities to work together to decrease the impact of homelessness within Western Australia.

Homelessness is a problem often misunderstood by the wider community; but together we can advocate for change and put homelessness on the public agenda.

Imagine this...

Curled up on a thin sheet of cardboard, you pull your sleeping bag up tighter around your neck and ears in an attempt to block the cold wind. Using your backpack filled with a handful of your belongings as a pillow; you try to get comfortable to fall asleep. It might not be the ideal situation, but you take comfort in the knowledge that tomorrow you will wake up and go home, take a hot shower, make something to eat and maybe even go to bed for a few more hours of sleep.

THE FACTS

You might be surprised to know that children and youth are some of the largest groups of Australians experiencing disadvantage.

- More than 17,000 Australian children under the age of 12 do not have a permanent home
- Children under the age of 18 make up 27% of people experiencing homelessness
- 60% of Australians who are homeless are under the age of 35
- 42% of people in Australia experiencing homelessness are women and 58% are men
- In WA over 9,000 men, women and children experience homelessness on any given night

Reference: ABS, 2018, Census of Population and Housing: Estimating Homelessness 2016

Many Australians experience events in their lives that put them at risk of homelessness. It is estimated that around 44% of low-income households experience affordability issues due to rental stress and around one in four women have experienced some form of domestic and family violence in their lifetime. Other risk factors include mental illness and family instability.

With the rising cost of living, homelessness is a growing problem and more people are turning to Vinnies for help. The vital funds raised through your Vinnies Community Sleepout will enable us to promptly respond to the increase in Western Australians seeking our services.

TYPES OF HOMELESSNESS

Homelessness does not discriminate, and many people within your community may be on the brink. People don't choose to be homeless; it is generally a result of an illogical housing system - the lack of affordable housing combined with the rising cost of living in Western Australia plays a huge part in the number of people who are without a home.

We often refer to the types of homelessness as primary, secondary and tertiary.

Rough sleeping is the most 'visible' form of homelessness; however the majority of people who are homeless fall into the secondary and tertiary categories outlined.

PRIMARY HOMELESSNESS is experienced by people without conventional shelter who are living on the streets, sleeping in parks, sleeping in a car or squatting in derelict buildings - in other words 'sleeping rough'.

SECONDARY HOMELESSNESS is experienced by people who frequently move from one shelter to another. This includes people staying in emergency or transitional housing, hostels and refuges; or people staying temporarily with other households, commonly known as couch surfing.

TERTIARY HOMELESSNESS is experienced by people who live in accommodation that is considered to be below the minimum community standards. This might include accommodation that does not have self-contained facilities, or security provided by a lease. Living in a caravan park or boarding house is also considered to be tertiary homelessness.

VINNIES IN THE COMMUNITY



1,800+

visits to homelessness services by young people



200-250

emergency relief calls received daily for food, clothing and bills



14,840

hours provided each year supporting people living with mental illness



6,000+

financial counselling sessions per year

HOW YOUR EVENT WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Vinnies WA receives minimal government funding and relies on the generosity of the Western Australian community. Your Vinnies Community Sleepout will help us continue to provide vital services to people seeking our support.

As well as providing much needed funds for Vinnies, your Community Sleepout event will also raise awareness and ensure the issue of homelessness, and how as a community we can prevent it, is at the forefront of everyone's priorities.

DID YOU KNOW?



\$50 can provide warm blankets and a meal



\$100 can provide a struggling family with essential groceries



\$200 can provide a night of crisis accommodation



\$500 can provide support with utility bills



\$1000 can prevent a family from being evicted from their home

HOW TO HOST A SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY SLEEPOUT

Follow these simple steps and you will be on your way to organising a unique and memorable event!

1. REGISTER YOUR INTEREST

- Contact Vinnies on 08 6323 7500 or email fundraising@svdpwa.org.au to request a 'Vinnies Community Sleepout' application form.
- Return your completed form to the above email address or post to:
Fundraising Coordinator
Vinnies WA
PO Box 1450
Canning Vale DC WA 6970



Once your event has been approved, you can start the fun part!

2. PLAN YOUR EVENT

- Choose a date - We recommend a night between May and August to coincide with our Winter Appeal. The colder months also reinforce the discomfort of homelessness.
- Pick a venue - choose a safe, suitable venue within your community. Pavilions, halls, schools, sports arenas or parish grounds are ideal locations. Your venue should:
 1. Be safe and secure: the security and privacy of participants is a priority. Pick a venue that is easily secured, or has its own security personnel.
 2. Have access to power.
 3. Have access to water.
 4. Have all night access to toilet facilities, and change-rooms where possible.
 5. Offer appropriate sleeping conditions. Exposure to the elements is great to create atmosphere and provide a genuine experience but you will need to ensure there is shelter in case of rain.
 6. Have capacity to fit more than the amount of participants you are expecting will attend.
- Gain permissions - ensure you have permissions from relevant council or venue administrators to host your Community Sleepout. You will need to make sure your event complies with the venue or council's policies and procedures. Investigate what insurances, permits and licenses you may require to ensure you provide a safe and secure sleepout for your participants.
- Ask for volunteers - depending on the level of interest in your Community Sleepout, you may need to arrange for volunteers to assist you in the planning and preparation of your event and also on the night.

3. SET UP YOUR GOFUNDRAISE PAGE

Visit vinniescommunitysleepoutwa.gofundraise.com.au to set up your page. Your GoFundraise page will help you promote your event, raise awareness and is an easy and efficient way for people to financially support you. You will be able to set targets, monitor your fundraising and donors will be automatically receipted.

It is a great idea to provide the link to your GoFundraise page with each ask for support or online promotion; as well as have the URL visible in any print marketing you might undertake.

4. BUILD YOUR DATABASE

A comprehensive database of potential prospects will assist you in hosting a successful event. Possible participants could include:

- Local politicians and 'Perthonalities'
- Local business owners
- Parents and teachers at your local school(s)
- University students
- Community groups
- Sporting groups
- Local parishes

*Children under 16 must be accompanied by a parent/guardian or have written consent from a parent or a guardian.

You may wish to consider sourcing an ambassador for the event. A well-known and liked ambassador will boost interest and help to promote your event, and may be suitable to be your MC on the night. If you have someone in mind, we suggest contacting them several months in advance with a letter of invitation; as well as their expected duties in the lead-up to; and on the day of the event.

5. ASK FOR SUPPORT AND SPONSORSHIP

As your Community Sleepout is a fundraising event; it is important to cover all or most costs with the assistance of sponsorship. Sponsorship may include in-kind support as well as financial assistance.

EXAMPLES OF IN-KIND SPONSORSHIP

- Provision of your proposed venue for free, or at a reduced rate.
- Provision of security; and car parking if required.
- Approach local businesses such as IGA, delicatessens or bakeries and ask if they would be willing to provide soup, bread, tea, coffee and milk; and a light breakfast the following morning for all participants.

- Approach equipment hire companies to provide audio visual equipment and labour; as well as tables, chairs, crockery, hot water urns and fencing and marquees if required.
- Ask a local business if they would be happy to donate cardboard boxes for the night, or ask each participant to bring their own cardboard box to the event.
- Scout your community for any local talent such as bands, comedians or dance groups who would be willing to provide free entertainment on the night.
- Source donated prizes to award to your top fundraiser(s).

It is important to recognise all in-kind supporters in the lead up to the event and on the night. This might be through logo placement on any advertising collateral (such as invitations, posters or newsletters); promotion on your GoFundraise page, newsletters and local newspaper articles, and/or recognition in your event handouts on the night.

FINANCIAL SPONSORSHIP

Your Vinnies Community Sleepout provides a great opportunity for local businesses to support your event with financial sponsorship. You may wish to offer tiered levels of sponsorship and provide benefits according to their level.

Examples of benefits might include:

- naming rights for your Community Sleepout
- logo placements
- an opportunity for the manager or CEO to address your event
- company or business name mentioned during the formal presentation and within any handouts on the night

VINNIES SNAPSHOT



40,000+

Western Australians given emergency relief assistance each year (including food, furniture, clothing, financial assistance)



3,500+

members and volunteers... and growing



100+

locations state-wide



50+

Vinnies retail shops

6. PROMOTE YOUR EVENT

Once all the finer details have been organised, it is time to start promoting your event! The Vinnies Community Sleepout is all about community participation; and your guests are fundamental to your events success.

- Send out an invitation using your database of potential guests. You may wish to send hardcopy or electronic invites, or a combination of both.
- Facebook is a great medium to create an event and encourage people to sign up, and allows you to post regular updates and reminders to increase excitement amongst attendees. Be sure to include the link for your GoFundraise page for people to share and donate.
- Create posters to place around your community; such as the bulletin board at your local shopping centre, schools, community centres and other high traffic areas. We are able to help with artwork and provide you with both the Vinnies WA and Vinnies Community Sleepout logos but please ensure you gain permission before you use them.
- Electronic Direct Mail (eDM) is a cost effective way to promote your event.
- Consider hosting a launch event to kick-start your promotion and fundraising, and recruit participants.
- Approach your local publications or industry specific media to spread the word of your involvement with Vinnies.

7. MARKETING MATERIALS

Your Vinnies Community Sleepout relies on word of mouth, online and social media, and marketing methods and materials. Some of the marketing materials you may need include:

- 'Save the date' invitations
- Formal invitations
- Email signatures
- Electronic Direct Mail
- Event posters
- Event signage
- Programs
- Facebook ads
- Facebook banners



Other administrative materials you may need include:

- Name tags
- Registration forms
- 'On-the-day' sign in sheet
- Photo release forms
- Thank you cards
- Certificates of participation

You are responsible with the creation of all marketing materials. Marketing materials must align with our branding guidelines. If you wish to create any promotional materials please contact our Fundraising Coordinator to request a copy of the Vinnies National Style Guide to assist you.

Please note all marketing collateral must be sent to our Fundraising Coordinator for approval before they are printed or disbursed.

8. FUNDRAISE

The easiest way to begin fundraising for your Community Sleepout is via your GoFundraise page. Encourage participants to regularly share the page on social media, and include the link or URL in all communications.

Other ways of fundraising include gold coin donation events such as casual dress Fridays, office morning teas, raffles or BBQs; or requesting donations to be made in lieu of birthday or Christmas gifts to support your Community Sleepout - be creative!

For other fundraising ideas visit vinnies.org.au/CommunityFundraisingIdeas

You might also like to encourage participants to bring along their unwanted material goods such as clothing, blankets and homewares to donate to Vinnies; and have an area allocated for these donations on the night of the event.

9. PREPARATION AND THE NIGHT'S AGENDA

With the promotion and fundraising component of your Community Sleepout underway, you can begin planning the activities and agenda for the night.

SPEECHES

Some items to consider when preparing your speech:

- Introduction to the event and why you are hosting a Community Sleepout
- Thank all participants, volunteers, sponsors and donor
- Make known the First Aid Officer
- Advise of drop-off point for all clothing, blanket and homewares donations
- Address all other housekeeping such as the location of toilets, change-rooms and emergency exits

Please contact our Fundraising Coordinator for any statistics and information around homelessness in WA to include in your speech.

GUEST SPEAKERS

Please contact our Fundraising Coordinator if you wish to have a Vinnies staff member give a presentation at your event or be provided with a video featuring personal stories of clients assisted by Vinnies.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Consider the potential risks around your event and the venue, and create a plan as to how you will limit or eliminate them. Have a first aid kit available, and a trained first aid officer on-site for the duration of your Community Sleepout. It is important that everyone signs in on the night so you have a record of participants who are present, in case of emergency or a need to evacuate the premises.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Ensure someone is on photographic duties to capture the event. If you are unable to source in-kind support from a professional photographer, assign a volunteer to take photos throughout the night. Try to get a photo of each participant (preferably in front of a branded backdrop) as they arrive and over the course of the night. These photos can then be sent with thank you cards or emails to each participant as a memento of the night.

**If you are uploading images to social media, use the hashtags
#VinniesCommunitySleepoutWA and #VinniesWA**

CARDBOARD

Seek sponsorship for provision of cardboard for participants to sleep on; and offer exclusive branding of the cardboard if a business is willing to provide it at no cost. If you are unable to get cardboard donated, encourage all participants to bring their own on the night.

FOOD

In keeping with the experience of the night, food and beverages should be kept simple. An example of a suitable dinner could be a bowl of soup and a bread roll, with hot beverages and water available throughout the night.

For breakfast you might consider croissants, muffins and/or pastries, with juice and hot beverages available. Alternatively, you could arrange for a mobile coffee and food van to arrive at your event the following morning.

*Please note this is strictly a drug and alcohol-free event.

ACTIVITIES

Once the formalities of the evening have concluded and dinner has been served, consider screening a movie, holding a quiz night or organising a performance from a local band/singer/performer.



DON'T FORGET TO PACK

- **Sleeping bag**
- **Pillow**
- **Warm clothes and pyjamas**
- **Toothbrush and toiletries**
- **Phone charger**

AGENDA

Below is an example of how your event might run on the night:

AFTERNOON/EVENING	
TIME	ACTIVITY
5:00-5:30pm	Guests arrive and sign in
5:30-6:00pm	Welcome and event overview
6:00-6:15pm	Presentation/information about homelessness and Vinnies in WA
6:15-7:00pm	Activities/Guests mingle
7:00-8:00pm	Dinner
8:00-10:00pm	Movie/Quiz night/performance
10:00pm	Sleepout
NEXT MORNING	
6:30-7:45am	Wake up and serve breakfast
7:45-8:15am	Pack up
8:15-8:45am	Reflection
8:45am	Home time

10. AFTER THE EVENT AND DE-BRIEFING

Congratulations, you have completed your first Vinnies Community Sleepout!

Now that your event is over, you may wish to send a letter, email or certificate to all participants, sponsors, donors and volunteers to thank them for their contribution in making the event successful. Share photos, meaningful moments, how much money you raised and how their participation and support will make a real difference to your community. If you are close to hitting your fundraising target, now is a good time to encourage some last minute donations to get to your fundraising goal!

Send out a short survey with your letter or email to gather feedback from everyone involved; especially if you are considering hosting another Community Sleepout in the near future.

And finally, don't forget to tag **@VINNIESWA** in your social media posts and remember to share your Vinnies Community Sleepout experience, feedback and photos from your event with our team by emailing our Fundraising Coordinator at **fundraising@svdpwa.org.au** so we can celebrate your success with our Vinnies community.

From all of the staff and clients at Vinnies WA, thank you for your time, generosity and commitment to seeking a solution to ending homelessness in Western Australia.

VINNIES



COMMUNITY

SLEEPOUT™

[#VINNIESCOMMUNITYSLEEPOUT](#)