A cold wintery night greeted 213 business and community leaders as they arrived at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre for the sixth Vinnies CEO Sleepout held in Melbourne.

After registering, all participants received their two pieces of cardboard and went to claim a sleeping space on the outside concourse. Despite an impressive city view, the concourse had little protection from the icy wind from the Yarra River.

The Vinnies Soup Van and our team of volunteers provided the CEOs with a simple soup dinner and chatted to participants about their work and the reality of what they see on the streets every night.

This year, the Society introduced a service expo where CEOs had the opportunity to learn more about the Society’s individual works and the people we assist by talking with service managers and staff from each of the areas.

The formalities were opened by Martin Foley, Victorian Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing and then Associate Professor David MacKenzie facilitated a panel discussion comprising of VincentCare service managers and three individuals who related their experiences of living on the streets. The presentations gave our CEOs a better understanding of the challenges our homeless population face.

After the formalities it was time for the CEOs to head back to the concourse where their cardboard and sleeping bags were waiting.

Melbourne’s overnight low was 7°C and while there was no rain, participants managed to shiver through a cold windy night.

CEOs rose early, some enjoying a hot breakfast but most opting to get going and start their day early.

The Society’s State President, Michael Liddy, officially thanked and farewelled the participants.

DONATIONS CAN STILL BE MADE ONLINE UNTIL 31 JULY 2015 AT WWW.CEOSLEEPOUT.ORG.AU
On Thursday 18 June 2015, 213 CEOs and community leaders gathered at the Melbourne Exhibition and Convention Centre to sleep rough on a cold winter’s night to raise money for, and awareness of the issues of homelessness in our community – in all their complexity and diversity.

Martin Foley, Victorian Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing addressed the gathering, and referred to new funding arrangements to assist community organisations including VincentCare which provide frontline services for homeless people in our community. Minister Foley later joined those who slept outside the centre on a couple of sheets of cardboard.

Associate Professor David MacKenzie helped us to understand some of the causes and impacts of homelessness, especially through a facilitated discussion with three people who are working their way out of being homeless. Their presentations told their individual stories of the paths they have trodden. Importantly they identified the milestones in their progress towards more safety, security, and certainty in their lives.

In Victoria, a record amount of $975,000 has been raised to date and nationally, $5.9 million – an outstanding effort.

The St Vincent de Paul Society and VincentCare in Victoria will use the money raised to continue their responses, both in early intervention and prevention of homelessness, and in delivering programs designed to offer a safe haven and the potential to break the homeless cycle.

Thank you to all who assisted in organising, hosting and supporting a very successful evening: hard work and dedication was evident.

Donations can still be made online until 31 July 2015 via our website www.ceosleepout.org.au

Thursday 23 June 2016 will see everyone (we hope) reconvene to keep the issue of homelessness alive in our community’s hearts and minds, and challenge us to respond constructively and generously.

Thank you

Michael Liddy
State President

STATE PRESIDENT
Michael Liddy
“Don’t judge a person before you know them. If they’re lying on the ground there’s a reason for it. Being homeless taught me humanity.”

“Luck should not be a prerequisite for getting out of homelessness.”

“The staff supported me. They believed in me. Even when I missed a meeting they didn’t give up. It made all the difference.”

“I want you all to remember what it was like when you had your children and you held that innocent, beautiful baby. Every homeless person was a baby like that once.”

“I thought I was clever and stole a tin of spaghetti from 7/11. Didn’t help though – I had no tin opener.”

“You question yourself. Can anyone help me? Is there something wrong with me.”

“We need to assist people to get out of homelessness as quickly as possible and that’s where Vinnies comes in.”

“The standard you walk past is the standard you accept.”

“We can end homelessness in Australia. Your support here tonight demonstrates that. Homelessness is a process. People have a life before and after.”

“Luck should not be a prerequisite for getting out of homelessness.”

“The staff supported me. They believed in me. Even when I missed a meeting they didn’t give up. It made all the difference.”

“I want you all to remember what it was like when you had your children and you held that innocent, beautiful baby. Every homeless person was a baby like that once.”

“When I finally got a job and was walking through Richmond in the morning with all the other commuters I felt so good. I felt normal.”

“A huge thank you to all our sponsors for their generous support of the 2015 Vinnies CEO Sleepout.
THE MORNING AFTER...
CEOs woke to a cold Melbourne morning at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre. After an uncomfortable night they gathered for a hot breakfast prior to being thanked and farewelled by the Society’s State President, Michael Liddy.

2015 TOP FUNDRAISERS
Congratulations and thank you to all our CEOs for rising to the challenge, sleeping out and raising awareness of the issues relating to homelessness in Victoria.

- Gretel Packer, Crown Resorts Foundation $206,783
- Vedran Drakulic, Gandel Philanthropy $33,090
- Ian Grisold, St Vincent’s Private Hospital Melbourne $27,158
- Ben Beck, Active Utilities $21,031
- Nancy Crupi, YPA Estate Agents (Taylors Lakes) $15,801