



EMBARGOED

11 May 2017

VINNIES CEO SLEEPOUT: NEW VENUE, SAME CHALLENGE.

The St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria (Vinnies) has today officially announced a new venue for the 2017 Vinnies CEO Sleepout, which will be hosted onsite at the University of Melbourne Parkville Campus (the University) in the South Lawn Underground Carpark – a gritty, cold, and memorable spot for participants to sleep ‘rough’ in the thick of winter.

Vinnies has partnered with the University to breathe fresh life into its flagship annual corporate fundraising and advocacy event, which is being hosted in Melbourne for the eighth year in a row in 2017. The University has kindly donated the space, along with a number of essential services for the night.

St Vincent de Paul Society CEO, Ms Sue Cattermole, said the new venue will deliver a new experience and attract new interest – but has stressed that the event’s key challenge to alleviate poverty and homelessness across the community remains largely unchanged.

“It’s a sad reality that we face ever increasing social and economic uphill battles to alleviate poverty and homelessness within our community. Vinnies experiences constant demand for its services - particularly our Vinnies Soup Vans, which provides essential food and social connection for people struggling to make ends meet,” said Ms Cattermole.

“We are incredibly indebted to our Vinnies CEO Sleepout participants who roll up their sleeves to raise funds and keep our volunteer-run services afloat. We couldn’t do it without them.”

This year’s Vinnies CEO Sleepout campaign, **#FaceToFace with Poverty**, has already recruited 165 participants and raised over \$100,000. As the event draws closer, Vinnies is calling on Melbourne leaders to sign up to participate and support the fundraising event – either individually or as part of an executive team.

University of Melbourne Provost, Prof. Margaret Sheil, is today personally challenging Melbourne’s leaders to experience a night of relative discomfort in the South Lawn Underground Carpark - one of the city’s most iconic, albeit gritty, architectural sites.

“Believe me, this will be a no frills night out – but certainly one to remember,” said Prof. Sheil.

“Our historic underground car park is one of the University’s most striking locations. With its gothic-like arches and shadowy atmosphere, the car park has featured in a number of films and television series over the years, including Mad Max, Masterchef, and the major motion picture Lion.

“It will provide an engaging and centring atmosphere for Vinnies CEO Sleepout participants to discuss, debate and work through the many issues that impact the lives of 725,000 Victorians living below the poverty line,” said Prof. Sheil.

Participants will be invited to sleep on a piece of cardboard for one night, to dine on food from the Vinnies Soup Van and to hear real life experiences from Vinnies volunteers and people they assist.





“The University is so proud to be supporting this invaluable cause. As a first time participant, may I personally put the call out for all of our City’s leaders to consider helping in whatever way they can – by pulling up a slab of cardboard to sleep out on 22 June, or by donating to those who are,” said Prof. Sheil.

“Together, as leaders, we can make a difference in the lives of those who need it most – by lending our voices and networks to this campaign and by empowering Vinnies volunteers with the resources they need to keep listening and supporting people at a grassroots level.”

CEOs, politicians, business leaders, and community leaders are invited to sign up for the 2017 Vinnies CEO Sleepout on 22 June 2017, either individually or as part of a senior management team. Visit www.ceosleepout.org.au to register now.

- ENDS -

MEDIA: For further information or resources to assist with your story, please contact:

St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria Vinnies CEO Sleepout Manager
Kate Fitzpatrick | kate.fitzpatrick@svdp-vic.org.au | 0418 284 485 | 03 9895 5819

INTERVIEWEES:

- **Vinnies CEO Sleepout Spokesperson and Ambassador:** Respected author and social commentator, Nikki McWatters. Nikki can share candid and moving insights into her time as a single mother of five experiencing poverty; a time when Vinnies volunteers supported her, face to face, in her home.
- **Vinnies CEO Sleepout Participant Ambassadors:** St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria CEO, Ms Sue Cattermole; University of Melbourne Provost, Prof. Margaret Sheil; Jewish Community Council of Victoria Executive Director, David Marlow; Telstra Energy Executive Director, Ben Burge; FM Innovations Director, Kris Greenwood.
- **Other participants:** Please visit ceosleepout.org.au/events/vic-sleepout to see the full list of participants for the Vinnies CEO Sleepout in Melbourne. Interviews are available with any of these individuals upon request.

RESOURCES:

- **Event video:** accessible [HERE](#)
- **Fact sheet:** accessible [HERE](#)
- **Infographic:** accessible [HERE](#)

EVENT DETAILS:

- **Register online:** www.ceosleepout.org.au
- **When:** 6:00pm Thursday 22 June - 7:00am Friday 23 June 2017.
- **Where:** University of Melbourne Parkville Campus, South Lawn Underground Carpark.
- **Who:** 250+ CEOs, senior executives and community leaders.
- **What:** Participants will participate in a peer-to-peer fundraising campaign (aim: \$5,000 each), which culminates in ‘sleeping rough’ for a night at the event. The proceeds will support the Vinnies Soup Vans and home visitation services.
- **Theme:** #FaceToFace with poverty.





ABOUT THE VINNIES CEO SLEEPOUT:

The Vinnies CEO Sleepout was initiated in 2006 by a St Vincent de Paul Society volunteer in Sydney and has now grown into a successful national event, hosted annually during winter in every state and territory around Australia.

It collectively raises over \$6.5m across the country every year, which is used to support vital services for people experiencing homelessness, including crisis accommodation, food vouchers, soup vans, rent assistance, referral services and more.

The event is experiential, allowing participants to reflect on the experiences of people living below the poverty line or without secure accommodation, by sleeping in a 'rough' location for one night on a piece of cardboard. To find out more visit ceosleepout.org.au.

ABOUT THE ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY VICTORIA:

The St Vincent de Paul Society and its wide network of members and volunteers provide practical frontline support, advocacy and friendship for the most vulnerable members of our community.

Key services include home visitation; Vinnies Shops; youth programs; soup vans; assistance for asylum seekers and refugees; compeer programs for people experiencing mental illness; education and tutoring; and professional accommodation and health services through VincentCare.

The St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia has more than 60,000 members and volunteers. Internationally, the Society operates in 149 countries and has over 950,000 members. To find out more visit vinnies.org.au.

