



## EMBARGOED

1 June 2017

## #FACETOFACE WITH THE COLD

On the first day of winter for 2017, the St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria (Vinnies) is urging the community to spare a thought for people who experience the harshest side of the cooler months, living without essentials such as adequate food, warmth and comfort.

Over 725,000 Victorians are living below the poverty line and when the mercury drops, utility bills rise and life simply gets harder. To raise awareness of their plight, over 200 business and community leaders are preparing to brave the cold on 22 June at the Vinnies CEO Sleepout.

This year's Vinnies CEO Sleepout campaign, **#FaceToFace with Poverty**, has already recruited 217 participants and raised \$240,720. As the event draws closer, Vinnies is calling on Melbourne leaders to sign up to participate and support the final fundraising sprint – either individually or as part of an executive team.

“There is still time to sign-up for the Vinnies CEO Sleepout and as the reality of winter starts to set in, we hope more leaders will be inspired to get behind this important cause,” said St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria CEO, Ms Sue Cattermole.

“Victorians are encouraged to support those participating in the Sleepout by making a donation. Every cent we raise will help to support our Vinnies Soup Vans and home visitation services, which provide an important point for human connection and essential food security 365 days a year.”

The no-frills night out will include sleeping rough on a piece of cardboard for one night, at a new venue at The University of Melbourne. Participants will be served soup from the Vinnies Soup Van and hear real life experiences from Vinnies volunteers and people they have assisted.

“The Vinnies CEO Sleepout is a hugely important event on the corporate calendar” said Ms Cattermole, “the experience is grounding and eye opening to the real economic and social issues that we don't always see in our everyday, busy lives.”

Senior Climatologist, Dr Blair Trewin from the Australian Bureau of Meteorology, says while the official weather forecast is released seven days out from the event, the Bureau's climatologists aren't expecting Melbourne's average night-time temperatures to be cooler than normal this June.

“The same night last year was mild by the standards of mid-winter, with a minimum temperature of 10 C, and it was dry overnight after a few showers in the afternoon,” says Dr Trewin. “This winter night-time temperatures for June to August are actually likely to be warmer for many parts of Victoria, but that doesn't mean you won't need to rug up – the average temperature in June is 6.9°C so remember to pack your winter woollies and always stay dry and out of the wind.”

**Come #FaceToFace with poverty and sign-up now or donate at [www.ceosleepout.org.au](http://www.ceosleepout.org.au).**

**- ENDS -**





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

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**Kate Fitzpatrick** | [kate.fitzpatrick@svdp-vic.org.au](mailto: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](http://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](http://www.ceosleepout.org.au)
- **When:** 6:00pm Thursday 22 June - 7:00am Friday 23 June 2017.
- **Where:** University of Melbourne Parkville Campus.
- **Who:** 200+ 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.
- **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](http://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](http://vinnies.org.au).

