



Media Release

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CEOs braved the elements for the Vinnies CEO Sleepout®

While Brisbane slept last night, 170 local business, community and government leaders braved the cold weather under the Story Bridge for the St Vincent de Paul Society Queensland's annual Vinnies CEO Sleepout®.

The 2017 Sleepout was a colder, harder and harsher experience for participants who spent the night sleeping unprotected, out in the elements in temperatures as low as 11 degrees.

Participants in the Vinnies CEO Sleepout® Brisbane raised more than \$528,000, which will provide direct support to those in need through care packs, emergency assistance and housing for vulnerable people facing homelessness.

St Vincent de Paul Society Queensland CEO Peter Maher used the event to announce the organisation has invested over \$6 million in housing in the past year, using funds raised at previous events. The new housing is located around Queensland, including Cairns, Mackay, Toowoomba and Brisbane, and is being used to house families and individuals who would otherwise have no place to call home.

In Brisbane, Vinnies has purchased multiple properties that will be dedicated to house women and children fleeing domestic violence. Vinnies has entered into a partnership with Centacare, who will provide the families with wrap-around support to help them rebuild their lives.

Jon Stretch, CEO of ERM Power, was recognised as Brisbane's top fundraiser, raising a total of \$57,000 for Vinnies homelessness services.

Mr Stretch said he was proud to support Vinnies and the work they do, noting that it was fantastic to see the new housing that funds raised at the Sleepout have been used to purchase.

"This is my second year participating, and I'm especially proud that the whole team from ERM Power are able to get behind Vinnies, raising more than \$100,000 in that time. Vinnies are tackling this big issue with a range of vital support including emergency accommodation, meals and a pathway to affordable housing," said Mr Stretch.

The 2017 Brisbane event has attracted more female CEOs than ever before — a total of 70 female participants — including proud advocate and Deputy Premier Jackie Trad.

St Vincent de Paul Society Queensland CEO, Peter Maher, said the Vinnies CEO Sleepout® has made a real difference in the lives of those who are experiencing homelessness.

"Brisbane's business, community and government leaders rose to the challenge to raise much needed funds to help Vinnies provide immediate relief to people in crisis, and to break the cycle of poverty and homelessness."

Vinnies provides crisis accommodation to individuals experiencing homelessness, as well as advocacy support, budgeting services, living skills programs, emergency relief, transitional housing and access to programs that help rebuild lives.

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St Vincent de Paul Society Queensland CEO, Peter Maher, is available for interview upon request.

For more information, please contact:

Hayden Calderwood
State Communications Manager
St Vincent de Paul Society Queensland

P: 0428 759 814

E: hayden.calderwood@svdpqld.org.au