



EMBARGOED

04 April 2018

VINNIES CEO SLEEPOUT: EXPOSING THE HOME TRUTHS OF POVERTY IN GEELONG

The St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria (Vinnies) has today launched a campaign to support recruitment for the inaugural 2018 [Vinnies CEO Sleepout](#) in Geelong - **#PovertyHomeTruths** - which will educate the community about the real, lived experiences of poverty in regional Victoria and the invaluable role of volunteers in helping people to rebuild their lives.

This is the first time the Vinnies CEO Sleepout has been hosted in a regional centre in Victoria and the event is being generously supported by local event sponsor, the [Kardinia Park Stadium Trust](#). As a highly regarded corporate event – which has been running for over twelve years and backed by Australia’s most respected leaders – this is a significant occasion for Geelong.

St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria CEO, Sue Cattermole, said the time is now to encourage sustained action, solidarity and compassion for people experiencing hardship in the greater Geelong district.

“Now, more than ever, we need your support. Vinnies Victoria has experienced an average 40 percent rise in demand for welfare support over the past three years and in the greater Geelong district, the rise is as high as 68 percent. Our charity only receives 1.1 percent government funding, so we rely heavily on generous donations from the community to sustain our good works,” said Ms Cattermole.

“Fundraising for the Vinnies CEO Sleepout will provide Vinnies with the financial means to not only respond to immediate need in local communities, through home visitation and assistance delivered via regional assistance centres, but advocate for change too.”

Vinnies is calling on business, community and political leaders to register now by visiting [ceosleepout.org.au](#). Each participant is challenged to raise at least \$5,000, to help Vinnies meet a collective target of \$200,000 in Geelong, and to sleep outside for one night at GMHBA Stadium in the thick of winter on the **28 June 2018** too.

Kardinia Park Stadium Trust CEO, Michael Brown, said spending one night in relative discomfort at the Stadium is a small sacrifice for leaders who care deeply about their local community.

“We’re promising a no-frills night at GMHBA Stadium and participants will be comforted only by a piece of cardboard to sleep on and a cup of soup for dinner – but we hope it will provide a momentary glimpse into the hardship experienced by people in the greater Geelong district who are struggling to make ends meet,” said Mr Brown.

Participants will also be invited to reflect on the experience of poverty and homelessness, and to hear from and connect with people who have lived through extreme hardship. This is a meaningful and memorable part of the event, which provides moving insight into the home truths of poverty.

“The Kardinia Park Stadium Trust is proud to be supporting the Sleepout, because every cent raised will be backing Vinnies’ local, volunteer-run community services that provide people with the basic things people need to survive – food, school fees, transport, clothing, furniture, and more. As a community-centred organisation, this is a big part of our mission.”

Vinnies has over 2,200 volunteers in the greater Geelong district, and over 12,000 in Victoria, who spend their personal time in communities big and small, on streets and in houses, connecting with people face-to-face to listen, care and give them the resources they need to get back on their feet.



“No one wants or chooses to experience homelessness or poverty and it’s important for us to be aware of the stereotypes that so commonly hold these individuals back from a full recovery and to give generously of the resources we have to help,” said Ms Cattermole.

“Join us for one night to learn how you can personally make a difference.”

CEOs, politicians, business leaders, and community leaders are invited to sign up for the 2018 Vinnies CEO Sleepout on 28 June 2018, 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:

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EVENT DETAILS:

- **When:** 6:00pm Thursday 28 June - 7:00am Friday 29 June 2018
- **Where:** GMHBA Stadium, L1 Concourse, Brownlow Stand, Kardinia Park, 10 Kilgour Street, Geelong
- **Who:** 100+ CEOs, senior executives and community leaders. Individually, or as part of a team
- **What:** Participants will participate in a peer-to-peer fundraising campaign (aim: \$5,000 each), which culminates in ‘sleeping out’ for a night at the event
- **Theme:** #PovertyHomeTruths
- **Register now:** www.ceosleepout.org.au

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 and poverty, 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.