



Media Release

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VINNIES CEO SLEEPOUT GOES ONLINE TO COMBAT HOMELESSNESS DURING COVID-19

For the first time, business and community leaders across Australia will unite for a national online sleepout on 18 June to raise essential funds for Vinnies' homelessness services.

The Vinnies CEO Sleepout will take place in cars, backyards and on couches across the country as participants join an interactive, live-streamed broadcast through their phones, tablets or computers. The online event will be hosted by television personality Dr Andrew Rochford.

"I've seen the difference that Vinnies' homelessness services make first-hand, and the Vinnies CEO Sleepout is such an important fundraiser to make sure they can continue helping thousands of people every year," Dr Rochford said.

The 2019 Vinnies CEO Sleepout raised \$7.9 million for Vinnies' homelessness services across Australia, which include accommodation; domestic violence refuges; food, clothing, blankets and sleeping bags; counselling; and individualised support to address barriers such as debt and unemployment, with the ultimate goal of finding a permanent and safe home.

"It's great to see Vinnies, and the business and community leaders who participate in the sleepout, adapt to ensure this year's event can go ahead in the midst of coronavirus. The onset of a global health crisis means people facing homelessness need that support more than ever," Dr Rochford said.

In past years the Vinnies CEO Sleepout has comprised several events in major cities across Australia, but in 2020, all participants will join one online event. They are invited to nominate their own sleeping location, such as their car, couch, or outdoors in their backyard.

Each of these locations reflect the reality for many of the 116,000 people experiencing homelessness across the country. Of these, around one in 14 people are 'sleeping rough', but many more are hidden from sight behind closed doors and nonetheless unable to find a suitable and safe place to sleep.

This year, participants could also involve partners, children or other household members, helping to spread awareness about the growing issue of homelessness, which affects upwards of 116,000 people in Australia.

Vinnies SA CEO, Louise Miller Frost, who will be participating in her first CEO Sleepout, welcomed the evolution of the organisation's major fundraiser to an online event.

“While social distancing and mass gathering restrictions mean we can’t get together in person, I’m delighted that this iconic event will continue, albeit in an altered format,” she said.

“Funds raised at the 2019 Vinnies CEO Sleepout have allowed us to support thousands of South Australians at risk of or experiencing homelessness, by accommodating them at our crisis centres, providing food and fellowship at our Fred’s Van meal services, and with support and advocacy through our Vinnies Assistance Visit program and Migrant and Refugee Centre.

I’ll be sleeping in my backyard on 18 June, and I hope CEOs, executives, entrepreneurs and leaders from all sectors and walks of life will join me to raise money for homelessness services at a time when it’s desperately needed.”

“Please register online at www.ceosleepout.org.au.”

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