



# Media Release

17 June 2020

## BankSA hits SA record of \$1 million fundraising for Vinnies CEO Sleepout

With the Vinnies CEO Sleepout this week, Vinnies SA CEO Louise Miller Frost has announced that Nick Reade, CEO of BankSA and State GM Westpac SA/NT/WA, has reached a new record for the CEO Sleepout in South Australia, with \$1 million raised cumulatively over his seven years participating in the event.

Ms Miller Frost, who joined Vinnies SA in March just as COVID-19 struck, said the organisation couldn't be more grateful to the BankSA and local Westpac teams for their incredible commitment over a number of years.

"Particularly this year, with the challenges presented by the bushfires and then COVID-19, BankSA and Westpac have again demonstrated their commitment to the South Australian community," she said.

Nick Reade is among 117 business and community leaders who have signed up to help inject much-needed funds into the organisation's homelessness services.

On the eve of his seventh sleepout, Mr Reade said that he and his team have been motivated by the opportunity to make a difference and support people doing it tough in the community.

"If you have an opportunity to make a difference, you have a responsibility to act. South Australians have had a tough time over the past few months and the need for support and services is higher than ever," he said.

"The BankSA and Westpac teams, and many of our customers and stakeholders, rally behind the opportunity to give back to our community. Their determination to make a difference to the lives of those in need shows that we are a bank with a huge heart.

"Over the past seven years, we've seen first-hand the difference this fundraising has made – including working with Vinnies to establish a Women's Crisis Centre in Adelaide's north to give women and children a safe environment to work towards a brighter future."

Those sleeping out tomorrow night include a cross-section of the state's CEOs and executives, community leaders, and a sprinkling of politicians all planning to spend a night under the stars or in their car for the cause.

Because of COVID-19 mass gathering restrictions, this year the event has moved to a livestreamed format, and participants can involve other members of their household if they wish.

"So while we may not quite reach the same heights in terms of fundraising that we are used to, the move to an online event means we can amplify the messaging beyond just those who would normally attend in person," said Ms Miller Frost.

"It's important that these conversations spread far and wide – homelessness is still such a hidden problem, and most people would be surprised and horrified to know that more than 6,000 people in South Australia don't have a safe place to call home."

Ms Miller Frost is participating in her first sleep out, and while she can't say she's looking forward to spending the night in her backyard, she understands that it is important to try and gain some insight into what it means to experience homelessness – even if only for one night.

“It's been bitterly cold these past few mornings and if I'm feeling it, what about those who are sleeping rough, or in their cars? That's why we choose to do this – because right now, those people don't have a choice.”

Last year the Vinnies CEO Sleepout in South Australia raised almost \$700,000, with funds supporting people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, through the Fred's Van meal service, the Men's and Women's Crisis Centres, the Vinnies Migrant and Refugee Centre, and the Vinnies Assistance Visit service.

Donations can be made to the event or to individual participants at [www.ceosleepout.org.au](http://www.ceosleepout.org.au)

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For more information, please contact Jo Dinnison, Vinnies Communications Officer, on 0419 940 721 or [jdinnison@svdpsa.org.au](mailto:jdinnison@svdpsa.org.au)

More information on the Vinnies CEO Sleepout can be found at [www.ceosleepout.org.au](http://www.ceosleepout.org.au)

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