
Media Release

15 June 2021

Vinnies CEO Sleepout takes off at Lot Fourteen this Thursday

The countdown is on for the 2021 Vinnies CEO Sleepout, which returns to an in-person gathering at Lot Fourteen on Thursday 17 June after being livestreamed in 2020 due to COVID-19.

127 South Australian business and community leaders will sleep out in the elements to raise funds and awareness about the issue of homelessness in our community. It's a growing problem in South Australia, with more than 6,000 men, women and children without a safe place to sleep each night.

The Adelaide event is set to be the most COVID-safe CEO Sleepout around the nation, with Commissioner Grant Stevens participating for the sixth time. He will be joined by Chief Public Health Officer Professor Nicola Spurrier at her first event. Commissioner Stevens and Professor Spurrier have taken leading roles in the state's response to the Covid pandemic.

'Being involved in the Vinnies CEO Sleepout provides an opportunity to highlight the incidence of homelessness, particularly for those women and children who, as a result of domestic violence find themselves in desperate circumstances, with nowhere to stay – no safety and no security.

'Raising awareness of the number of young children sleeping rough, without their own bed is important and should motivate all of us to support this worthy cause,' said Commissioner Stevens.

Professor Spurrier is expecting it to be a cold winter's night but notes her experience will be 'nothing compared to the experiences of many homeless people around Australia every night.

'The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the crucial link between safe housing and people's health. Homelessness has a massive impact on a person's physical and mental health, something brought into stark relief during the pandemic.

'Together we can combat homelessness right here in South Australia. Please help me support this important cause allowing the St Vincent de Paul Society to empower more people to get into stable accommodation,' Professor Spurrier said.

Louise Miller Frost, CEO of St Vincent de Paul Society SA, said the organisation was honoured to welcome Commissioner Stevens and Professor Spurrier to the CEO Sleepout.

'We're very appreciative that they have both taken time out of their extremely demanding schedules to support Vinnies and the work we do to help people facing homelessness. The event is our major fundraiser and supports a range of services including crisis accommodation, the Fred's Van meal service, support for asylum and refugee seekers and a variety of preventative initiatives to stop people falling into homelessness in the first place.

'Along with Commissioner Stevens and Professor Spurrier we are grateful to all who have committed to sleep out, plus their supporters. It's an extremely engaged group that has taken the cause of homelessness to heart, and we are seeing some incredible fundraising efforts.

'We are starting to see some really big numbers come through our call centre for assistance, so every dollar counts.' Ms Miller Frost said.

Other high profile participants include the Labor leader Peter Malinauskas, Adelaide University Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter Høj AC, Fringe Director Heather Croall, and Adelaide United's Nathan Kosmina and Bruce Djite

The team from Lot Fourteen, the venue for the CEO Sleepout, has been working hard behind the scenes in readiness for the event, with a number of tenants participating in the spirit of collaboration engendered at the precinct which brings together innovation, entrepreneurship, research, education, culture and tourism.

Lot Fourteen State Project Lead, Di Dixon, said the precinct was looking forward to hosting the event and doing their bit to help support people experiencing homelessness.

'As a prominent CBD destination and community, we have a responsibility to help shine the light on the impact homelessness has on our most vulnerable South Australians,' she said.

Donations can still be made to individual participants or to Vinnies via the CEO Sleepout website - **[ceosleepout.org.au](https://www.ceosleepout.org.au)**.

ENDS

Contact details + more information

For interview opportunities please contact Jo Dinnison, Communications Officer at Vinnies, on 0419 940 721 or jdinnison@svdpsa.org.au.

More information on the Vinnies CEO Sleepout can be found at <https://www.ceosleepout.org.au/>