



Media Release

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Vinnies CEO Sleepout Finds a New Home in Melbourne

On **Thursday 17 June 2010** the Vinnies CEO Sleepout will be held simultaneously in cities around Australia, including Melbourne's inaugural event at Etihad Stadium. The event challenges business and community leaders to experience homelessness first-hand for one night to gain insight and change social opinions on this serious issue.

Over 100,000 Australians are homeless and over 34,000 of these are children according to official numbers but anecdotally, this could be much higher. This event will raise important funds for the ongoing provision of St Vincent de Paul Society's homeless services, the demand for which is increasing.

Victorian ambassador for the Vinnies CEO Sleepout and The Australian Population Institute Inc. President, Jane Nathan believes that housing is a basic right we are all entitled to.

"It is disgraceful that 105,000 Australians sleep out each night. Of those, it's truly alarming that 34,000 are children. In Victoria, we have more than 23,000 people homeless on any given night.

"Everybody deserves to feel a sense of belonging, and secure housing is a tangible and important part of this.

"We need to make a difference. To do this, I'm asking CEOs to join me in what will be a profound, confronting and enlightening experience. The services that St Vincent de Paul Society provides give homeless people the knowledge and resources to make different life choices.

"I am committed to working towards ending homelessness in Australia and I urge all CEOs to acknowledge this growing issue by joining me on June 17 at the Vinnies CEO Sleepout."

St Vincent de Paul Society Victorian president, Tony Tome said the event will raise much needed funds for those in need.

"Fifty four per cent of Australian homeless people in need of supported accommodation are turned away and in a time of rising unemployment and economic uncertainty, the emerging face of homelessness is families – young families, two-parent families and families with no history of domestic violence.

"We want to raise awareness of homelessness by giving our community's influential leaders the chance to experience a glimpse of life on the streets. Today's launch kicks off our call to all CEOs to get on board.

"While St Vincent de Paul Society runs a broad range of homeless services, further specialist homeless and housing services are needed to meet growing demands.

"We don't just want to serve the homeless, we want to bring an end to homelessness all together – and it's a task that's up to all of us.



The Vinnies CEO Sleepout began as a local community venture in Sydney's Parramatta in 2006 and has since raised important funds for Vinnies Homeless Services across NSW. 2010 marks the first national staging of the event.

Those who take part in the CEO Sleepout are encouraged to seek sponsorship from colleagues, friends and family. To register for the CEO Sleepout, for more information or to sponsor a CEO, go to www.ceosleepout.org.au.

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