

2025 VINNIES CEO SLEEPOUT: 20 YEARS OF IMPACT IN THE FIGHT AGAINST HOMELESSNESS

Thursday, 3 April 2025: This year, the Vinnies CEO Sleepout will mark its 20th anniversary, bringing together CEOs and senior executives from across Australia for a night outdoors to raise critical funds and awareness for Australia's homelessness crisis.

On Thursday, 19 June 2025, business leaders will spend a winter night outdoors to gain a small insight into the challenges of those experiencing homelessness and to help drive change.

Since its launch in 2006, the Vinnies CEO Sleepout has evolved from a grassroots initiative in Homebush into a nationwide movement, raising nearly \$100 million to support vital homelessness services run by the St Vincent de Paul Society. With thousands still struggling to find stable housing, the mission is more urgent than ever.

"Reaching the 20-year milestone demonstrates the business community's commitment to the cause, but is also a stark reminder of the challenges we still face," said Bernard Fehon OAM, Founder of the Vinnies CEO Sleepout.

"What started as a local effort has grown into a nationwide tradition and a powerful reminder that everyone deserves a home and a place to feel safe. We're determined to continue working toward our vision of real change and ending homelessness."

The latest Census figures highlight a steady rise in homelessness across Australia over the past decade. Between 2016 and 2021, homelessness increased by over 5%, following a 14% increase between 2011 and 2016.

In New South Wales alone, 35,000 people go to bed without secure housing each night. Recent figures from the City of Sydney's February 2025 Street Count show 345 people are sleeping rough in the inner city each night- this is a 24% increase from the previous year.

"These concerning figures highlight the urgent need for action," said Yolanda Saiz, CEO of St Vincent de Paul Society NSW.

"With homelessness and rough sleeping on the rise and the housing crisis worsening across NSW, immediate assistance is critical."

NSW also faces challenges in providing adequate housing assistance. The state made up nearly a quarter (24%) of the 280,000 people assisted by Specialist Homelessness Services between 2023 and 2024, according to the Australian Institute of Health & Welfare.

Over half (53%) of these individuals were without adequate housing before receiving assistance, which is higher than the national average of 48%. Vinnies NSW reported that while its homelessness and housing services have assisted 6,746 individuals and families in 2024/25, 3,094 people remained unassisted.

Adding to the challenge, the City of Sydney Street Count revealed that 98% of government-funded crisis accommodation beds are occupied, leaving little room for those in need of a safe place to stay.

“The Vinnies CEO Sleepout remains our most significant fundraising event and this year in New South Wales we are aiming to raise \$3 million. The much needed funds will allow us to provide emergency accommodation, food, healthcare, and practical support to those experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness,” said Ms Saiz.

Participants will spend the night at the White Bay Cruise Terminal in Sydney, as well as events in Newcastle and Wollongong, offering them a glimpse into the harsh realities of homelessness. While their experience lasts just one night, thousands of Australians face housing insecurity every day.

As the 2025 Vinnies CEO Sleepout approaches, we urge business and community leaders to take action against homelessness by signing up, fundraising, and taking a stand to help make a lasting impact. Registration details and further information can be found at ceosleepout.org.au.

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Notes to Editor

A VNR package is available to accompany the 2025 Vinnies CEO Sleepout press release. It includes b-roll of last year's event, the launch and interviews with Yolanda Saiz, CEO of St Vincent de Paul Society NSW, and Bernard Fehon OAM, Founder of the Vinnies CEO Sleepout.

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Key Statistics

- Rough sleeping has increased by 26% between 2023 and 2024.
- 122,000 people nationwide will go to bed tonight without a secure place to sleep.
- One in two people trying to access support from Specialist Homelessness Services are turned away.
- The number of people on the priority waitlist for social housing in NSW has grown by 21% in a year.
- Domestic and Family Violence (29%) is the leading reason for people seeking assistance from our homelessness services, followed by the housing crisis (16%) and housing affordability (10%).
- Vinnies Vans assisted 100,000 people in the last year, providing 95,000 meals and 85,000 snack and toiletries packs.
- School leavers will need to save for 44 years to afford a 20% home deposit in Sydney.
- The Vinnies network of members across the state supported 100,000 people in the past year and are on track to do so again this year.
- Source: St Vincent de Paul Society NSW Annual Report 2023/24.
- Between 2024-2025, Vinnies NSW Services has assisted 6,746 people with their support services, including 3,094 unassisted requests.
- Source: St Vincent de Paul Society NSW Assistance Data

About Vinnies NSW

The St Vincent de Paul Society is a member and volunteer based organisation that has been assisting people experiencing disadvantage and hardship in NSW for over 140 years.

Members, volunteers and employees assist people experiencing disadvantage with resources including food parcels and vouchers, financial assistance, help with energy bills and other expenses, budget counselling, school items for children, and the provision of other material items such as furniture, clothing, bedding and any other household items.

The St Vincent de Paul Society NSW is also a leading provider of frontline services, with over 100 local services and programs across the state. These deal with a range of issues including homelessness, domestic and family violence, disability, mental health, youth wellbeing, refugee and migrant inclusion, rehabilitation and addiction.

About CEO Sleepout

The Vinnies CEO Sleepout is a national event, taking place on Thursday 19 June. Since its launch in 2006, the Vinnies CEO Sleepout has evolved from a grassroots initiative in Homebush into a nationwide movement, raising \$100 million to support vital homelessness services.

The Vinnies CEO Sleepout brings together people from different sectors in pursuit of addressing a common goal. Business, community and government leaders will sleep out for one night to gain a greater understanding of homelessness. Through taking part in the Vinnies CEO Sleepout, we hope that participants can use their positions of influence to advocate for change.

CEO Sleepout 20 Year Milestone Timeline

- 2006: First CEO Sleepout hosted as a community event at Stadium Australia, Homebush.
- 2010: Vinnies held events Australia-wide with over 700 CEOs participating.
- 2013: Events in Wollongong and Newcastle were added.
- 2020: The pandemic forced a different approach; a national online sleepout saw participants sleep in their car, backyard or on the couch, connect via an interactive, livestreamed broadcast, and generate family-wide engagement with partners and children invited for the first time.
- 2022: Over 1,400 CEOs and community leaders participated across 8 states and territories at either a live event or via livestream, raising over \$9.6 million.
- 2025: Vinnies NSW commemorates the 20th anniversary of CEO Sleepout by reaching a milestone \$100 million raised in the lifetime of the event.