

VINNIES
COMMUNITY
SLEEPOUT
INFORMATION PACK

A NOTE FROM VINNIES

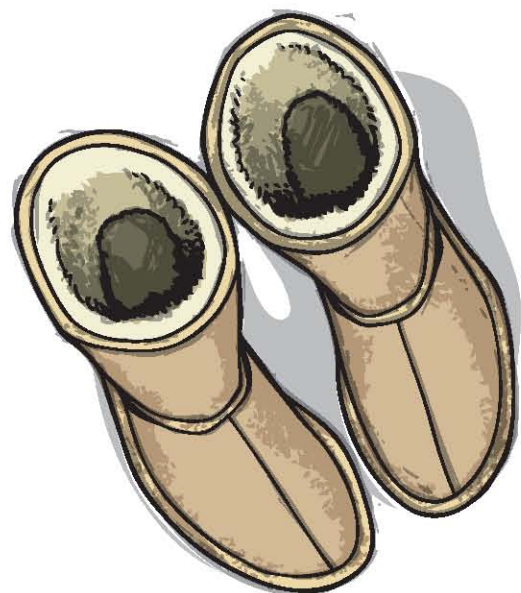
Thanks for getting involved in the Vinnies Community Sleepout. You'll find everything you need to know about hosting your Community Sleepout in this information pack.

A unique aspect of the Vinnies Community Sleepout is the insight it provides into how the money raised will make a difference in your community.

By providing participants with an example of what it's like to sleep out for the night we're encouraging them to acutely understand the problem they're helping to solve. The group dynamic also creates a sense of solidarity and community commitment. Both these features have helped to make the Vinnies Community Sleepout an immensely popular charity event.



St Vincent de Paul Society
good works



WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

The Vinnies Community Sleepout gives local residents the opportunity to join together and make a positive difference to the community they live in.

Homelessness is a problem often overlooked and misunderstood by the wider community. The Vinnies Community Sleepout is a chance for those involved to really appreciate the cause they're raising money for. The event's inclusive nature gives participants the drive and passion needed to tackle the fundraising part of the Sleepout – which is essential to continuing the work of the St Vincent de Paul Society.



WHY GET INVOLVED?

As a community group you are uniquely placed to help shape and influence local awareness and opinions around the issue of homelessness. By getting involved with the Vinnies Community Sleepout, your group or organisation can play an active role in your local community. This has the added benefits of:

- Connecting group members to their local community – in particular to those who are less fortunate than themselves.
- Raising awareness within the wider community on the plight of those in Australia who do not have secure housing or accommodation.
- Contributing to the overall development of your local community – intellectually, morally and emotionally.

The unique structure of the event also creates a level of excitement for participants and their supporters, boosting morale and creating a buzz within your community group or organisation.



HOW YOUR COMMUNITY SLEEPOUT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Awareness and fundraising are key ways the Vinnies Community Sleepout helps homeless people in your community.

1 AWARENESS

In today's financial climate, homelessness is a growing problem, with more and more people turning to Vinnies for help. Men, women, families and youth are all affected, with new demographics like single dads and elderly women sadly emerging as those most likely to be affected by homelessness.

With no family or friends to help, it's easy for someone to fall through the cracks and end up sleeping in their car or on the street.

The Vinnies Community Sleepout raises awareness of this pressing social issue and gives people an understanding of the realities of homelessness.



HOW YOUR COMMUNITY SLEEPOUT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

2 FUND RAISING

The St Vincent de Paul Society (Vinnies) first began helping Australians in 1854, and we've been active in the community ever since.

The Society's 40,000 members and volunteers help over 540,000 people in their local communities every year, providing support, friendship and resources to people in need.

In Australia, Vinnies operates numerous homeless services which include:

- Soup vans.
- Hostels for men.
- Family services.
- Refuges for women and their children escaping domestic violence.
- Accommodation services for people with a mental illness.
- Referral services for street present young people.
- Education and recreation facilities offering life skills courses, training and access to medical, legal and financial advice.

Our work relies on donations from the public.
The Vinnies Community Sleepout plays a substantial role in contributing to these donations.*



*Not all services available in all states.

HOMELESSNESS THE FACTS

Over the past five years, there has been a 30 percent increase in the number of families with children being assisted by homeless services. Most of the children in homeless assistance services are under 12 years of age – a crucial period of their development – and homelessness has a serious impact on their education, health and wellbeing.

Homelessness does not just mean sleeping rough on the streets. There are three different types of homelessness defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

1 PRIMARY HOMELESSNESS

People without conventional shelter, such as those living on the streets, sleeping in parks, squatting in derelict buildings or using cars or railway carriages for temporary shelter.

Sleeping outdoors in an undercover area, near facilities such as toilets, water, etc, gives Sleepout participants an experience of primary homelessness.



HOMELESSNESS THE FACTS

2 SECONDARY HOMELESSNESS

People who move frequently from one form of temporary shelter to another. This includes all people staying in emergency or transitional housing or people residing temporarily with other households because they have no accommodation of their own.

You can replicate secondary homelessness in your Community Sleepout by sleeping in a carpeted hall, auditorium, church hall, function room, etc.

3 TERTIARY HOMELESSNESS

People living in boarding houses for 13 weeks or longer. They are considered to be homeless because their accommodation is seen to be below minimum community standards.

Sleeping in a hall or multi-purpose area with close access to toilets and food facilities is a way for Sleepout participants to experience tertiary homelessness. This also allows for more bedding 'luxuries' on the evening, including an airbed or mattress.



HOW TO ORGANISE A COMMUNITY SLEEPOUT

10 STEPS TO MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR COMMUNITY SLEEPOUT

STEP 1 REGISTER YOUR ORGANISATION

STEP 2 PLAN YOUR EVENT

STEP 3 ADVERTISE

STEP 4 PUT THE EVENT INTO CONTEXT

STEP 5 UTILISE SOCIAL MEDIA

STEP 6 ENCOURAGE SPONSORSHIP

STEP 7 MANAGE RISK

STEP 8 BE PREPARED

STEP 9 SET THE AGENDA FOR THE NIGHT

STEP 10 AFTER THE EVENT



HOW TO ORGANISE A COMMUNITY SLEEPOUT

STEP 1 REGISTER YOUR ORGANISATION

Complete the registration form in the pack and return it to your nearest St Vincent de Paul Society state office.

STEP 2 PLAN YOUR EVENT

- Choose a date.
- Choose a venue and get permission from your venue – you can organise your Community Sleepout anywhere safe within your community. Some examples that work well include school or church halls, classrooms, undercover areas in schools, parish grounds or sporting clubs or the local footy oval.
- Main considerations for choosing a location are:
 - Safety.
 - Offers an authentic example of sleeping rough including outside areas or those exposed to the elements but with shelter in case of rain.
 - Near toilet facilities that can be open all night.
 - Near power supplies so you can make hot drinks and warm soup.
 - Near a water supply.
- Identify a theme – in order to best communicate your event, you will need a few pieces of core information to focus on. For example, statistics on homelessness in the local area, or the need to raise funds for a specific local homeless service or project.
- Invite participants – get the local community excited about the Sleepout and make sure you've got plenty of information circulating on how they can get involved, either as a participant or as a sponsor. This includes sticking up posters (available from your local Vinnies office) around your suburb or workplace, having an information stand at your local shopping centre and handing out information packs.



HOW TO ORGANISE A COMMUNITY SLEEPOUT

STEP 3 | ADVERTISE

- Draft a quick press release that you can circulate to your local media (newspaper, radio station, any TV or online media) detailing the positive difference your Sleepout will make to the community.
- Ask for council permission to stick posters up around shopping malls and high streets. Utilise noticeboards in the entrance to supermarkets and libraries.
- Ask local businesses to put a poster in their window.
- If you have a newsletter, use it to advertise the Sleepout.
- Send out an email or letter (available in the information pack) to all your contacts to let them know about the event.
- Ask participants to email all of their contacts.

STEP 4 | PUT THE EVENT INTO CONTEXT

- By raising community awareness on the plight of homelessness, we're able to create opportunity for long-term change. So it's important to give possible sponsors an understanding of why this is such a worthwhile cause. This includes when you talk to local media and businesses.
- On the night, consider having information sheets available for participants and also having someone give a talk or presentation about homelessness. Vinnies can provide you with video footage of experts talking about homelessness. For a copy please contact your local Vinnies office on the details provided at the end of this document.



HOW TO ORGANISE A COMMUNITY SLEEPOUT

STEP 5 UTILISE SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook and Twitter are great ways to communicate with an extended audience on a limited budget.

Facebook

You can utilise your Vinnies state Facebook page to keep your community updated on the progress of your Sleepout and to connect with other communities and organisations involved in the Sleepout. Simply search for your Vinnies state page on Facebook, 'Like' the page and start posting about your Sleepout activities! Try to keep your posts short and regular. Including photos or links is a great way to make your posts more engaging.

To promote your presence on the Vinnies Facebook page you could make your own 'Like the Vinnies Community Sleepout on Facebook' posters and stick them around your local community and organisation. By encouraging people to 'Like' the page on their Facebook profile, you can potentially reach a much larger audience as each person's list of friends is privy to this 'Like'.

On the night, you could use Facebook or Twitter as a way to keep the rest of your community involved in the Sleepout. Take lots of pictures and video and encourage photo 'tagging' so participant's friends, other organisations involved in the Sleepout, and the wider community can see what's going on. Encourage and remind participants to make their own regular Facebook status updates or tweets so their friends who aren't involved get an idea of how the Sleepout is going.

Twitter

Following Vinnies on Twitter is also another way to connect with a larger audience using social media. If you tweet about your Sleepout via the Vinnies account, it's likely we will repost it, so you'll be talking to a very broad audience.

Ask participants with a Twitter account to use the hashtag #VinniesSleepout when tweeting about the Sleepout – this connects them at a state level with everyone involved in the Sleepout. You should also use this hashtag for your own tweets.

Instagram

Instagram is another popular social media tool that you can use to promote your Sleepout. Try using Instagram to take your Sleepout photos and then in the 'photo comments' section, label them with the #VinniesSleepout hashtag. This makes it easy for people to find your photos and links your photos with anyone else using the #VinniesSleepout hashtag. Instagram also allows you to create a comprehensive album of your night that can be shared online. Don't forget to post a selection of your Instagram pics to your Vinnies state Facebook page.

HOW TO ORGANISE A COMMUNITY SLEEPOUT

STEP 6 ENCOURAGE SPONSORSHIP

- Highlight the need for participants to get as much sponsorship as possible from family and friends. If a monetary donation isn't possible, let people know they can ask for material donations like blankets and canned foods that will be used by your local Vinnies conference or branch.
- Make sure all participants record their sponsors' details on the sponsorship form included in this pack and available online.

STEP 7 MANAGE RISK

- Consider any potential risks associated with your event and plan what you can do to reduce or eliminate these factors.
- On the night make sure you have a first aid kit onsite and someone who is familiar with first aid.
- Consider registering your event with the local police.

STEP 8 BE PREPARED

- Make sure you have cardboard boxes or sheets for people to sleep on.
- Let everyone know they should wear warm clothing and that they can bring a pillow and sleeping bag or blankets for extra warmth.
- Advise participants that torches might be handy for the night.
- Have participants sign a release form that allows you to use any photos taken of them on the night for PR purposes. Then take a load of photos!
- Make sure to note who actually arrives on the night – a Sign In sheet is important – so that you have a list of all of those onsite in case of emergency.
- In keeping with the homeless experience, food and beverages needn't be elaborate. The ideal evening meal would be a bowl of soup and a bread roll, which you can supply, or seek sponsorship for, or ask people to bring along.



HOW TO ORGANISE A COMMUNITY SLEEPOUT

STEP 9 SET THE AGENDA FOR THE NIGHT

Groups are welcome to follow any format that suits them, or you can use the following rundown as a guide:

NIGHT

6.30pm	Participants arrive – sign in and find a spot to sleep. Possibly take photos of each participant.
7.30pm	Dinner – soup, bread roll, tea and coffee.
8.00pm	Talk about homelessness from a guest speaker or someone known to the group. Vinnies can help you organise a guest speaker. Play the Vinnies DVD about homelessness. Group involvement – get group's input and/or ask them what they would do to tackle homelessness. Get a shot of the group.
10.30pm	Lights out and good luck!

NEXT DAY

5.30 – 6.00am	Breakfast (If you want to treat your participants to a more lavish meal, this would be the time to do it. For example, you could see if a local business will supply pastries or porridge).
6.30 – 7.00am	Departure and event concludes.

STEP 10 AFTER THE EVENT

- Return your donations and sponsorship forms to Vinnies.
- Use all communication mediums available to let people know how much you raised and what kind of difference this will make to the community. This includes using Facebook, Twitter and your organisation's newsletter and website. Vinnies can give you an idea of what the money you raised will be used for.
- Thank any businesses or community leaders that sponsored or supported the event by sending them a letter and photos.
- Send some photos to the Vinnies team so we get an idea of how your night went.
- We'll send your organisation a certificate of appreciation. You could also organise a certificate for each participant to keep as a memento.

AUTHORITY TO FUNDRAISE

AUTHORITY TO FUNDRAISE

The St Vincent de Paul Society is legally required to approve and authorise all volunteer fundraising activities. Once your event is approved, the Society will provide you with a letter giving you confirmation of your legal authority to fundraise on behalf of the Society. This is issued following a receipt and approval of your fundraising application form.

RESPONSIBILITY

The event will be coordinated and managed in the name of the fundraiser listed on the authorisation form who will be solely responsible for the activity. The fundraiser, not the St Vincent de Paul Society, will be responsible for the event, finances, prizes, publicity and/or goods and services required to run the activity. Where possible, support and advice will be offered to help the fundraiser organise and run the event.



VINNIES **COMMUNITY** **SLEEPOUT**

SPONSORSHIP FORM

Name:

Community Group:

The above named person is a registered participant in the Vinnies Community Sleepout and is sleeping out on to raise funds on behalf of the St Vincent de Paul Society to assist in helping the homeless in their community.

NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE/EMAIL	\$ SPONSORSHIP



REGISTRATION FORM

Name:

Community Group:

In registering to participate in the Vinnies Community Sleepout, I agree to accept the following conditions:

Signed:

Date:

- I understand this event is a serious event and not a party.
- I understand that this event will be alcohol and drug free.
- I will not invite any unregistered guests to attend this event.
- I will be responsible for my own belongings and valuables on the night.
- I will obtain sponsorship on behalf of the St Vincent de Paul Society to assist them in helping to support the homeless in our community.
- I agree to not leave the designated venue for the duration of the Vinnies Community Sleepout.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Thanks for taking part in the Vinnies Community Sleepout and for helping to assist the homeless in your local area. We hope you have an exciting, informative night that motivates your participants to understand and assist the St Vincent de Paul Society fight against homelessness.

If you'd like further details or materials to help support your event, such as posters, please contact us at the St Vincent de Paul Society.

Victoria

Vinnies Community Sleepout Team
Address: 43 Prospect Street
Box Hill VIC 3128
Or Locked Bag 4800
Box Hill VIC 3128
Phone: 03 9895 5800
Fax: 03 9895 5850
Email: melbourne@ceosleepout.org.au

New South Wales

Vinnies Community Sleepout Team
Address: Charles O'Neill House
2C West Street
Lewisham NSW 2049
Or PO Box 5,
Petersham NSW 2049
Phone: 02 9568 0262
Fax: 02 9550 9383
Email: sydney@ceosleepout.org.au

Western Australia

Vinnies Community Sleepout Team
Address: 76 Abernethy Road
Belmont WA 6104
Or PO Box 473
Belmont WA 6984
Phone: 08 9475 5400
Fax: 08 9475 5499
Email: community.sleepout@svdpwa.org.au

Northern Territory

Vinnies Community Sleepout Team
Address: PO Box 1468
Nighcliff NT 0814
Phone: 08 8948 8100
Fax: 08 8948 2844
Email: darwin@ceosleepout.org.au

South Australia

Vinnies Community Sleepout Team
Address: GPO Box 1804
Adelaide SA 5000
Phone: 08 8112 8700
Fax: 08 8112 8799
Email: events@svdpsa.org.au

Queensland

Vinnies Community Sleepout Team
Address: 10 Merivale Street
South Brisbane QLD 4101
Or PO BOX 3351
South Brisbane QLD 4101
Phone: 07 3010 1000
Fax: 07 3010 1099
Email: communityfundraising@svdpqld.org.au

Australian Capital Territory

Vinnies Community Sleepout Team
Address: 14-16 Colbee Court
Phillip ACT 2606
Or PO Box 642
Mawson ACT 2607
Phone: 02 6282 2722
Fax: 02 6281 4743
Email: canberra@ceosleepout.org.au

Tasmania

Vinnies Community Sleepout Team
Address: 191 Invermay Road
Invermay TAS 7248
Phone: 03 6333 0822
Fax: 03 6333 0840
Email: launceston@ceosleepout.org.au