



## MEDIA RELEASE

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# ‘Nominate your CEO’: Vinnies CEO Sleepout urges businesses to tackle homelessness crisis

St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria (SVDPV)’s annual Vinnies Victoria CEO Sleepout returns for its 15<sup>th</sup> year, with the organisation aiming to raise a record \$1.8M and engage 300 senior executives to participate. This year, Victorians are being encouraged to [Nominate a CEO](#) to support current housing and food services reaching capacity.

On 19 June, business leaders will swap their beds for cardboard, spending one of the coldest nights of the year sleeping out to raise critical funds needed to combat homelessness and food insecurity across the state.

All funds raised will support Vinnies Soup Vans, which deliver over 800,000 meals annually to Victorians in need.

Demand for soup vans has continued to rise dramatically over the past 12 months, with increases of 65% in Melton, 50% in Berwick, and 35% across the Southeast. While nine out of ten calls to SVDPV’s call centre relate to food insecurity, sounding the alarm on the need for more support.

**St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria CEO Dr Jennifer Fitzgerald AM** said: “With food and housing demand surging, we’re asking workplaces across Victoria to nominate their CEO or senior leaders to help raise \$1.8M to expand and improve our Soup Van network.

“Homelessness in Victoria increased 24% from 2016 to 2021, outpacing the national rise of 5%. Nearly 30,000 people await public housing, with women and children most at risk. The urgency to act has never been greater.

“For 50 years, Vinnies Soup Vans have been symbols of compassion, proving a meal and conversation can lead to housing, healthcare and stability. Each van—costing \$130K to equip—is a vehicle of hope, transforming lives. We’re asking Victorians to call out these issues to their CEOs or senior teams to offer support. Start a conversation, discuss ideas and get teamwork out of the boardroom to drive real-world impact to vulnerable Victorians this winter.”

Vinnies Soup Vans hits a milestone of 50 years this year, but to meet rising demands – the 171-year-old charity is hoping to tap into a workforce of employees that want to see their senior leaders support a local cause and take action.

**Maureen Mohr**, a volunteer of 15 years at the Vinnies Melton conference and a Melton Soup Van volunteer, said: “Everyone who comes to our Soup Vans carries their own story, and we meet them with compassion, not judgment or questions. A simple meal, a listening ear and a respectful conversation can be the beginning of renewed hope. And if they are comfortable, it’s in these instances that we do our very best to gently guide them towards other vital community support services, whether it’s help finding secure housing or accessing even more regular meals.

“The work we do is vital, and it’s because of donations and events like Vinnies CEO Sleepout that we’ve been able to set up our Soup Van in Melton. While demand for our support services has been increasing, I’m acutely aware that other parts of Melbourne and regional Victoria are in even greater need of support. Every dollar raised helps us to walk alongside more people in crisis and to extend the hand of hope a little further.”

**Event details:**



On Thursday 19 June 2025 St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria (SVDPV) will host its annual Vinnies CEO Sleepout at the iconic South Melbourne Market.

This year's Vinnies Victoria's CEO Sleepout theme is #DriveTheChange to put emphasis on inspiring urgent action among colleagues, as a team.

To learn more about this year's Vinnies CEO Sleepout, nominate your CEO, donate or sign up, visit [www.ceosleepout.org.au](http://www.ceosleepout.org.au).

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#### **ABOUT THE ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY:**

*The St Vincent de Paul Society and its wide network of members and volunteers provide practical frontline support, advocacy and friendship for the most vulnerable members of our community. Key services include home visitation; Vinnies Shops; youth programs; soup vans; assistance for asylum seekers and refugees; education and tutoring; and professional accommodation and health services through VincentCare. The St Vincent de Paul Society in Victoria has more than 10,000+ members and volunteers, and more than 60,000 across Australia. Internationally, the Society operates in 149 countries and has more than 950,000 members. To find out more visit [www.vinnies.org.au](http://www.vinnies.org.au).*