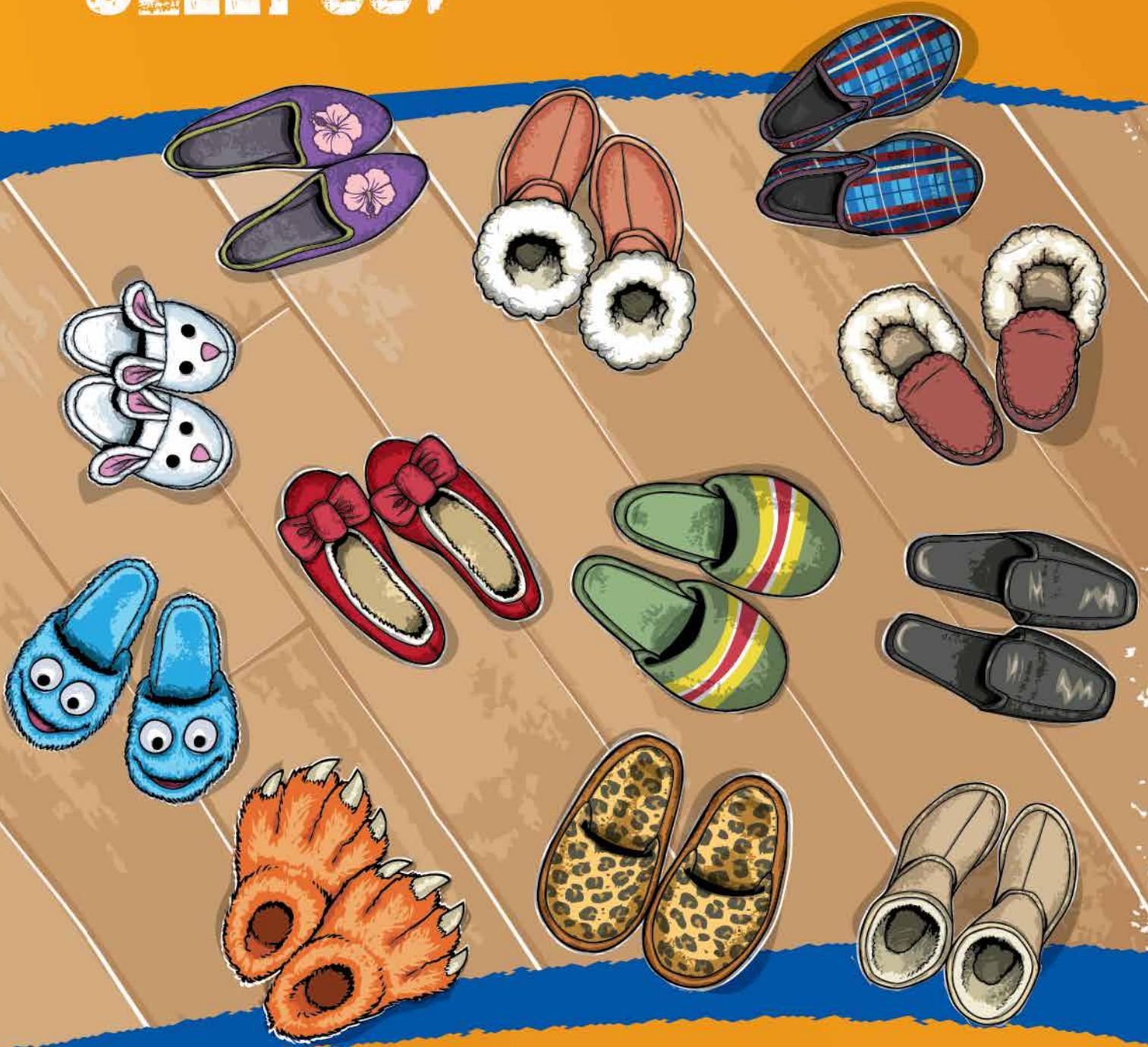


# VINNIES COMMUNITY SLEEPOUT



St Vincent de Paul Society  
*good works*



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# INFORMATION GUIDE

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**VINNIES**  
**COMMUNITY**  
**SLEEPOUT**



## WHY GET INVOLVED?

Thanks for getting involved in the Vinnies Community Sleepout. This guide includes everything you need to know about hosting your Community Sleepout. Homelessness is a problem often overlooked and misunderstood by the wider community. The Vinnies Community Sleepout provides participants with a glimpse of what it's like to sleep out for the night and encourages them to learn more about the problem they're helping to solve.

By getting involved with the Vinnies Community Sleepout, your group or organisation can play an active role in your local community. You will raise vital funds and awareness of the situation faced by many Australians who do not have secure housing or accommodation.



# WHO YOU ARE HELPING

Awareness and fundraising are key ways the Vinnies Community Sleepout helps people experiencing homelessness in your community. 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 by this issue. 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.

Vinnies first began helping Australians in 1854, and we've been active in the community ever since.

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 people experiencing homelessness
- 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 operate in all states.



# VINNIES COMMUNITY SLEEPOUT



**\$30**

**\$30** will give someone a bed for a night when in need of crisis accommodation



**\$75**

**\$75** will pay for a course in life skills be it cooking, how to prepare for a job interview or basic computer skills at TAFE.



**\$100**

**\$100** can pay for one week's accommodation for women escaping Domestic Violence



**\$150**

**\$150** will pay for a home-ware start-up pack for families which include toasters, kettles, pots and pans



**\$200**

**\$200** will pay for a group of children to take part in school holiday programs .



**\$1000**

**\$1000** can prevent a family from being evicted from their home

# HOW TO ORGANISE A COMMUNITY SLEEPOUT

## STEP 1

## SET THE DATE

- Your community sleepout can happen anytime.

## STEP 2

## REGISTER YOUR EVENT AND START FUNDRAISING

- Use the online fundraising portal  
[nswinniescommunitysleepout.gofundraise.com.au](http://nswinniescommunitysleepout.gofundraise.com.au)

Fundraising can also be recorded on the sponsorship form available on our resource page. If using this form, ensure you record all donor details.

## STEP 3

## PLAN YOUR EVENT

- Choose venue and confirm such as:
  - sporting club or local footy oval
  - school or church hall, a classroom or undercover area in a school.
- Considerations for choosing a location should include:
  - 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



- 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.

## **STEP 4**

## **SPREAD THE WORD**

By raising community awareness on the issue of homelessness, we're able to create opportunity for long-term change. So it's important to give supporters an understanding of why this is such a worthwhile cause. This includes when you talk to local media and businesses.

- 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 a sponsor.
- Use Social Media – tips can be downloaded from the resources page at [nswinniescommunitysleepout.gofundraise.com.au](http://nswinniescommunitysleepout.gofundraise.com.au).
- Draft up a 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. Please contact your local Vinnies office for a sample template if you would like one.
- Ask for Local Council permission to hang posters in 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 your Community Sleepout.
- Send out an email or letter to all your contacts to let them know about the event. Please contact your local Vinnies office for a sample template if you would like one.
- Ask participants to email all of their contacts.

## STEP 5

## BE PREPARED

- Make sure you have cardboard boxes or sheets for people to sleep on, or ask participants to bring their own.
- 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. Please contact your local Vinnies office for a form.
- 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, seek sponsorship for, or ask people to bring along.
- On the night, consider having information sheets available for participants and also having someone give a talk or presentation about homelessness. Vinnies can organise a spokesperson or provide you with video footage of experts talking about homelessness. For a copy, please contact your local Vinnies office.
- 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.



# VINNIES COMMUNITY SLEEPOUT

- Groups are welcome to follow any format that suits them, or you can use the following as a guide:
  - 6.30pm Participants arrive – sign in and find a spot to sleep. If possible 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!
  - 5.30 - 6am 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 – 7am Departure and event concludes with a formal thank you.

Return any non-online donations and sponsorship forms to Vinnies.





## STEP 6

## SAY THANK YOU

- 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.
- We'll send your organisation a certificate of appreciation. You could also organise a certificate for each participant to keep as a memento. Please contact your local Vinnies Office for a certificate template if you need one.
- Send some photos to the Vinnies team so we get an idea of how your night went.

## **TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

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 confirming your legal authority to fundraise on behalf of the Society.

This is issued following a receipt and approval of your fundraising application.

Please note that your event will not be a St Vincent de Paul Society event, rather it is an event to raise funds for donation to the St Vincent de Paul Society. If you would like to use the St Vincent de Paul Society logo on any promotional materials, you must obtain prior written approval from the St Vincent de Paul Society.

The event will be coordinated and managed in the name of the fundraiser listed on the authority to fundraise letter, 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.

The St Vincent de Paul Society does not provide public liability insurance for fundraisers. You should consider insurance for your community sleepout event in order to ensure that you and the participants are protected. We suggest that you find a suitable venue which is already covered by public liability insurance.

You acknowledge that you participate at your own risk and that you are not, to the best of your knowledge, suffering from a condition which would prevent and/or render you unfit to participate in the event. You agree to take all reasonable measures to protect yourself from the risks of participation.

**Thanks for taking part in the Vinnies Community Sleepout and for helping to assist people experiencing homelessness 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.**

**VINNIES**  
**COMMUNITY**  
**SLEEPOUT**



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*good works*

**Fundraising & Communications Team**

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Lewisham NSW 2049

Or PO Box 5, Petersham NSW 2049

Email: [events@vinnies.org.au](mailto:events@vinnies.org.au)

Phone: 02 9568 0262

Fax: 02 9564 6044

[vinnies.org.au](http://vinnies.org.au)

[nswvinniescommunitysleepout.gofundraise.com.au](http://nswvinniescommunitysleepout.gofundraise.com.au)