

The CEO Sleepout experience report 2011;

Well it was colder this year than last, with no cloud cover it turned into a rather chilly night.

I was one of the first CEO's to arrive and seek out the softest looking concrete to place our 3 pieces of cardboard in readiness for the night ahead. As 6.30pm approached we were mustered by the channel Ten weather crew to create a setting for their evening report [if you were watching I was apparently front and centre of the shot sitting down]. Time then to mingle with the CEO's and chat about why we were involved. I had a good chat with 2 of the heads of Rosie's ... what an excellent job they do! Rosie's can always do with more volunteers and at this time of year are in dire need of BLANKETS. It was explained to me that a blanket often has a very short life span on the street. Once the blanket gets damp and ground with dirt and other debris they may only last 2 weeks. I am happy to act as collecting agent for blankets to pass onto the Rosie's crew for distribution... just bring them in my showroom.

After some soup and coffee we gathered in the stands of the Suncorp Piazza to listen to some heart wrenching stories from both actual homeless people and those who work for Vinnies on the front line. The most outstanding fact is that the conception of the homeless hobo is so far from the reality of the majority of homeless people. The people who have become homeless were just like you and me, and never in their wildest dreams ever saw what was coming their way.

We heard stories of a father who killed his entire family [wife, daughter & son] in a car accident, he lost his job whilst recovering from his own extensive injuries and spiralled into depression and homelessness [he still lives in King George Square today]... We heard about a family made up of the single father, an 18mth toddler and 3 year old girl squatting by a Brisbane creek side and sleeping in the father's truck, fortunately rescued by Vinnies and housed whilst assisting to find affordable accommodation and care for the children... One guest speaker recently became homeless after the collapse of his business last year then to have what possessions he had [stored at a friend's place] destroyed by the QLD floods this year and how Vinnies are helping him.

Watch this YouTube clip put together by the ACT Vinnies team, I think it explains it best;

{to watch please go to [http://www.frankoneill.com.au/news/2011/jun/ceo\\_sleepout\\_2011\\_experience](http://www.frankoneill.com.au/news/2011/jun/ceo_sleepout_2011_experience) }

After some further speeches and auctions to raise more funds we turned in to our concrete pads. I was pleasantly warm in my sleeping bag, but comfort was non-existent. The pressure points from being on the ground developed by 1 or 2 am, the street noises are incredibly loud with rubbish trucks and street sweepers, and louts yelling in the street. Fortunately no crickets to contend with this year, but I had my lock lube at ready to fill any cracks containing noisy crickets.

I'll be back next year to enhance on my participation and efforts to raise awareness of the homeless in our own country. I managed to raise over \$3,000 this year, better than last year but still short of my goal of \$5,000.

Qld had 122 CEO's attend, up from 55 last year, 1001 participated nationwide.

We have so far raised over \$500,000 in Qld and over \$3,800,000 nationwide.

You can still contribute by [clicking here](#) and bolster the funds that will go directly to those helping our most in need.

Thanks to the 23 donors so far, you know who you are, and most of you have supported me both years....

Much appreciated ,

*GUY O'NEILL*