

Flavour Creations CEO to sleep rough to help Vinnies

Thursday 14 June 2018 - For Flavour Creations founder and CEO Bernadette Eriksen, participating in this year's Vinnies CEO Sleepout is personal - because the risk of homelessness was once a reality for the successful entrepreneur.

The 2017 Telstra Queensland Business Women's of the Year and Entrepreneur Awards Most Outstanding Entrepreneur award winner, whose business is split across two sites at Acacia Ridge and Tennyson, said running her own company was once the furthest thing from her mind.

"My husband left when I was pregnant with my second child, all my family was in Melbourne, I didn't have any support network and I had to work out quickly how I was going to keep a roof over our heads," she said.

"We were all only a few steps away from homelessness and I never thought I would be in that position.

"I was fortunate that I was able to grow a great business and support my family but I certainly understand the fear of not knowing how to pay the rent next week."

Ms Eriksen said part of her motivation to raise funds and awareness by sleeping out with other executives on 21 June is to try and help other women.

"Up to 4,000 women in Brisbane are homeless on any given night. These women are often escaping an emotionally or physically abusive situation. They need our support, not our censure and we need to let them know that we are here as a community to look after them," she said.

"These figures are a tragic reminder of the sheer scale of the homelessness crisis in Brisbane. Vinnies works tirelessly to help these women access shelter, support and services but they can't do this alone. That's why I'm asking my business and personal network to sponsor me."

Part of the lure of participating in the Sleepout for Ms Eriksen was the alignment of values between Vinnies and her own business.

"I believe in helping and supporting people in times of need, to be compassionate and to never forget your humanity."

"Our culture at Flavour Creations focuses on community and respect by restoring dignity and empowering people living with dysphagia –a difficulty in swallowing nutritious food or fluids.

"Vinnies CEO Sleepout embodies our culture and our behaviour and if the money and public awareness we raise by doing this helps the homeless that is a fantastic outcome."

The Vinnies CEO Sleepout Brisbane 2018 on 21 June will involve more than 150 business and community leaders sleeping rough at the Brisbane Powerhouse to raise awareness and funds to help Vinnies address the growing issue of homelessness.

ENDS

Dysphagia Fast Facts

- Humans swallow at least 900 times a day, around three times an hour during sleep, once per minute while awake and even more during meals.
- Swallowing uses 26 muscles
- Around one million Australians have a swallowing difficulty. Swallowing problems can occur at any stage of life. However, the knowledge of dysphagia and its implications remain largely unknown for most Australians.

About Flavour Creations

Flavour Creations is a Brisbane-based specialist food and drink manufacturer that researches and develops innovative dysphagia and nutrition products to support a healthy lifestyle and improve the lives of people living with dysphagia. Flavour Creations products are sold throughout Australia and New Zealand and exported to Europe and Asia. For more visit www.flavourcreations.com.au

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