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**DineSmart is changing lives this Christmas**

As we wrap up another year, many of us turn our minds to friends, family and to those who are less fortunate. DineSmart is back and, with a host of new restaurants taking part, it’s simple to lend a hand to people who are homeless this Christmas.

Since 2003 DineSmart has applied the simple model of asking diners to chip in a small donation to their bill and granting those donations to combat homelessness in the local community. The collective power of restaurants and local diners working together, makes it such a success!

Heading into its 17th year, there are more than 110 participating restaurants and the campaign runs from **November 21st – December 31st** with hopes to raise at least $250,000 for homelessness projects during the busy run into Christmas.

But in those 17 years, [homelessness in Australia has worsened](https://www.homelessnessaustralia.org.au/about/homelessness-statistics). Between 2011 and 2016 (the most recent census), homelessness increased by 13 per cent. In New South Wales alone it increased by 37 per cent.

“We’re not properly funding services, we’re not properly funding housing,” says Robinson. “I think as a community we haven’t prioritised solving these issues. We seem to be sitting back and thinking it’s okay, but where’s our national emergency when we’ve got over 100,000 people that haven’t got housing? Who would have thought that the simple idea of asking diners to leave a small donation on their bill could have made such a huge impact for so many people experiencing homelessness? ”

DineSmart has sparked a number of innovative projects that are leading local responses to homelessness. Organisations such as Orange Sky Laundry, HOMIE, The Street Socceroos, FareShare, Wear for Success,, and Second Bite, all received early funding from DineSmart and have gone on to have lasting impact.

To find all the restaurants involved check the google map  [www.streetsmartaustralia.org/dinesmart](http://www.streetsmartaustralia.org/dinesmart)

*“****BMiles Foundation****works with women who are impacted by mental ill health, many of whom have experienced trauma and or family and domestic violence, and these much-needed funds will enable women to access clinical support to assist them with their recovery. Please let your supporters know their funds raised by DineSmart are going directly to those in need and making a real difference to the lives of the most vulnerable women in our society.”* Kate Timmins, BMiles Foundation

**ENDS.**

For more information about how to Dine Out and Help Someone Sleeping Out visit: https://streetsmartaustralia.org/dinesmart/

For interviews and photo opportunities please contact Geoff on 0428 909 097

