

## Media Release

13 March 2020

### TAKE ACTION AGAINST HOMELESSNESS THIS WORLD SLEEP DAY

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*“For many of our women this will be their first new item they own to start their life free of violence. Thank you to everyone who has donated so far,” Macleod Domestic Violence Refuge for Women & Children.*

Today is World Sleep Day and national charity against homelessness *StreetSmart Australia* is urging everyone to take a moment to consider the 116,000\* people around the country who don't have a safe place to sleep every night.

StreetSmart is working with *Sheridan Australia* to provide the necessities for a safe night's sleep to those in need through its *SleepSafe* initiative.

In the last six months SleepSafe has raised over \$130,000 to give Sleep Kits to more than 8,700 people, providing the dignity and security of their own bedding to use while they're in either temporary or more permanent accommodation.

“People often don't realise that homelessness affects more than just people living on the streets. We help a wide range of people by providing Sleep Kits to victims of domestic violence who have had to leave their home suddenly or the elderly who have been evicted because they can't afford their rent,” Geoff Hills, Chief Operations and Fundraising, StreetSmart Australia.

Sleep Kits are manufactured by Sheridan suppliers using excess material and each contain a single sheet set (fitted and flat sheets with a pillowcase) and towel.

“The success of the SleepSafe initiative has exceeded our expectations. We've had an overwhelming response from customers and our employees from all over Australia who have really rallied behind our cause. We're seeing first-hand the positive impact the sleep kit donations are having in the lives of Australians in need, and we will work hard to help as many people and community organisations as we can,” Paul Gould, Group General Manager, Sheridan.

You can help provide a safe night's sleep by donating just \$15 which gives a Sleep Kit to someone in need. Visit [www.streetsmartaustralia.org/sleepsafe](http://www.streetsmartaustralia.org/sleepsafe) to donate or find out more.

- Ends -

### **Latest statistics about homelessness in Australia\*:**

- Homelessness in Australia has increased by 13.7% in 5 years
- 116,427 Australians now have no home
- Rough sleepers represent just 7% of all homelessness nationally
- Homelessness in Australian women is up 9.5% in 5 years. That's 49,017 women with no shelter
- There has been a 28% increase in Australians aged 55+ experiencing homelessness. They are a rapidly growing age bracket

\*Source: Council to Homeless Persons <https://chp.org.au/homelessness/>

### **Interview opportunities:**

- **Geoff Hills**, Chief Operations and Fundraising, StreetSmart Australia
- **Paul Gould**, Group General Manager, Sheridan Australia
- A community partner representative may be available upon request

### **Boilerplate:**

StreetSmart Australia is a national not-for-profit organisation that raises funds to support and provide grants to grassroots community groups which focus on homelessness in Australia. StreetSmart keeps it local by connecting businesses with their neighbourhood shelters, action groups and projects, so funds raised directly help people in their own community. The core belief of StreetSmart is that everyone should have a safe and secure place to call home and aims to raise funds and awareness to bring about change for people experiencing homelessness or at risk. Since it was founded in 2003, StreetSmart has distributed more than \$6 million to over 600 local organisations all across Australia.