

COFFEE DRINKERS ARE HELPING END HOMELESSNESS

Cafes & Coffee Drinkers Taking Action During Homelessness Week 2021

Community spirit is on the menu for hundreds of cafes around the country who are uniting to take action against homelessness through **CaféSmart** (2 - 8 August), by raising money to support their local homeless charities and services.

Next week is Homelessness Week 2021 and cafes are becoming homelessness advocates by raising awareness about the devastating crisis facing thousands of Australians without a home and encouraging customers to dig deep to help provide vital funding. While also donating \$1 per coffee sold on Friday 6 August.

"CafeSmart offers a quick and easy opportunity for customers to provide crucial support to vulnerable people in their area, while also supporting a local café that gives back to its community. It's a win-win. Visit your local CafeSmart café to purchase a coffee on Friday 6 August, or simply donate the cost of a coffee online, and you will help deliver vital emergency funding to small, local grassroots homeless charities," said Geoff Hills, CEO, StreetSmart Australia.

Funds raised are kept local, meaning cafes are directly supporting homeless services in their region. Over the past 10 years, CafeSmart has raised and distributed over **\$1.5 MILLION** to more than **1,000 local projects** by bringing together local café businesses and coffee drinkers, to help vulnerable people in their neighbourhood.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the critical role CafeSmart funding plays in supporting charities who provide essential services to some of the most disadvantaged Australians. During the past 18 months, many people sought help from charities for the first time in their lives, leaving many organisations overwhelmed.

"Every dollar helps us get healthcare to those living on the streets doing it tough. CafeSmart funds help support our medical outreach clinics. We provide healthcare to vulnerable individuals and families experiencing homelessness and poverty across Australia." Sonia Goodwin, Sunny Street.

Donations raised through CafeSmart provide urgent emergency grants to grassroots homeless charities that often have little public funding to sustain their work. These frontline services are delivering hot meals, supporting victims of domestic violence, providing a safe place to sleep, supplying free medical care and working hard towards long term solutions to the crisis.

To join the fight against homelessness, find your local participating café via the CafeSmart interactive map or donate the cost of a coffee online, visit: <https://streetsmartaustralia.org/cafesmart/>

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Current statistics of the pandemic impact on emergency relief organisations:

- According to the 2020 Foodbank Hunger Report, the coronavirus pandemic led to a doubling in emergency food relief demand, needed by around **15%** of Australians in 2019 and increasing to **31%** in 2020
- **72%** of volunteer programs were severely impacted (<https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/resources/volunteering-and-the-ongoing-impact-of-covid-19/>)
- **86%** of charities reported a reduction in revenue <https://www.socialventures.com.au/work/vital-support-building-resilient-charities-to-support-australias-wellbeing/>
- **71%** of charities reporting increased demand during 2020 <https://www.socialventures.com.au/work/vital-support-building-resilient-charities-to-support-australias-wellbeing/>

Photo and interview opportunities available.

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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 almost \$8 million to close to 800 local organisations across Australia.