



Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> September 2009

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **COMMUNITY JOINS THE FIGHT AGAINST HOMELESSNESS**

The homeless may not be the people you think they are!

Acting Lord Mayor of Hobart Alderman Eva Ruzicka said the traditional image of an old man sleeping on a park bench is definitely not the case anymore.

“Homeless people are mums and dads, couples, young people and children; potentially they are even working in jobs and attending schools. Nationally 12% of people who are homeless are children, 31% are young people, 40% are adults and 17% are older people.”

“Many people find themselves homeless through something as simple as their current lease ending and struggling to find another rental property they can afford.”

Alderman Ruzicka said a significant contributor to people being homeless is where family violence means the current home is no longer a safe place to live. Relationship breakdown also contributes through either couples separating, leaving only one partner with a place to live, or in circumstances where young people are unable to live at home.

“Another contributor, which is particularly relevant at the present time is the loss of employment, or the loss of hours may mean a person can no longer afford their accommodation.”

“All of these factors mean that people often struggle to reconnect with the community leading to a cycle of increased marginalisation. Homeless Connect Hobart gives people the opportunity to re-establish those connections through a one day community event aimed at fostering social inclusion.”

“This is supported by donations made by community members and businesses for \$10 and \$20 vouchers, which guests of the events will be able to redeem at Argyle Street St Vinnies Store,” said Alderman Ruzicka.



“Many community volunteers are also supporting the event, These volunteers are individuals, members of local community organisations, like Rotary, Lions or churches and interested business' giving their own time to be part of a solution. At this event, they will have roles such as welcoming guests and helping them navigate the venue, leading teams and supporting the general running of the project,” said the Acting Lord Mayor.

Those wishing to participate through the opportunity to donate can choose to have their name or their business name on the voucher, or remain anonymous. Donations for these vouchers can be made at the Hobart Council Centre (corner of Elizabeth & Davey Streets) or via cheque to Homeless Connect Donations, GPO Box 503, Hobart 7001 (cheques will need to be made payable to Hobart City Council).

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