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PRESS RELEASE

NEDLANDS-BASED CEO
TO DO IT ROUGH TO HELP THE HOMELESS

Jane Chilcott, CEO of NEDLANDS-based not-for-profit community support organisation – Linkwest – will be sleeping rough on the night of Thursday 18 June as part of the 2015 CEO SleepOut.

Jane will be joined by 118 other WA-based CEOs, all of which are hoping to make a difference to the problem of homelessness, not just in Western Australia, but across the nation.

There are just under 10,000 Western Australians experiencing homelessness every night. Australia wide, there are officially more than 105,000 individuals, equating to 1 in 200.

Jane's decision to participate stems from her distress at the sheer number of young people and women she sees sleeping rough every time she visits the Perth CBD at night.

Jane Chilcott said: “There is a common misconception that the homeless are mainly middle-aged or older men. In fact, most homeless people (60%) are under 35, and 44% are women. A sudden change in circumstance, such as illness, the loss of a job, or even the loss of overtime hours, can mean the difference between getting by, and not being able to make ends meet.”

Feedback from Linkwest member centres indicates that there are increasing numbers of people in their communities with what can be precursors to homelessness: substance abuse, financial difficulties, domestic turmoil, depression or mental illness.

Jane Chilcott said: “Our member Centres – which are by nature friendly, welcoming places – are often the hub of their local community, and as such bear witness to the effects that issues such as unemployment, substance abuse, and increasingly – gambling problems – have on individuals, families and the wider community. Our Centres are responding to these issues in many ways: some offer emergency relief, others with programmes to improve financial literacy and employability; and others with community kitchens, op shops and food and clothing drives.”

“Tackling the problem of homelessness is a complex issue,” said Jane Chilcott. "While our Centres are working every day to help people at a local level, I hope my one night of discomfort can assist in some small way, and help raise awareness of a problem that could happen to anyone, no matter their age, gender or social status.”

Fundraising forms a vital part of Jane’s participation in the 2015 CEO SleepOut, and donations can be made securely via her CEO SleepOut page, https://www.ceosleepout.org.au/ceos/wa-ceos/jane-chilcott-linkwest/

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BACKGROUND: LINKWEST

Nedlands-based Linkwest is a small not-for-profit organisation that is largely funded by the State Government’s Department of Local Government and Communities.

Located on Hampden Rd in Nedlands, Linkwest is the peak body for community, neighbourhood and learning centres in Western Australia. It offers targeted and relevant training and support to those working in small community-managed not-for-profit organisations.

Linkwest, with a staff of six, offers crucial support to more than 75 members, including 35 regional and remote organisations. More than 70,000 Western Australians currently use these centres. The centres provide a friendly, welcoming place where local people can meet to learn, gain new skills, make friends and feel part of their community. They also provide a safe, affordable space for playgroups, community and support groups to gather.

Former Premier of Western Australia, Professor Carmen Lawrence, is Linkwest’s official patron. She has been a patron for the past five years.

The history behind the organisation goes back to 1978 – for many years it was known as Learning Centre Link, until it was renamed Linkwest in 2011.

http://www.linkwest.asn.au/

Jane Chilcott, Linkwest CEO

Jane Chilcott, CEO of Linkwest since 2011, has been instrumental in re-establishing the peak organisation’s focus and commitment to small, locally managed centres and not-for-profits. Jane’s knowledge of the sector and her extensive HR background has helped many centres become better equipped at meeting the needs and aspirations of their local community.

Below: Linkwest CEO Jane Chilcott.