



## New(town) Beginnings #7

Dear Neighbour,

As we near the end of a wet week, we can't help but think of those who sleep rough and have to endure these adverse weather conditions that the colder months bring.

At Newtown Neighbourhood Centre we aim to support those who are marginalised and disadvantaged, including people experiencing homelessness, as well as to highlight the plight of those in our community doing it tough.

One of the ways we are able to do this is thanks to our incredibly generous community who support our fundraising events such as the Newtopian Sleepout, which will be held next Tuesday evening outside the Centre in Newtown Square.

"Like many organisations, we took a real hit last year with the cancellation of our fundraising events, so we're thrilled that we can bring back our Sleepout fundraiser this year, albeit on a smaller scale than usual! Our team has worked extremely hard to make it happen in a COVID-safe way," explains NNC CEO, Liz Yeo.

"Not only does the event raise much-needed funds for us to continue providing our life-saving frontline services, we are also able to educate local residents on the challenges faced daily by people experiencing homelessness," she continues.

And it's all with huge thanks to the brave and willing participants who agree to take part and raise money for the Centre. One of those sleeping out next week is Jackie Finlay who has been a member of NNC's Board for two and a half years.

As an active and community-minded Newtown local, having lived in the area for 14 years, Jackie has courageously signed up to participate in her second Sleepout event.

"I have always admired the work of NNC from afar, walking past every day on my commute to and from work. In 2018, when I was invited to apply to join the Board, I thought it would be a great opportunity to get to know and do more rather than just be a devoted admirer," says Jackie.

### Newtown Neighbourhood Centre

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Jackie found parallels in the work of NNC and in the people she supports in her role as a lawyer at Legal Aid NSW, assisting people who have legal problems with Centrelink and the National Disability Insurance Agency.

“My role is to advise clients of their options for challenging decisions that adversely affect their lives, and to represent clients in challenging those decisions,” explains Jackie.

“Legal Aid NSW provides legal services to disadvantaged people – those who are living in poverty, experiencing domestic and family violence, facing homelessness. It’s a very similar cohort to those people NNC supports.”

This year Jackie is not only returning for her second event, she has also recruited colleagues to join her on the evening.

“When I learnt NNC was hosting another Sleepout event, I immediately agreed to sign up. In 2019 when I slept out there was a great sense of a community with people coming together to better understand the complexities of homelessness.”

“I wanted to spread the word amongst my family, friends and work colleagues about the work of NNC and to help raise funds for the critically important work the dedicated staff do.”

As someone who has participated in the event before, Jackie’s advice for the first-timers: “Wear a beanie. Bring lots of cardboard to sleep on. It was very cold in the early hours, before dawn.”

We are aware just how lucky we are to have such an enthusiastic and supportive Board and without their fundraising efforts we would not be able to deliver such innovative programs.

If you would like to donate to Newtown Neighbourhood Centre’s Newtopian Sleepout event and ensure we can continue to support those most vulnerable in our community, please donate [here](#).

Mel  
Community Strengthening Team

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The team from Legal Aid NSW - Gary, Meredith and Jackie - who will be participating in the 2021 Newtopian Sleepout next Tuesday evening.



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