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Sleep out highlights the plight of homeless females
Freya Michie

A community initiative of The Big Issue.



Sleep-out highlights the plight of homeless females

By Freya Michie

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A woman sleeps in her car to highlight the plight of Australia's 46,000 homeless females. (ABC TV News)

- [Map:](#) Brunswick 3056

Women from housing support groups in Melbourne have staged a sleep-out in cars to highlight the problem of women's homelessness.

More than 20 women slept in cars in the inner Melbourne suburb of Brunswick overnight.

They were watched by about 100 supporters.

Natalie Sussman from The Big Issue magazine says thousands of women across Australia are homeless and many have no option but to sleep in cars.

"We need to look at those basic figures of 46,000 homeless women in Australia every night, it's just not okay, and it's a figure that's pretty scary for a lot of us," she said.

She says many women are fleeing domestic violence and have children with them.

"Many of those women are taking to sleeping in their cars, many times with their children, because they just have nowhere else to go," Ms Sussman said.

Danielle Stone who took part in the sleep-out said that trying to sleep in her car was a cold and uncomfortable experience.

"I'm lucky enough to be surrounded by a good group of people so I do feel safe and supported which is not the case for a lot of women," she said.

Trish O'Donohue from WISHIN (Women's Information Support and Housing in the North) says she organised the sleep-out to highlight the plight of the "hidden homeless".

"It's just a reflection of what's happening out there," she said.

"The women who are homeless are invisible, they're not seen or heard and we want to give voice and face to their plight and to raise awareness around the country about what's going on," Ms O'Donohue said.

She said as well as mothers and their children, many older women aged in their 60s and 70s were also sleeping rough or sleeping in their cars due to homelessness.