

[Full version](#)   [Text-only version](#)   [View source](#)

Tip: To quickly find your search term on this page, press **Ctrl+F** or **⌘-F** (Mac) and use the find bar.

# Western Independent

STORIES FROM CURTIN UNIVERSITY'S JOURNALISM STUDENTS

THURSDAY, AUGUST 5TH, 2021

GENERAL

## Coffee and hope

BY RACHEL SIMMONDS ON AUGUST 5, 2021

It's Homelessness Week 2021, and Perth cafes are trying to show their support by raising awareness and sharing profits with local charities.

On Friday \$1 from every coffee sale will be donated to StreetSmart, through the CaféSmart (<https://streetsmartaustralia.org/cafesmart/>) program. Funds are collated and then injected back into local homelessness services.

According to ShelterWA, more Western Australians are currently homeless or at risk of homelessness than ever before .

Data from the state government shows 9000 Western Australians are currently experiencing homelessness, while 1,083 are sleeping rough.



Some of last year's CaféSmart participants. Photo: Supplied.

Founded in 2003, StreetSmart is a charity which raises funds for grassroots homeless services.

Husband and wife duo, Brad and Fleur Cassidy own the Leaf Bean Machine cafe in Bibra Lake, and are taking part in the CaféSmart initiative for the first time this year.

Ms Cassidy says the fact her husband was on the verge of homelessness as a young child after his mother was left to provide for her three children on her own, was a driving force behind their support.

“You know cafés and a cup of coffee is a really powerful tool,” she says.

“We're all going out and buying a cup of coffee most days and the price of a cup of coffee is a simple donation for most people to make.”

The pair have also taken part in the campaign 'Homeless Connect' for the past five years.

Over the years of fundraising, Ms Cassidy says she believes the issue has become more visible.

“Every year we do Homeless Connect we make more teas and coffees unfortunately, and I think that's a sign of the numbers increasing,” she says.

Owner of Wild Oats Coffee Co in Carlisle, Fran Michell is participating in CaféSmart for the second year now.

### STATS ON HOMELESSNESS



**9000**  
are currently homeless in WA

Currently there are 17,000 households on the social housing waitlist (a 14% increase from this time last year)

**43.7%**  
The amount of people in WA who are homeless due to the housing crisis

### SLEEPING ROUGH

Currently there are 1,083 people sleeping on the streets or outdoors in WA

**2 OUT OF 3**

People who go to homelessness services requiring long-term housing are rejected due to a lack of accommodation

### REASONS FOR HOMELESSNESS

There are many... but a few are...

1. Domestic abuse and violence
2. Financial reasons
3. Housing crisis (affordability and lack of accommodation)

She says she sees the signs of homelessness every day.

“We basically see a lot of life pass by our little window and one of the things that affects us the most I suppose is homeless people, because you have all walks of life come to our coffee shop but the people that can afford to are homeless people so we often go out and give them sandwiches and drinks and water.”

For Ms Mitchell and her staff, seeing people walk by without shoes and holding blankets is nothing new.

She says StreetSmart plays an important role in raising awareness for the complexity of the homelessness issue.

StreetSmart CEO Geoff Hill says a big focus for them is to ensure they support the diversity of the homelessness issue, so they aim to do so by supporting a different cause each month.

Two thirds of support goes directly to at-risk categories like youth refugees, domestic violence, migrant centres and temporary housing

Ms Mitchell worked in the in the Human resources industry before transitioning to hospitality.

“I’ve known people who are professionals who have been homeless, that have slept on park benches. I’ve known FIFO workers that their home away from home is the back of their car,” she says.

“It’s a situation where you can’t pick it you can’t judge by appearances alone.

“Because we’re in the food industry, we’re always very conscious of being able to give food away at the end of the day, so we have a look out for people and its funny when you actually look out for them you actually see them,” Ms Mitchell says.

“When you’re not looking out for them you don’t.”

Mr Hill agrees with CaféSmart participants who say they feel the homelessness crisis has worsened recently.

“There is a real genuine need for affordable housing. With what We’ve recently seen over the last 18 months with rental prices, the housing market skyrocketing that the need for affordable housing is only growing and their needs to be more support and Homelessness Week is a great way to highlight that,” she says.

According to ShelterWA 43.7% of people in WA are homeless due to the housing crisis.

“There’s more people becoming vulnerable, and the people who were vulnerable are now having different layers of vulnerability layered to their vulnerability indicator,” Mr Hill says.

He says encouraging empathy amongst the community is also central to raising awareness for homelessness.

“I really try to sort of put the image in peoples mind around you know, think about the end of the day, you know walking through your front door at home and that feeling that you get when you walk in and you feel safety, you feel relieved, you might be hungry, you know you’re ready to have a shower and put on your ugg boots and watch friends,” Mr Hill says.

“It’s that moment and that feeling that there’s hundreds of thousands of people that don’t have that feeling every night and they might not be having that feeling for quite some time and it is within their right to have that feeling.”



Fleur Cassidy with her coffee featuring the CaféSmart donation code. Photo: Rachel Simmonds.



Staff at Wild Oats Coffee Co in Carlisle. Photo: Rachel Simmonds.