

Society Spotlight

Aug - Sep 2026



BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

CONNECTED TEAMS & FAMILIES

STATE PRESIDENT COMMISSIONING



St Vincent de Paul Society
good works

UPDATE

from the desks of
Joe & Peter



REFLECTIONS ON THE LAST MONTH

As we move through the second half of the year, this edition highlights a Society that continues to evolve, collaborate, and respond to the needs of communities across Queensland.

On 17 August 2026, we introduced a new executive leadership structure designed to strengthen collaboration across SVdP Qld and support a stronger *No Wrong Door* approach. While structures and reporting lines are important, the real purpose of these changes is simple: helping us work more effectively together in service of the people and communities who rely on us.

That spirit of collaboration is reflected in the story of our recent whole of family outing to Australia Zoo, where teams from different programs and dioceses came together to create positive experiences for children and their families. It is a practical example of what can be achieved when we work across traditional

boundaries and focus on shared outcomes.

This edition also highlights the significant housing, community and property developments underway across Queensland. Meanwhile, National Homelessness Week reminds us that meaningful change requires both immediate support and long-term investment in solutions that help people find stability, dignity and hope.

September brings two important dates in our calendar: the Feast Day of Blessed Frédéric Ozanam and the Feast Day of St Vincent de Paul. Their examples continue to inspire us to strengthen our connections with one another, remain focused on our mission and work together in service of others.

Finally, the official commissioning of Peter Dougherty as State President was held during a special service at St Stephen's Cathedral on 29 August. Peter's family joined members and employees to mark the beginning of his term and affirm his commitment to the Society's mission.

CONNECTED TEAMS



CROSS-COLLABORATING TEAMS DELIVER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

In a first for SVdP Qld, the Youth team and Child and Family team have collaborated to deliver a 'whole of family' outing to Australia Zoo, on the Sunshine Coast.

Embodying the *No Wrong Doors* approach, 20 employees and volunteers from multiple dioceses and state administration worked together to deliver the event on Thursday 18 June, 2026.

The event brought together 227 children, teenagers and their parents connected to Child and Family and Youth teams located across Ipswich and Toowoomba. For many of the families, the opportunity to travel to the Sunshine

Coast and visit Australia Zoo is one that they may not otherwise have been able to access.

The day allowed parents and children to connect,

"Importantly, the event also demonstrates the No Wrong Door approach..."

strengthen relationships and create positive shared experiences. Yolanda Mui-Nomand, State Manager Community and Family, reported positive feedback from attendees,

who valued the occasion of family togetherness in an inclusive and welcoming environment.

Importantly, the event also demonstrates the *No Wrong Door* approach, which allows companions to receive the support they need, no matter where they first enter the SVdP Qld landscape. By coming together in a joint approach, these teams created a great outcome for the children, young people and families we support.

Please note image shown above was changed to protect the privacy of the families participating.

BUILDING *for the future*



PROJECTS CONTINUE TO GROW ACROSS QUEENSLAND

SVdP Qld and Vinnies Housing continues to invest in homes, community facilities and retail infrastructure across the state, with significant projects in development and well underway in both metropolitan and regional communities.

Current housing developments include projects in Newtown, Mackay, Nerang and

Bundaberg, with additional projects progressing through design, planning and funding stages in locations including Cairns, Townsville, West Ipswich, South Toowoomba and Yeppoon.

While most of the projects aim to increase the supply of social and affordable housing stock, several projects also rejuvenate community spaces. For example, in Mackay we are delivering a new Community

Support Centre, with funding from The Queensland Government's Resources Community Infrastructure Fund, co-located with six new community housing homes.

Together, these developments represent hundreds of new homes and demonstrate SVdP Qld's ongoing commitment to responding to housing need.

Sharon Sheersmith, CEO of Vinnies Housing, said,

"We're currently working towards building more than 500 community housing units across the state, with residents having access to a range of community and support services."

"It takes a lot of work, time and patience to help someone break the cycle of homelessness – but it is possible."

Bianca Harris, General Manager Construction and Property, who joined the organisation in May, said, "My team and I are excited to be delivering beautiful new homes and community spaces for the people and communities who need them most."

"Well designed and well-maintained properties play a crucial role in providing dignified spaces and improved outcomes for the people we serve," she said.

"It's why it's so important to have a collaborative effort between the Construction and Property team, Vinnies Housing, the dioceses and our wonderful local members to ensure the success of the developments."

As housing pressures continue to affect communities across Queensland, these projects will help expand SVdP Qld's ability to provide practical and long-term support where it is needed most.



Newtown - construction near completion

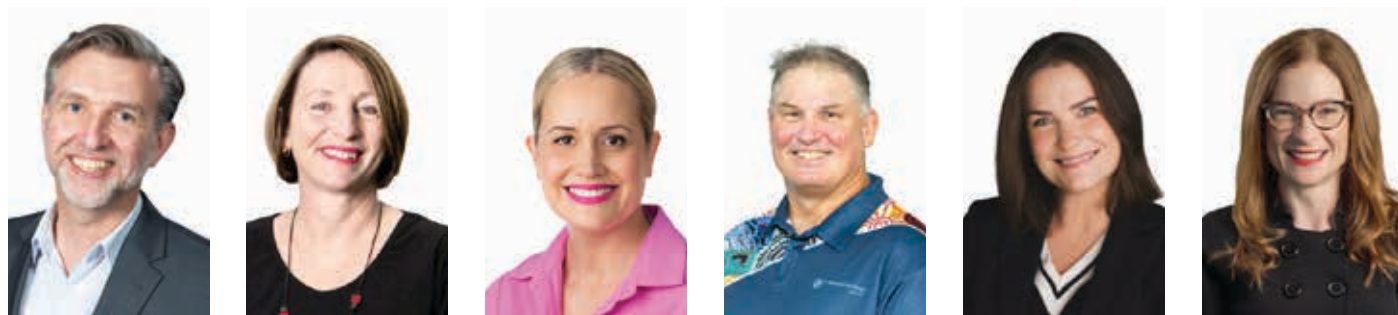


Mackay - construction near completion



Bundaberg - construction underway

OUR PEOPLE



EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE UPDATE

Everything we do at SVdP Qld begins with the people and communities we serve. As need continues to grow and become more complex, we have a responsibility to strengthen how we work together so we remain well placed to serve now and into the future.

To support this, we have realigned our executive leadership structure, effective from 17 August, to strengthen collaboration, improve coordination across the organisation and support a stronger *No Wrong Door* approach to service delivery.

The revised structure brings together related functions to create clearer accountability and greater connection between teams:

- **CEO Office**, led by Joe Duskovic (pictured above, first left), will provide leadership which executes strategy, delivers mission, ensuring sustainability and growth.
- **Operational Delivery**, led by Jackie Youngblutt (pictured above, second from left), will bring together Programs, diocesan and regional services, and retail operations.
- **Service Excellence and Assurance**, led by Trish Woolley (pictured above, third from left), will focus on service quality, continuous improvement, safeguarding, risk and compliance. Fundraising,

Marketing and Communication will also join this function.

- **People and Culture**, led by Stephen Bosse (pictured above, fourth from left), will incorporate Mission and Membership, strengthening the connection between our Vincentian mission and the way we support members, volunteers and employees.
- **Business Services**, led by Kerri Ryan (pictured above, fifth from left), will continue to oversee Finance and Technology, with the addition of a new Project Management Office.
- **Construction and Property**, led by Bianca Harris (pictured above, far right), will continue delivering the Society's property, housing and infrastructure program.

These changes are designed to help us operate as one connected organisation, make the best use of our resources and continue delivering meaningful outcomes for the people and communities we serve.

Further information, including department summaries, reporting arrangements and frequently asked questions, is available on the Vintranet page [Executive Leadership Team](#). Please speak with your leader if you have any immediate questions.

DIOCESEAN REFLECTION

ANY GIVEN WEDNESDAY

Today's a Wednesday - just like most Wednesdays. Yes, I know there's a big State of Origin game on the line tonight. But otherwise it's just like most other Wednesdays on the Darling Downs. Cool but pleasant, if you're out of the wind. Perfect if you can catch the sunshine.

A call comes into our Family Support Centre around 9 am. There was a housefire on Jellicoe St last night and two young men are without everything. Our Vincentians work with staff to find them the basics to start to put life back together again.

Then an hour later I get a call from a local refugee resettlement agency. A family of eight is arriving in Toowoomba at midday and they are feeling the cold and have only the clothes on their backs. Again we are able to share Vinnies gift cards as well as some gift cards for other essentials. Doing what we can to help people start a new life in a new country.

And then to round things off, I get to spend some time with this magnificent group of women. They



make up the John Bosco Micah Conference and every Wednesday afternoon they give their time, talents and energy to visit and provide support to young people living at Manna House, our local SVdP Qld Women's Refuge.

There are many, many other stories like these that took place today across our diocese. And they all happened because of the way you captured and reflected a generous heart. From the donors who give to our stores, to the volunteers who give their time to help raise the funds to make this magic happen. To the members who give their time and talents to

share the love. And to the staff who help keep the train on the tracks.

And we can even do all of this together! Even when the teams we cheer for, like Jill from Taroom, and Adam from Toowoomba, are different. Thanks for all that you are and all that you do. Whether you are blue or maroon - or don't follow the footy - you are all winners!

Mark Copland
Executive Officer
Toowoomba Diocese

MEMBER UPDATES



ST WILLIAM'S FUNDRAISING SUCCESS

The St William's Conference Grovelly has recently celebrated two outstanding examples of community generosity.

Long time supporters Ann and Noel Stallard, pictured above with conference members, marked 15 years of organising "Verse for Vinnies" bush poetry events, which have raised more than \$200,000 for the conference.

The conference also received a significant Winter Appeal donation from St William's Primary School, with students

contributing 23 laundry baskets filled with food and household essentials for local families. Conference members attended a school assembly to accept the donation and thank students for their support.

Together, these contributions demonstrate the strong community spirit that continues to support local Good Works.

MEMBER UPDATES



SHARE A MEAL

For almost 20 years, *Share A Meal* has been providing a hearty meal, a warm welcome and a sense of belonging for companions in Caloundra.

What began as an initiative of the local parish is now supported by Our Lady of Good Counsel, Caloundra Conference.

Each week, the conference serves around 25 companions, many at risk of or experiencing homelessness, at a beachside park.

Bob Cullen, pictured above with fellow conference members, is the *Share a Meal* coordinator. He said, "We'll always be there, even if it's wet and raining, and nobody is ever turned away."

"While the meal is often what first brings companions here, it gives us the opportunity to offer additional assistance and wrap around support."

Save THE DATE

1 SEPTEMBER
Membership Recruitment Month commences

1 SEPTEMBER
Spring Appeal commences

5 SEPTEMBER
International Day of Charity

6 - 12 SEPTEMBER
Queensland Child Protection Week and National Child Protection Week

9 SEPTEMBER
The Feast Day of Blessed Frederic Ozanam

10 SEPTEMBER
R U OK Day

10 SEPTEMBER
Feast Day of St Vincent de Paul

12 SEPTEMBER
F.A.B. sale, select Vinnies stores

25 SEPTEMBER
50% off sale, select Vinnies stores

SOCIETY SHORTS



CHILDREN'S EDUCATION FUND

Applications are now open for the Children's Education Fund (CEF), which helps families experiencing financial hardship meet education-related costs for school aged children for the 2027 school year.

The CEF assists with expenses such as uniforms, stationery, technology, school fees and textbooks.

To meet the application deadline, members are encouraged to identify families and begin dialogue now. Members should use CARE to submit the applications on behalf of their companions. All applications are assessed by State Council.

Applications close on 18 September 2026. Payments are distributed to conference in November 2026.

Visit the [Vintranet](#) for helpful tools and information session times.



FNQ SLEEPOUT

Far North Queensland locals spent the night sleeping rough at Cazalys Stadium for the annual Vinnies Community Sleepout, held on Friday, 7 August 2026, raising more than \$46,000.

An estimated 3,000 people experience homelessness each night in Cairns, giving the region one of the highest rates in the country.

Funds raised through the Sleepout will support Far North Queensland residents experiencing or at risk of homelessness with emergency accommodation, wraparound services and providing clothing, bedding, food and hygiene products.

The Community Sleepout comes off the back of Queensland's most successful Vinnies CEO Sleepout ever, held in June, with more than \$3 million raised.

SOCIETY SHORTS



CELEBRATING DIVERSITY

Refugee Week and Multicultural Month provided opportunities for us to share in the culture, stories and pride of refugee and migrant communities.

In Townsville, members of the *Vincentian Refugee Assistance Program* (VRAP) marked June's Refugee Week with a variety of activities, including gifting refurbished bicycles to a refugee family. Their volunteer tutors play a vital role in supporting refugee, migrant and asylum seekers to build social connection in the Townsville region.

In Brisbane, *Volunteer Refugee Tutoring and Community Support* (VoRTCS) team, pictured above, walked with partner organisations, cultural groups and the migrant community in the Luminous Lantern Parade at South Bank. The event, which launched August's Multicultural Month, reflects the work of VoRTCS in delivering SVdP Qld's commitment to fostering inclusive and welcoming communities.



NAIDOC WEEK

SVdP Qld observed NAIDOC Week in July, strengthening our commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities through learning, connection and practical support.

Members and employees participated in *Waterways* cultural training, developed and delivered by SNAIC, to strengthen understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, supporting the Society's child safe and safeguarding objectives.

Meanwhile, at the NAIDOC Family Fun Day in Musgrave Park, above, the team hosted a stall which invited participants to explore the meaning of home through interactive themes of clothing, food and housing. Families also accessed practical support including lunchboxes, clothing and mother packs.

In Townsville, Maria House, DAARS and the hostel team joined local celebrations, recognising the importance of culture, community and connection. See more photos on page 18.

SOCIETY SHORTS



THIRTY YEARS OF CARE

On 1 July 2026, Ozcare celebrated 30 years of caring for Queensland communities.

Established by SVdP Qld in 1996 as St Vincent's Community Services, Ozcare has grown from 600 employees across 25 locations to one of Queensland's leading providers of aged care, health and community services.

Today, Ozcare supports around 25,000 Queenslanders each year through residential aged care, retirement living, community care, health services and more.

While the organisation has grown significantly, its purpose remains unchanged: providing care and support, guided by the Vincentian spirit.

Congratulations to Ozcare on this significant anniversary. We look forward to continuing our strong partnership into the future.



R U OK? DAY

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is marking R U Ok? Day on Thursday, 10 September with a new training series.

Mental Health Conversations will help team members to start and respond to a conversation about mental health.

The training, delivered in person or virtually, is available throughout September and October. Team members will be equipped with the skills to take a conversation about mental health further, transforming a simple check in to confident support.

The EAP, which provides free, confidential counselling and coaching, is available not only to employees but all members and volunteers.

You can [register your interest here](#). More R U OK Day resources [can be found here](#).

SOCIETY SHORTS



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The Spring edition of *Making a Difference* is now available and has been distributed to diocesan councils, regional councils, conferences, support centres and shops across Queensland.

The publication shares stories of the good works made possible through the combined efforts of members, volunteers and employees, while providing an opportunity to thank supporters and customers for their ongoing generosity.

Conferences are encouraged to share copies within their parish and local community. Additional copies can be ordered through the Supporter Care Team, and a digital version is available on both the [Queensland website](#) and the Vintranet.

We'd *love* to hear from *you!*

Would you like your local conference news shared in the next edition?

Or do you have any feedback about this edition of Society Spotlight?

Email us at internalcomms@svdpqld.org.au

SOCIETY SHORTS



NATIONAL HOMELESSNESS WEEK

National Homelessness Week, 3-9 August, provided an important opportunity for SVdP Qld to continue advocating for better housing outcomes for people experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity.

Throughout the week, SVdP Qld supported the broader advocacy efforts of our National Council, calling for greater federal government action to address Australia's growing housing and homelessness challenges. SVdP Qld also leveraged the Census on 11 August to highlight the importance of accurately measuring homelessness and housing stress, releasing media commentary urging action to address Queensland's housing crisis.

Chief Executive Officer Joe Duskovic said SVdP Qld had seen an unprecedented demand for housing support since the 2021 Census.

"In 2021, more than 23,000 Queenslanders were counted as experiencing homelessness," he said.

"We expect the number to have grown significantly since then. While we might be in for some alarming news once the results are released, we should use this opportunity to reinforce the urgency of taking action to help more Queenslanders find a safe place to call home."

Across Queensland, local dioceses marked the week through community events and awareness raising activities. The Toowoomba Diocese led the charge, firstly in Roma where around 80 people attended a homelessness awareness event which also secured live coverage through ABC Radio. Then in Warwick, approximately 50 people attended a community breakfast (pictured above), with local media also covering the event.

Together, these activities helped keep housing affordability, homelessness and community support firmly in the public conversation.

FEAST DAY REFLECTION

TWO SACRED DATES

September marks two sacred and significant dates on the calendar of the Society, with the Feast Day of St Vincent de Paul and the Feast Day of Blessed Frédéric Ozanam.

On 27 September 2026, we celebrate the life of St Vincent de Paul. Vincent was a man of connection. He understood that faith is not lived in isolation, and that serving others begins by first being in relationship with them.

One of the defining moments in Vincent's life came when he encountered people whose suffering he had previously overlooked. He listened, he learned, and he allowed himself to be changed by those encounters.

Vincent consistently sought to build communities of belonging and support. He knew that when people are connected to one another, they become capable of extraordinary acts of love and transformation.

200 years later, the young Blessed Frédéric Ozanam took inspiration from the spirit of St Vincent de Paul and founded our

Society. On 9 September 2026, we honour Frédéric as our Society's principal founder. But Frédéric understood that the work of God is never entrusted to a solitary hero.

The Society was born from a community of people who shared a common conviction that faith must find expression in love. And the Society grew because people listened to one another, encouraged one another, challenged one another and prayed together. They discovered that charity is not simply what we do for others; it is also how we belong to one another.

This is a timely reminder for us today. Whether we are members visiting companions, volunteers offering practical assistance, staff supporting our mission, or leaders guiding our future, we are part of something larger than ourselves.

The future strength of our Society depends on the depth of our connection to one another. Every conference meeting, every workplace conversation, every volunteer gathering, and every encounter with a

companion is an opportunity to strengthen the bonds that make us a Vincentian community.

The Vincentian vocation is not an individual calling but a communal one. God does not send us out as lone servants. Together we serve and carry hope into places where hope can be difficult to find.

The Society was born from friendship, sustained by community and strengthened by collaboration. Today, when we collaborate, communicate and support one another across the Society, we ensure that no one falls through the gaps and that every person receives the assistance they need.

On these two important feast days, may we renew our commitment to being people of connection, community and love. Click on the links below to read the full reflections of [Blessed Frédéric Ozanam](#) and [St Vincent de Paul](#).

SPIRITUAL REFLECTION

OUR GOD SMILES



Recently I asked the State Council of the St Vincent de Paul Society to reflect on what some of their “core principles” that they worked from were.

I then asked myself the same question. I found myself going back to my family home in Proserpine and to my wonderful parents Zena and Frank Price. Both mum and dad were deeply committed people of faith whose faith expressed itself in reaching out in care to others. I could hear them in my ear whispering,

“Damien, keep it simple – don’t overcomplicate things!”

“Damien, when in doubt – share story!”

“Damien, remember that every person has an innate dignity!”

“Damien, it is in giving that we receive!”

The great Carmelite, St John of the Cross once said, “The language that God hears best is the silent language of love!”

One of the great strengths of the Society is that we just get in and get it done. We care.

We honour. We accept. We celebrate the innate dignity of the other. We meet real need with real care – and we do it all with no fuss and no fanfare. We know that the tired faces, the trembling hands and the courageous one foot after another brothers and sisters on life’s journey that we call our companions do not need a lecture, a sermon nor judgement. We gift them, and they gift us, with simple presence, laughter and tears, fidelity and daily courage. What more can life ask of us?

Today and each day that we put on a Vinnies shirt or lapel badge, walk up and knock on a companions door, volunteer at a centre or sort through donated goods or reach out in the myriad of ways that members of the Society do – we know that that simple encounter is the “silent language of love” – and God’s ears, God’s heart hear it and feel it. Then – my brothers and my sisters – our God smiles!

~ Br Damien Price

AROUND THE SOCIETY

STATE PRESIDENT COMMISSIONING

Around 80 Vincentians, family members and employees gathered at St Stephen’s Cathedral in Brisbane to celebrate the commissioning of Peter Dougherty as the new State President of the SVdP Qld. The ceremony was presided over by Fr Anthony Mellor, Dean of the Cathedral, and Fr Andrew Chase, from Peter’s home Parish in Gladstone, who formally ratified Peter’s election and invited the Vincentian community to affirm its support for his leadership. During the commissioning, Peter professed the Catholic faith, received a candle symbolising the light of Christ and hope for those in need, and was presented with the Society’s Rule and Constitution as signs of authority and responsibility. The celebration concluded with a reception in the Hanly Room, providing an opportunity for fellowship and congratulations.



AROUND THE SOCIETY

NAIDOC WEEK

Teams in observed NAIDOC Week in Townsville (clockwise, top right) and West End (below).



AROUND THE SOCIETY

LUMINOUS LANTERNS

VoRTCS celebrated the start of Multicultural Month with the Luminous Lantern Parade at South Bank.



WONDAI REFURBISHMENT

Northern Diocese recently welcome a newly refurbished store located at Haley Street, Wondai.



NATIONAL HOMELESSNESS WEEK

Teams in Warwick (left) and Roma (right) observed National Homelessness Week with community events.



**One big month,
two big sales!**

To find out more
about your store's
promotions, email
shops@sudpqld.org.au

