



St Vincent de Paul Society  
NSW  
*good works*

SUMMER 2016  
ISSUE NO. 80

# Vision

## NATIONAL OP SHOP WEEK

THE CHANGING FACE OF POVERTY

MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

ANNUAL FESTIVAL MASS

CREATIVITY ON SHOW



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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear friends

Welcome to the Summer Issue of *Vision*. This issue comes at the completion of my first year as President of the Society in NSW and gives me the opportunity to review the year.

One of our major achievements has been the implementation of essential Local Area Coordination (LAC) services to National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) participants and their families from now until June 2018. We were appointed in January by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and we have made excellent progress since then.

Another huge undertaking was our submission to the NSW Government regarding the Social and Affordable Housing Fund (SAHF) initiative. Our proposal is for the delivery of around 500 dwellings and support services, with a mix of newly constructed and acquired dwellings. We are still awaiting the Government's decision. Our submission was the result of a great deal of hard work and collaboration across the Society and my thanks go to everyone involved.

My priorities have been to re-engage and invigorate our membership. To this end we have seen the Valuing Youth

initiative gain momentum.

The pastoral program for residents of the Matthew Talbot Hostel has also been reviewed and has commenced recently.

I'd like to thank you all for your contribution to the Society over the past year – members, volunteers, employees and supporters have all played a huge role in ensuring that we assist those most in need. I'm particularly grateful to those who have assisted me in my inaugural year as President.

Christmas is a time of joy and togetherness for all of us. We will all no doubt be grateful for the family and friends who will be sharing Christmas with us, surrounded by bountiful food, gifts and laughter. But we constantly have in our minds those less fortunate than us. The Vinnies Christmas Appeal has taken off well this year and I encourage all of you to support it and ensure your fellow parishioners and local community are aware of what a difference their donations will make to those facing hardship this Christmas, a time of love, compassion and hope.

Yours faithfully

Denis Walsh  
State President, St Vincent de Paul Society NSW

## CEO'S MESSAGE



At the heart of the Christmas story is a search for shelter or, even, housing. Housing was hard to come by for that young man and woman as they prepared to become parents.

For me, that search for a home, accompanying and supporting those on their journey to create a safe place, has been my clearest impression of the work of the St Vincent de Paul Society.

As I commence in my role with the Society, housing has been at the forefront of our activity, raising our voice about the lack of affordable housing in NSW. In October keynote speaker at the Rosalie Rendu lecture was Hon. Susan Ryan AO. She spoke on the hidden crisis facing older women at risk of homelessness. It was a sell-out event. That evening we launched our petition calling on the NSW Government to set a 15 per cent affordable housing target for all new developments. The petition is available on our website and I encourage you to fill it in and return it (see p.11).

This issue of *Vision* is my first opportunity to reach out to you all. Since I joined in August I have been taking every opportunity to meet with everyone, to find out what they do, what their aspirations are and what support I can provide for these aspirations to be achieved.

There are still Central Councils and services I haven't yet visited and I hope to do so soon. Thus far I have been overwhelmed by the contribution made by everyone in the pursuit of the mission of the Society, to serve the poor with love, respect, justice and joy, and to work to shape a more just and compassionate society.

Wishing you and your families and loved ones a peaceful and safe Christmas as we all remember the story of a homeless child and his parents who tried to find security and safety. Let their inspiring story that changed the world also be at the heart of our work in the New Year.

Jack de Groot  
Chief Executive Officer, St Vincent de Paul Society NSW

# Annual Festival Mass 2016

## St Patrick's Church at The Rocks in Sydney is imbued with the presence of Charles O'Neill.

It was here, Bishop Terence Brady DD VG, Auxiliary Bishop of Sydney, reminded the congregation at the Annual Festival Mass, that he established the St Vincent de Paul Society in NSW.

It was in this Church that the first Conference met in 1881, in the heart of The Rocks, an area of abject poverty.

Bishop Brady addressed the full church on 6 December and the presence of Charles O'Neill was felt by all.

"God you inspired Charles O'Neill with the spirit of your love, and led him to establish the Society of St Vincent de Paul to generously support and promote groups of Christians whose hearts are set on helping those in poverty," Bishop Brady prayed.

He went on to describe Charles O'Neill as a balanced man, who combined spirituality with his capacity to give to others. He said the Church was blessed to have Vincentians among its members and thanked the members on behalf of the Church for the work they do today.

The Offertory Procession also recognised the contribution of Charles O'Neill. Denis Walsh, State President, carried his original manual where he recorded the establishment of the first Conferences in Sydney, Parramatta and as far away as Braidwood. An image of the first Conference table was carried by Bev Kerr, Vice President and Support Services President.

The sounds of young voices also



resounded, thanks to the St Paul of the Cross Catholic Primary School, Dulwich Hill Choir. Corey Tuifua and Hugh Preston from St Mary's Cathedral School carried the bread and wine in the Offertory Procession and the Mini Vinnies group from Star of the Sea Catholic School Terrigal attended.

After the Mass, lunch was served in the crypt and Denis Walsh had the opportunity to thank the guests for attending. He told of how he had been commissioned as President in February and how he had committed himself to doing everything he could to return the focus to the original mission work of the Society.

"This is to enhance the spiritual growth of members by working with and seeing the face of Christ in the people we assist," he said.

"We need to move toward a pastoral approach. As Blessed Rosalie Rendu said: 'Be kind and love, for love is your gift to the poor. If you have nothing to give, give yourself'.

"Our challenge is to consider the physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing of those we journey alongside. Spiritual wellbeing may be religious for some but for others it may simply be what sustains them and offers hope, a sense of empowerment and self-belief."





## SISTER CLEM LENNOX - ASK AND SHE'D DELIVER

**Sister Clem, an amazing lady, has been with the Society since 1986.** During her time with the Society, Sister Clem had many health issues but she always bounced back every time bigger and better. As well as being the St Mary's spiritual leader, Sister Clem visited folk at home who were unable to leave the house, nursing homes and the Mudgee District Hospital.

Every Thursday you'd find Sister Clem in the Shop. Quite a character, she'd work at the front counter and was adored by all. Poor health meant she cut back on her hours but she still loved chatting with everyone.

She taught scripture for 25 years and organised many funerals over 30 years. People would ask and she would deliver. She was recognised with the Premier's Award for Community Services in 1992 and received her Order of Australia Medal in 2002.

For 12 years she cared for her aged sister Milly, "a labour of love".

It seemed nothing was ever going to stop her from her work with the Society, the work she loved. In May she celebrated her 70th Jubilee but sadly, after fracturing her shoulder and at the age of 91, she decided to retire to St Catherine's Home in Bathurst.

She misses everyone greatly but feels blessed with her lovely room and all the activities within St Catherine's.

**Reflections by her friend Carol Jones (Mudgee Conference Member)**

## Vinnies and The Wiggles join Broken Hill Christmas Pageant

**A Vinnies Wiggles float was one of 54 in the Broken Hill Christmas pageant.** Younger members of the Ss Peter & Paul Conference walked the 2km journey behind the float. Thousands lined the streets in 35 degree heat, dancing and singing along. Thanks to the Wiggles for their permission.

In town were Denis Walsh and Bev Kerr who also visited the Vinnies Shop and Bishop Fox Meal Centre. Manager Pat Davis was presented with a plaque for achieving 100% from Council for their food audit.



## A life of active service



**John Kearney of Trundle recently received his St Vincent de Paul Society Life Membership award for 70 years' service.** John joined the Society in 1946 at the age of 20. An active member, he has held positions of President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer for St Michael's Conference Trundle. He kept this Conference going during periods of very low membership. Recently, after a successful recruitment drive, he was involved in training the new members. At 90 he still attends all Conference and regional meetings.

## DEDICATION SHINES THROUGH

**Society Life Member John Hawkes was awarded an Order of Australia in the Queen's Birthday Honours List this year for his outstanding contribution to supporting the most vulnerable people in his community.**



After retiring from the police force in 1996, John joined the Society where he worked in emergency relief and held positions as Conference and Regional President.

John's dedication has shone through in his involvement with the Coachstop Caravan Park. In 2000, the Community Health Service initiated a project at the Park to provide support to 150 residents who were living in poverty and isolation. John offered the support of the Society in 2002 and built a close and effective partnership.

He has been tireless in improving the residents' standard of living: he provides a regular supply of fruit and vegetables, arranged with a local pharmacy to provide necessary medications and organised the purchase of an on-site cabin to provide health services, often pro bono. John also won a grant to provide dental services.

John arranged transport to medical appointments, provided telephone cards so residents could keep in touch with families and organised swimming pool passes for the children.

"Over the years, John has earned the friendship, trust and deep gratitude of the residents," says Peter Fishlock, President of Maitland/Newcastle Central Council.

"We congratulate John on his OAM and thank him for his tireless work in reaching out to our local community, particularly the residents of Coachstop," says Peter.

"Thanks also to our local parishioners for their generosity in making our good works possible."

## Vale Richard Barton



**Richard Barton passed away in August after a battle with cancer.**

Richard grew up in Manly and has, for many years, been committed to helping others by way of many different community organisations. When Richard became a member of the Society he very quickly earned himself the role of Centre President and was elected as Broken Bay Central Council President in February 2016.

Richard was a man of ideas and action who had great plans for the growth of Broken Bay, especially with respect to educating youth about to the role of the Society and how they could help and support the Society. Richard is missed by all who knew him. Thanks to Barry Finch for acting in his role as Alternate Central Council President during his illness.

## TRUNDLE MAKES LIBRARY MOBILE

**A great initiative of the Trundle Conference for their very small country town is the establishment of a library service for residents who cannot visit the library.** As soon as the service was set up there were three members waiting to join. A 95-year-old vision impaired woman had never had a library card before but now she is taking out audio books and CDs.

Members Karen Quade, Brian Goodwin and Julie Jones headed off with librarian Debbie Anderson to take books, CDs, audio books, magazines and DVDs to the Trundle Multi-Purpose Nursing Home. While there they were they chatted to another resident who placed an order for their next visit.





## Learning and Growing during MENTAL HEALTH MONTH



**One third of Australians will struggle with mental illness during their life.** Our members, volunteers and employees know, too, that people experiencing homelessness are more likely to suffer from severe mental health issues. Our challenge is to support them and give them voice or, more importantly, amplification.

That is why initiatives like Mental Health Month in October are so important. They give those working in Mental Health the chance to talk about challenges and issues and point out potential solutions.

It is also a timely reminder of the contribution of carers to improving the lives of some of the most vulnerable in our society. And for all of us to listen to the voices of those who live with a mental health illness every month of the year.

The theme this year was 'Learn and Grow'.

Our Compeer program is celebrating 20 years in NSW. It is a friendship program partnering volunteers with friends living with mental illness, to break isolation and build bonds.

In recognition of its success, Compeer was invited to participate in a Mental Health Month event hosted by Premier Mike Baird in the Speaker's Garden at NSW Parliament House.

Compeer also held an afternoon tea at State Support Office to introduce its new team to employees and to talk about the contribution of Compeer.

Ability Links Sydney Metro South also participated in two events.

The inner west and city Ability Links team organised a Well Being Hour in collaboration with a local neighbourhood centre. Activities were designed to teach wellbeing skills that are enjoyable and positive. Their message is that it doesn't take much time each day to look after your wellbeing and by doing that, you may prevent the possibility of developing a mental illness.

The Welcome Choir ran a singing workshop, Sydney Laughter Yoga demonstrated the importance of laughter and The Body Shop representative circulated the room offering mini hand massages and pampers. There was a mindfulness colouring-in area and a Pledge Wall asking people how they would look after themselves as part of Mental Health Month.

Linkers also had a stall at the Feel Good Fete at Maroubra where they chatted to people about mental health.



## Raising voices together

**Audrey is a passionate volunteer who sings in the Rendu Rhythms music group, run by the Society in Campbelltown as an outreach Conference.**

Its purpose is to bring people together to perform for those in need, by bringing joy to those going through hard times. A bunch of talented musicians and singers, they play well-loved music from the Beatles, the Eagles, Abba, and many more.

"I've lived in Campbelltown most of my life. I've always had empathy for helping people who are less fortunate than myself, particularly older people, people with dementia, and the homeless," says Audrey.

"My heart goes out to them and I like seeing that I've made a difference to their day.

"I saw an online advertisement looking for performers for a new singing group through the Society and I thought, "why not give it a go?". I got on so well with everybody. We all have a passion for music and just want to help others."

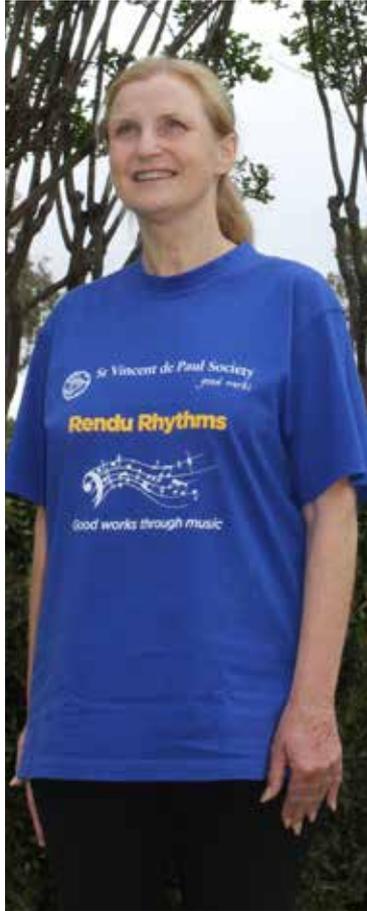
The group practises every Thursday night for two hours and performs once a month at the Nagel Centre Campbelltown.

When they started many of the diners would just eat their meals and leave.

But now, Audrey says, you can see the difference.

"They are staying longer and there are many more smiles on their faces. It's working—we're actually reaching them."

Rendu Rhythms continues to grow in size and popularity and now performs at a range of venues bringing joy to those going through hard times.



## Migrants giving back

**Van and Hoa, a husband and wife team, have volunteered at the Glebe Shop for 10 years, four days a week.**

Van arrived in Australia by boat as a refugee 36 years ago. Inspired by the assistance he had received as a struggling new arrival, he volunteered with the Society years later when he had free time. Soon Van brought Hoa so together they could do something for others.

"I volunteer because I want to give back to the community and help people who are struggling like I was when I arrived," says Van.

Van can fix almost anything and has become the shop's handyman. Hoa has an incredible work ethic, always smiling.

Acting Shop Manager Lauren said they are valued, hard-working staff members.

"Van and Hoa are real personalities and bring so much fun and laughter. We are so grateful for their contribution," says Lauren.



## Dedicated young volunteer wins award

Lucas Di Cicco, a Year 11 student, won both the Sydney South Volunteer of the Year and Student of the Year awards for his work at the Matthew Talbot Hostel (MTH). The annual award program is run by The Centre for Volunteering, the state's peak body for volunteering.

Every Monday and Friday Lucas travels to MTH after school with a teacher from St Mary's Cathedral College. There he serves coffee, tea or a meal and has a chat to the men experiencing homelessness.

It began last year as part of the volunteer program at MTH for all Year 11 students at Cathedral College. Instead of just visiting once, their requirement, Lucas went above and beyond, completing 40 hours' service by early 2016, even volunteering during school holidays.

Despite an overwhelming school workload, Lucas gave time and effort to those much less fortunate than himself. Sometimes he was called upon at

short notice when other students were unavailable. He also assisted at school organising the student volunteering roster. Even after being elected Vice Captain by his peers, he found time to offer his services at MTH.

The men appreciated chatting with Lucas when they came to the kiosk and this deepened his understanding of the hardships facing people experiencing homelessness every day.

Through volunteering, Lucas has gained insight into humanity. His ongoing commitment to visiting is a testament to his dedication.



## Every child has the right to feel normal

### Christian has been a volunteer mentor with Kids Engaged in Education Program (KEEP) since 2013.

KEEP uses education and case management to support children experiencing homelessness. It was developed at Vincentian House, the Society's crisis accommodation and case management service for families in central Sydney.



Christian helps the children build resilience and problem-solving skills.

"It's about forming a long-term relationship that's very trusting. I was pretty fortunate to have a bunch of good mentors when I was growing up. These kids are often dealing with a lot of instability in their lives, like not having

a roof over their heads and having some obvious family challenges."

What he enjoys most is giving them the time to hang out and be kids.

"Having the ability to let loose in a safe, fun and engaging environment is pretty important."

He is also sometimes a sounding board for boys who will often bring up conversations they're not comfortable having with adults.

"It might be that someone's giving them a rough time at school and they want to talk someone who may be younger, in a friendly environment."

The impact KEEP has on children and their families is something that is precious for Christian.

"I've bumped into the parents who say 'This is a great outcome for my child. They look forward to it and they're very excited'.

"A boy who left Vincentian House was enjoying the program so much he wanted to come back just for the mentoring. This was so satisfying to see."



# The changing face of poverty

**This year's Rosalie Rendu lecture was a sell-out. A huge audience came to listen to former Commissioner for Age Discrimination Hon. Susan Ryan AO speak on a subject that members, employees and volunteers are confronting every day – the changing face of poverty and growing epidemic of older women facing homelessness.**

The lecture runs every year during Anti-Poverty Week. This year a report released by ACOSS and the Society, the Poverty in Australia Report, identified that in 2014 nearly three million people were living in poverty in Australia, or 13.3 percent of the population.

We also know that women and girls make up 59 per cent of the people who are seeking help from homelessness services. And not only are more women now seeking help to escape poverty, women over 55 make up the fastest growing group of people experiencing homelessness.

The majority of older women experience homelessness following separation, widowhood or domestic violence. These experiences also mean that women are more likely to experience poverty than men.

"What is worse," said Denis Walsh, State President, "is that our rates of women seeking help is more than double the UK's 26 per cent and the USA's 38 per cent."

Ms Ryan is an advocate for older women and has taken up the challenge of speaking out about their plight, as they face homelessness when they can no longer afford to pay ever-rising private rentals.

Many women spent long periods of time without regular employment while raising their children and as a result

they have much less superannuation to draw on.

They are also usually in lower paid jobs and now, as they face failing health, redundancy or retirement, they find they can no longer afford to pay escalating rents in the private rental market. These women struggle to keep a roof over their head.

"We need to recognise the extent of the problem of poverty among older women, and the causes of it, so that we can identify effective interventions, and attack this form of poverty before it gets beyond us," Susan said in her speech.

"We need to ask of our governments and of our private sector providers of housing ,why is it that when we hear and see evidence continually of a housing boom, where we are told the construction of dwellings is at an all-time high, that a proportion of these new dwellings cannot be offered at an affordable rent?"

Michelle Anderson, Support Worker at Our Lady of the Way, the Society's supported crisis accommodation service for single women aged over 55, told the audience about the problems facing these older women.

She ended her talk saying: "Let's not let down our older generation when they need us the most."

Gaynor Mason, President of Wollongong Central Council, and Katherine McKernan from Homelessness NSW also spoke. From the floor Marlene, a retired nurse, told the moving story of how she found herself homeless after a lifetime working as mental health nurse. She thanked the Society because the Rozelle Region assisted her at a desperate time.





## Affordable housing campaign gains momentum



**In NSW the lack of affordable housing has reached crisis proportions. Leaders of the housing and homelessness sectors in NSW have been speaking as one voice in pressuring the government to increase the stock of housing for low and middle income earners.**

The Society has been active in this movement, seeking to get the NSW and Commonwealth governments to deliver more affordable housing.

Our call to the NSW Government is to change the planning laws so that at least 15 per cent of new residential developments are set aside for affordable housing. We have taken action in a number of ways including using the media – traditional and social, meeting with ministers and Members of Parliament in both State and Federal governments, hosting fora, making it the theme for the Rosalie Rendu lecture, signing joint letters with others in the sector and, most

importantly, launching a campaign with a petition.

The Right to Home campaign was announced at the Rosalie Rendu lecture during Anti-Poverty Week in October with a series of comprehensive recommendations for Commonwealth, State and local governments.

The campaign calls for the construction of at least 25,000 new social housing units (run by government or community housing associations) in 10 years in NSW.

Our main action is a petition urging the NSW

Government to set an affordable housing target.

If we can get 10,000 signatures and deliver all the signatures to Parliament House then the issue will be debated in Parliament.

Jack de Groot, CEO, is confident the concerns of the Society and the sector are reaching the public and governments.

“There has been a great deal of coverage in the media and we have seen slight movement by the NSW Government in acknowledging a problem,” said Jack.

“Firstly, the Greater Sydney Commission has included an affordable housing target of five to 10 per cent in all new developments on land that is rezoned for higher density. This is insufficient but at least it recognises that the community is agitating for a solution.

“Then in late November Planning Minister Hon. Rob Stokes spoke out against negative gearing tax breaks because they worsen housing affordability. He went on to say it was unrealistic to assume that an increase in supply increases competition and reduces prices.

“This lone voice is progress but clearly not enough.”

The petition is available on our website – visit [www.vinnies.org.au](http://www.vinnies.org.au) and search for Petition.

Print it, sign it and circulate it among your friends, family and colleagues. Then post it back to us at PO Box 5, Petersham NSW 2049, so that your signature can be included.

We all have the right to a home. Let your voice be heard.



## Letter to the Premier

**Our Social Justice team visited NSW Parliament House in November to help launch an open letter to Premier Mike Baird, calling on the NSW Government to do more to address the affordable housing crisis.**

The Society, along with many other organisations and academics, has put its name to the letter and will continue to push for reforms to current policies to better help those who are facing homelessness as a result of rising housing and rental costs.

An excerpt from the letter reads:

“We write to applaud and encourage your government’s initiative in tackling the worsening problem of unaffordable housing in our major cities.

“We welcome the announcement reported on October 28, that your government will move to change the city’s planning laws to require under the Greater Sydney Commission’s District Plans a minimum level of accommodation at rents accessible to lower incomes. We now urge you to ensure that this initiative achieves its desired outcome of adding significant new opportunities for affordable housing by:

1. setting the level of affordable housing in rezoned developments at between 15% and 30% - the latter in developments on government land; and
2. ensuring that these levels apply to the whole development, not merely the “uplift” of added units.”

You can read the full letter at [www.vinnies.org.au/page/Publications/NSW/Homeless\\_in\\_NSW/](http://www.vinnies.org.au/page/Publications/NSW/Homeless_in_NSW/)

## PROGRAM TO EMPOWER OTHERS

**“Leaders become great, not because of their power but because of their ability to empower others.”** – John Maxwell

This quote highlights one of the core principles of the Unlocking Leadership Potential program which was developed and implemented in 2016 across NSW. Each Central Council held three face-to-face conversation sessions with their Central Council President, Regional Council Presidents and other emerging leaders. Janice Jones and Kate Scholl of the Policy & Member and Volunteer Services Training and Development Team, wrote and facilitated the program.

These sessions and the accompanying Leaders’ Resource Kit allowed for everyone to share and engage about local issues for leaders. Feedback revealed how participants grew in confidence and in their capacity to support others to lead.

Shirley Kelynack, Conference President and Hornsby Regional Council Vice President, said: “I was pleasantly surprised. Everyone was given the chance to speak, with each opinion valued. We were encouraged and supported and new skills and ideas were taught and demonstrated. It has given me new energy and I am up and running with new ideas, thoughts and motivation.”

The next phase is to develop the program further so that more people can engage with the resources and tools.

The Leadership Resource Kit can be downloaded on [mavs.vinnies.org.au](http://mavs.vinnies.org.au). Search for ‘leadership’.



L to R: Broken Bay’s  
Bruce, Shirley and  
Michelle



## Lego 'Little Builders' brings Eastern Sydney kids together

**School children came from across the Eastern Suburbs to become busy 'Little Builders' at Paddington Public School, working in small teams to build Lego models.**

Paddington Public School partnered with Ability Links to coordinate the 'Little Builders' day for students from Paddington Public School, Clovelly Public School, Maroubra Junction Public School and La Perouse Public School.

According to Michael Bones, Ability Linker with the East

Sydney team, it is based on the principles of Lego Play Therapy.

"'Little Builders' provides an opportunity for students experiencing social isolation, or who find it difficult to communicate with other students, to be included in play and social activities with other children," says Michael.

"Lego Play Therapy is known to help children to improve their verbal and non-verbal communication, sharing and turn-taking, as well as their collaborative problem-solving skills."

This year Paddington Public School introduced a weekly Lego Club. Jono, teacher and Lego Club facilitator, has seen the positive outcomes.

"Lego Club has helped promote communication and social skills amongst those students with autism, ADHD or even those who feel they need that safe space to come at lunch time," says Jono.

"In this way it has also helped to reduce challenging behaviours as it offers students strict roles to play as they socially interact."

Ability Links is a program that helps support people with disability aged 0 – 64, their families and carers live the life they want, as valued members of their community. For children, it is so important to support them to become more independent and confident in their own abilities.

One mother recognised the positive outcomes: "Being part of the Lego Club has given my son a sense of confidence and belonging around the school he didn't have before."

Thanks to Toys R Us, Supa Centre, Moore Park who donated the Lego, and Earth Catering.

## LIVING LIFE TO THE FULL

**David has been employed at the Ozanam Industries Stanmore Work Centre for 10 years and he has had many highlights during those years.**

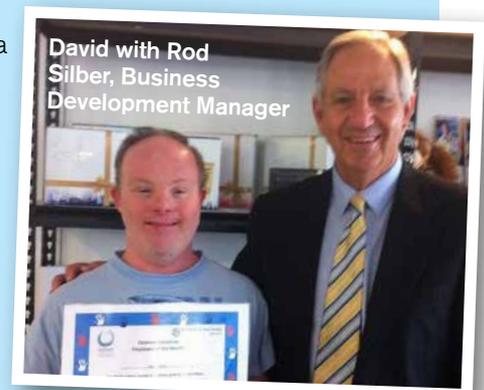
David was so excited when he learnt that he was the winner of the Employee of the Month. He was presented with a certificate in front of all his work colleagues. It made him feel special, loved and an important part of a great team at Stanmore.

In addition to the work that David does every day, he also works in the Stanmore kitchen. He prepares the tea, coffee and lunches for his colleagues and goes about his tasks with great enthusiasm.

A keen West Tigers supporter, David is quick to remind his colleagues whenever they have a win of how much better they are than the Sea Eagles. He also loves playing ten pin bowling.

David has travelled overseas, going on a South Pacific cruise and also visiting Scotland where his Mum was born.

Working at Ozanam Industries enables David to live a full, meaningful and enjoyable life.



# CREATIVITY ON SHOW

**Art therapy is based on neuro-scientifically based principles and plays an important role in developing the skills and confidence of people living with disabilities.**

That is why both the Como Social and Leisure Centre and the Caroline Chisholm Centre for Social Justice in Mt Druitt run regular art therapy programs.

Both centres recently exhibited artists' work because seeing their work exhibited is hugely rewarding for the artists, their friends, family and the dedicated staff.

Como Social and Leisure Centre provides a safe and friendly atmosphere for people to socialise, participate in recreational activities and build support networks. It is a joint venture with Sutherland Hospital Mental Health Service.

Over 50 creative works were on show at Sutherland Hospital as part of the 2016 Mental Health Expo Art Exhibition. They were available for purchase, with funds raised going towards supporting the art program.

Elizabeth Cavanagh, who oversees day-to-day operations, said the Centre provides services that help prevent the isolation and loneliness, often associated with those living with mental health issues.

"Our art therapy program encourages and develops creativity, provides a channel for self-expression and offers relief from life's daily challenges," says Elizabeth.

Art therapist Robbi Wyme facilitates the art group and is extremely proud of the pieces exhibited.

"Some of the artists had never painted before joining the art group, others picked up a paintbrush after years of neglect and some have been inspired to continue their artistic practice at home and in community art classes," says Robbi.

"The annual exhibition offers an opportunity for emerging talent to share their artworks. Our artists were thrilled because Minister for Health, Mrs Jillian Skinner, visited our exhibition."

The art therapy program is generously supported by the GyMEA Tradies Club with the valued assistance of staff and volunteers.

In September, Jeremy, art therapy participant at the Caroline Chisholm Centre for Social Justice, held a solo exhibition



of his work at the Centre. At the opening were his mother Hazel and his friends from St Mary's Community Centre and Brisbane Street, as well as staff from Bunnings and Westfield whose donations made his exhibition possible.

Jeremy is often facing challenges, as he has an intellectual disability, along with a number of other conditions. But this doesn't stop Jeremy from doing the things he loves.

After attending art therapy sessions for eight months, Jeremy has become a prolific painter, producing two to three paintings a week.

"I get my inspiration from every aspect of my life. It has also been an outlet for my frustrations and stresses and it helps calm me down," said Jeremy.

Jeremy set a goal to have his art work displayed in an art exhibition and so the team there set about assisting him reach that dream.

Corinne Deitch, art therapy student from Western Sydney University, was there to help. She designed the invitation, set up the exhibition and framed some of his pieces.

"It is an honour and a privilege to work with people like Jeremy and a joy to see their work and life expand and deepen," said Corinne.

"We are all very proud of his outstanding achievements."

## Army base wheels into action to assist homeless

A major barrier facing people experiencing homelessness is their lack of transport but through the generosity of Echo Company at Kapooka Army Base and Wagga Wagga Cycle Centre a solution has been found for Edel Quinn, a crisis accommodation and case management service run by the Society's Support Services for men and women who are experiencing homelessness in the Wagga Wagga region.

Rachel Arthur, Senior Support Worker at Edel Quinn said that the lack of transport further isolates people from their community.

"We thought that cycling might be a solution. It's healthy, doesn't use energy and is cheap. We started this year with one second-hand bike, which we loaned among the 16 clients residing here," says Rachel.

"Then we were thrilled when the Wagga Wagga Cycle Centre came on board and supported us with equipment and an additional two new bicycles. And now, with the support of Echo Company at Kapooka Army Base, we



were able to expand the number of quality new bicycles to all the residents.

"Thanks to Andrew Treloar of Wagga Wagga Cycle Centre and Edel Quinn all our bikes are maintained and road worthy. We also provide access to the new road rules for bicycle riders to ensure our residents are fully equipped to use the bicycles safely.

"We can already see benefits to the residents: they are fitter and healthier and are able to get about Wagga Wagga independently and confidently. That has to be a good thing."

## GROWING GREEN



**The Society's John Purcell House is looking much greener after two new garden beds sprang to life recently.**

The Shoalhaven Shark Tank is an event that helps people experiencing homelessness and disadvantage in the area. In August, Bishops South Nowra, a rural produce and agricultural store, provided materials, including the two garden beds, and their expertise to assist the men currently residing at the John Purcell House.

They were shown how to make a good veggie patch and keep the garden looking beautiful. They were also offered two weeks of work experience at Bishops.

Given newfound skills, the men are now equipped with knowledge on how to grow and cook their own produce.

The homelessness services at John Purcell House gives men aged 21 and over, who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of becoming homeless, the chance of having their name on a lease, to build their rental history and get back on their feet.

## EVERY BODY AT THE BEACH: Disability Awareness Training for Lifeguards



**An idea that took off in Sydney is going national. Linkers from the East Sydney Ability Links team learnt that lifeguards on our beaches did not feel confident to support people to use their beach wheelchairs.** They decided to partner with Royal Rehab to develop lifeguard training that would cover not only the use of beach wheelchairs, but also a general look at disability awareness and how lifeguards can support people with any disability on the beach.

As part of the process, the team produced a video that captured the experiences and advice from people with a range of disabilities.

Five people who love going to the beach explained the barriers and challenges they face, and how lifeguards can make the beach a more accessible and inclusive space.

The training was rolled out in September this year to lifeguards

in the Northern Beaches of NSW and Gold Coast councils. It is now being delivered across Australia by Royal Rehab and includes theory and practical elements, including simulation activities that provide lifeguards with an insight into what it's like to live with a disability.

You can watch the video on the Ability Links website: <http://www.abilitylinksnsw.org.au/story/DisabilityAwareness>



## WE CARE Financial Wellbeing Service to be launched

**Society members aspire to go beyond immediate assistance to identify the root causes of poverty and endeavour to alleviate them. In early 2017 a new Conference Financial Wellbeing (CFW) Service will be piloted, with three objectives:**

1. To strengthen the support we offer people
2. To demonstrate the outcomes for the people we assist
3. To maximise funding contributions from government and donors.

The Society's Policy & Member and Volunteer Service team will be working in partnership with Conferences to pilot, learn and evaluate this refreshed approach to supporting people.

Conferences in four Central Councils will be participating in the pilot: Wollongong, Bathurst, Lismore and Parramatta.

They will be adopting the new WE CARE framework which:

- builds on the existing strengths and practices of Conferences
- clarifies tasks
- ensures the person seeking assistance is provided with two service pathways – immediate assistance and, where necessary, the provision of intensive support to help address the underlying causes of their problems.

A key feature of the WE CARE framework is that it promotes a consistent level of service for the people we assist and provides Conferences with flexibility in how it is applied to suit local needs and contexts.

To find out more about this exciting initiative please contact your Central Council Office or Lukas Rajnoch, Engagement and Support Manager at State Support Office, [lukas.rajnoch@vinnies.org.au](mailto:lukas.rajnoch@vinnies.org.au) or (02) 9568 0279.



## MAKE HEALTHY NORMAL

**For the first time, Parramatta Central Council and Western Sydney Local Health District (WSLHD) are collaborating to offer community members their very own and free telephone health coach.**

The new partnership, officially launched at the Vinnies Blacktown Mega Centre Shop in November, is part of NSW Health's Make Healthy Normal campaign.

The six-month long program will offer staff, volunteers, and customers the opportunity to instantly sign up for free health coaching at 21 Vinnies Shops across western Sydney.

Susan Goldie, Executive Officer of the Parramatta Central Council, said the Society was proud to be supporting the Make Healthy Normal Campaign through their in-store promotions.

"People experiencing disadvantage in Western Sydney also face significant health challenges, and we want to promote an easy, accessible way to improve wellbeing through eating well and moderate exercise," says Susan.

Research shows that social determinants of health are inextricably linked to the social inequalities. We know that health follows a social gradient and if people are struggling with social inequalities, then this negatively affects their health.

"In line with the Society's work to combat social inequality, we support work regarding the social determinants of health. By gradually increasing the number of healthy choices we make every day, we will be healthier, have a reduced risk of chronic diseases, and ultimately increase our quality of life," says Susan.

## Confidence through coffee

**Youth Reach is a Special Work of Broken Bay Central Council in Brookvale on Sydney's Northern Beaches. The service operates as a drop-in centre for 11-24 year olds and offers a variety of early intervention programs and recreational activities.**

Youth Reach recently introduced a Café Skills program to provide disadvantaged young people with the opportunity to gain training to work in cafés. There are two commercial coffee machines on premises and a small café has been set up where participants are trained and can practice their coffee-making skills.

The program is aimed at young people who may be facing challenges that prevent them from finding employment opportunities. They may have left school early or have limited education, or experience homelessness, mental health issues, financial disadvantage, social exclusion or lack of confidence and self-esteem.

The training covers many aspects of working in a café, customer service and the skill of preparing a coffee. The staff provide support and assist the young people with tasks like preparing resumes and discussing effective communication skills and appropriate workplace behaviour, presentation and hygiene.

A recognised barista certification is a very practical skill for young people on the Northern Beaches because of the proliferation of cafés. The training provides the participants with their first step to transitioning into casual or part-time employment, a step on the path to independence and self-determination.





## Commonwealth Bank Community Grants awarded to Lismore Central Council

**Lismore Central Council has been awarded two \$10,000 Community Grants from the Commonwealth Bank to go towards programs to improve the health and wellbeing of young people.**

Cheryl Nolan, Service Manager at North Coast Settlement Service (NCSS), said one of the generous grants would enable NCSS to establish a homework program for migrant and former refugee children in the Coffs Harbour area.

"The Homework Club provides primary school students from migrant and former refugee families, aged 6-12 years, with the opportunity to access additional help and guidance with their homework.

"Participants will have the opportunity to develop English language and reading skills, improve capabilities in school subjects, reduce social isolation, build relationships, and create hope for the future," says Cheryl.

Michelle Hyde, Breaking the Barriers Coordinator (North), said the second Community Grant would support at-risk children who are experiencing various forms of disadvantage.

"This special grant will assist children to engage and remain in education, provide respite and resilience activities to aid social development and confidence, and support initiatives which impact positively on the lives of at-risk children," says Michelle.

"Thanks to the generosity of our staff who donate to the Staff Community Fund, we are able to assist thousands of Australian youth each year, and we are thrilled to be able to help Vinnies continue its important work in the community," said Julie Magner, Manager Group Sales & Service Regional NSW/ACT at the Commonwealth Bank of Australia.



## WHEN THE DICE IS STACKED AGAINST YOU

The local Hastings Accommodation Solutions (HAS) (formerly McCosker

House) made it into the news recently after a local family shared with the *Camden Haven Courier* their tragic story of homelessness.

HAS is a Society accommodation service that provides seven self-contained units for people experiencing homelessness in the Port Macquarie area.

Increasing rent, medical issues and expenses were against the Humphryis family since the birth of Zarah-Jade who was born with several serious conditions. Soon after her birth they were evicted from their private rental property.

They managed to find temporary accommodation but are now supported by McCosker House.

With the help of case workers, Jacob and Kaylah are looking into more permanent housing.

Kaylah said: "The ladies at McCosker House made sure we settled in. They had gifts for the girls, hampers, new cutlery and crockery, even a little box of nail polish for the girls and I to have some fun with."

Jacob added: "It's been lovely to see the girls welcomed and made to feel comfortable. That relieves some of my stress."

## Local art show grows in stature

**Over 100 guests attended the opening of the second annual OLC Art Show.** Held



in Redfern in June, it showcased 88 works by 22 artists from the Ozanam Learning Centre (OLC). The artists all attended weekly classes like ceramics, drawing and painting, as part of the OLC art program. The exhibition provided the opportunity for them to sell their works and is an extension of the classroom and part of the educational process. The event was generously sponsored by Pack & Send Kings Cross.

## Ozanam Industries helps SavourLife save rescue dogs



Ozanam Industries has helped SavourLife, an Australian dog-rescue social enterprise, reach two big milestones recently – its third birthday and the launch of a new range of dog treats.

SavourLife is a family-owned, Australian company inspired by a passion for dogs and a desire to make a difference. They make treats for dogs and donate 50 per cent of their profits to pet rescue organisations, helping them save and re-home abandoned dogs.

Ozanam Industries, a Society Special Work, employs over 100 Australians with disability at three work centres. A strong link has been formed with SavourLife and it provides services to them, like special packing requests for SavourLife's largest customers.

"As a trusted partner, they take a strong interest in not just providing the services we ask for, but also in the success of our business in general," said Michael McTeigue, SavourLife's founder and MD.

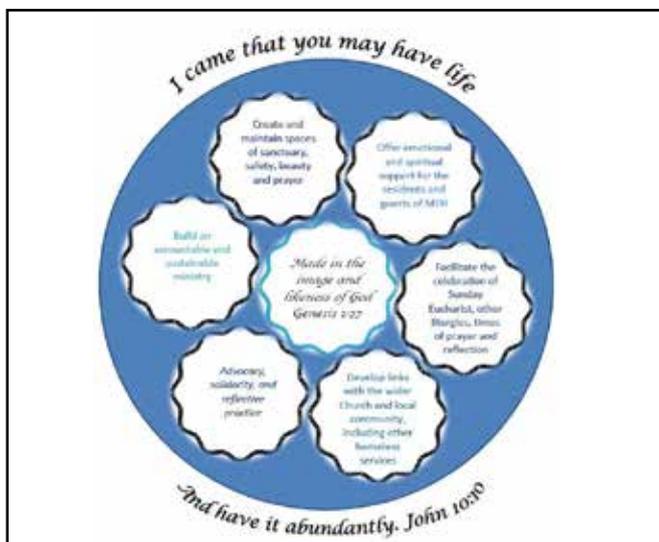
"Without the Ozanam team, we wouldn't be in the position we are today. It's great knowing that our social



enterprise provides jobs for the talented folks that Ozanam Industries employs. We're supporting both of our community causes, so it's a win-win for everyone."

Together, Ozanam Industries and SavourLife are two social enterprises making a big difference in their respective communities.

## A new vision for Pastoral Care



**Elizabeth Lee, Pastoral Care Officer has developed a new vision for Pastoral Care at the Matthew Talbot Hostel (MTH).** Her aim is to create a safe space for residents which allows time for reflection and the opportunity to develop deeper meaning and a sense of belonging in their community.

The illustration (left) captures the elements of the vision.

She has established three groups of volunteers to play an integral role in Pastoral Care: those providing Eucharistic hospitality, those providing pastoral care and those with specific skills such as leading meditation and grief support. Bev Kerr, State Council Vice President and President for Support Services, said it was a really important program for the men.

"I am excited by the possibilities that enable us at MTH to support people on their own spiritual journey, immersed within a community of faith that offers love, compassion and hope," she said.

"The involvement of volunteers in this program is crucial for its success."

# The Marian Centre re-opens its doors

**The Marian Centre in Sydney's Inner West has reopened after an almost two year hiatus as urgent building repairs were completed.**

The Marian Centre provides crisis accommodation for women and children and is housed in a glorious old building, which served as a hospital from 1883. The Society purchased the site in 1988 and opened as a refuge in 1989 with accommodation for 18 families.

It is one of the largest women's refuges in Australia, but in 2014 was in need of repair and refurbishment. The building was closed while a new roof was installed and the electrical wiring throughout the facility was redone.

The building is looking splendid, with a new roof, renovated kitchen and play area and new floors throughout the building. Before it re-opened six teams of volunteers from Hilton Hotel Sydney, Genworth Financial, Groupon, Mamamia and Metcash Food & Grocery gave generously



of their time to clean the rooms, build the beds and prepare the rooms for the residents who started arriving in December.

The Marian Centre was blessed and officially reopened by Auxiliary Bishop Terence Brady at a ceremony in November.



## Registration Week documents rough sleepers' vulnerability

**The Matthew Talbot Homeless Service Newcastle successfully coordinated Newcastle's first Registration Week, based on CommonGround, an innovative approach from New York which looks at documenting rough sleepers' vulnerability.**

For three mornings in October 50 staff and volunteers from over 15 organisations took to the streets, parklands and carparks from 4-7am to find people sleeping rough and gather information from them using a Vulnerability

Index (vulnerability refers to those who are most likely to die within five years unless housed).

It was a huge success: the Mercy Foundation, FACS, Housing NSW, Jenny's Place, Newcastle Family Support, Nova Women's and Children Service, Samaritans, Newcastle Council, Hunter Primary Care and NSW Transit Police all worked together. The Good Brothers Café committed over

100 suspended coffees and breakfasts and Sanatorium donated breakfast packs.

Fifty-four rough sleepers were counted that week, with 41 interviewed and completing the Vulnerability Index. Females made up 30 per cent of the total, and three families were interviewed. Ages ranged from 18-83; 83 per cent stated they had concern from their mental health; 39 per cent had experienced being a victim of violence since becoming homeless.

The Matthew Talbot Outreach team has completed a further 10 surveys of people after Registration Week. To date 27 per cent of the rough sleepers have been housed, 35 per cent are in temporary accommodation and 13 per cent cannot be found.



## CITY2SURF 2016

In August a record 125 Vinnies supporters completed the iconic City2Surf fun run in Sydney raising an unprecedented \$55,525 for Vinnies homelessness services. Team ambassador Joe Hildebrand from Network Ten led the team, with Vinnies CEO Jack de Groot and his son running alongside supporters and a group of year 10 students who travelled all the way from Armidale to join the fun.



## Vinnies Great Wall Challenge

Vinnies launched its inaugural Great Wall Challenge trek to China to raise awareness and funds for Vinnies homelessness services. This adventure-of-a-lifetime will see Vinnies supporters fundraise in the lead up to the trip and trek diverse and challenging sections of the Great Wall of China in April 2017. This is a new and exciting way for supporters to engage more deeply with Vinnies work and strengthen their impact for people experiencing disadvantage.



Vinnies Community Sleepouts continue to shine a light on the growing demand for social and affordable housing while giving community members a glimpse of the hardships affecting people experiencing homelessness. Vinnies Armidale Central Council and Vinnies Broken Bay Central Council both hosted their inaugural Vinnies Community Sleepouts in September and scout Sophie Dixon focused on youth for her Scouts Vinnies Community Sleepout which was attended by 30 other scouts in the area.

## GENERAL FUNDRAISERS

Community members have completed amazing challenges and organised creative events all in support of Vinnies homelessness services.

Long-time Vinnies supporter, Chris Barron, tackled his first marathon under the guise of Maroubra Marathon Man, completing the Sydney Blackmores Marathon in great time and raising a tremendous \$3,450 for Vinnies.

Founded by Stephanie Scott, Lovesweats Yoga is a new social enterprise striving to address social isolation and disadvantage. Stephanie donates a cut of class proceeds to Vinnies and hosts free yoga sessions for people accessing Vinnies Ozanam Learning Centre.

Christmas fundraisers are being held all over NSW with Cath Sullivan hosting holiday carols with her group of young violin students for the third year in a row.

Other creative fundraisers generously supporting Vinnies include the Junior Banks Short Film Contest hosted by MP David Coleman's office, and a charity football tournament for the Sydney music industry called Musica Copa.





## Abergeldie's support for the Vinnies Van continues for another year

Abergeldie Complex Infrastructure has again presented the Parramatta Vinnies Van with a \$31,000 cheque to support its efforts to provide friendship, compassion and dignity to those experiencing homelessness and social isolation in the Mount Drutt and Parramatta areas.

The cheque presentation gave Vinnies Van Coordinator Courtney Deighton the opportunity to thank Abergeldie staff for their monthly commitment volunteering with the Van. Executive Chairman Mick Boyle was the second highest fundraiser at the Vinnies CEO Sleepout in 2016, raising an amazing \$68,000 to support our homelessness services.

Thank you Abergeldie. Your ongoing commitment to rebuilding hope in our community is truly inspiring.



## Travellers' Change Makes Change

Lagardère Travel Retail has again raised funds to support us through Lagardère Newslink newsagent outlets and Relay Book stores in domestic and international airports around Australia. They raised \$13,000 for the Winter Appeal and a collection is currently underway for the Vinnies Christmas Appeal.

Lagardère Travel Retail has been a strong supporter since 2014. Thank you for assisting us to give a helping hand up to those in need.

## Sydney Airport funds KEEP

A generous \$136,000 donation from Sydney Airport has enabled us to expand our Kids Engaged in Education Program (KEEP) to help more children across NSW.

We are pleased to announce the recruitment of Kelsie Hedge who will work closely with the current KEEP team to expand the program to existing Vinnies Services. We're able to make a positive difference thanks to Sydney Airport's support.



## AGL Conference training

Our strategic partner AGL has been busy visiting Conferences around Sydney providing members with training on how to read an energy bill and offering energy advice tips. Marg Mitchell and Tim Cook from the AGL sustainability team have visited Sutherland Shire Regional Council, Nepean Regional Council and Concord West Conference.

We are grateful to AGL and their continued effort the restore hope to those in need.





## Christmas support from IGA

**IGA has thrown its full support behind the Vinnies Christmas Appeal again this year, with the help of actor and comedian, Shane Jacobson.**

Participating stores have sold \$2 Vinnies baubles and donated funds from the IGA Community Chest products during the November and December period, with all the proceeds going to the Christmas Appeal. Having raised \$600,000 previously, IGA hopes to raise the bar this year to support the great work Vinnies provides to people experiencing disadvantage. "Community is at the heart of everything IGA does around the country, especially at Christmas. So the link with the Vinnies Christmas Appeal is a natural one," says Ian Ashcroft, Chair of IGA's National Retailer Council.

A heartfelt thanks to IGA for renewing the National Partnership with Vinnies. We hope the campaign will be the most successful to date.



## GROUPON DOES GOOD WORK

**Groupon, the e-commerce marketplace, has partnered with us to raise money through their website for the Vinnies Christmas Appeal.**

Customers can choose to purchase a donation to the Christmas Appeal while they browse the deals on offer. Groupon staff also lent a hand to help prepare the Marian Centre for its reopening in December.



## Janssen provide the online SPARK for more inclusive communities

**Long-standing corporate partner Janssen has funded and produced a short documentary style promotional video for the SPARK program for newly arrived migrant, refugee and asylum seeker families.**

SPARK partners with primary schools and relies on volunteers and community organisations to support the settlement of these families by creating opportunities to engage with local communities.

The video can be viewed at [www.youtube.com/vinniesau](http://www.youtube.com/vinniesau).

With support from Janssen and other like-minded organisations we can continue to inspire inclusive communities.





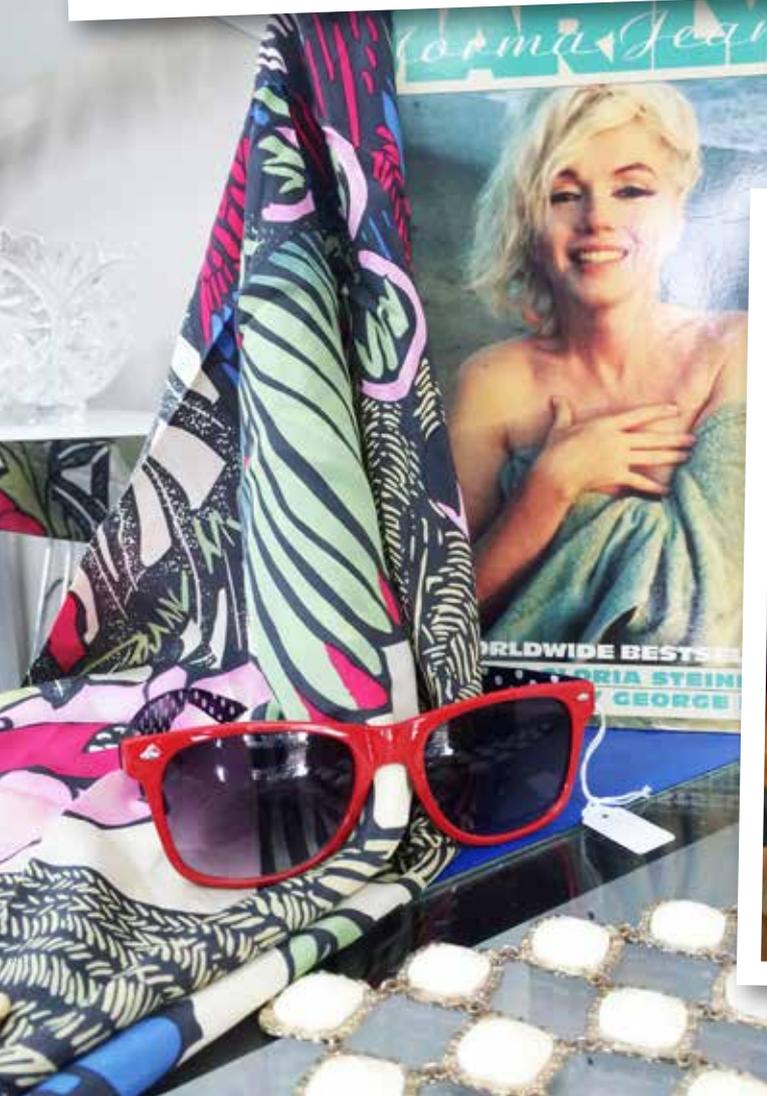
# NATIONAL OP SHOP WEEK



The fifth annual National Op Shop Week ran in August, a celebration of vintage fashion and amazing op shop bargains and a reminder of the good works that underpin Vinnies Shops.

National Op Shop Week is the brainchild of Jon Dee and DoSomething, and was set up to make it easier for people to get involved in community volunteering.

Costa Georgiadis from ABC TV's Gardening Australia was this year's ambassador. The beloved television presenter and sustainability advocate was given a sophisticated makeover using a fearless beard tamer and 'Costa-ffective' op shop clothing. He modelled his outfits for the *Daily Telegraph*.





Even The Richies, a growing army of diehard Benaud fans, got involved in promoting Vinnies Shops during the Week. They visited the Waverley shop in full dress-code of grey wigs, handmade over-size microphones and of course the trademark cream or beige jackets.

Denis Walsh, Society President, said: "National Op Shop Week raises public awareness about the importance of donating good quality items to charity stores as well as reminding people that by shopping at Vinnies, you are supporting people in the local community doing it tough."

The Instagram photo competition using the hashtag #vinniesfavouritethings proved to be very popular among op shop fashionistas because they could share images of their favourite op shop purchases. There was \$50 Vinnies voucher up for grabs for the most creative entry every day during the Week.

Tips on how to make the most out of op shopping were shared and a great online community grew during the Week, with many new followers of our Facebook and Instagram accounts.

National Op Shop Week also generated a huge amount of media coverage for the Society across the state.

"Funding from Vinnies Shops represents 44 per cent of Society revenue, so coverage in the media is vital—showing off our Shops and encouraging more people to visit, to find good value items and plenty of treasure during Op Shop Week and beyond," says Denis.





# Oh what a night!

## Vinnies Styling Sessions

**November was an exciting time for Vinnies Shops when the Styling Sessions were launched in North Parramatta and Waverley Shops.**

The concept of the Styling Session is to deliver a fun, informative and valuable shopping experience. Using women's garments from the two Shops, Vinnies was showcased as the perfect place to find fashionable, affordable and stylish clothing. Resident Vinnies stylist Tara Castellán divulged trade secrets on how to successfully shop at an op shop. She created an enjoyable evening that will be talked about for months to come.

Jacqui Dropulic, NSW Retail Development Manager, said the two evenings were a huge success.

"The reaction from our shopper and fan base was very exciting – social media feeds on Facebook and Instagram lit up with likes, shares and posts about the Styling Sessions," she says.

"We exceeded our expectations with two nights of fabulous shopping and customer interaction."

The Style Sessions were informative, fun, and stylish. Guests ranged from regular customers who knew the location of every rack and bargain, to op shop newbies who needed encouragement and confidence to try a new way of shopping. Regardless, everyone benefitted from the session and they left with clothing, shoes and accessories that boosted their shopping confidence.

Guests enjoyed beautiful nibbles and drinks on arrival and were able to mingle and peruse the racks. They received a packed goodie bag to take home with magazines, makeup, a Looksmart discount voucher and gifts, yummy chocolate and the Vinnies Styling Session Handbook, written for the evenings by Tara and the State Support Office retail team.

Tara put together head-to-toe Vinnies outfits for the three models and talked through the looks and how easy it was to meet one's fashion needs.

"There is definitely a need among our shoppers for more advice. It was also a fabulous opportunity for our supporters to meet and share ideas and images," says Jacqui.

"We hope to host more events in 2017 in regional centres and wherever there is interest.

"Many thanks to the Sydney Archdiocese and Parramatta Central Council retail teams and volunteers, to State Support Office Retail and Media and Communications teams, and our very own in-house models from Fundraising and Communications for supporting the events."

# TOWARDS ZERO WASTE

**NewsCorp invited Vinnies Shops to participate in their One Degree initiative – Towards Zero Waste – held in November during National Recycling Week at its head office.**

Towards Zero Waste was a staff sustainability covering environmental, recycling and repurposing initiatives.

One of the two booths was a pop-up Vinnies Shop with women's wear, accessories, furniture and bric-a-brac for sale, all merchandised with that special Vinnies touch.

The second space showcased examples of our core recycling initiatives and Special Works, including Lismore Central Council's Bag of Rags and Vinnies Buy Back Shop, the resale of cut cloth as rags to various industries across NSW distribution centres, the recycling of unsaleable plastic, metal and metal objects objects, and the St Joseph's Workshop on the Central Coast where donated wood offcuts are transformed into furniture and toys.

Our booths were visited by over 200 NewsCorp employees and guests over two days. The pop-up shop was very successful, particularly on the first day when the Vinnies team literally had to hold the shoppers back in anticipation of opening time and the wonderful bargains that were on show. Many women left with full shopping bags and big smiles.



A common comment was that they had no idea of the work that the Society does in this space.

Planet Ark and Cleanaway were also there presenting their recycling initiatives, so it was an honour to be invited to participate at this high profile NewsCorp event.

Many thanks to the Sydney Archdiocese and State Support Retail team for their coordination, dedication and hard work in setting up and 'manning' the booths.

## Vinnies Buy Back Shop is turning trash into treasure in Tweed

**Lismore Central Council has partnered with Solo Resource Recovery to manage the Tip Shop at Stotts Creek Resource Recovery Centre in Murwillumbah.**

"We're very excited about the Vinnies Buy Back Shop because it is bringing environmental and social benefits to our region," says Angelo Grande, Recycling and Waste Management Facilitator.

"We already have a wealth of experience successfully recycling and selling unwanted goods and the new shop is a fantastic resource for everyone from DIY enthusiasts, collectors and lovers of vintage chic, to families on a budget.

"All the second hand goods on sale come from the transfer station at the Stotts Creek facility. They may not be in tip-top condition, but they have been cleaned,

repaired, restored and ready for sale at a huge discount."

Re-usable items sent to landfill represent a lost opportunity because these valuable materials are unnecessarily removed from the economy and new materials manufactured in their place. All objects are sold in working condition so they can be diverted from landfill and given a new lease of life.

According to Reece Daly, Commercial Business Manager at Solo Resource Recovery, the old adage, one person's trash is another person's treasure, really is true.

"The Vinnies Buy Back Shop has a wide range of reclaimed items up for sale – building materials, furniture, household goods, electricals, collectables and toys," says Reece.

In addition to the positive environmental benefits of buying back, all surplus funds go towards local Good Works.

## Magdalene students give back to the community

Students at Magdalene Catholic High School Narellan have a strong tradition of supporting the Vinnies Nagle Centre, Campbelltown, which offers care and support for individuals and families experiencing crisis and disadvantage.

This year's School Winter Sleepout was very successful, with 120 students and 30 staff experiencing a night of homelessness in the depths of winter, raising nearly \$1,700 for the Nagle Centre.

Peter Collins, Mission Coordinator Magdalene Catholic High School, said: "With temperatures nearing 0 degrees on the night, participants were able to build greater empathy for those who rough it every night in the Macarthur area."



## NARROMINE MINI VINNIES

A Mini Vinnies Gathering was held in Narromine in November, bringing together 85 students and 15 teachers from St Augustine's Narromine, St Joseph's Nyngan, St Mary's Warren, and St Joseph's Peak Hill and Society members and staff.

They met students from other schools, watched presentations on the work students have been doing and came up with new ideas to take back. They prayed together, with the liturgy led by Michael Lynch, Wilcannia Forbes Central Council Spiritual Advisor.

During the day they also participated in workshops on wide-ranging topics like homelessness, bullying, migrants and refugees, poverty and mental health.

Keynote speaker Cathy Walsh spoke of her involvement with Life Charity Focus, Uganda. The Narromine Mini Vinnies group has held events this year to raise funds and collect shoes which they sent to a Ugandan school supported by Life Charity Focus.

The group surrounds a cut-out of Pope Francis at a Welcome Friend orientation session.



## Growing the Society in Sutherland with a school partnership

Mouna Roche, the family educator at St Patrick's Catholic Primary School Sutherland has been very active in engaging new members in the St Patrick's Parish and school.

She has been working closely with Chris Watson, President of the Sutherland Conference, recruiting and mentoring parents and teachers from the school to assist those in need in their local community.

"It is so rewarding because the parents and teachers are passionate, generous and keen to work for social justice," says Mouna.

The student membership in St Patrick's Mini Vinnies Conference has also grown. In August the Mini Vinnies group organised their most exciting event of the year– the Recycled Project Runway 2016, a celebration of sustainability through recycling and a great end to their Vinnies Winter Appeal.

All year the students had been collecting donations of clothes and held a fashion show where they modelled their recycled clothing. They also sold clothes for the whole family at market stalls, offering the best prices in town.

"The kids wanted to show everyone that it's cool and trendy to wear recycled clothes," says Mouna.

"They had another message which is that we can all help the environment by reducing waste, giving to those in need and raising funds for the good works of the Society."

## VALUING YOUTH STRATEGY

**An enthusiastic group of members, volunteers and staff have been meeting since July, working together to develop new initiatives they are passionate about.**

Our Big Opportunity Statement was to make a real difference in breaking the cycle of disadvantage by giving people a hand up. To meet this, the groups, known as circle groups, have been working in new ways with new people to come up with innovative and sustainable actions.

The five initiatives are:

- **Flexible Conference models:** Investigating existing Conference models and proposing new models that enable the full contribution from all ages and the best outcomes for those we assist.
- **Welcoming and pathways:** Developing, implementing and evaluating welcoming initiatives that recognise the value and potential contribution of each individual we engage—members, volunteers and staff.
- **Collaboration and communication:** Developing and piloting internal collaboration initiatives that blend new technologies and traditional forms of communication to connect, share knowledge and support each other in our good works.
- **Schools engagement:** Reviewing existing schools engagement programs and proposing enhancements and streamlining.
- **Programs for children:** Proposing improvements and new models that enable the best outcomes for those we assist that are flexible, innovative and responsive.

The circle groups meet up between sessions, utilising technology and teleconferencing to ensure everyone is clear on their actions and supported in the work they are doing.



## SLEEPING OUT AT UNSW

**UNSW students braved the cold August weather to sleep out on the Library Lawn to feel what it would be like to be homeless for a night and raise awareness for the issues surrounding domestic violence and homelessness.**

All week students hosted a stall serving free hot drinks and raised \$400 for the Winter Appeal by selling baked goods.

Anne Slattery provided a wonderful insight into the work being done locally. She shared experiences and stories about people she has met in Sydney and overseas.

That night new friendships were formed while they enjoyed games, hot drinks and a warm breakfast the following morning.

## Western Sydney University students help cut our costs

**It costs the Society over \$1.5 million annually to dispose of the large volume of generous donations to our Shops which are unfit for sale or reuse.**

Parramatta Central Council hosted four students from Western Sydney University (WSU). They worked closely with Retail Manager Phil Basti to learn about the donations and retail supply chain for the Society across Western Sydney.

They developed a Reduce the Waste proposal to improve the quality of donations and looked at cost-effective solutions to waste disposal.

The students are part of WSU's Social Engagement and Leadership Program designed to promote leadership and community engagement.

# Caterina Giuliano

## 1966-2016



**Caterina Giuliano passed away suddenly and tragically on 18 October. She was the much-loved and highly regarded Manager of the Ozanam Learning Centre (OLC), Woolloomooloo.**

She has left a strong legacy to the OLC and her team is committed to continuing that legacy as they keep working hard in her memory.

Right from the time she started as the Living Skills Officer in 2011, Cat had a heartfelt passion for the OLC. She built on her passion and leadership skills and in 2014 was appointed manager.

Her door was always open. At her memorial a woman who used the OLC services said: "I would walk into her office feeling awful, and walk out feeling hopeful!"

Under her stewardship, OLC programs grew in number and we could see the outcomes they achieved for service users. Cat's love of the arts was reflected in the growth of the art program. It is now a high quality program across a range of disciplines, where participants have the opportunity to work with our many skilled volunteer artist tutors.

Cat's experience as a performer was invaluable. Her passion for theatre arts led to a partnership with Milk Crate Theatre. They now use the OLC as a meeting venue, enabling people to come in to a safe, familiar environment, learn new skills and perform.

The Resilience Film Challenge, now in its third year, was another passion of Cat's. The culmination of a week-long film making and production process is a gala screening night at the Dendy, with 20 short films premiered this year.

We wanted to give everyone a chance to reflect on their relationship with Cat, because she was held in such high esteem by so many. We did this by leaving a condolence book at the entry to the OLC and holding a memorial service for her. The number of heartfelt written comments and tributes paid at her memorial show just how much she was loved.

She was described as compassionate, always having best interests of the people who passed through the OLC at heart. She was praised for how she always made them feel respected and listened to. They remember her infectious smile and laugh.

Cat had developed strong networks with other service providers in the wider community. She was very well liked and highly respected and built the OLC's reputation so that we could reach more people in need.

Her legacy lives on.

**Deborah Petlueng**  
Project Officer

**St Vincent de Paul Society NSW Support Services**

# A Seasonal Reflection

## Pope Francis in his “mission statement” *Evangelii Gaudium* expresses:

“I want a Church which is poor and for the poor. They have much to teach us. Not only do they share in the *sensus fidei* [sense of faith], but in their difficulties they know the suffering Christ. We need to let ourselves be evangelized by them... We are called to find Christ in them, to lend our voice to their causes, but also to be their friends, to listen to them, to speak for them and to embrace the mysterious wisdom which God wishes to share with us through them.”

These words of Pope Francis speak volumes in how we approach this holy time of Christmas. Over the weeks of Advent, parishes, workplaces and even shopping centres contribute generous donations of food and toys in the Society Christmas Hamper Appeals. My local parish of St Nicholas of Myra in Penrith packs hampers every year around the third week of Advent. I remember at St Vincent’s Hospital in Darlinghurst assisting volunteers in the collection of a thousand Christmas toys for young children and teenagers.

Christmas is a time when words and action motivate compassion and love. The heart of the Vincentian spirit is motivated by the one and same true act of love that is grounded in faith, living in hope and growing in love. Over the weeks of Advent may we take a moment to ponder the significance of this time not only as a Santa event but as a Christmas event and may we carry Christmas blessings to all we meet.

*May there be harmony in your relationships and may your kind words and acts be rewarded.*

*May you receive love generously as you have given it freely.*

*May each person who comes into your life be greeted with openness and acceptance.*

*May every guest who enters your presence give you the respect and honour you deserve.*

*May the hope of Christmas season settle within you and enliven your spirit.*

*May your family and friends be especially blessed this Christmas season.*

*May you realise daily the gift of your person and reflect the hidden treasures in your lives.*

*May the coming year be one of good health for you filled with energy and vitality.*

*May you keep your eye on the star within you and may the Luminescent Presence guide and direct you always.*

Amen.



**Leo Tucker**

State Council Spiritual Advisor



**Spiritual Reflection Guides  
can be downloaded**

# SHE IS THEIR HERO CAN YOU BE HERS?

There are thousands of Australians who personify heroism.

They're strong, brave and tough; but they're not athletes or celebrities.

They're men and women who find courage to flee from abusive households, who find strength to overcome disadvantaged upbringings and who make incredible sacrifices to protect their children.

They're people like Anna, who Vinnies and its volunteers assist each and every day.

It's your generosity that will let us continue to rebuild their strength and help them overcome adversity at Christmas and all year long.

If you can find it in your heart, please donate at [vinnies.org.au/christmasappeal](https://vinnies.org.au/christmasappeal) or call 13 18 12.



Images and names have been changed to protect the privacy of the people we assist.