



St Vincent de Paul Society  
NSW  
*good works*

SUMMER 2018  
ISSUE NO. 82

# Vision

## BLAKE'S OLYMPIC DREAMS

**FIRST NATIONAL  
CONGRESS IN 60 YEARS**

**ANTI-POVERTY WEEK  
ACROSS NSW**

**COMMUNITY HUB TRIAL  
A HUGE SUCCESS**





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**Supervising Editor:** Felicity Moody

**Designed by:** Claudia Williams

**All correspondence can be sent to:**

Communications & Media Manager  
Fundraising and Communications  
St Vincent de Paul Society  
PO Box 5, Petersham NSW 2049  
Email: felicity.moody@vinnies.org.au  
Ph: 02 9568 0278

**State Council:** Denis Walsh (President), Beverley Kerr, Kerry Muir, Peter McNamara, John Donnelly, Kathleen Thickitt, Maurie Ryan, Yvonne Wynen, Jim Rogers, Rosemary Fisher, Anne Stanfield, Peter Fishlock, Jenni Duff, Gay Mason.

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**We'd love to hear what the Society is doing in your area.**

**Send us an email, or call with an idea for a story or news piece:**  
felicity.moody@vinnies.org.au  
or (02) 9568 0278.

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**Front cover and page 21 image:**  
Darren Pateman



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear friends,

This edition of Vision is full of stories illustrating the good works carried out by our members, volunteers and staff across New South Wales.

It has been an exciting festive season for the Society. We have pursued both new and renewed initiatives, such as our first National Congress in 60 years (page 6). I can personally confirm it was a fantastic success, with an especially large number of young Vinnies members participating in the many workshops and lectures.

The Society's Housing Petition, advocating for a mandatory fixed percentage of affordable housing in new residential developments state-wide, was presented before the NSW Parliament in August. It received over 16,300 signatures of support and we broke the record for attendees of a petition being brought to Parliament. Read about this record-breaking assembly and the campaign's next steps on page 4.

As most of us prepare to celebrate the abundance of Christmas with those we love, we must consider those for which the holidays hold little joy. The Society seeks to walk beside our friends and neighbours experiencing financial difficulties, hunger, homelessness, addiction or other forms of disadvantage, and ease their burdens not only during Christmas, but throughout the New Year.

Please support our mission by contributing to or promoting the Society's 2017 Christmas Appeal. Any donation will improve the lives of those experiencing hardship and afford our communities a better future.

I hope you enjoy these stories of good works, and that you help us continue them beyond these pages.

Yours faithfully

Denis Walsh  
State President  
St Vincent de Paul Society NSW



## CEO'S MESSAGE

Vision is a wonderful way to learn about the meaningful work accomplished by the Society.

The articles that often leave the biggest impact on me are the

more understated, personal and communal narratives, such as 90-year-old Irene's birthday and 30-year anniversary volunteering with Vinnies (page 12), or the wonderful Vinnies Green Team in Wagga Wagga helping people in need with their gardening (page 29).

These stories forge the foundation of the St Vincent de Paul Society, at the core of which is the everyday kindness, dignity, and generosity extended by our members, volunteers, and staff to those experiencing disadvantage.

It is also incredibly empowering to see the Society lobby at a legislative level on behalf of the people we assist. I am proud that the Vinnies community has asserted itself as an influential voice for housing affordability (page 4).

During this special festive season, no individual should feel isolated, lost, or forgotten. Let the lives spotlighted in this issue of Vision inspire you to similarly reach out to someone in need, or support and become more involved in a Vinnies program.

I wish you all a wonderful Christmas and happy New Year with your friends and family.

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



## Affordable Housing Petition Debated In NSW Parliament

**After incredible action taken by the St Vincent de Paul Society's supporters, our petition for 15% mandatory affordable housing targets on all new housing developments was introduced for discussion in the NSW Parliament in August.**

The tabling of the petition was part of the Society's Right to Home Campaign and drew a record-breaking crowd of observers in the Visitor's Gallery. The petition, which gained over 16,300 signatures, asked the NSW Government to introduce legislation requiring that a fixed percentage (at least 15%) of all new residential developments be designated for affordable housing.

The petition was received and officially introduced by Damien Tudehope, Liberal Member for Epping. Mr Tudehope supported the principle of affordable housing, however he was cautious about disrupting the housing market and would not commit to a specific percentage.

Once officially introduced before the Legislative Assembly, the petition received the full support of Luke Foley, Leader of the Opposition, Michael Daley, Member for Maroubra and Deputy Leader of the Opposition, and Jenny Leong, Member for Newtown.

Minister for Planning, Anthony Roberts, did not commit to delivering specific housing targets.

St Vincent de Paul Society's CEO Jack de Groot said, "While the government did not back our suggestions, the Society did receive endorsements from independents and minor parties, and the NSW Labour Party again confirmed their inclusionary zoning policy in Parliament.

"The NSW Labour Party committed to 25% of new properties constructed on government-owned land and 15% on private land would be set aside for affordable housing if they are elected.

"The housing crisis, faced by many in NSW, incurs significant financial and social costs. The Society believes that these issues need to be addressed through policy changes and inclusionary zoning.

"Without it, we will see more and more people struggle to find secure housing and ultimately face homelessness. We must focus on long-term, sustainable housing solutions to increase our affordable housing stock.

"What Mr. Foley announced was probably the most significant and ambitious plan that any state in Australia has proposed. If implemented, the NSW Labor Party would be offering a real solution to housing security in Australia's most populous state," explained Jack de Groot.

## FIRST NATIONAL CONGRESS IN 60 YEARS



**In October Vincentians from across Australia gathered in Adelaide for Congress. It provided a unique opportunity for Society members to reaffirm our core purpose and to collectively imagine a renewed and reinvigorated future for the Society.**

It was great to see the many young people attending and coordinating the Congress. The two key features were the focus on those we serve and on giving a long-term hand up to them, by understanding their situation, gathering evidence and advocating for them. Three events in particular highlighted this for me.

Firstly, the workshop on Our Companions featured a refugee and two people who had experienced of domestic violence. They emphasised how they owed their life to the time spent with Vinnies' members and staff, and that Vinnies gives, and doesn't take. They urged us to invite them to continue their journey with us by involving them more.

Secondly Dr Larissa Behrendt, Professor of Indigenous Research at UTS, gave an empowered presentation, emphasising the importance of evidence, not ideology, in making decisions about what help would be most effective. Policy should be driven by evidence about what works, rather than by people's ideas about what might work. Her closing message was that the Society should tell the stories about what is working on the ground.

Finally, the Congress working groups devised practical solutions to challenges in the Society, and advocacy and social justice featured in most of those groups. It was pleasing to note that they incorporated Dr Behrendt's notion of using evidence-based frameworks, rather than relying on an idea about what might work.

**Peter McNamara**  
**Vice President for Social Justice**





**During Anti-Poverty Week in October, the Society focused on individuals seeking asylum both offshore of and onshore in NSW. Asylum seekers are refugees who have not yet been granted legal status for sanctuary.** While such individuals wait in limbo, they have little to no access to employment, health care, affordable housing or other necessities. As a result, this demographic has become one of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in the state.

On 19 October, Vinnies held the annual Rosalie Rendu Forum was held at the Wesley Centre in Sydney. The Forum was privileged to have Emeritus Professor Gillian Triggs as the keynote speaker on People Seeking Asylum in Our Community – A Human Rights Perspective.

Professor Triggs noted the draconian measures instituted by the Government that have forced asylum seekers into poverty and high rates of homelessness. "Clearly the Government has abrogated on its responsibilities. It's been left to us to step into the breach to look after people with nowhere else to go.

"It is tragic" she concluded, "that it has been primarily left to charities such as Vinnies to meet the needs of the people in our communities, as government assistance is often inconsistent or incomplete."

After her keynote, Professor Triggs was joined on stage by a panel of experts who work closely with refugees and



people seeking asylum, including Carmel Hanson, a SVDP Social Justice Committee member; Carolina Gottardo, Country Director Jesuit Refugee Services; Mary Crock, Professor of Public Law at Sydney Law School, Fellow of the Australian Academy of Law, solicitor and Accredited Specialist in Immigration Law; and Jennifer, a young refugee from the Red Cross Young Leadership program. In a discussion moderated by Susan Goldie, Executive Officer of the Parramatta Central Council, the specialists debated the social, financial, and physical impacts of the asylum process in NSW.

Vinnies also launched a formal campaign inviting members and supporters to get involved and take action for people seeking asylum.

## Anti-Poverty Week

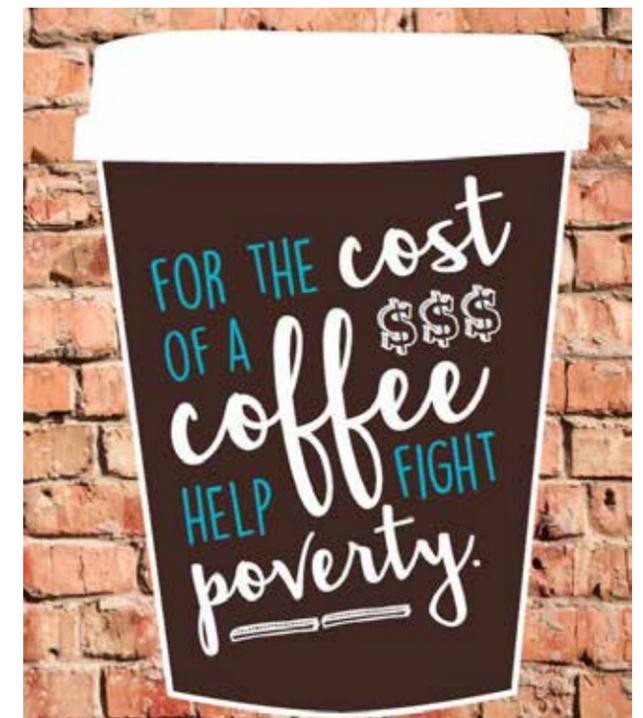
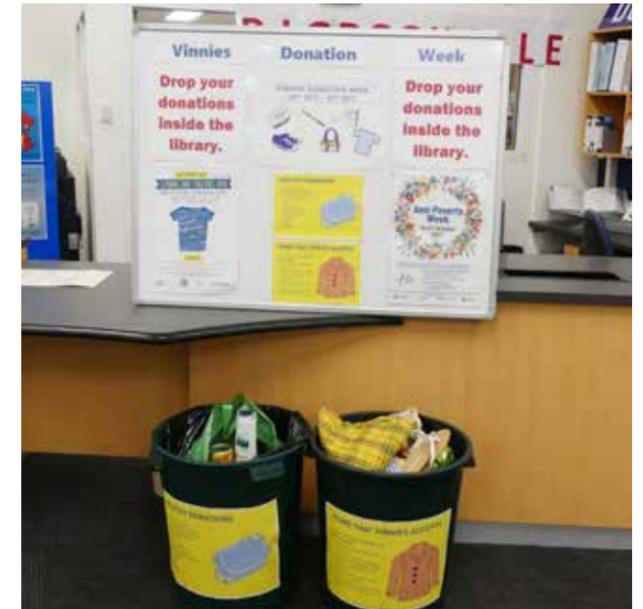
**CEO Jack de Groot was this year's co-chair for the NSW Anti-Poverty Week.** This meant managing and encouraging other organisations as well as Vinnies to put on events.

It was a very successful week with 169 events across the State listed on the website – the highest ever recorded!

Some of the main Vinnies events included:

- Rosalie Rendu Forum on refugees and people seeking asylum in our communities
- Cost of a Coffee campaign
- Asylum Seeker Program fundraising in Central Coast Shops. Customers were encouraged to spend \$30 or more and a donation would be made to the Vinnies Asylum Seeker Program
- Workshop in the Ozanam Learning Centre to help staff better understand some of the complexities when assisting people seeking asylum
- Discussion and pizza in the State Support Office on the Vinnies Asylum Seeker Program and the people we assist
- Report release in Lismore Central Council on child poverty
- Dundas Library in Parramatta sponsored a Vinnies Donation Drive, collecting new toiletries, gently worn clothing, and blankets for individuals experiencing disadvantage in the local community.

All in all, it was a busy and informative week, with a variety of events held across the State. The community's tremendous generosity and enthusiasm made the week a stunning success. All items, funds and education and information received will go towards helping reducing disadvantage for people in NSW.



**If you have stories you would like to see in Vision please contact the Communications Team at State Support Office at [felicity.moody@vinnies.org.au](mailto:felicity.moody@vinnies.org.au)**



## NEWCASTLE WELCOMES ITS NEW PRESIDENT

John McKendry's association with the Society goes back a long time, with him becoming more and more active after retiring from his working career. He started as a 19-year-old student under the guidance of his college vice-Rector, visiting disability centres and minimum security prisons, where his task was simply to encourage and support the young people in these institutions. In the 1980s he volunteered for night duties in Canberra, delivering groceries and helping people with a range of problems.

John's involvement increased when he became a member of the Cessnock Conference in 2010, going on to become Regional President.

Having extensive background in management both in corporate and government roles, he has been able to bring his technical, operational, and commercial knowledge to assist his work with the Society.

Born in 1944 in Emerald QLD, John and his wife of 50 years, Joan, now enjoy life in Newcastle, just walking distance from the Central Council offices.

The Newcastle/Maitland Central Council welcome John to his new role as President.



**Lismore Central Council have started an equine therapy program, helping young people address behavioural issues resulting from the impacts of trauma and other challenges.**

The 'Horses Helping Humans' program takes place on a local farm where the centrepiece is a horse ring, holding various unsaddled horses small and large.

"The aim isn't to teach kids to ride, but to help them develop a trust with an animal they have never encountered before," explains Deb O'Malley, Program Director.

"When that happens, often quickly, they develop a relationship that opens up their body language and helps them work out how to stay calm before acting or speaking, possibly inappropriately."

Horses Helping Humans is part of the Vinnies Breaking the Barriers program, aimed at supporting children in various Lismore Central Council locations.

"Equine therapy promotes emotional resilience in children and young people by helping them learn better self-control, improve their communication skills and participate more harmoniously in school and social settings, including family life," said Sarah Mason, Southern Coordinator for Breaking the Barriers.

"I've seen all types of personalities come here, including kids with challenging backgrounds and combative attitudes, but I'm yet to see anyone whose equilibrium hasn't been helped," Sarah Mason added.

## Western Sydney Homeless Connect



Community services from across Western Sydney came together in August to participate in the the Western Sydney Homeless Connect in Centenary Square, Parramatta. This one-day event provided people experiencing homelessness and disadvantage, the opportunity to connect with support and relief services, with the intention of ending the cycle of homelessness.

The day was an outstanding success, with an estimated 1,000 guests welcomed and connected with support services including housing, legal, finance, employment, women's, youth, and animal assistance. Over 60 volunteers came together to produce the event in partnership with more than 50 support organisations from across Western Sydney. Throughout the day, our fantastic Vinnies staff and volunteers handed out more than 300 care packages, 250 jackets and coats, and 130 clothing vouchers to assist those who were experiencing homelessness or at risk.

Parramatta Central Council was proud to be on the steering committee of this event, ensuring a maximum impact within the community.

## NILS VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

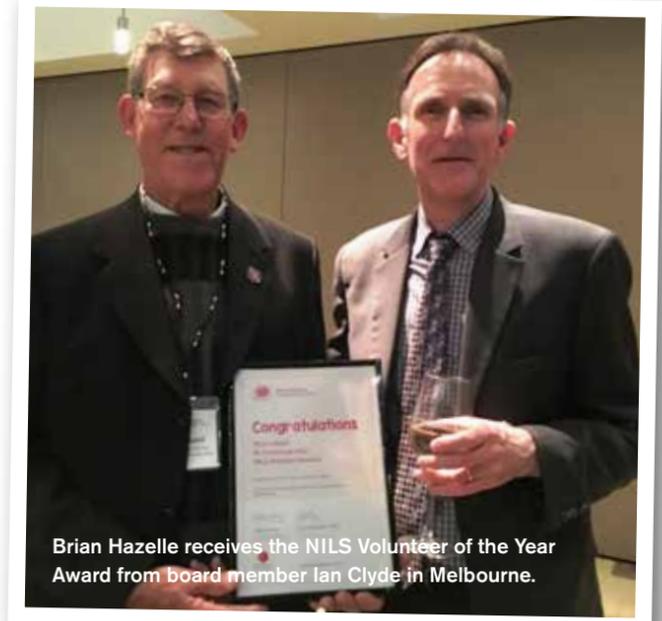
**Brian Hazell, a long-time Corrimal Conference member, received the NILS Volunteer of the Year award from Good Shepherd Microfinance in Melbourne.**

The ceremony took place during the annual two-day national Microfinance Conference.

Neville Eager started working on the No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS) when it commenced at the Society. Neville said, "When Brian joined the Conference, we learnt more about his accounting background, so he quickly became part of organising the Northern Illawarra NILS program.

"Brian played a major role in securing our group accreditation with the Good Shepherd system; we were one of the first Society NILS programs accredited in NSW. He is a great asset to the Society and Corrimal is very proud, although not surprised, of the award he has received."

Loan numbers in Wollongong doubled this year, highlighting the success of the program locally, and the clients' response to Brian's dedication to NILS. Brian has a wealth of experience and empathy for the people he assists, which becomes clear as soon as you speak to him. We would all like to say thank you and congratulations Brian!



Brian Hazelle receives the NILS Volunteer of the Year Award from board member Ian Clyde in Melbourne.

NILS is a Special Work of the Society and is currently in 10 locations around NSW. For more information please contact [simon.wheble@vinnies.org.au](mailto:simon.wheble@vinnies.org.au) or [marte.tagle@vinnies.org.au](mailto:marte.tagle@vinnies.org.au).



## Music in the Mall

This August, Centenary Square Parramatta was host to Vinnies Music in the Mall event, with Mount St Benedict College, OLMC and Oakhill College coming together in support of Vinnies.

More than 100 students joined together over the three-day event as their band and choir groups entertained a large crowd.

With a legacy spanning over nine years, the event was initiated by a group of volunteers who wished to combine the talent of local schools in support of our services.

This year, Mount St Benedict College added a Digital Doorknock campaign to their outreach, which helped achieve further fundraising through an online donation page. Music in the Mall was once again a great success, thanks to the talented schools that provided entertainment and thanks to the generous audience. All donations will go to support those in need within the local community. The event will be held next year in Parramatta.



## CHRISTMAS IN JULY

The Rozelle Region held Christmas In July with festive spirits in wonderful weather. Children enjoyed outdoor holiday face painting, crafts, balloon animals and games.

Those supported by the event were delighted and grateful for all proceeds raised. Thanks to the many wonderful Presidents and Members in the Rozelle Region for their generous support and donations, which allowed the day to be produced at no cost to the Society. These community members are true Vincentians in every aspect of the meaning.



## Social Justice Workshop at St. Patrick's Parish Glen Innes

At this year's Social Justice Sunday, the Australian Catholic Bishop's Conference called upon the community to understand the current economy and to take action against economic injustices.

The day's headline, 'Everyone's Business: Developing a Sustainable and Inclusive Economy' highlighted how free-market economics can fall short in meeting the needs of the communities it is meant to serve.

Vice President Kerry Muir hosted a workshop at Glen Innes in September allowing parishioners to detail this issue and better understand Catholic social teaching. Thought-provoking and enthusiastic discussion around the core of community relief engaged all attendees.

This workshop is an excellent model for how Vincentians can work towards our mission of developing a more just and compassionate society.

Thanks to Father Richard Gleeson and Father Kinglsey Etoh for their hospitality and continued support.



## First Community Hub opens in Blacktown

The Blacktown Community Hub opened its doors in March within a new, purpose-designed space at the Blacktown Vinnies Shop. The Hub celebrated its official opening in early August.

The Blacktown Hub is the first of several hubs planned for Western Sydney. It is a person-centred support and referral service operated by Vinnies Parramatta Central Council.

"In addition to the home visitations our members provide, people come here seeking emergency relief to pay for food and bills, as well as for assessments, advocacy, and referral support," said Anne Stanfield, Parramatta President, at the opening.

"Volunteers and staff have undergone training so they are well equipped to meet the complex individual needs of the people who seek our assistance.

"Through an initial in-depth assessment and ongoing evaluation process, we enable the people we support to achieve wellbeing in all aspects of their lives.

"With a 'no wrong door approach', people coming to us now have more options for accessing support from the Society, as well as finding out about other local services."

The Hub has a self-help area where visitors can use a phone



and computer to connect with family, friends and services. Mayor of Blacktown City, Councillor Stephen Bali, said his Council recognises and hugely supports the important work the Society does in the community.

"We thank all Vinnies workers and volunteers for their tireless efforts to help families and individuals who are struggling with various issues," he said. "Without their generosity and dedication, many people would not get the help they need."

### SINCE THE HUB OPENED FOUR MONTHS AGO

 550 clients have been assisted

Over 40% were referred from another service 

 40 people are over 65

480 required assistance with food 

 190 were referred to other services

## 90 AND STILL GOING STRONG

Irene Smith has been volunteering at Vinnies for 30 years and recently celebrated her 90 birthday!

Irene volunteers at our Erina Heights Shop where she loves greeting the public and has an incredible zest for life and a wicked sense of humour.

Even suffering with two health issues doesn't slow her down and she continues to turn up for a full day's work at the Shop. Happy birthday Irene and thanks for all your amazing work!



## Conference Financial Wellbeing – pilot project nearing completion

**After six months of trialling the Conference Financial Wellbeing (CFW) service delivery model, the Society will soon be able to measure the effectiveness of its refreshed approach to supporting people.** The Society aspires to go beyond immediate assistance to identify the root causes of poverty and contribute to their elimination.

The pilot project is being implemented using the WE CARE framework. This framework sets the standard by which the Society welcomes every person seeking assistance, fully engages with them to better understand their needs, collects relevant information, assesses the most appropriate level of service and responds in the most appropriate way. Finally, it evaluates the success by following up with the person assisted to determine how they are progressing.

The WE CARE framework fosters collaboration among members, volunteers, and staff to provide a service which enables people to move from financial distress to financial wellbeing. The pilot sites in Bathurst, Lismore and Parramatta have already seen positive results.

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN PARRAMATTA

**The Parramatta office received a letter from a gentleman who was assisted at the Blacktown Hub.** The man wrote expressing his relief and gratitude to the volunteers after he came in seeking assistance with energy bills. He was going through huge financial and emotional problems which involved his home being sold out from under him. As well as being grateful for EAPA assistance, the client went on to say how well he

was treated and that he felt the volunteers were kind and compassionate. He wrote, "you really helped me to get through the day and so felt you should know that what you're doing is important".

The individual's experience and kind words are validation of the effectiveness of the enhanced service delivery model being used as part of the WE CARE framework.

## COFFS HARBOUR REACHING THOSE WHO NEED IT MOST

**A refugee from Sierra Leone with three adult children was recently referred to our St Augustine's Conference.** The parent receives Newstart but the rest of the family is not eligible for any benefits for two years. In the meantime, while the case is currently under review by the Department of Immigration, the family struggles to survive.

The Conference was able to assist the family with EAPA and food vouchers. They also assisted the family with the costs of urgent medical expenses.

Due to the effective engagement and understanding of the family's situation, Conference members were able to offer a hand-up by referring the individual for budget counselling to help this family manage a very difficult financial situation.

## Bathurst Care and Support team working with Dubbo colleagues

**The Society's Bathurst Care & Support team hosted Dubbo colleagues for a conference to discuss best practices and new approaches for successful community support.**

Bathurst's Care & Support team, in partnership with the local St Therese Conference, now offers assistance and counselling via scheduled appointments rather than a drop-in service at a cottage adjacent to the Keppel Street Vinnies Shop. This new appointment system will enable the team's trained volunteers to spend more time with each client to garner a comprehensive understanding of the client's circumstances and develop longer-term solutions. They also work closely with a variety of organisations within the community in order to build a more supportive referral network.

Dubbo's St Brigid's Conference president Ian Wray commended Bathurst's innovative methods of service, and believes this meeting will advance the effectiveness of his own Central Council's programs.

Gerry Kearney, spokesperson for the Vinnies St Therese Conference, said that collectively, the conference posed the question, "If we were in their shoes, what would be the best way to walk beside them?"

## Leadership Program for Conference Presidents now available

**Leading Conference Life is a brand new six hour session for Conference Presidents.** Kate Scholl is taking bookings to facilitate this in Central or Regional Councils.

Kate Scholl, Development and Events Officer explains, "This is the next step in our Unlocking Leadership Potential program. The sessions are similar in style to the 'Conversation' sessions that Janice Jones and I led in 2016 with Regional Council Presidents but the content is completely different. Each participant receives a Resource Kit that has been designed with the particular needs of Conference Presidents in mind."

"We can offer a series of workshops in your Central Council or just one. The target group for this workshop is Conference Presidents, but other members are also welcome to attend. The hope is that Regional Council Presidents will also participate, as a major part of their role is supporting Conference Presidents," says Kate.

Email [kate.scholl@vinnies.org.au](mailto:kate.scholl@vinnies.org.au) to explore options.





**BEVERLEY KERR**  
Illawarra Volunteer  
of the Year

**Bev Kerr has built a long-standing and unparalleled legacy of philanthropic service with the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW.** She is a leader with state-wide responsibilities by day and a regular, 'grassroots', member by night.

Prior to joining Vinnies in 2001, Bev had a very successful career with the Department of Community Services. Her work benefited local children, individuals, and families, making a vital impact within the community.

Bev presently holds the position of Vice President, State Council. This critical role requires servant leadership to the organisation's Board of Trustees, 20,000 volunteers and more than 2,000 employees across New South Wales. Her unique attributes as a leader have continuously enabled her to navigate challenges and capitalise on opportunities.

Bev's strong sense of social justice and compassion for the vulnerable and voiceless are key drivers to her faith in action. There is no distance too far, no lengths too great for her to help. Bev is purely a shining example of a selfless heart delivering on Vinnies' mission.

## An incredible and rewarding journey reaches its end

**A group of volunteers, employees and community partners reflected on an incredible journey when they gathered at the William Farah Hotel at the end of October when the Vinnies Humanitarian Settlement Service (HSS) program in the Riverina ceased.**

In partnership with the Multicultural Council Wagga Wagga, the Society has been delivering this service for the past 12 years. The Federal Government-funded HSS program has been replaced by a Humanitarian Settlement Service Program (HSP) that will be overseen by another agency.

Jenni Duff, Wagga Wagga Central Council President, explained: "As the HSS program comes to an end we want to acknowledge our partnership with the Multicultural Council Wagga Wagga. Without them the program would not have been so successful.

"I would also like to give a big personal thank you to its true heroes – the 400 plus Vinnies volunteers who have tirelessly given up their free time to make sure those people coming to settle in the Riverina were given the warmest welcome, support and friendship."

Deirdre Moulden, the Society's HSS Manager, said: "It has been wonderful to work with so many great and dedicated people; I will treasure the lifelong friendships I have made."

Between October 2005 and September 2017 the HSS program assisted 484 families – 1694 individuals – in the Riverina. Businesses in Griffith, Leeton, Albury/Wodonga and Wagga Wagga have benefitted from the program with \$2.5 million injected into the local economy through the purchase of basic household goods.

Ms Moulden was especially proud that one of the first people to arrive in Albury from Bhutan in October 2008 was nominated as Wodonga Citizen of the Year 2017.

"So many of our families have come to make the Riverina their home. They have purchased homes, gone to university and are working in meaningful employment," says Ms Moulden.

## Poem from a member in 1970s still captures the heart

**Gay Mason, President of Wollongong Central Council and a strong advocate for social justice, shared the poem which her mother wrote when she was in her 50s and was published in the Picton Post in the 1970s.**

"My mum was a very gentle soul who always turned the other cheek and had the most forgiving heart. I definitely gained my love to help those in need from her. Mum wasn't a Catholic and I wasn't brought up Catholic either, but I was taken to so many different places of worship as a child. Mum believed everyone should have an understanding of all religions.

"As a child I remember a swaggie calling in and asking her to fill his thermos with hot water. Mum filled the thermos and also packed him the most wonderful lunch to take with him and then handed him a pound note. Her generosity was amazing. The year was 1956.

"As money goes my mum was not wealthy; she brought me up to realise money is only good for what it can buy and what difference it can make to those who don't have any and she made a big difference to many."



**Boat People's Lament,  
by Wynne G Saward, Thirlmere, as  
printed in the Picton Post, 1970s**

*We don't know where we are going.  
We just know where we've been.  
We want to leave the terror  
And the heartache we have seen.*

*We know that we're not wanted  
We don't know how we'll cope.  
The only thing we live with  
Is a heart that's filled with hope.*

*We see our brothers sighing.  
We hear our sisters cry.  
We watch our children dying  
In their eyes they ask us "why?"*

*We know in Another Time  
Another People tried  
For Sanctuary and Sympathy  
And many of them died.  
For evil men put out their Flame  
And Honest men bowed heads in shame.*

*And when we're gone  
They'll wisely say  
"How could it happen  
In OUR day?"*

## CORPORATE ASSISTANCE CONTINUES TO GROW

The past few months have seen a high uptake of corporate group volunteering activities and we have engaged several of our valued corporate partners in a range of exciting opportunities with our services in Sydney. In September, the Australian Stockbrokers Foundation Executive Leadership Team cooked up a delicious BBQ lunch for the community accessing services from the Matthew Talbot Hostel and Ozanam Learning Centre. In September and October, Johnson and Johnson staff hosted families from the Caroline Chisholm Centre to a day out at Featherdale Wildlife Park with another team donating their time to build Ikea furniture for one of our domestic violence refuges in eastern Sydney. Genworth staff offered up their time with the HR Team assisting in hosting a BBQ at Dulwich Hill for our Inner West families. In October as part of the KEEP School Holiday program, Genworth staff took kids from Vincentian House out for a fun day to Luna Park. These volunteer activities are thoroughly appreciated by the people we assist and would not be possible without the generous time and support of these corporate partners. Thank you!



### Vinnies Vans supported by Abergeldie

**Abergeldie Complex Infrastructure, the major sponsor of Parramatta's Vinnies Van, has extended its corporate sponsorship into 2020 with a generous pledge of \$120k over the next three years.**

This endowment will help fund the Van's daily services. Each month, Abergeldie also proudly provides a team of staff volunteers to help prepare meals and support those accessing Vinnies Vans services. Vinnies Vans offer free food, drink, and a friendly social connection to anyone experiencing homelessness, disadvantage, or simply seeking company. Abergeldie's continued support of Vinnies has made a direct and significant impact on the people and community of Western Sydney. Thank you for all of your support, Abergeldie!

## LONG-TERM PARTNER BOOSTS SUPPORT

**Our longest term corporate partner Johnson & Johnson Family of Companies (formerly supporting Vinnies under the Janssen brand for the last 25 years) continued their funding support of the SPARK program and Freeman House in 2017.** Johnson & Johnson recently confirmed a three year partnership to fund phases 2, 3 and 4 of the expansion of the KEEP Program across existing Vinnies services in NSW. The expansion will allow the KEEP program to reach more families and children experiencing homelessness and disadvantage encouraging a positive engagement with education

as well as providing a whole of family focus of support including creating community connections. We're extremely appreciative to have J&J commit to the three year funding deal for the KEEP expansion and look forward to working with J&J and their staff over the coming years to build on J&J staff engagement with our services in NSW.



## Christmas baubles with IGA

This Christmas IGA will again be throwing its support behind the Vinnies Christmas Appeal 2017. Participating stores will be selling \$2 Vinnies baubles from November 8 to December 26 as well as a portion of funds being donated from the IGA Community Chest product range from 6 December to 26 December. Over the last four years IGA has raised over \$1.2 million to support Vinnies work nationally, an incredible contribution that helps Vinnies to support people experiencing poverty and homelessness on a national scale. Thank you to IGA for choosing to support the Vinnies Christmas Appeal again in 2017 which will raise vital funds to support our work in local, regional and remote communities.



## GENWORTH PUT A SMILE ON KIDS FACES

**Our wonderful friends at Genworth have also supported Vinnies to expand KEEP across New South Wales in the last 12 months.** Genworth has been funding KEEP since 2013 and staff regularly undertakes volunteering activities with the KEEP school holiday program. Recently the Senior Executive Team from Genworth hosted a Carnivale Family BBQ at Vincentian House, complete with a magician and face painter. We look forward to building on our partnership with Genworth in 2018.

**THIS CHRISTMAS. YOUR DONATION CAN MAKE WISHES COME TRUE.**

Ollie's wish is to stop moving house so his mum can be happy again.

Your donation can help provide a stable home, put food on the table and presents under the tree.

**Lagardère makes Christmas wishes come true**

Lagardère Travel Retail continues their tremendous support of the Vinnies Appeals by collecting funds through their Newslink and Relay bookstores in domestic and international airports around Australia.

Lagardère generously raised over \$10,000 for the Winter Appeal and will be raising funds for the Vinnies Christmas Appeal. Thank you for helping Vinnies to make Christmas wishes come true!

## KEEP on going thanks to Sydney Airports

**Thanks to our major partner Sydney Airport, who donated vital funds to employ a KEEP Program Manager for an 18 month period.** Funding has enabled the development of a framework for KEEP. The framework supports both children and young people and their parents access support from the Society in Sydney across several funding streams and programs. As a result, the Sydney Airport funding has supported KEEP expanding across four services – Vincentian House, Marion Centre, Elsie's Lodge and Killara House. Learnings from this project have also supported the development of KEEP in the Society's Hastings Accommodation Service in Port Macquarie.





# COMMUNITY FUNDRAISING



## Keeping Fit and Helping Out

Team Vinnies conquered the City2Surf challenge with 60 participants raising over \$25,000. Ambassador Joe Hildebrand expertly led the Vinnies team, including CEO Jack de Groot and 12 charity superstars, over the 14km course from Hyde Park to Bondi Beach. Each participant committed to raising \$1,000 for Vinnies.

Continuing with the fitness trend, Team Vinnies also took part in the Blackmores Sydney Running Festival. Participants choose from four varying course distances, ranging from a 3km Bridge Run to the 42km full marathon. Through this event, over \$6,800 was raised for our frontline services.

## School Sleepouts

Over the winter season, high school and primary school students braved cold nights to take part in Vinnies School Sleepouts. Participants got a small glimpse of the challenges regularly faced by people experiencing homelessness during this event. Schools involved include St Christopher's Primary Panania, Marist Sisters College Woolwich, St Agnes Catholic School in Rooty Hill and St Mary's Cathedral College. St Mary's notably raised an astounding \$10,270 for the Matthew Talbot Hostel.

## UTS Murder Mysteries

A group of four UTS Events students hosted a 1920s Murder Mystery cocktail party in October. The night was a dazzling success, with guests attending in on theme full costume. The team directed all proceeds to supporting women facing homelessness and housing issues.



## Corporate Fighter

Vinnies Project Manager, Horatio O'Shea, will be stepping into the boxing ring in December after 12 weeks of training with Corporate Fighter. All money raised from the event will go towards the Asylum Seeker Program, a program close to Horatio's heart. Donations can be made [vinniesnsw.gofundraise.com.au/page/horatio](http://vinniesnsw.gofundraise.com.au/page/horatio).



## CONTACT US

Want to get involved? Contact our Community Fundraising Coordinator at (02) 9568 0211 or [events@vinnies.org.au](mailto:events@vinnies.org.au) or look online at [www.vinnies.org.au/getinvolvednsw](http://www.vinnies.org.au/getinvolvednsw)

## Farming helping people connect with their community

Established in 1999, the Jim da Silva Farm is a joint venture between Vinnies and the NSW Department of Housing to provide medium-to-long term accommodation for men with disabilities who are experiencing or are at risk for homelessness.

Set on 4.5 acres, the farm is a secure place for residents to receive the support required to rebuild their lives and re-enter the community.

Over the past year, the farm has added a number of resources to its growing facility. A commercially-sized garden has been re-cultivated to grow fresh fruit and vegetables for residents and community members. A recent partnership with TAFE Illawarra provided for the installation of an Aquaponic crop system. A mudbrick chicken coup was carefully re-built by residents to house



a full stock of hand-reared birds. The farm now cooks with and sells the resulting freshly laid eggs.

The greatest achievement over the past year has been the successful transition of 10 residents into private rental properties. Housing NSW units, and aged care facilities. The farm staff maintain close contact with former tenants through weekly outreach and continue to support their transition back into the wider community.

## SMART ART

Students of three select Gosford LGA primary schools were among 1,000 attendees from the Hunter and Central Coasts to 'get their art on' at the inaugural Ability Links 'Smart Art Includes You' Challenge.

The students were asked to create art expressing 'what inclusion means to me', with the works then displayed at public exhibitions across the region. The aim of the Challenge was to encourage dialogue and grow awareness within the community about the value of inclusion, with referral pathways directing to Ability Links NSW.

Outstanding creative works by individuals and groups included a hip-hop song composed by teenagers from the Lake Macquarie Adolescent Support class.

The concept for 'Smart Art Includes You' Challenge was developed with the generous input of Muswellbrook-based artist Andrew Davis.



**R U OK Day on 14 September was an opportunity to start a conversation with friends, family, and colleagues to check in on their mental health.**

St Vincent de Paul Society's Ability Links marked the R U OK Day with a variety of events around Sydney. Barbecues were held in East Sydney and Menai, while cupcakes were given out at Newtown Neighbourhood Centre for committing to completing conversation challenges on the challenge wall. Over 70 challenges were accepted by members of the public to promote having conversations with friends and family about mental health. The Newtown event also had an Art Wall, and a conversation corner. In Surry Hills, an 'arvo show' talk show discussed living with a mental illness.



## GARDEN DIRECTORY CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

**In August, Ability Links hosted the Campbelltown Community Garden Fair to launch the official Campbelltown Community Garden Directory.**

The Directory aims to make community gardens more commonly accessible by providing information on locations, costs, accessibility, and helpful contacts. In addition to fostering a community connection, the gardens also offer direct health benefits – the physical activity of planting and tending, resulting in healthy, fresh, and inexpensive produce.

The Community Garden Fair was a huge success with over 450 guests in attendance. Live music, face painting, gardening demonstrations and workshops, Aussie wildlife appearances, and a free sausage sizzle bloomed into a spirited day for the entire community.

Thanks to Bunnings for sponsoring the event and committed to participating again.

## Inclusion Champion Project making small businesses more inclusive

**This past spring, Ability Links successfully launched the Inclusion Champion project.** This project offers small business owners and their staff the opportunity to meet individuals with a disability, for an honest, round-table conversation about customer experience. The goal of the project is to improve mainstream awareness and understanding of those living with disability in the community. Its unique approach has garnered coverage across a number of media outlets, including FBI Radio and the South Sydney Herald.

“After chatting with an Inclusion Champion, I have made it my challenge to make my café as welcoming and accessible as possible. Not only for people with disability, but for everyone in the community,” said Kumiko, owner of Refn Café in Redfern.

“I have learned a lot. I used to think that people with disability wanted to be treated as special, but now I realise that they want to be treated as people,” said Amy, owner Quirk’s in Redfern.

Andrew Grant is one of the Champions

involved with the project and an avid foodie. He says, “Whenever I leave the house, I see the experience of having a disability as if I’m taking off in an aeroplane. I’m always looking for a runway to land on – somewhere accessible, with an accessible toilet, and a welcoming attitude. Making these new café connections through the Inclusion Champion Project is like I’m building new runways – new safe places to land.”

The project has been piloted in 10 central Sydney cafes and will be rolled out across all St Vincent de Paul Society’s Ability Links teams by 2018, with the hope of extending its services across the state in the new year.



## GOING THE DISTANCE

**When Blake Carr joined the Hunter Academy of Sport two years ago, his soaring talent in Track & Field was limited only by a lack of resources, not by his Autism Spectrum Disorder.** With the support of St Vincent de Paul Society NSW’s Ability Links, in partnership with the Academy of Sport’s Athletes with Disabilities Program, 22-year-old Blake is now training towards his dream of representing Australia in the 2020 Tokyo Summer Olympics.

Ability Links and the Academy of Sport have provided Blake with the tools and guidance necessary to compete at both state and national levels as an athlete with disability. Among the benefits of his involvement with the program include nutritional education, goal-setting and personal improvement workshops, and coaching to enable him to perform to the top of his talent.

“Vinnies’ Ability Links and the Academy also helped with the financial barriers in finding sponsors and travel assistance to events. There is no difference here in whether you have a disability or not”.

Now, Blake’s ambitions have turned to representing his country on the international stage.

“Tokyo 2022 is my dream. Long jump seems to be my best option. I am also aiming to reach the 2019 World Champs and the Melanesian Championships in Vanuatu.”

The Academy’s Athletes with Disabilities Program and the Society’s Ability Links believe many people in the community have the skill to compete and achieve, but are unaware such opportunities for support exist.

“The program is open to a wide cross-section of the community, including people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), as well as hearing and vision impairments, intellectual and physical disabilities,” says Ability Links community engagement coordinator, Gabriel Wingate-Pearse.

“This is a not-to-be missed opportunity – we want to put people in the best position to realise their potential and we are encouraging people with disabilities to come and give it a go.”

The Academy’s Athletes with Disabilities program is designed to develop and educate promising athletes across a range of different sports. It offers strength and condition testing motivation and goal setting, nutrition advice, sports psychology, and special and para Olympics information, competitions and guideline sessions.



## Hepatitis C has a cure within the community

### The Matthew Talbot Hostel's Hepatitis C treatment program launched this year in response to a clear and urgent need within the inner-city community.

Hepatitis C is a viral infection of the liver that causes serious health problems and, at advanced stages, can be fatal.

The staff of Matthew Talbot Hostel's Preventative Health Program Clinic detected high rates of Hepatitis C present in those they served. The disease was particularly apparent among men experiencing homelessness, drug and alcohol misuse, mental health issues, and cognitive impairment.

This disturbing trend spurred the Clinic to develop a highly specialized and locally unique treatment program. The program is designed not only to medically treat, but to generally care for and support patients. A new, superior medication to combat Hepatitis C was added to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme in time for the program's initiation. As a leader of quality medical practice in the Inner City area, the Clinic also offers the Hepatitis B vaccination and many other specialised health services.

With proper and immediate treatment, the rate of full recovery is high, with estimates of a 90% success rate if a three-month course of treatment is consistently completed.

Woolloomooloo locals Jim and Fred represent the

disadvantaged population that carry the heaviest burden of disease yet face the greatest obstacles to treatment. Both men are in their early 60s and suffer from schizophrenia, chronic lung diseases and Hepatitis C. Their illnesses are both a cause and effect of their chronic homelessness. With the continued closure of state run psychiatric institutions, Jim and Fred rely heavily on the Matthew Talbot Hostel for healthcare, lodging, food and social support. In the past, the instability of their lifestyles, limited personal support network and health care has prevented these men from receiving consistent medical treatment.

At the Matthew Talbot Hostel Clinic, all of their care is mapped and managed by the dedicated staff of the Preventive Health Program. A support worker coordinates and accompanies each patient to regular doctors' appointments, testings, and hospital visits, and assists with their daily medication service. Only because of this steady support, will people be cured of the Hepatitis C virus.

There is great potential for growth of this model, which can be replicated throughout the Society's services. It will soon be introduced into an aged care facility, where many of the men suffer from Hepatitis C, and at various drug and alcohol services around the state.

## Brighter Bathrooms building project

Having access to a bathroom is something that most of us take for granted. Easy access to a hot shower in a well-equipped bathroom restores dignity and improves health. It should not be a luxury but an essential.

The facilities at Matthew Talbot Hostel were in urgent need of an upgrade as they had grown inadequate and were hard to maintain.

Poor hygiene underpins many of the health issues experienced by the men accessing the services of the hostel, as residents or just dropping in.

Easy access to a hot shower is the foundation to build respect, and sense of self worth and dignity. Without access to a shower these men face the daily humiliation of being unwelcome and feeling uncomfortable in the community.

Finding a job becomes impossible and they are essentially locked out of society. Invisible.

Cherie McKenna, Manager Bequests and Major Gifts, approached her philanthropic supporters to find a solution.

"We had a wonderful response. The extraordinary generosity of a number of donors is going to improve the lives of so many men," says Cherie.

"Our major funder is The Fussell Foundation. Through their support the work can be completed before Christmas. They have also generously funded a special needs bathroom.

"We would like to thank the Maple-Brown Family Foundation who ignited this fundraising effort with the first large gift. They didn't hesitate to lend their support to assist the men at the Talbot. Our gratitude also goes to our loyal trusts and families who have generously supported this much-needed renovation.

"Good personal hygiene – a hot shower – can be the first step in opening up opportunities for our staff to engage with these men and begin to address many of their issues and finding a solution to their homelessness.

"With the refurbished bathrooms we can restore their dignity and open new doors."

### FAST FACTS

**620 MEALS**  
ARE PREPARED EVERY DAY

**ON AVERAGE 2 MEN**  
ARE PLACED IN HOUSING PER WEEK

**80 MEN**   
ARE TREATED BY THE MEDICAL CLINIC EACH DAY

**200+** PEOPLE VOLUNTEER AT THE HOSTEL EACH WEEK

IN SYDNEY MTH IS THE MAJOR PROVIDER, ALONG WITH ONLY TWO OTHER FACILITIES, OFFERING BATHROOM FACILITIES TO MEN EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS.

**THE BATHROOM FACILITIES ARE USED UP TO 300 TIMES PER DAY**



## FLOOD-HIT VINNIES LISMORE REOPENS

After eight weeks of building work and internal renovations, Vinnies' Lismore shop re-opened this past September.

"The Shop's layout was extensively remodelled and improved upon with a brighter and better display space.

"The revamp of Vinnies' Lismore was made necessary by the April flooding of the CBD," explains President Yvonne Wynen, "A lot of structural work was required, and it led to a much improved layout and better environment for both shoppers and volunteers.

"The gala unveiling of the Shop came as a nice surprise and was a fun event for bargain hunters," Ms Wynen said. "We know the community was pleased by what has been achieved."

Lismore Central Council staff Susan Monson and Andrew Green got into the dress-up swing.



Lismore Central Conference President Yvonne Wynen cutting the 'Welcome Back to Vinnies' cake at the official re-opening. Also pictured, I-r, Lismore Mayor Isaac Smith, Executive Officer Michael Timbrell, shop manager Maree Ganter, volunteer Shona Townsend, and Karen Hogan representing her husband Kevin, Federal MP for Page.

Photo by Vinnies volunteer Jacklyn Wagner.

## LOVE WAS IN THE AIR FOR OP SHOP WEEK

Op Shop Week at Vinnies Islington in Maitland Newcastle involved a very special guest star, Singer John Paul Young and his piano player, Warren Morgan, visited the store to serenade shoppers and volunteers with a series of songs including Mr. Young's most popular hit, "Love Is In The Air".



## Mobile donation stations in Maitland Newcastle

The Newcastle City Council is proud to host a Vinnies Mobile Donation Station within the City Council building to help collect quality clothing for the 29 Vinnies Shops located throughout the Maitland Newcastle Central Council.

The new initiative of placing Vinnies clothing bin Mobile Donation Stations inside local corporate workplaces has attracted higher quality donations and renewed media interest for the cause. Inspired by these results, a Strata Committee member has enquired into placing Mobile Donation Stations strategically within a large unit development in the Newcastle's east end to facilitate residents' recycling and spur opportunities for involvement.



## A new Conference model in Broken Bay

An English Conversations Club has been successfully established as a new Conference in Chatswood. The club is the result of a partnership between Father Paul of Our Lady of Dolours and Adrian Brennan of Vinnies in Chatswood. Over 14 people attended the inaugural meeting in October.

The club will work to assist migrants integrate into the community. Weekly meetings will feature classes focused on developing English conversation skills.

Reg Wong, a Vincentian of 25 years, has been a driving force behind this initiative. From initial concept development to informational barbeques and briefing sessions, through to training, Mr. Wong has personally recruited and established eight volunteers as founding teachers of this innovative outreach program. These committed Vincentians lead weekly meetings to uniquely support, encourage and nurture new migrants through the development of English conversational skills.

Mr. Wong's love of languages and personal experience as a teenage migrant arriving to Australia in the 1950s motivated him to start this model. He has experienced first-hand the challenges of settling into a new country, and learning a new language and cultural practices. The detailed tutoring he received from the De La Salle and Christian Brothers schools



has given him a lifelong love of the English language in addition to his native language.

The commitment and enthusiasm shown by all members has been extremely encouraging for the State Support Office Membership Services Team that has been supporting this project.

English Conversations Club is an innovative initiative of the Broken Bay team and championed by Diocesan Council President John Donnelly, Executive Officer Maureen Roast, and endorsed by the Membership Services Team at State Support Office. It has been a successful response to recruiting new members with a clear purpose of carrying on that Vincentian mission of service to alleviate isolation whilst giving a hand up to migrants within the community.

# The Vinnies Van communities across NSW

## Sydney

**For many people experiencing homelessness, social isolation and are some of the most challenging aspects of not having a home.** These excluded individuals may go days without having a conversation or simple human interaction, creating a social disconnection that can be devastating.

Sydney Vinnies Van Services (SVVS) includes Sydney Night Patrol, Liverpool Night Patrol, and the Brekky Van, three roaming homelessness services assisting those in need. Each van service offers meals, hot drinks, blankets, toiletries and, crucially, companionship.

As of August 2017, the City of Sydney Council Street counted 386 people sleeping rough and 600 staying in temporary and crisis accommodation. This denotes only a two per cent decrease in rough sleepers from the same period last year.

SVVS volunteers dedicate thousands of hours every year to support some of the most vulnerable people in Sydney.

These services strive to not only fulfil basic needs, but to also create a compassionate and friendly community, where friends can gather for a chat and a cheer.

One of Sydney Night Patrols longest serving volunteers, Noel Davar, has worked with the team for over 30 years. Throughout his time volunteering, Noel has seen the scope of the Patrol evolve, but affirms that social connection has always been one of its greatest impacts.

"Twenty years ago, it wasn't uncommon to make 12 or more stops in a night. The stops were small, and even at the biggest ones, you'd usually just see 10 or 15 people," Noel said. "Many stops only had one or two people and often we'd stop for someone we'd just see sitting in an alcove on the street. We were friends with people like Carl who lived in a bus shelter at St Vincent's Hospital, Steve who sat on the steps of the Uniting Church opposite Woolworths and Alan who slept at Woodchips."

"The conversations and the friendships haven't changed too much over the years," continues Noel. "Nor has our mantra of 'the food and coffee only serve as an introduction'.

It's the conversations and the friendships that are what's important."

Sydney Night Patrol operates every night of the year (except New Year's Eve), visiting up to 200 people across three locations at Ward Park in Surry Hills, Martin Place, and Belmore Park at Central Station.

Liverpool Night Patrol operates Tuesday through Saturday and caters to approximately 30 people a night, with the van visiting two locations at Pioneer Park in Liverpool and Miller Football Oval. The Brekky Van service operates on Sunday mornings, offering a cooked breakfast in Prince Alfred Park, Redfern.



## Parramatta

In the Mount Druitt and Parramatta areas, 364 nights of the year the local Vinnies Van offers friendship, compassion and dignity to those experiencing homelessness and social isolation, along with food and referrals to services.

## Orange

**Next year, the Orange Vinnies Van and Café of Orange will celebrate its 10th birthday.** The winters in Orange are severe, but at Vinnies, the food is warm, the coffee is hot, and the faces are friendly.

The Vinnies Café was the vision of Rosie Frecklington, a woman who's energy and drive is founded in her compassion for those less fortunate. After Rosie retired in 2015, a committee led by Pam Whitehead as facilitator assumed coordination.

"In the early evenings during off-pension weeks the Van visits several locations around Orange. Nobody is turned away," says Pam.

On off-pension week Fridays, volunteers prepare and deliver a delicious home-cooked hot lunch for the Café which is operated by Vinnies volunteers.

"Many elderly people drop in, but we also serve young people and families who are

facing difficulty. We try to make our gentle presence a reminder of their dignity and worth.

"The Vinnies Café has a special place in the hearts of the Orange community for its warm and welcoming atmosphere, community spirit and delicious food."

Pam says they are very fortunate to have the support of generous sponsors and donors, including IGA and Bakers Delight.

Around 65 volunteers work to support all aspects of the Van, from shopping and keeping the pantry stocked, to preparing food and cleaning up. There are eight Night Patrol crews and a further 25 volunteers who work in the Café.

"All our volunteers are caring and compassionate. Just knowing our visitors can go to sleep not feeling hungry is an immense reward for their hours of effort."

## Wollongong

**A Vinnies Van team loyally serves the districts of North Wollongong, Warrawong and Nowra.** Gay Mason, President of Wollongong Central Council, says it would be impossible to serve the communities without the support of their passionate volunteers.

"Based at the Charles Gordon O'Neill House in Coniston, volunteers prepare nourishing food in a new industrial kitchen," says Gay.

"Danny Munk, CEO of Wests Wollongong, and Roy Rogers, CEO of the Flagstaff Group, are long-standing volunteers and supporters."

One of our volunteers, Frnak explained: "We try to provide companionship; if you don't have that support it is very hard to survive."

# MINI VINNIES

Mini Vinnies is a St Vincent de Paul Society social justice formation program operating in primary schools worldwide. The program introduces students from Years 3 to 6 to social justice issues, the work of the Society and ways they can live their own faith in action. In Australia, Mini Vinnies initiatives also assist school communities to develop an ongoing relationship with their local Conference and provide opportunities for them to support people experiencing hardship. For more information contact your Central Council.



## Raising a helping hand

**The entire Mini Vinnies team at Lady Star of the Sea Terrigal stood up tall at their school assembly in May in support of the Vinnies Winter Appeal.**

They were collecting food donations for Mary Mac's soup kitchen Woy Woy.

The relationship goes back many years, when parishioners of St John the Baptist Church started Mary Mac's with Society members. In the early days the service began upstairs from the Woy Woy Shop for some six months before other more permanent premises were found.



# Go Vinnies Green Team!

**On an October Sunday afternoon in Wagga Wagga a group of high school students from Mater Dei Catholic College sweated away in the backyard of a person being assisted by Vinnies.**

The person has lived in social housing for decades but his chronic illness has meant he cannot do any sort of gardening maintenance. He couldn't even get into his backyard to play with his beloved dog.

No surprise that his backyard had become a bit of a jungle. The students got stuck in, pulling weeds, pushing wheelbarrows, pruning and digging. They are part of a local Vinnies school Green Team.

The gentleman now looks out the back door and keeps thanking the Green Team volunteers. Now that the students are finished, he will be able to throw the ball to his dog from the back steps. He said the clean-up has been like a breath of fresh air!



## Young Good Samaritans – a sense of hope for the future

**Over 300 students from 36 Sydney Catholic primary schools were motivated to do more after attending a Mini Vinnies gathering in June. This year's theme was "How can I be a good Samaritan in the 21st Century?"**

Mary Musolino, Sydney Archdiocese Schools Liaison Officer, related this to the Mini Vinnies model of 'See, Think, Do' and encouraged young people to think and talk about their spirituality and how they could make a difference in the lives of others.

"By connecting their values and beliefs with social justice

issues in their community, young people can make their faith real, meaningful and relevant," says Mary.

"Through volunteering with Mini Vinnies they develop leadership skills, learn about and discuss local community issues and discover their ability to make a difference in the world. Vincentian spirituality teaches young people to be non-judgemental and to work in solidarity with those who are disadvantaged or marginalised. Our Conference members are inspirational role models to our Mini Vinnies students."

Students attended workshops to see how their donations are used to directly help others. The popular Mini Vinnies Train demonstrated the range of support provided by the Society to the community, including health and wellbeing services for people experiencing homelessness, people with disabilities, older people and refugees.

Olivia and Calista, Year 6 students from St. Bernard's Catholic Primary School Botany, had an amazing day.

"We learnt about the different services that Vinnies provides and how we can make a difference, not just when we are older, but now. We learnt so much that we can now share with the rest of the students back at school," they explained.

Graeme Roche, Sydney Archdiocese Executive Officer, was there to thank the presenters, participants and members.

"Our Mini Vinnies gathering is an encouragement and a reminder of the passion and enthusiasm of our youngest members in Sydney. Some of their questions and comments showed incredible insight about issues such as homelessness and poverty. It gives us all a sense of hope for the future."

## YOUTH SOCIAL JUSTICE GROUP FORMED

**Parramatta Central Council launched a new Youth Social Justice Group for young people 16-30 year olds who live, work or study in the Western Sydney region.**

Anna Ashenden, Social Justice and Community Engagement Manager for Parramatta Central Council, said they were looking for people who were passionate about social justice in their local communities.

"Our group focuses on the Society's Social Justice priorities of housing and homelessness, energy affordability, and refugees and asylum seekers," says Anna.

"We are taking action in Western Sydney through advocacy, events and fundraising.

"We are looking for more young people to work with us to speak up about social justice inequalities and create change at the local level!"

For more information or to get involved, email Anna: [anna.ashenden@vinnies.org.au](mailto:anna.ashenden@vinnies.org.au)



# Vale Rupert Hudson

**Rupert Hudson OA was a passionate advocate of social justice through his work with the St Vincent de Paul Society at international, national and local levels. Sadly he passed away at his home in North Curl Curl this past July.** Rupert was a lifelong devotee of the Society and former National Council President.

A lover of rugby league and a recipient of the Order of Australia Medal in the Australia Day Honours list in 2014, Rupert is remembered for his outspoken mind, passion and humour.

During his term as President from 1986 to 1991, Rupert was a member of the Society's International Council General and International Finance Commission. He was the author of Article 33 relating to Charity and Justice in the Society's Rule (Constitution). He also wrote the Society's first ever Mission Statement in 1986.

Rupert inspired Society members across Australia to cooperate with other agencies in developing more just and compassionate communities. His reach went far beyond Australia, through programs and shared resources he facilitated across Asia Pacific. His efforts resulted in the provision of food, clothing, education, employment, and housing to many people in the developing world.

His long-time friend John Brannan shared, "Rupert was a giant of a man. He held high positions in the Society and Caritas. He was a Catholic man who always gave a good example of how to live your Catholic life."



## World Day of the Poor

**Pope Francis called upon international parishes to celebrate the inaugural World Day of the Poor on Sunday, 19 November.**

With the conclusion of the 2016 Jubilee Year of Mercy, the Pope appended the Church's calendar to include this service so "whole Christian communities can become an ever greater sign of Christ's charity for the least and those most in need."

The theme of the Pope's message on this special day was, "Let us love, not with words, but with deeds", an echo of a challenge presented to the Blessed Frederic Ozanam, founder of the St Vincent de Paul Society, in 1830's Paris, "And you, who pride yourself on your Catholicity, what are you doing now for the poor? Show us your works!"

Pope Francis further elucidated, "For Christ's disciples, poverty is above all a call to follow Jesus in his own poverty. Poverty means having a humble heart... an interior attitude that avoids looking upon money, career and luxury as our goal in life and the condition for our happiness. [Poverty is] the yardstick that allows us to judge how best to use material goods and to build relationships that are neither selfish nor possessive."

Pope Francis closes his message with an invitation to all Christians, "If we want to help change history

and promote real development, we need to hear the cry of the poor and commit ourselves to ending their marginalisation." This appeal echoes much of the practical "good works" performed through the Society.

The Pope's sermon is a strong reminder of the practical, relational, engaging and responsive love that Blessed Frederic promoted, "Knowledge of the poor and needy is not gained by pouring over books or in discussions with politicians, but by visiting the slum they love, sitting by the bedside of the dying, feeling the cold they feel and learning from their lips the causes of their woes."

In these thoughts from Pope Francis may we take a moment at the close of this year and the opening to our New Year, to bring to mind those who struggle in life, those who go hungry, those who live without shelter and security, those suffering in mental health and addictions, the suffering refugees of our world, and the people we hold close to our hearts.

And may we offer all these things into the love of our Father.

**Leo Tucker**

State Director of Mission and Spirituality





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

# THIS CHRISTMAS, YOUR DONATION CAN MAKE WISHES COME TRUE.

For most, Christmas is a time for giving and celebrating with loved ones.

But for around 105,000 Australians, including families and 17,000 children under 12, it's a time when fulfilling even the simplest of wishes, like having food on the table or a place to call home, will be a struggle.

Take Ollie and his mum, Sharon. All he wants for Christmas is to stop moving all the time and for his mum to finally be happy.

When you donate to Vinnies, you're making simple Christmas wishes like Ollie's come true.

**Your generous donation can be made through your parish, [vinnies.org.au/christmasappeal](https://vinnies.org.au/christmasappeal) or by calling 13 18 12.**