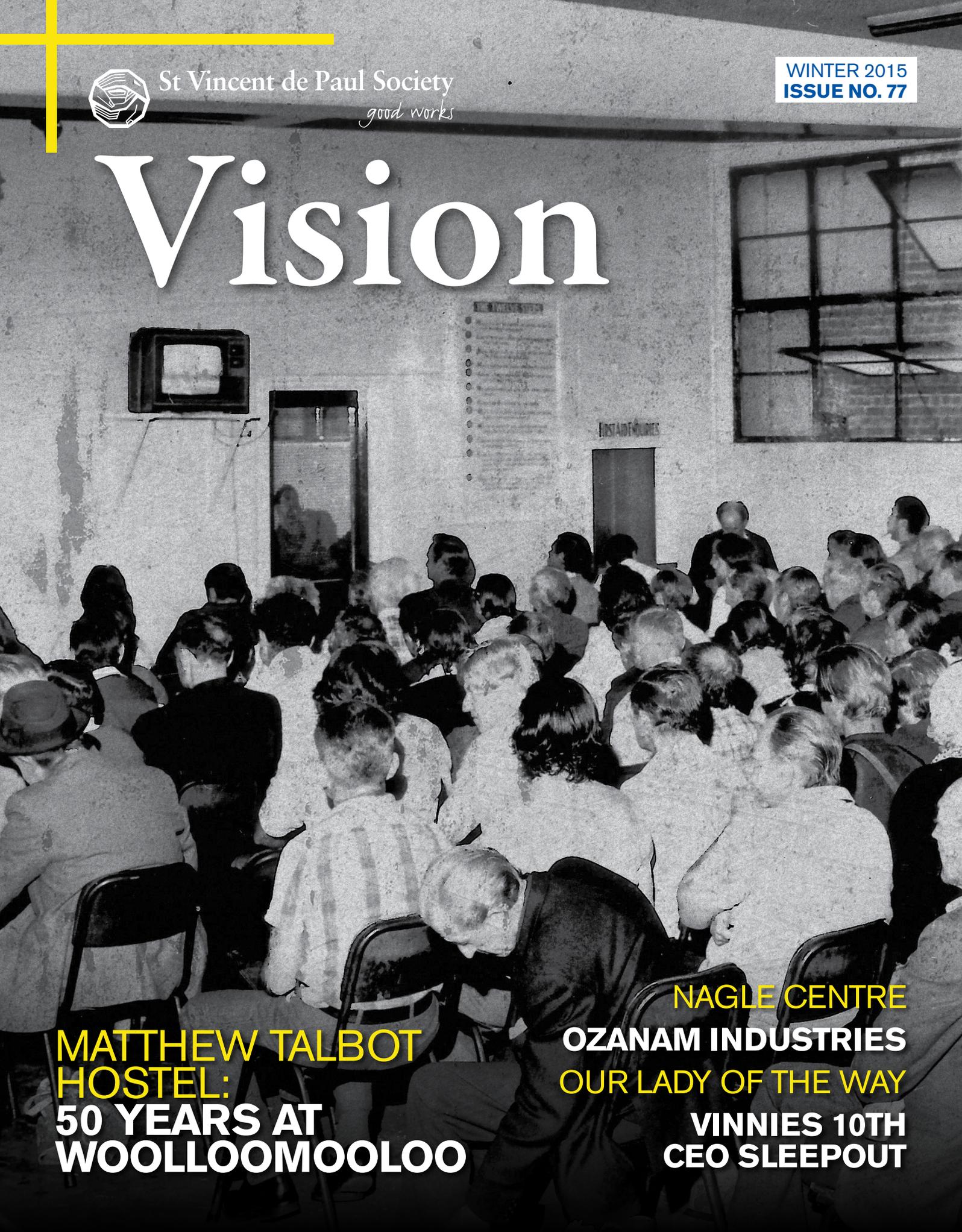




St Vincent de Paul Society
good works

WINTER 2015
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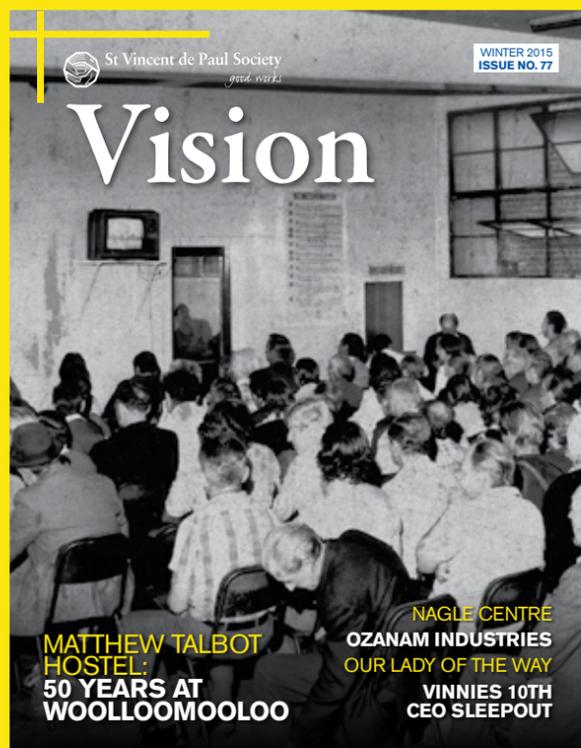
Vision



MATTHEW TALBOT
HOSTEL:
50 YEARS AT
WOOLLOOMOOLOO

NAGLE CENTRE
OZANAM INDUSTRIES
OUR LADY OF THE WAY

VINNIES 10TH
CEO SLEEPOUT



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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: yolanda.saiz@vinnies.org.au or (02) 9568 0293.

Please DO NOT send original photographs.



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear friends,

It is with great pleasure that I present you with the Winter edition of Vision. As you read through this edition, you should take pride and celebrate in the important work and achievements of the Society.

You will read some powerful stories about the change we deliver through many of our services such as the Nagle Centre, Our Lady of the Way, Ozanam Industries and Spark.

The Society has continued to advocate on the issues that impact the people we assist. We have been very active in raising our voice about housing affordability and homelessness. In March, prior to the NSW State election, we were very pleased to see the Baird Government pledge \$1 billion towards the establishment of an Affordable Housing Growth Fund.

This year marks a milestone for the Matthew Talbot Hostel (MTH) which celebrates 50 years at its Woolloomooloo location. It is truly an inner city icon and a service that has evolved over the decades to ensure that it is always achieving the best outcomes for the men and women experiencing homelessness who turn to the MTH

and Ozanam Learning Centre for assistance. On pages 8 to 11 you will find a special four page spread on the MTH.

I ask that we pray for Tony Thornton our past National President who sadly passed away recently. He was a true Vincentian who tried his utmost for the Society and was very supportive of me personally when reestablishing the NSW State Council in 2011/2012. On page 31 you will read an extract from a beautiful obituary written by National Council CEO, Dr John Falzon. May the perpetual light shine upon him and may he rest in peace.

As we visit with people who need a helping hand, we should remember that as we assist them we should also stand by them. We should share the stories of the injustices they endure and speak out to break down the barriers that keep people in poverty.

As Pope Francis said, "Human rights are not only violated by terrorism, repression or assassination, but also by unfair economic structures that creates huge inequalities."

Yours sincerely,

Ray Reynolds

President, NSW State Council, St Vincent de Paul Society

CEO'S MESSAGE



Dear friends,

Welcome to the latest edition of Vision.

The 10th anniversary Vinnies CEO Sleepout was held on 18 June across the country and was once again an overwhelming success, raising \$6.3 million nationally and \$2.3 million in NSW. The event was attended by the Governor General of Australia, His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Retd), demonstrating the excellent reputation the event has built over the past decade. Importantly all the funds raised will go to support some of the most vulnerable people in our community, those experiencing homelessness. You can read more about the 2015 Vinnies CEO Sleepout on pages 24 -25.

As you may know, the Society has continued to advocate strongly on housing affordability and social housing. As Ray mentioned in his message

we are very welcoming of the Baird Government's commitment to establishing an Affordable Housing Fund. We continue to call for other key reforms of social housing including that the NSW Government expedite the transfer of public housing properties to community housing providers via long term leases and the inclusion of affordable housing targets for local government. It is imperative that investment in social housing be seen as a form of infrastructure investment. The more we can all raise our voice about this issue across the state, the greater an impact we will have.

As we all continue to work together towards a common goal of serving those people experiencing disadvantage, we should also take some time to reflect on all that has been achieved over the past six months.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Perusco

Chief Executive Officer, St Vincent de Paul Society NSW

Ted with Paul Crayn



THANKS TED!

Over the past few years the Vinnies St Marie Therese Conference in Kootingal (Tamworth) has been visiting Ted Coleman in his home, providing company and support. Over this time Ted has been donating CareFlight teddy bears to the Tamworth Base Hospital, delivered by the Vinnies Conference to children who are receiving emergency treatment.

To acknowledge Ted's generosity, Paul Crayn, President St Marie Therese Conference recently presented him with a Certificate of Appreciation from the Society for his kindness.

TAMWORTH RECOGNISES LONG-TERM SERVICE

The Tamworth Regional Council in the Armidale Central Council held a Festival Meeting in Tamworth in May. Forty-six members and volunteers attended the day which was led by Sister Helen Baguley. As part of the day's proceedings, twenty-one people received Service Badges in recognition of their great dedication to the Society of twenty years or more.



Long-term commitment

CHRISTMAS CHEER IN A BOX



For the past fifteen years, Carmel Clancy, a member of St Therese Conference Bathurst, has done a tremendous job coordinating the arrangements for Christmas gifts in shoe boxes. These gifts are then distributed by the St Vincent de Paul Society Conferences in the Evans Region.

During the year, Western Sydney Disability Services purchase special gifts for all ages and are individually wrapped and beautifully presented in 100 shoe boxes. Carmel contacts the local Conferences and arranges for the gifts they require to be delivered in time for the distribution of Christmas hampers and gifts to families in their area. Carmel is assisted by her class of Year 1 students at Holy Family School who split the presents into age groups.

Carmel also coordinates the annual "Adopt a Family" Christmas Hampers in the Bathurst parishes.

The St Vincent de Paul Society Evans Region members and volunteers as well as local parishioners are truly grateful for the good works that Carmel has so willingly and lovingly coordinated for the past 15 years.



Gwen King

25 YEARS OF SERVICE AND COUNTING!

Mondays and Wednesdays are very special days at the Vinnies Lismore Retail Centre. That's because Gwen King is rostered on, and this means a smiling face is never too far away. It was back in 1990 that Gwen decided to volunteer with Vinnies. This decision has, without a doubt, changed the lives of many people experiencing disadvantage. "I had always admired the work of the Society so to be able to become a part of Vinnies through volunteering and give something back to the community was very special," Gwen says.

Gwen started out working with a Conference, and later moved to volunteering in Centres. For eight years, she also held the role of Diocesan Centres President, which she says has been the greatest highlight during her 25 years with Vinnies.

When asked to recall one of her favourite moments throughout her time with Vinnies, Gwen pauses and takes a few moments to think.

"One day, a Conference President commented to me that I was trying to make the Centres look too much like a Best&Less store, to which I simply replied, 'That's not true at all – I'm going more for the David Jones' look,'" she says with a smile.

"All the ladies who volunteer in the Centres work so hard. It's often not an easy job, but when you receive a compliment from a customer about how nice their shopping experience has been, it all becomes worth it," Gwen says.

So, 25 years on, why does Gwen continue to volunteer with Vinnies?

"The nicest people volunteer at Vinnies – I've made so many friends," says Gwen.

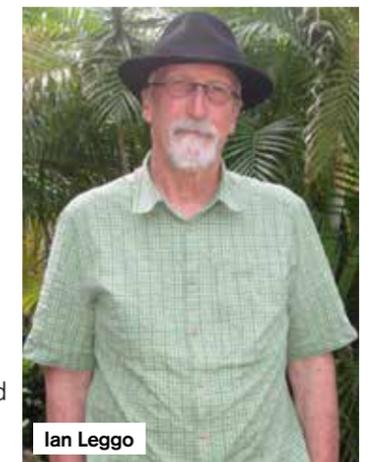
IAN LEGGO – WORKING COLLABORATIVELY

Having moved to Byron Bay after he retired in 2004, Ian Leggo and his wife, Loretta began worshipping at St Finbarr's Church. Two years later, they took up the call made by President of the Tweed Byron Region of the Society, Norm Blacklock to restart the St Finbarr's Conference.

Making a compelling case, nine parishioners, including Ian and Loretta, signed up. Ian took the reins and stepped into the President's role. As they were all new to Conference work, Ian approached other organisations in the Bay to find out more about welfare work in the area, forming close associations with the Salvation Army, Homeless Breakfast, Beggars Banquet, Byron Youth Service and the Byron Community Centre.

In 2009, with a new Conference President at the helm, Ian had time to get involved with other projects which eventually resulted in a collaboration to set up the Fletcher St Cottage, a drop in centre for people experiencing homelessness, managed by the Salvation Army, and supported by St Finbarr's Conference and the Byron Community Centre. In 2012 Ian again took over as President where he remains active in supporting a number of other local organisations and also assisted in establishing a Mini Vinnies group at St Finbarr's Primary School.

Ian recently gave a presentation at the Leaders Conference in Grafton where he said, "We need to use many forms of assistance to give a hand up. As Vincentians we often need to hand them on to those who can give them the help they need. We need to make ourselves familiar with as many of the other assistance providers so we can understand what they offer and how to contact them."



Ian Leggo

BROKEN BAY FESTIVAL DAY

This year Broken Bay celebrated its Festival Day by asking how they could engage the Strategic Plan to fulfil their mission. A large team of members and staff combined to develop Regional Action Plans based on the six Strategic Goals included in the NSW Strategic Plan. Leo Tucker set the scene with a wonderful Spiritual Reflection which he expanded on during the Conversation Tables Session on Goal 1 Strengthening Our Spirituality. A keynote address was delivered by Peter McNamara, Vice President State Council on another of the key goals, Raise Our Voice.

JAZZ UP THE CREEK

Conference members from Narrabri have been raising awareness about assistance the Society offers to drought affected communities. In the Namoi Barwon Region, Narrabri Conference members recently manned a stand at the Jazz up the Creek event at Maules Creek. The event was well attended by the local community and was organised under the New England LGA's Targeted Community and Family Support Programs.

Conference members took the opportunity to speak with the farming community and hand out Rural Assistance Advisory Committee leaflets outlining assistance available.

SUTHERLAND SHIRE REGIONAL COUNCIL FESTIVAL MASS 2014

The Sutherland Shire Regional Council Festival Mass was celebrated at St Joseph's Church late last year coinciding with the Oyster Bay Conference 60th anniversary. Approximately 130 people attended the Mass which was concelebrated by Bishop Terry Brady, Monsignor Brian Rayner (Gynea), and Reverend Fathers Michael Knight (Sutherland) and Bob Stevens (Como-Oyster Bay).

In his homily Bishop Terry Brady was very supportive of the St Vincent de Paul Society, acknowledging in particular the on-going importance of home visitation undertaken each week by Conference members.

A Commissioning Ceremony took place with the outgoing Regional President Michael Towke handing



PILLIGA COMMUNITY FUN DAY

In the Namoi Barwon Region, volunteers attended the Pilliga Community Fun Day, an event organised by the local Council that included jumping castles, a BBQ and live music. Gunnedah Conference members engaged with the local farming community, advising them of the assistance on offer from the Rural Assistance Advisory Committee. They also handed out bags of groceries and toys donated by Gunnedah's St Mary's College students and organised by the recently formed Vinnies Youth Conference.

Also present, were Sisters of Mercy from Casino and the North Coast who had organised "Coast to Bus" food parcels and beauty gift bags for farming women, literally bring a smile to their face!



Celebrating the Sutherland Shire Regional Council Festival Mass

over responsibilities to the new Regional President Rob Lennon. Newly elected Engadine Conference President Denise Gittoes and Gynea Conference President Tony Day were also commissioned.

Bishop Terry Brady assisted by Regional Council Vice-President Sue Khallouf also presented members with long service certificates of appreciation. One recipient, Gynea Conference member Neil Ryan, has been involved with the St Vincent de Paul Society for over 60 years, a marvellous example of personal generosity.

COMMISSIONING MASS EASTLAKES REGION



From left: Christine Wilson (McKillop); Anthony Weir (Cardiff); Terry Quinn (Belmont); Brian Halligan (Swansea); Julie Davies (Kotara); Dallas O'Neill (Eastlakes)

Society members gathered at St Philips Church Kotara earlier this year to witness the commissioning of six Presidents in the Eastlakes Region. The Presidents commissioned were the Regional President, Dallas O'Neill, as well as the Presidents of Belmont (Terry Quinn), Cardiff (Anthony Weir), Mackillop (Christine Wilson), Kotara (Julie Davies) and Swansea (Brian Halligan).

The Mass was concelebrated by Bishop Bill Wright, assisted by Fathers Dom Carrigan (Maitland/Newcastle Society Spiritual Advisor), Greg Arnold (Blackbutt South Parish priest), Gerard Mackie (East Lake Macquarie Parish priest), and Deacon Martin Johnson from Blackbutt South Parish.

Each President was presented with a Bible, to signify the Good News, a candle representing the light of Christ, a piece of bread to signify giving to those suffering hardship, and 'The Rule'. The Mass was followed by a very pleasant supper in the hall which was enjoyed by many of the various Conference members.

Special thanks to Bishop Bill Wright for this most enjoyable and memorable evening and Father Greg for the use of St Philips.

If you have a story for Vision Magazine please contact Yolanda Saiz on 02 9568 0293 or email yolanda.saiz@vinnies.org.au



MARIE JACKSON

Marie Jackson, now aged ninety, is correctly described as the most valuable member of the Society at Forster, having served with the Society since the 1970s and with the Holy Name Conference since moving to Forster in 1980. Whilst a hip operation meant she was unable to continue with Conference work, she simply transferred her talents to kitchen duties at the Centre.

When Marie arrived at Forster she was immediately drafted into both the Centre and Conference as secretary for a number of years. She also worked as secretary for the Manning Regional Council for many years, where her remarkable memory and knowledge were invaluable to the Council.

Marie has three children, who, along with their families, still live in the area. Irrepressible, Marie is also a member of the Laurel Club and Forster's War Widow's group.

All members of the Forster Centre and Conference say thank you to Marie and consider it an honour to have served God's poor with such a gentle lady.



MATTHEW TALBOT HOSTEL: 50 YEARS AT WOOLLOOMOOLOO

Perhaps one of the best known of the St Vincent de Paul Society's services is the Matthew Talbot Hostel (MTH) which has been caring for Sydney's homeless men for 77 years. Just recently, the MTH celebrated 50 years at its Woolloomooloo base; a location that has become synonymous with the hostel.

The St Vincent de Paul Society first opened the MTH after the Auxiliary Bishop of Sydney of the time, Bishop Gilroy saw the problem of homelessness and wanted to open a place for the men to receive food and shelter. With the loan of the old Church of St John in Kent Street site, the Society opened the MTH on 25 October 1938. The original

IN 1976 A GROUP OF DOCTORS BEGAN A FREE CLINIC FOR THE MEN AT THE MTH. THIS SERVICE CONTINUES TODAY AND IS NOW KNOWN AS THE MTH HEALTH CLINIC.

site offered eleven beds per night as well as 100 meals at breakfast and dinner time.

The Kent Street site was overwhelmed by the demand for its services and it soon became obvious that a larger site would be needed if all the men turning to the service were to be assisted.

The Society began the search and started a building fund, which, despite the Depression, gained great support. A location was soon found in Cathedral Street, Sydney. Plans for the new building were prepared but with the outbreak of World War II, all activity was ceased.

After the war, the Cathedral Street property was sold and the MTH eventually reopened at the old Wool Shed building in Young Street. The new site offered forty beds and facilities for about three hundred morning and evening meals. Despite the expanded services, the demand continued to grow.

A Building Appeal was launched with the backing of a Citizens Committee headed by the then Lord Mayor of Sydney, Alderman H.F. Jensen and under the patronage of the then State Governor, Lieut. General Sir Eric Winslow Woodward.

Following this, the Society purchased a large part of Burrahpore Lane, Woolloomooloo. The site was then demolished and the new MTH built. The building was officially opened and blessed on Sunday 14 March, 1965. The new hostel offered four hundred beds and facilities for over 1,000 meals a day.

With increasing age, poor health and unemployment, the great demand on MTH continued. From its humble beginnings to the mid 1970's the facility had supplied an estimated 6 million meals and 500,000 beds for men experiencing homelessness.

In 1976 a group of doctors began a free clinic for the men at the MTH. This service has today evolved into the MTH Health Clinic, a comprehensive health services clinic.

In the 1990's, with the support of then State President, John Menadue and the St Vincent de Paul Society fundraising team, a capital raising campaign was launched. The campaign was a huge success and funded the upgrade of the reception area, dormitories, dining room and medical treatment area.

Throughout the 2000's upgrades continued as did improvements to service delivery to ensure that the Society was getting the best outcomes for people experiencing homelessness.

In 2008, the MTH opened an adjacent service, the Ozanam Learning Centre (OLC) which is an early intervention centre that supports people who are at imminent risk of homelessness or those who require social inclusion options to keep them connected with the community.

The OLC supports people by building trusting and professional relationships; facilitating referrals to case management and other comprehensive supports as needed; providing access to accredited onsite education; offering recreational activities, and a holistic living skills program.

A special mention to Patron of St Vincent de Paul Society Support Services, Sir William Deane AC KBE QC, for his dedicated commitment to the Matthew Talbot Hostel and men and women experiencing homelessness.

This year we celebrate the growing and evolving face of the MTH, a truly iconic Sydney service.



Sir William Deane and Premier Baird at the Matthew Talbot Hostel

I know God loves me but nobody else does it
ming21 Bankstown

"This is not how I pictured my life.
On the streets alone." Jayne, 40

"I miss the simple things, like doing
grocery shopping and cooking my own
meals. The things that make you feel
normal." Greg, 59

"You may have lost some of the battles in your
life, but you can win the war as long as there
are places like the Matthew Talbot Hostel."
Matt, 37

"As a mother, as a sister, I never thought I
would be alone. I never imagined I would
not have a home." Rosa, 60

"I had to pretty much
destroy myself to
find myself. I have
the Talbot to thank
for helping me get
there." Jason, 38

50 YEARS QUOTES

"I couldn't allow
violence towards
my children. I had
to leave, but I had
nowhere to go."
Melanie, 36

"I miss seeing my friends and family.
Being alone at special times like
Christmas is awful." Philip, 58

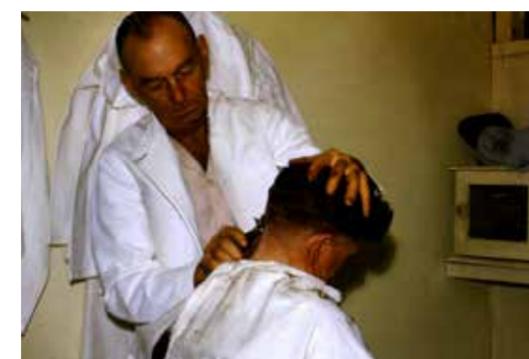
I have a room
but I don't know
how long it will last
(maybe a week)
mike

This is ALL I have.
To Feed my
family with

"I had a family, I had a trade. I was
employed. I had the station wagon, a
mortgage. And then a few years ago I lost
my job and my world dissolved." Ian, 56



EARLY SCENES FROM THE
MATTHEW TALBOT HOSTEL



IN MEMORIAM: FR VINCE PEDEMONT



Fr Vince Pedemont joined the priesthood late in life following the death of his wife. After being ordained in 1996 by Bishop Murphy, he was appointed to Gosford Parish where he remained until his retirement in 2001 due to ill health.

Between 1978 and September 1984, Fr Pedemont was the Executive Officer of the St Vincent de Paul Society. In September 1984 he was elected NSW State President of the Society and worked in a voluntary capacity in that role until 1989. In 1990 he was awarded a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for service to the community through his involvement with the Society.

In 1947 he had married his wife, Shirley at St. Vincent's Ashfield, and reflected a little on their life together in an article for Annals Australia:

"In May 1990, Shirley was to die, following a short but to serious illness. We had six children, the second child a boy, died, not yet one year old. Our four daughters married and we welcomed into our family

their husbands and all our sixteen grand children up to that time. Our lives were such that we lived our faith and so had an exciting and happy life with the usual percentage of difficult times.

People who know us are willing to accept my story, that shortly before she died, Shirley told me, on three occasions, that she thought I would become a priest. I simply answered 'no, that it was just not my scene'. Yet, some time later, I did approach Bishop Murphy, because I knew him, for we lived at Epping when he was Parish Priest there, but, I was confidently expecting the Bishop to say that I was too old. Eventually, Bishop Patrick sent me to the Beda College in Rome, and finally he ordained me a priest in 1996.

I wish to thank God and all the people, lay people, married and single, all the Priests and Religious Brothers and Sisters, and the woman I married, all those who set me as a youth, the practical example and wisdom of this aspect of our Catholic faith. I thank Almighty God for all those people who gave their lives to God and to us, to teach us the best and most practical way to successfully live out our wonderful gift of life, and to prepare us for the final gift of eternal life."

Fr Pedemont is survived by his children and grand children.

LISMORE CENTRAL COUNCIL VENTURES INTO SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

Six months ago the Lismore Central Council made its first foray into social enterprise, purchasing a rag business in Labrador, Queensland, to complement the Matthew Talbot Clothing Recycling Centre – a program run by the Lismore Central Council which processes and sells cut rags from waste textiles to industry.

"In the past, there certainly has been the mentality that Vinnies isn't in the business of buying and operating businesses, but with this particular venture, there was an obvious and natural fit, and the opportunities were significant," Michael says.

Six months on, Michael says that despite some initial hurdles, the venture has already proven to be hugely successful and the opportunities ahead for the business are exciting.

"We spent a lot of time reviewing our operating model to make sure it was sound and cost efficient. All processing of waste textiles now takes place onsite at the Matthew Talbot Clothing Recycling Centre in Goonellabah under the stewardship of Recycling Operations Manager, Angelo Grande. In Labrador, we have a highly experienced Distribution Coordinator, Tony Line, who manages all sales and distribution for this region."

Michael believes that with Government funding cutbacks affecting the Society, we must look at ways of becoming self-sufficient into the future and continue to reduce our reliance of government funding.

"As a Central Council, we strongly believe that if there are ways of raising funds to continue our 'good works' and assist society's most disadvantaged, then we should explore them."



The Castlereagh Industries team with their award

CASTLEREAGH INDUSTRIES AWARDS

Congratulations to our wonderful team at Castlereagh Industries who were acknowledged in the recent Coonamble Australia Day Awards. The award was in recognition of the wonderful support and encouragement that is provided to our supported employees in their sporting endeavours and community activities.

Castlereagh Industries along with Ozanam Industries in Sydney are Special Works of the St Vincent de Paul Society Support Services that are strongly committed to enhancing the lives of people with disability by offering real employment and training opportunities.



INNER CITY CASE WORK FOCUSES ON PREVENTION

The Society is more focused than ever on providing early intervention and prevention services that have been highlighted as part of the recent NSW Government's *Going Home Staying Home* reforms.

This approach has always been valued by the Inner City Case Work team working with men, women and families at the Matthew Talbot Hostel and Vincentian House, as they believe that many of the people presenting as homeless could have been assisted earlier and avoided their experience with homelessness altogether.

Early stages of this more targeted case work practice has involved a greater focus on building relationships

with Housing NSW offices and Community Housing providers, as well as working internally with other Society services for more streamlined referral pathways and inter-service support.

Most of the early intervention case work has been with residents of social housing properties who are working through tenancy issues such as financial difficulties, and safety and security within their properties. Case workers have been able to use their knowledge and experience of social housing policies and tenancy rights to help advocate for these clients.

Senior Operations Manager – Case Management, Brett Macklin says, "We understand that the concept of safety is perhaps one of the biggest factors needed to ensure sustainable homes."

Other support provided has been to link clients with health supports such as local doctors, mental health teams as well as the local community.

"We have also worked with people who are wanting to move from their home for various reasons and who are on the brink of relinquishing their tenancy with no clear plan of what they will do next. In these circumstances, the case work has been focused on understanding the need to move, and then helping with longer term planning and goal setting dependent on this," says Brett.

ONE TEAM, ONE COMMUNITY

Ability Links hosted the 'One Team, One Community' sports inclusion forum at the Glasshouse Function Centre, The Entrance.

The purpose of the event was to raise awareness, and inform sporting clubs and teams across the coast on how to be more inclusive to people with disabilities. Attendees had the opportunity to listen to guest speakers from different sporting codes, as well as representatives with disability.

There were a variety of guest speakers on the evening including Jackie Lauff from Sport Matters who spoke about disability inclusion; AFLNSW who highlighted their inclusion program for children with disability; Aaron Camp from Surf Lifesaving Australia who shared his personal story of being overlooked for activities as a child when he temporarily lost the use of his legs; and All Kids Can Play who delivered the final presentation of the evening, detailing a valuable program designed to assist and support sporting clubs to become more inclusive in their approach.

A very personal story was also shared by Eric on the night, who explained that although he does not "play" in his local basketball team, he is just as much a member of the team as everyone else with his own key responsibilities



and duties that contribute to the team's success. He described how this gives him an opportunity to share in the highs and lows of being part of a sporting team.

There were representatives from a variety of sporting codes across the Central Coast in attendance, including netball, football, rugby league and surf lifesaving, many of which took away great ideas on how to address inclusion for people with disability in their organisations.



SOCIAL JUSTICE IN THE PUB HITS LISMORE

The St Vincent de Paul Society in Lismore held a very successful Social Justice in the Pub event with a focus on housing affordability. The Lismore Central Council decided to coordinate the event after more and more people began to turn to the organisation for assistance with housing stress, says Michael Timbrell, Executive Officer at the St Vincent de Paul Society Lismore Central Council.

"The Society sees the impacts of New South Wales' housing affordability crisis each day. While people approach us for assistance with food or paying their energy bills, it soon becomes clear that in many cases the underlying problem is the high housing costs they must pay, leaving very little for other household essentials," he says.

Guest speakers taking part in the Social Justice in the Pub event include Trish Evans, Director – Development and Innovation, Northern Rivers Social Development Council; John McKenna, CEO, North Coast Community Housing Company Ltd; and Brian Murnane, CEO, St Vincent de Paul Amelie Housing.

The Social Justice in the Pub event provides an effective platform for the general public as well as key stakeholders in community services to share their observations, experiences and ideas to help create a housing market that delivers for everyone.

FRONT DOOR DELIVERIES: FROM LITTLE THINGS, BIG THINGS GROW

The Society's Refugee Support Services (RSS) is coordinating a grassroots service that sees volunteers run a home delivery service to asylum seekers living in the community. Under the initiative, families receive large hampers that consist of food and basic household items with family size and cultural requirements taken into consideration.

RSS provides case work support and financial assistance for people currently seeking asylum in Australia. Visa restrictions, separation from family and no access to government support mean that many of the men, women and children are living in Australia without any income and means to support themselves and their children.

RSS Coordinator, Karena Alexander says that asylum seekers are fearful to return to their home countries and end up living well below the poverty line.

"Many are enduring hardships here in Australia just hoping for the opportunity to move forward in their

lives, and provide their children a safe home and future. These families are living in severe financial destitution, at risk of homelessness and struggling to put food on the table," she says.

One of the factors that made this initiative a success is that internal relationships and resources have been put to work. Spark, which has a large volunteer team that are already working with people from a refugee background, was keen for their volunteers to do a little more towards contributing to the 'greater good'.

"The myth in our community that asylum seekers are illegal has had a terrible impact on the people we work with; they have experienced isolation, shame and prejudice and have at times been refused access to support in the community. A small gesture of care such as Front Door Deliveries has big meaning for the families. They have expressed deep gratitude and happiness when receiving this extra support," says Karena.

GET INVOLVED AND REBUILD LIVES

Support the Vinnies Winter Appeal

Visit us online at vinnies.org.au/winterappeal or call 13 18 12



St Vincent de Paul Society
good works



PIECING LIVES BACK TOGETHER

At only eight years of age, Nathan lost both his parents and younger brother in a horrific car crash – a loss and trauma most people cannot even begin to imagine. Alone in the world, the young boy was moved from one foster home to another, his life sliding slowly out of his control.

As the years ticked by Nathan found he was making many decisions that set him on a destructive and troubled path. Marrying and becoming a father at a young age, Nathan struggled to keep things together. His marriage ended and left Nathan caring for his young daughter on his own.

Struggling to make ends meet and cope with the responsibility, Nathan visited the Nagle Centre, a Special Work of the St Vincent de Paul Society located in South West Sydney. A family care and support service, the Nagle Centre provides crisis assistance, referral service and education and skills programs for people experiencing disadvantage and homelessness.

In the beginning Nathan would visit the Nagle Centre for help with bills, food and clothing. However, in the 15 years that have passed since, the Nagle Centre has played a bigger role in Nathan's life than he ever could have imagined, helping him get his life back on track.

With the encouragement of one of the case workers, Nathan became involved in Clemente, a university education program hosted at the Nagle Centre. Clemente aims to break the cycle of disadvantage by providing university education and study opportunities to people who would not otherwise be able to participate.

Despite leaving school when he was only 15, Nathan knew that his eagerness to learn and good listening skills would help him transition into study. Nathan excelled in his learning and studied subjects such as liberal arts, politics and sociology receiving distinctions and credits in numerous subjects.

Nathan credits the Nagle Centre for getting him where he is today.

"If study and support weren't offered to me, I think I would have come out the other end a completely different person to who I am now. I think Vinnies is good for building up people's strength and offering people foundation in their lives. They gave me a purpose," says Nathan.

The Nagle Centre has a welcoming and open door attitude and Manager Donna plans to keep it that way.

"There are no appointments needed and most importantly there is no judgement. People can drop in when they need to get a bite to eat, have a shower, get linen or clothing, or even just for a chat," explains Donna.

Nathan agrees.

"Everybody feels comfortable to just come in and talk to someone when they need. The case workers and staff do an amazing job and are always available for you."

Nathan is just one of the many success stories that the Nagle Centre sees. With the right support and through his own hard work and determination, Nathan has been able to get his life back on track.

The Nagle Centre's approach has meant that Nathan was not only able to get through a rough financial period in the immediate term when he needed it but also develop skills that would help change his life in the long-term.

Nathan is now living in independent and affordable housing, studying at university and deepening his connection with his family and community. Looking ahead Nathan is positive about his future and the direction he wants to take.

"I really want to go out there and help people. I want give something back.

"Each night before I go to bed regardless of the day I've had, I always smile because when you wake up the next morning, it will be a better day. That's the philosophy I get through life with. It's a nice one to have. In the end you've got to make yourself happy," says Nathan.



VALUING ABILITY

In 1965, at just fifteen, Cheryl left school in search of a job. She found an opening at the St Vincent de Paul Society's Central Sorting Centre and fifty years later is still working hard and has etched her name as one of the longest serving employees in the Society's history.

In her time with the Society, Cheryl, who has an intellectual disability, spent 24 years working with the Central Sorting Centre, six years with the James Moloney Work Centre in Lewisham involving general packaging and cutting duties, and twenty years at Ozanam Industries in Stanmore.

Ozanam Industries is a Special Work of the St Vincent de Paul Society dedicated to supplying high quality service solutions to the Australian business community. Ozanam Industries proudly employs over 100 Australians with

varying forms of disabilities at their West Ryde, Stanmore and Coonamble (Western NSW) sites.

Cheryl is a skilled all-rounder at Ozanam Industries and regularly moves between sections when needed, assisting others in whatever way she can.

Ray Reynolds, President of the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW says, "By providing supported employees with better opportunities, it shows people with a disability that the Society recognises them as valued employees and members of the community."

After 50 years Cheryl says that Ozanam Industries and the Society feels like a second home. Quite the socialite, Cheryl regularly organises outings with her colleagues at Stanmore and West Ryde.

COMMUNITY SUPPORTS VINNIES IN THE CITY2SURF

Team Vinnies raised close to \$45,000 in the lead up to the 2015 City2Surf. Ambassador Joe Hildebrand explained why he chose to run:

"I absolutely love Vinnies and the work they do helping the most vulnerable people in our society. In an age where we're so easily distracted by things that are not real problems Vinnies is there working tirelessly to tackle some of the most complex and difficult problems we face – and they need everybody's help to keep doing it."

"So that's why I'm running for them in the City to Surf – that, and because I look great in running shorts."



Above L-R: Joe Hildebrand, Alina Hutton, Paul Hutton, Anna Christie, Tanwen Hutton, Alina Hutton, and Lynne Hutton.



Left: Senator Deborah O'Neill and Mauro Bortolato

PASSPORT OUT OF POVERTY

Having no place to call home is a long, lonely journey for over 105,000 Australians.

Donate to help give someone a passport out of poverty.

All funds raised will be donated to Vinnies CEO Sleepout where I will be spending a night out in the cold on Thursday 18 June to support people experiencing homelessness.

Matthieu Mercier
CEO, LS travel retail Pacific

VINNIES CEO SLEEPOUT
18 JUNE 2015

PASSPORT OUT OF POVERTY

In June and July, LS Travel Retail Pacific are raising funds via collection boxes for Vinnies homeless services within their retail businesses Newslink newsagents and Relay Bookstores located in domestic and international airport locations around Australia to support Vinnies homeless services and Vinnies Winter Appeal.



ROYAL BANK OF CANADA HELP KEEP KIDS IN EDUCATION

The Royal Bank of Canada renewed their partnership with the KEEP program at Vincentian House for 2015-2016 contributing \$13,000 towards the program.

RBC also provides trained RBC staff volunteers who work closely with the KEEP programs Child and Young Person Case Manager to attend school holiday activities with the children. Their donation supports the costs associated in providing the children staying at Vincentian House with stimulating and fun school holiday activities.

VINNIES RECEIVES ENLIGHTENED ENERGY SAVING DONATION

The St Vincent de Paul Society Auburn Distribution Centre was fitted out with high efficiency warehouse lighting donated by Sydney LED Lighting Innovation Company, enLighten Australia.

Over the last two years NSW has seen a 20% rise in electricity prices and the Society has been looking at methods of cost and energy savings. Artarmon based company enLighten Australia provided the Society with a free lighting design and installation which supported the sites needs and

specifications, aiming to reduce costs and energy usage.

Joseph Fernandopulle, Manager Retail Operations & Distribution for the Society's Sydney Archdiocese said the results were instantaneous.

"We saw a 69% reduction in energy consumption for the high bay lighting, representing an annual saving of 54,600 kWh pa based on lighting operation of 50 hours per week. The feedback from staff has been positive and we will be looking at rolling this out in other sites as well," said Mr Fernandopulle.

enLighten Australia co-founder and CEO Steve Cahill is following a family tradition giving back to the St Vincent de Paul Society. His grandfather and great aunt were instrumental in the launching of the first Vinnies store in Newtown in 1922.



A TRIBUTE TO ASHLEY SPENCER

In loving memory of Mr Ashley Spencer, Vice President Hilton Worldwide, who sadly passed away in April 2015 after a long illness. Ashley was a selfless man who gave so much of himself for the benefit of others through his support of charities including the St Vincent de Paul Society.

Actively involved as an Ambassador in the Vinnies CEO Sleepout for a number of years, Ashley played a pivotal role in growing the event and raising millions of dollars

for people experiencing homelessness. Under Ashley's leadership, the Hilton Sydney became a valued partner of Vinnies supporting the Hotels Have Hearts Gala Dinner, which has raised almost \$3 million. Hilton also provides Hilton grade food to Sydney's homeless via the Sydney Night Patrol and generous Hilton employees volunteer every month on the service. Other staff get involved running in the Vinnies gold team for the annual City2Surf and each month over 70kgs of meat is provided to the Matthew Talbot Hostel to cook a special meal for the men that live there. His legacy lives on through Hilton Sydney's continued commitment to the Society.

JANSSEN CONTINUES SUPPORT



Freeman House

Heather Ellen

Janssen has been supporting the Society for over 25 years and recently entered into a new three year agreement to support Freeman House accommodation services, the rollout of the Ozanam Learning Centre at Freeman House and the Spark program. The partnership is worth \$360,000 over the next three years. In addition, Janssen has donated \$10,000 to support the Matthew Talbot Hostel in 2015. Vinnies thanks Janssen for their ongoing commitment.

ICAP CHARITY DAY

As part of a unique fundraising initiative, the ICAP Charity Day, Youth Reach Brookvale received a generous \$35,000 donation.

ICAP Charity Day is not your normal charity event. Instead, the event sees ICAP Brokers head to work but instead of wearing their business suits they don themselves in fancy dress costumes. The desks are decorated and ambassadors will help them execute trades and 100% of commission and profits from the day's work is given to a number of charities. Youth Reach provides 11-24 year olds with inspiration, encouragement, support and a fun place to hang out. Our programs include a drop-in youth centre, case management and psychology programs, recreational activities, as well as a series of outreach programs designed to improve young lives.



Vinnies Ambassador Joe Hildebrand with Maryann Novakovic

SHARING A GIFT OF LOVE

Our Lady of the Way received a donation of lovely warm winter doonas, sheet sets, pillows, towels and kitchen wear from long time service supporters Springwood Catholic Women's League. This particular donation was dedicated to a very special lady, Mrs Edythe Gallagher who passed away in 2013.

Edythe Gallagher was a loving and caring mother of 12 children who always found the time to help anyone in need.

Edythe joined Catholic Women's League when she came to live in Springwood. The branch became regular supporters of OLOW with Edythe often using her sewing skills to make beautiful nightgowns and dressing gowns for the residents.

When Edythe passed aged 90 years, her daughter asked that some of Edythe's money be given to a worthy cause, asking the Springwood Branch members how best this could be spent. It was clear that Edythe's first choice would be her beloved OLOW which was so close to her heart.

Her daughter Kate said, "During our childhood Mum had very little money to spend but she always made sure her children were never without the necessities of life. It is for this reason and in Mum's beautiful memory we want to make it possible for other people to share in her great gift of love."



SUMO SALAD AND VINNIES #HeatUpTheStreet

Sumo Salad partnered with the St Vincent de Paul Society to make a difference this winter. By purchasing a \$2 soup slammer from any Sumo Salad store, taking a photo of you with your soup slammer and sharing online with the hashtag #HeatUpTheStreet, Sumo Salad donated the cost of a soup to Vinnies. People could also donate \$2 to Vinnies when they purchased any item at Sumo Salad via collection boxes.



Sumo Salad staff hit the streets



AWAY OUT OF A LIFE OF FEAR

“I am so happy I now have my own little space to call home - free from abuse and safe to live the rest of my life happily. I don't need to rely on anyone, and I have my freedom, a freedom I never thought I'd get.”

At an age where many women look forward to retirement and spending precious time with family and friends, some women are faced with the shock of homelessness as a result of family or domestic violence.

The most recent Census shows that seventeen percent of people experiencing homelessness in Australia are aged over 55; with this age group over represented among those living in temporary and insecure housing and at risk of homelessness. These statistics also show that about 36 per cent of older Australians experiencing homelessness are women.

A St Vincent de Paul Society service in Sydney's West, Our Lady of the Way (OLOW), is addressing this growing issue by providing accommodation for single women over the age of 60 experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of homelessness.

OLOW provides assistance with finding permanent accommodation, finances, court support during Apprehended Violence Orders, divorce or property settlement, counselling and mental health, living skills, and medical support.

Having spent many years trapped in an abusive marriage in Lebanon, Sofia found herself deeper in crisis when her husband was left incapacitated after suffering a stroke. She had four children and no way of supporting them. Having been disempowered for so long, Sofia didn't even know where to start.

Sofia's Uncle encouraged her to come to Australia where he would help her find work so that she could support her husband and children back in Lebanon. With no other options, Sofia agreed to accept her Uncle's help. With a heavy heart she left her children in Lebanon and made her way to a new country full of unknowns but with the hope of building a better life for her and her children.

After arriving in Australia, all seemed to be going well and Sofia put her beautiful singing voice to use, becoming very popular with the local Lebanese community singing at many weddings, events and restaurants. Sofia felt relieved and that Australia was the right place for her to bring her children to start a new life.

But just as Sofia began to see light at the end of the tunnel, things began to change. Her Uncle forced her to take on other jobs including brick laying and labouring, threatening not to bring her family out if she objected. Then came the abuse at the hands of her Uncle, someone she thought she could trust.

After years of living in fear of her Uncle, Sofia was finally able to have her children join her in Australia. Full of guilt at

having left them behind, Sofia tried her best to reconnect with her children but the relationships were broken.

Her children, most of them now grown, took an instant dislike to their Uncle and left the house to live on their own, turning their back on their mother. Sofia was left with her youngest son and desperately tried to find some social housing so that she could escape the violence and abuse.

After patiently waiting for a house, one finally became available through Housing NSW. Struggling under the pressure, Sofia agreed to let her Uncle help her finalise all of the details. During this time, Sofia's father became very ill, meaning she had to return to Lebanon to see him before he passed. On her return, Sofia was shocked to learn that she had lost the house allocated to her, as her Uncle had neither advised Housing NSW of her trip to see her father nor returned any of their calls.

Sofia was devastated. This was the last straw for her youngest son, who also moved away. Desperate and shattered, Sofia turned to one of her older sons, hoping to sleep on his couch for a few nights.

“I remember getting on my hands and knees, begging him to let me stay with him,” Sofia recalls.

Devastatingly, he turned her away. As did all of her children.

With nowhere to go and refusing to return to the abuse at the hands of her Uncle, Sofia began sleeping in her car; a pillow and a blanket her only comforts. It was there, lying in the back of her car, full of fear and deep sadness that Sofia decided to call the homeless persons line and was referred to OLOW.

When Sofia arrived at OLOW she had major depression and anxiety, was suicidal, had no housing options and no family support. She had disengaged from everything, even singing – her true passion.

The staff at OLOW began on a journey of recovery with Sofia. They were able to work on a mental health care plan, reinstate her relationship with Housing NSW, reconnect her with her children, and even get her singing with her choir again. After a long hard road building her self-esteem and dealing with her demons, Sofia found herself getting back on her own two feet.

Just recently, Sofia received an offer of housing in an apartment. A place that she now calls home and where she finally feels safe.

Sofia says, “I am so happy I now have my own little space to call home - free from abuse and safe to live the rest of my life happily. I don't need to rely on anyone, and I have my freedom, a freedom I never thought I'd get.”



VINNIES CEO SLEEPOUT TEN YEARS STRONG

It was another successful Vinnies CEO Sleepout with the event commemorating its 10 year anniversary. Nationally over 1200 CEOs participated raising a record breaking \$6.3 million.

In Sydney, it was a cold wet night where over 275 CEOs braved the torrential rain and raised nearly \$2.1 million. The CEOs were joined by His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Retd). The governor-general used his address at the Vinnies CEO Sleepout to shine a spotlight on women's homelessness and domestic violence.

"This year's focus is on women's homelessness and domestic violence. We cannot, and must not, turn a blind eye to domestic violence. And we cannot let survivors stay on the streets."

"We are all doing something positive, but we need to keep doing more. As CEOs you have power and influence, you

create jobs and generate the opportunities that people need to get their lives together. I urge you to use your positions to keep making a difference and keep addressing the problem of homelessness," he told the room.

Martine Jager from RAMS took out the top fundraiser gong in Sydney raising \$166,000. Other leading fundraisers in Sydney include Nicholas Gray, The Australian on \$130,000; Michael Boyle, Abergeldie Infrastructure \$92,000; and Alison Watkins, Coca Cola Amatil \$76,000.

For the first time CEOs were asked to make some difficult choices about the small comforts the event usually offers. With a budget of \$20 "CEO Dollars" and after speaking with Vinnies Case and Service Managers about the tough decision our clients have to make on a daily basis, CEOs were given a price list to choose whether they would spend their money on food, shelter or warmth.

St Vincent de Paul Society CEO, Michael Perusco explains that the Society used the event call for more action on housing affordability and the impacts this has on low-income earners and people experiencing homelessness. "It is crucial that affordable and social housing be made available to people at risk of homelessness or already experiencing homelessness so that we can offer them viable options to lead independent lives. Providing wrap-around services to people in secure accommodation is a far more effective way of ending the cycle of homelessness," he says.

St Vincent de Paul Society NSW President, Ray Reynolds says it is shameful that, in a country as prosperous as Australia, we should have so many people living in such a vulnerable situation.

"What is truly shocking is that so many of these people are women and children. The Society and its 6000 members in NSW refuse to stand by and do nothing and we will continue to call for action to be taken in addressing affordable housing and fixing a social housing system that is broken," says Mr Reynolds.

The Society continues to call for other key reforms of social housing including that the NSW Government expedite the transfer of public housing properties to community housing providers via long term leases and the inclusion of affordable housing targets for local government.



Malcolm Turnbull MP and His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Retd)



L-R: Alison Watkins (Coca Cola Amatil), Martine Jager (RAMS) and Holly Kramer



L-R: Ray Reynolds, Martine Jager (RAMS), Nicholas Gray (The Australian) and Michael Perusco.

LISMORE YOUTH TEAM MEETING



The first Lismore Youth Team Meeting for the year was a great success in Coffs Harbour and provided a wonderful opportunity for the team to get to know each other, and share their achievements and good news stories.

At the meeting the team identified skills and support that they would like from their youth coordinators as well as evaluated the effectiveness of the current youth programs offered by Vinnies Lismore. Through a client-centred approach the team brainstormed ideas to improve the services and support it can offer young people experiencing disadvantage going forward.

There was also significant discussion about how, as "one Society", the team can work together to attain better opportunities for all of our volunteers, regardless of age, and further contribute to the good works of the Society.



ST LUKE'S REVESBY

A special school commissioning Mass was held at St Luke's Revesby inducting new students into Mini Vinnies bringing the total number of Mini Vinnies members to 65 students in years 5 and 6.

The students are actively involved in raising awareness about social justice issues in their school and community as well as raising money for Vinnies. The group also organised food parcels to be distributed through their nearby school Mt. St. Joseph High School, Milperra whose students volunteer with Sydney Night Patrol Van.

Welcome to all our new Mini Vinnies members.

WAGGA WAGGA VOLUNTEER SELECTED AS NSW/ACT YOUNG ACHIEVER AWARD FINALIST

Congratulations to one Sophie Mason, Wagga Wagga youth volunteer who was selected as one of the ten semi-finalists in the Community Service Award for the 2014-2015 NSW/ACT Young Achiever Awards.

Sophie has been actively involved with the Wagga Wagga youth team, Vinnies shops as well as other organisations including volunteering in a Sri Lankan orphanage and shaving her hair for Shave for a Cure.

Wagga Wagga Youth Coordinator Megan said, "Sophie is an upstanding, community-minded and simply amazing person. We are so proud of her!"

BUSY FIRST YEAR FOR GUNNEDAH YOUTH CONFERENCE

Year 10 students from St Mary's College Youth Conference, Gunnedah have been busy fundraising and volunteering their time to collect and sort donated food. Students also delivered 12 food hampers to the Vinnies Gunnedah Conference to be given to farmers doing it tough in the Namoi Barwon Region.

Again in December they organised donations of food items from pupils and parents at St Mary's College, and together with food donated at St Xavier's Primary School, Gunnedah, the Youth Conference sorted and packed 38 Christmas Hampers for donation by the Gunnedah Conference to local people in the community who were doing it tough.

VALUING YOUTH: PROJECT UPDATE

The Society's Strategic Plan "Our Society, Our Plan" recognises that the Society's approach to recruitment and retention of members and volunteers will determine the success and sustainability of the Society. The Valuing Youth project has engaged our members, volunteers and employees in strategic conversations, defining successful youth and young adult involvement in the Society and how we can keep the Society strong, responsive and attractive now and for future generations.

Over the past year the Valuing Youth project has heard the perspectives and ideas of more than 250 members, volunteers and employees. The interviews told us what's working well, the barriers we need to address and the exciting opportunities which will strengthen our engagement of young people.

Rosemary Fisher, Armidale Central Council President reflected on her experience of the Valuing Youth workshop.

"I found the workshop held in our Diocesan Council both challenging and rewarding. We are all aware the Society needs to move forward but the how is the difficult thing. One thing we can't afford to lose is the Catholic soul of the Society. The present members and the volunteers are only caretakers of this wonderful Society. It was great to see so many attending each workshop. At the Armidale workshop there was a lot of discussion on where we thought (and hoped) the Society would be in 5 years' time. I came away from the workshop exhausted but positive. The facilitator Marie O'Brien did a great job keeping everyone focused.

The second workshop I attended was the Analysis Workshop in Sydney. At this workshop the facilitator had pulled together all the results from Central Council workshops and it was extremely interesting to find each Council had the same issues and concerns.



While there is a lot of work to be done, if we as members, volunteers and staff listen to each other, are open to new ideas and work together as one Society we will achieve amazing things. The encouraging thing that came out of the second workshop was - if each of us listens to the older more experienced members - plus the enthusiastic younger members, I am very positive that the future of the Society will be in the good hands."

The Armidale Central Council workshops was one of eleven held in various locations across NSW between August 2014 and February 2015. These workshops provided an opportunity for the Society to step back and review our understanding of Youth, how they can contribute to work of Vinnies now and in the future and how we can all contribute to make that happen.

In March, the Society held two analysis workshops with a sample of members, volunteers and employees across NSW. At these workshops we reviewed the collated information that was shared with us throughout the project. The workshop participants discussed the common themes and priorities that were identified during the consultation process and a proposed approach to developing these initiatives was presented. The group discussed the importance of engaging members, volunteers and employees across NSW to assist us in developing and implementing these initiatives at a grassroots level.



LISMORE CENTRAL COUNCIL'S MINI VINNIES GATHERINGS A HUGE SUCCESS

The Lismore Central Council's Mini Vinnies gatherings were hosted late last year by St Patrick's Primary in Macksville and St Joseph's Primary in Tweed Heads. Vinnies Lismore holds these special days annually to say thank you to its Mini Vinnies for their incredible support during the year, and to provide students with the opportunity to share some of their amazing work with other schools.

As well as a liturgy and some fun activities and games, the children participated in social justice workshops which were run by our senior leaders. Each school group also delivered a short presentation on their Mini Vinnies 'good works' throughout the year.

Combined, over 200 children attended the Mini Vinnies gatherings – an amazing turn out!



WORKING TOGETHER

The St Vincent de Paul Society is the lead agency in a joint initiative with a number of other partners to assist people in the Wagga Wagga and Tumut regions who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

The Society is the head of an alliance which is made up of other valued partners including Mission Australia, Sister's Housing Enterprises, Tumut Regional Family Services, Argyle Community Housing and Intereach Ltd.

St Vincent de Paul Society Support Services Manager, Pat Fogarty explains, "Working in partnership with mainstream health and community services, real estate agents and housing providers, the alliance will deliver locally based services that take a holistic approach in building sustainable outcomes for clients."

Alliance members will provide a 'no-wrong-door approach' for clients, meaning that regardless of which agency a client makes initial contact with, their needs will be assessed and a process initiated. People who are at risk of homelessness will be supported to remain safely housed, while those in a crisis situation will be provided with safe accommodation and supported to move into sustainable long-term housing.

In addition, a significant pool of Brokerage Funding has been included by government. This funding assists clients address any barriers that prevent them from accessing or maintaining housing such as falling into rental arrears as a result of unexpected medical costs or other emergencies.

Turning to the Alliance for help, were James and Sophie with their four young children. The family were living in a remote area and the children's health was being impacted adversely by their living conditions and growing family tensions. The family was referred by the Family Referral Service and contact was quickly made to Housing NSW to prioritise the family for relocation.

With brokerage funding, the family were moved to a new home, where they continue to receive outreach support. The children have settled happily into their new home and school. James and Sophie are seeking ongoing counselling to address the challenging issues presenting in their relationship. Slowly but surely, the family is starting to put the pieces of their life back together.

"It's early days just yet but so far so good. It was amazing to see the Alliance at work, in all five different agencies worked together to achieve a brighter future for this family," says Pat.

AMAZING SUPPORT FROM ST MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, BELLINGEN



St Mary's Primary in Bellingen went above and beyond for the 2014 Christmas Appeal.

Working closely with the Mary Immaculate Conference in Bellingen, they organised a 'Giving Tree' where students and their families brought in presents to place under the tree at a special event held in Term 4.

With support from St Mary's Primary, more than 20 incredible Christmas hampers (filled with everything you could imagine!) were put together and given out to families in need. Mary Immaculate Conference President, Yvonne Wynen, and Youth Coordinator, Sarah Mason,

were both extremely moved to witness such generosity from the parents and children. In fact, the support was so overwhelming that it actually brought tears to their eyes!

The families who received the hampers were also very moved when they were told where the hampers had come from. Each family wrote a personal card back to the family who donated their particular hamper. These were then read out at an assembly by teacher Carmel Dagger, who without her passion, St Mary's Primary would not have such a great team of Mini Vinnies.

A truly incredible effort!

BRIGHT

CREATING
FUTURES

For many children, settling in a new country is a daunting experience – new surrounds, new school, and a new language. Helping children and their families through settlement since 2006 is the St Vincent de Paul Society Support Services' Spark program.

Spark facilitates the settlement of children and families of refugee backgrounds through a range of educational, social and cultural programs. Every week volunteers work directly with over 300 primary school children and their families in Western Sydney through a homework, English support and activities club.

Many refugee children arriving in Australia are often placed directly in mainstream classrooms, a huge challenge given that many of them are only just starting to learn English and whose parents are yet unable to support them in their learning environment.

This was the case for Heba who having only recently arrived in Australia was very shy and reluctant to talk with volunteers and other children. Heba became frustrated and unhappy at school and was forced to rely on her cousin to translate for her as she was not confident enough to speak on her own.

Soon after Heba was paired with SPARK volunteer Evan who was able to bring Heba's English along in leaps and bounds as well as bring her out of her shell.

Evan explains that the change and growth he saw in Heba was remarkable.

"The first few sessions working with Heba were challenging as she wasn't confident to do her homework in front of me. After we found some games that she enjoyed Heba slowly began to communicate more with me.

"It has been a great experience seeing Heba's self-esteem improve and seeing her express herself in English. Heba now has the confidence to approach teachers, students and other volunteers and is using her great sense of humour to make them all laugh," says Evan.

Thanks to Spark, school has become a happy place for Heba and she is spreading her love of the program with other new students, acting as a translator and making them feel welcome.



IN MEMORIAM: ANTHONY THORNTON

MBE SQNLDR RTD
10 JUNE 1937 – 11 JULY 2015

By Dr John Falzon

Tony Thornton, former National President of the St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia, died suddenly on Saturday, 11 July, 2015.

He was a great lover of humanity, a great fighter for social justice. The persistence of poverty and homelessness in prosperous Australia affected him deeply. He was never willing to accept a status quo that included the wholesale rejection of people who were made to feel the sharp edge of inequality.

Some people look at charity as a means of assuaging our consciences in the face of social injustice. For Tony Thornton it was a sign that something was profoundly wrong when people were forced to rely on charity rather than being able to count on justice. Deeply respected not only in the St Vincent de Paul Society but throughout the not-for-profit sector and beyond, Tony was distinguished by his integrity.

Tony saw everything as connected to everything else and was not afraid to roll up his sleeves and throw himself into the work that needed to be done to address the injustices that made his blood boil. He felt deeply the pain inflicted on the First Peoples, Asylum Seekers, single mums, young unemployed, older unemployed, people with a disability, people experiencing homelessness, the low-paid and insecurely employed and anyone else he came into contact with who was struggling. As a member of the St Vincent de Paul Society he regularly visited people in their homes to give them material assistance but he never walked away without being touched, and educated by, their stories of struggle and pain. He recently expressed his horror over violence against women and had decided to throw himself into this cause as well.

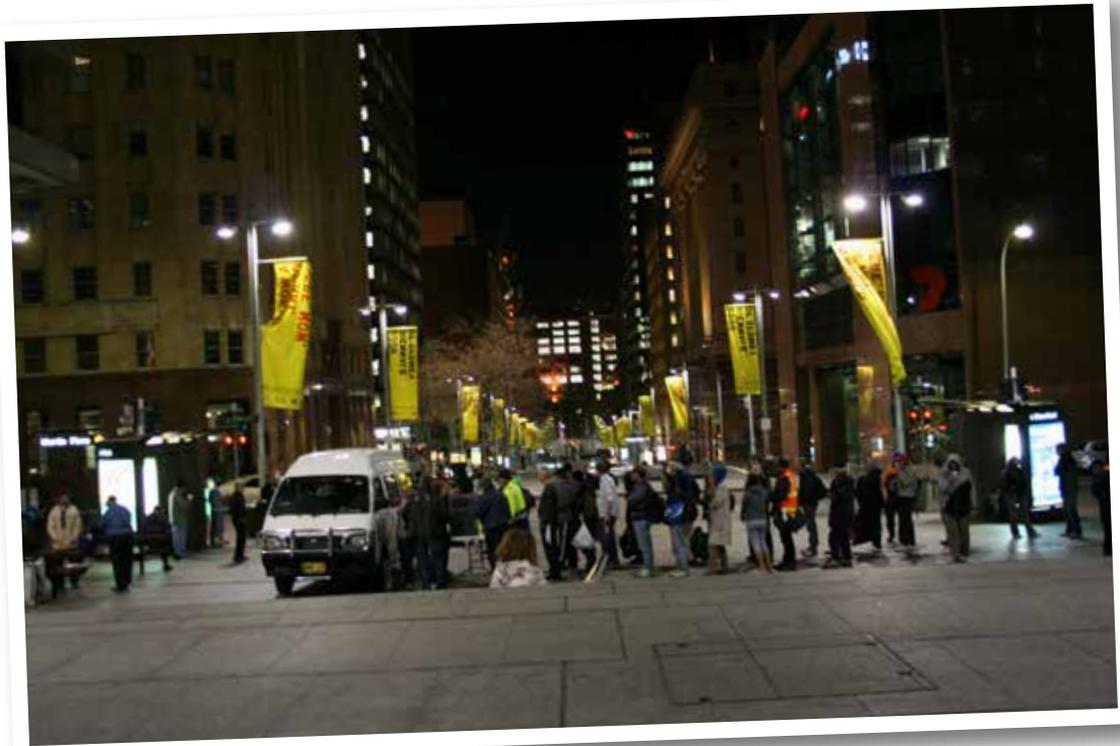
Anthony Thornton was born in Shanghai on 10th June 1937. His parents were English, his father directing a large technical training college in Shanghai. Tony always spoke with pride about his father's bravery in choosing to stay with his students while Shanghai was besieged and then taken over by the Japanese military administration. He lovingly kept an invaluable collection of memorabilia from this time, including the letter sent to his father ordering his imprisonment, his father's prison diaries, and a newspaper clipping from the Straits Times picturing baby Anthony as a young refugee as he and his mother were evacuated to safety. Little

wonder then that he felt such a sense of solidarity with, and compassion for, the people who seek refuge on our shores today. Tony and his mother found their way to Australia where they waited to be reunited with his father following the end of the war. Growing up in Balgowlah, Blayney, Moruya, Woodford in the Blue Mountains, and Wollongong, Tony went on to join the RAAF at the age of 15 as a junior trainee, retiring 24 years later as a Squadron Leader. He served in the Equipment Branch, saw service overseas and was awarded an MBE in the Queen's birthday honours in 1970, for service to the RAAF. It was in his early years in the Air Force that he won the heart of Aileen Murphy, the love of his life, a young woman from Wollongong who was to become his wife, his closest friend and confidante, soul-mate and chief combatant in the glorious battle of wits distinguished by a matchless display of dry humour and very human love.

Around 1994, he joined the St Vincent de Paul Society as a full-time cause. He stepped up, always with incredible modesty but never with any hesitation, to volunteer for whatever job needed doing. Before long he was put in charge of the Vinnies Centres in the Canberra-Goulburn Archdiocese, then President of the Archdiocesan Council, during which time he patiently but doggedly pursued, and achieved, the Council's independence within the Vinnies Federation. Following this, he was appointed National Secretary and then was elected as National President in 2011. He always said that his greatest experience was the simple joy of working alongside ordinary Vincentians, young and old and in-between, in the service of the poor and excluded. He was impelled by a hunger for social justice, a love for humanity and a conviction that his God was to be found not in pomp and splendour but in the poor and oppressed.

Tony loved his family. For him, there was never a shortage of love to be shared. His simple love for people was of a piece with his love for his family. He is survived and tenderly remembered by his wife, Aileen, his children Mary, Peter, Philip, Kathryn, Michael, and Damien and their families, including 17 grandchildren and 8 great-grandchildren, and by all whose lives he touched across the Canberra community, the nation, and beyond.

HILTON SYDNEY SERVES UP HOPE



Thank you to our generous partner Hilton Sydney for serving up hope to thousands of people experiencing homelessness through their support of the Sydney Night Patrol and the Matthew Talbot Hostel.



St Vincent de Paul Society
good works