

You are **MAKING A DIFFERENCE**

HOW YOUR SUPPORT OF VINNIES QUEENSLAND IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR COMMUNITY

SPRING 2022

You are providing hope and a helping hand

Helping Leah and Charlotte rebuild their lives

Supporting Queenslanders impacted by floods

Changing lives through education



Thank you *from our State President*

Welcome to my first edition of *You Are Making a Difference*.

It is a great privilege to begin my term as your new State President at such a significant time in our Society's history. I am honoured to be the first woman to serve in this role.

I would like to begin by paying tribute to outgoing State President Dennis Innes, who I believe epitomised servant leadership during his time in the role. With wisdom and compassion, he steered our Society through one of the most tumultuous periods in our state's history and left us in a stronger position at the end of it.

Many of the challenges Dennis faced remain with us today, from the lingering impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic to the devastation caused by recent floods. Our work in Queensland's most vulnerable communities has never been more critical, which is why I am especially thankful for your generous and loyal support today.

In this edition you will find inspiring updates on the lifeline you are providing to those left homeless and struggling by floods and the housing crisis, and those devastated by the war on Ukraine. You can also read about how you are helping to change lives through education.

I hope you feel a sense of pride as you read about the wonderful difference you are making. Thank you for your loyal and generous support.

With my deepest thanks,

P. McMahon

Trish McMahon
State President
St Vincent de Paul Society, QLD



St Vincent de Paul Society,
QLD's new State President,
Trish McMahon

Dennis Innes' *lasting legacy*



Dennis faced more than his fair share of challenges over the last four years. Queensland's ever-changing weather caused havoc through fire, floods and drought. COVID-19 turned life upside down for individuals, families and organisations (including Vinnies)

across our community. The housing crisis left record numbers of families without a roof over their heads. By quickly and successfully guiding our response to these challenges, Dennis enabled us to remain true to our vision and provide a hand up to all Queenslanders who needed it.

Ukraine crisis *update*

You are supporting people in urgent need, both here in Australia and overseas.

The war on Ukraine continues to drive vulnerable families from their homes into desperate situations.

Vinnies is helping to deliver urgently needed humanitarian aid to bordering countries including Poland, Slovakia, Romania and Hungary. Our Society's Board of the Council General International has also reached out to four Ukrainian Conferences seeking additional ways we can offer assistance. For displaced people arriving in Australia, Vinnies is working with the Ukrainian Community of Queensland to provide \$35,000 worth of vouchers.



Your kindness is helping support families displaced by the fighting in Ukraine, and settle into their new lives in Queensland.



If you or someone you know needs assistance, please call **1800 Vinnies (1800 846 643)** today.



Lasting support *for flood victims*

Your kindness is giving Queenslanders much needed hope to rebuild their lives.

More than half a year has passed since one of the worst floods in recent history and your generous support for those impacted remains as important as ever.

Thanks to the wonderful response to our Queensland Flood Appeal, Vinnies continues to provide clothes and day-to-day essentials to people who lost everything. But as St Vincent de Paul Society, QLD CEO Kevin Mercer explains, your support will be just as crucial in the months ahead.

“Once the initial shock of losing everything starts to settle, thousands of Queenslanders will need to rebuild their lives from scratch – a process that can take years. We’ve distributed \$1.5 million of \$2.7 million and anticipate that the remainder will be distributed in the 12 months to come.”

Thank you for being there at a time of great need for so many.

Just \$125 can provide emergency food and toiletries for a family who’ve lost everything in a natural disaster.

VINNIES QUEENSLAND FLOOD APPEAL

\$2,799,159
donated by generous supporters

\$1,543,544
distributed to people in need

1,644
Queenslanders assisted



883 food hampers



369 requests for furniture items



653 requests for financial support



342 requests for clothing items

Updated figures as at 26 July 2022.

A helping hand *when disaster strikes*

When February’s floods left Jacinta homeless, you were there to help.

As a Vinnies youth volunteer, Jacinta Corkeron was used to supporting people who were homeless. She never imagined she’d end up homeless herself, but that is exactly what happened when she was forced to evacuate from her flooded Windsor home in February.

“It all happened so quickly,” Jacinta remembers. *“I just had enough time to get a bag of belongings, the cat, put them all on a surfboard and float them to safety.”*

“Just a few weeks earlier I’d been talking to kids in schools about homelessness. Suddenly, I didn’t have a roof over my own head.” Jacinta

Thanks to the generous support of people like you, Vinnies was able to organise deliveries of food hampers and grocery vouchers to support Jacinta while she stayed with friends. When her home is repaired and ready for her to move back in, she knows she can also rely on Vinnies for help with rebuilding her life.

With your support, Vinnies volunteer Maree was able to help Jacinta with whitegoods, food and other essentials to help her rebuild her life.



Housing crisis

update You are helping to build new housing infrastructure for Queensland's most vulnerable.

Queensland remains firmly in the grips of an affordable housing crisis. Record interstate migration, rising rents and one of the most competitive housing markets in decades are driving more and more vulnerable families into homelessness.

In fact, recent research from Digital Finance Analytics found over 40 per cent of Australians are currently experiencing financial

stress in terms of maintaining housing.

With 21,000 Queenslanders facing homelessness every night, and over 50,000 on the wait list for social housing, there is an urgent need to focus on solving the problem.

Vinnies QLD CEO, Kevin Mercer, explains, "while our volunteer members and housing staff do a commendable job in

supporting Queenslanders to find accommodation, it's impossible to find people a safe and stable place to live if the homes simply do not exist in the first place."

Last year, Vinnies shared with you our vision to build a minimum of 500 affordable new dwellings in the next five years.

That vision is now well on its way to becoming reality. Vinnies is working with various partners to source development sites and prepare plans for inclusive social and affordable housing projects across the state.

Keep reading future editions of *You Are Making A Difference* for updates on this exciting development.

Thank you for helping provide more Queenslanders with a safe place to call home.

"We have heard increasingly from Queensland families, many who are on stable full-time incomes, telling us they have nowhere to go – there is nothing left they can afford."
Kevin Mercer, St Vincent de Paul Society, QLD CEO

With the support of people like you, Vinnies is building more affordable housing for Queenslanders experiencing or at risk of homelessness.



A place for people: INTEGRATED COMMUNITIES

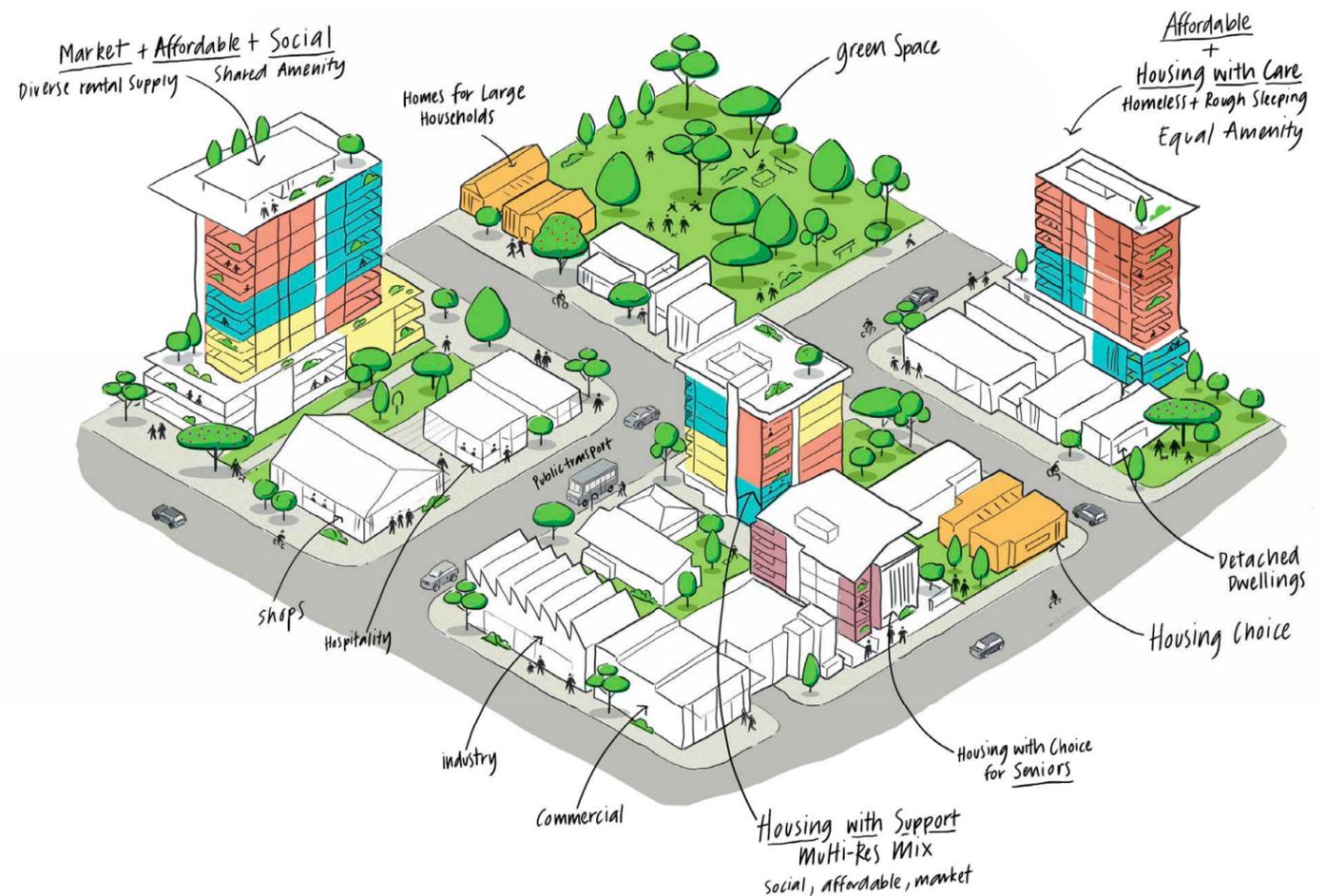
Through the financial contributions of supporters like you, Vinnies will create vibrant and inclusive communities for people from all walks of life.

The approach is a person-centred and place-based one, proven in a number of Scandinavian countries.

It's known as "housing first" and the model focusses

on helping vulnerable people transition through the process of crisis accommodation to achieving secure, stable tenancies and even home ownership.

"Housing first" is known to improve outcomes by ensuring people are connected to their community, social support networks and empowered to achieve a brighter future to live, work and thrive.



Did you know as little as \$364 can provide a homeless family with a week's worth of rent in safe, secure accommodation?

How education *is breaking the cycle of* poverty and homelessness

Your kindness is helping Afghan refugees succeed in the classroom.

A group of young Afghan refugees will get a head start in education thanks to support from volunteer member Rebecca Lim from the Vinnies Refugee Network and the St Peter and Paul Bulimba parish social justice group.

Rebecca helped to organise the donation of 25 reconditioned laptops for the refugees, who are preparing to study at TAFE this year. These computers are vital to helping the young Afghans get the very best out of their studies.

It is a wonderful example of what can happen when the Vinnies community comes together to help those in need. Good luck to the students with their studies.

“I used to study computer science back home and loved it, but I could never afford a computer – I couldn’t even do assignments.” Zainab

Thanks to you, volunteer members like Gerry Crooks, Michael Hollewand, Alison Stone and Sr Eugennie Levinson, organised laptops for Afghan students.



The Children’s Education Fund is changing more young lives, thanks to you.

When we asked you to help disadvantaged children through our Children’s Education Fund in the February edition of *Making a Difference*, you responded with extraordinary kindness. You helped raise more than \$370,000! What a wonderful achievement.

That helped provide stationery, schoolbooks, uniforms and computers – the essentials that kids need to thrive at school and break the cycle of poverty.

With the cost of living continuing to increase for many vulnerable families, your support for the Fund remains as important as ever – so no parent has to make difficult decisions.



Elizabeth and her children are so grateful for your support. Thank you for helping children.

For as little as \$75, you can help fund a child’s stationery and school resources.

Ray is looking to the future with hope

2021 was a bad year for Ray after a messy marriage breakdown saw him lose his home in the settlement. After applying unsuccessfully for more than 100 jobs, the 60-year-old had no income and nowhere to live.

Then one day Ray saw an ad for Skilling Queenslanders for Work, a job-ready program run by Vinnies. Case worker Katrina helped him through the course, which he successfully graduated with a Certificate II in Retail.

Ray now has a job in his local shopping centre and is hoping to move into a retail role in the future. Thanks to our many supporters for helping make life-changing programs like Skilling Queenslanders for Work possible.

“Katrina helped me update my resume, choose suitable clothes for the job interviews and also helped with the paperwork of applying for places to live.” Ray



A Vinnies work program, made possible by kind supporters like you, helped Ray turn his life around.

A warm, safe place to sleep

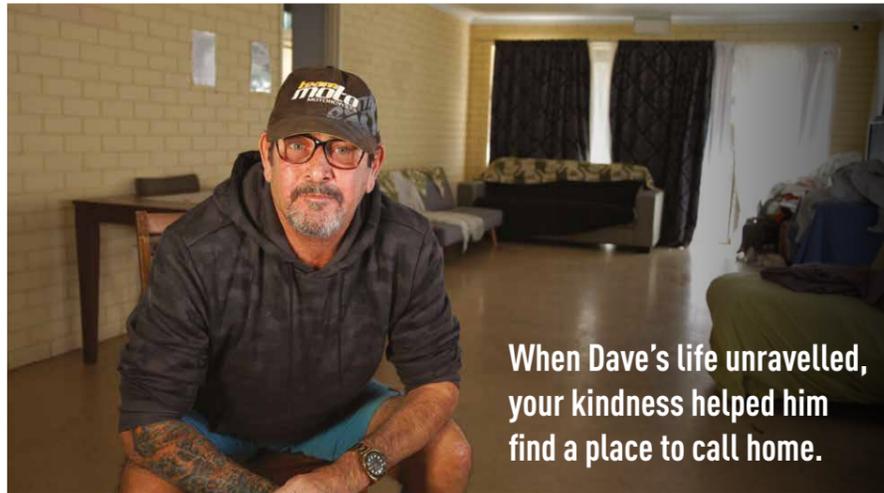
After five years of sleeping rough, you helped Dave find a place to call home.

Dave was faced with more tragedy in a twelve-month period than many of us will in a lifetime. First, he lost his long term girlfriend, weeks before they were set to move into their new home. Then within months he had lost both his father and brother. Dave turned to alcohol to cope with the heartbreak and trauma, and his life quickly unravelled.

Dave soon found himself with nothing but the clothes he was wearing, a backpack and a sleeping bag. He spent the next five years sleeping on the beach and taking shelter in a cold public toilet when it was raining. He lived in constant fear, but thanks to your generosity we were able to help him.

Dave's life turned around when he met Vinnies Homelessness Support Worker Sally. With your kind support, Sally helped Dave move into Rendu Lodge this April, where the stability of a place to call home is allowing him to put his life back together.

Scan QR code to see more of Dave's inspiring story.



When Dave's life unravelled, your kindness helped him find a place to call home.

The biggest CEO Sleepout yet

This June, business and community leaders across Queensland once again traded warm beds for cold ground in support of the Vinnies 2022 CEO Sleepout. Sharing your passion and commitment to our shared mission, they raised vital funds to provide much-needed hope and support for those facing homelessness.

Just like you, they care for those less fortunate and choose to make a difference with their leadership. Thanks to kind-hearted supporters like you, we raised over \$2,000,000 across the state to assist vulnerable people in your community.

"St Vinnies have been my life support. If it wasn't for them, I wouldn't be here. For the first time, I have a little bit of hope." Dave, who became homeless after losing three close family members within 12 months



Leah and Charlotte appreciate the support of volunteer members Frank and Narelle, whose work would not be possible without you.

The life-changing power of a safe, secure home

Leah is putting her life back together – and you are helping her do it.

You might remember reading Leah's story in a letter we sent you recently. She grew up under the constant threat of violence from her abusive father.

By 15 she was living in a youth shelter. By 16, she was pregnant with Charlotte.

But Leah's life turned around

when she connected with Vinnies on a visit to a hospital mental health unit. With your generous support, our team arranged accommodation in a Vinnies domestic violence shelter, and eventually a permanent home.

With a safe and secure roof over her and Charlotte's heads, Leah is

building her confidence and getting her life back on track. She's even commenced studying a Bachelor of Social Work at university, so she can one day help others who are struggling.

Thank you for providing hope and a helping hand to Queenslanders like Leah.

Thank you for your messages of hope and support for Leah.

Leave your message of support for Leah and Charlotte.
I hope your lives are better now. I also hope you both have adequate support systems in place for the future. You both must be very strong 😊

Leave your message of support for Leah and Charlotte.
Dear Leah & Charlotte
I admire you for the steps that you took to leave your home and go into the big wide world. Fortunately you eventually found that better life and your situation can only become happier. Take care, keep smiling.
God Bless Pat.
Please return with a personal message in our reply paid envelope so we can pass it on.

Leave your message of support for Leah and Charlotte.

I hope this \$20 can go a little way to help you out

Leave your message of support for Leah and Charlotte.

You have a long road ahead of you but you have now at least taken the first step.

Leave your message of support for Leah and Charlotte.

Best wishes lovely Ladies.
Hope Vinnies can bring the help, hope & support you need right now.
Best wishes

Leave your message of support for Leah and Charlotte.

You already possess everything you need to become great. Deep inside of you is more strength you will ever know.

I wish all the best for both of you.

Please return with a personal message in our reply paid envelope so we can pass it on. *Chere*

Leave your message of support for Leah and Charlotte.

Dear Leah & Charlotte,

I hope you will be blessed with happiness in the days to come with your new beginning.
Love for now,
Judy.

Thank you for sharing the gift of hope with Leah through your kind messages.

Leave your message of support for Leah and Charlotte.

Dear Leah, dear Charlotte

Keep smiling
be happy
be you

Sending much love

Leave your message of support for Leah and Charlotte.

DEAR LEAH AND CHARLOTTE I HOPE you are doing fine I wish you both the best and my heart goes out to you both I hope you get the love peace and happiness in your life be strong be brave and let the world know that life can get better to hope for your future it will change so love from a man that has been where you have so all the best and take care b yours

Please return with a personal message in our reply paid envelope so we can pass it on.

Leave your message of support for Leah and Charlotte.
LEAH + CHARLOTTE

MY HEART CRIES FOR YOU

I HOPE YOU FIND PEACE.

MARY

Leave your message of support for Leah and Charlotte.

Dear Leah & Charlotte,
As a male with 11 & 13 year old kids I am devastated that other men and fathers can do that to their families. Not all men are like that! I'm so sorry you've had to live in your car. Please know there are a lot of good people out there. I'm poor but I'm moved by your experience and I want to help by donating. I'll also

help locally and personally help anyone I know is in

Please return with a personal message in our reply paid envelope so we can pass it on.
TX-143762 Trouble from DV. All the very best, John Yeppoon



Vinnies
good works