MEDIA RELEASE

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Vinnies Winter Appeal 2026 launches to support Canberrans facing housing instability and rising cost pressures

As winter approaches, St Vincent de Paul Society Canberra/Goulburn is calling on the community to support the 2026 Vinnies Winter Appeal, with new data showing more Australians are being forced to cut back on essentials just to keep a roof over their heads.

More than half of Australians (55%) report reducing spending on basics such as food, medication and bills to afford housing, while nearly one in three say they do not have enough savings to cover an emergency. (Source: YouGov survey commissioned by St Vincent de Paul Society, March 2026)

Locally, these pressures are being felt across the ACT and surrounding regions, with more individuals and families turning to Vinnies for support to stay housed, warm and connected through the winter months.

Lucy Hohnen, CEO of St Vincent de Paul Society Canberra/Goulburn said the figures reflect what frontline teams are seeing every day.

“Winter is already one of the toughest times of year for the people we support who are facing hardship, but this year we’re seeing more households than ever living week-to-week with no buffer,” Lucy said.

“It only takes one unexpected event, a job loss, illness or relationship breakdown for someone to go from coping to crisis. That’s where Vinnies steps in.”

In just 12 months, from April 2025 to April 2026, our Emergency Relief Helpline received more than 19,000 calls for help (approx. 70 every day).

For Claire*, a Canberra mum, that moment came after experiencing domestic violence and being unable to secure stable housing. She and her young son spent two years living in a caravan while navigating rising costs and trying to rebuild their lives.

“I just wanted somewhere safe for my son to grow up,” she said.

With support from Vinnies, Claire accessed wraparound assistance including case management, emergency relief and pathways to longer-term housing. Today, she and

her son have moved into a stable home giving them the safety and foundation to move forward.

This winter, Vinnies Canberra/Goulburn is aiming to raise over $450,0000 to support vulnerable people experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness, poverty and ongoing cost-of-living pressures across the ACT & surrounding regions.

Funds raised will provide practical, immediate support including food, clothing, assistance with energy bills and access to longer-term services that help prevent crisis and build stability.

“Every donation helps people find relief, dignity and hope during one of the hardest times of the year,” Lucy continued.

“With demand continuing to grow, community support is critical to ensure we can continue to be there for the people who need us most.”

With the end of financial year approaching, now is the time to act. Donations of $2 or more made before 30 June are tax-deductible, meaning you can support families like Claire’s while also receiving a benefit at tax time.

Donations to the Vinnies Winter Appeal can be made at vinnies.org.au/winter-appeal, by calling 13 18 12, or in-store at Vinnies Canberra/Goulburn Shops.

Interviews available:

- Lucy Hohnen, CEO, St Vincent de Paul Society Canberra/Goulburn

*Name and images changed to protect privacy.