St Vincent de Paul Society CANBERRA/GOULBURN good works

MEDIA RELEASE

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More people seeking help for the first time across the Western Region communities this winter

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.

Across the Western and Goulburn regions, Vinnies is seeing a clear shift with more people reaching out for support, and more are doing so for the first time.

Over the past 12 months, people across the region reached out for support more than 5,250 times, a 12 per cent increase on the previous year. Volunteers also provided more than 8,486 instances of assistance, with demand heavily focused on essential, day-to-day needs.

Support is increasing around the basics - food, vouchers, clothing, transport and utilities, reflecting the growing pressure of living costs on local households. Notably, 30 per cent of people supported were new, highlighting how quickly changing circumstances can push individuals and families into needing help.

Sarah Murdoch, Director of Community Engagement at St Vincent de Paul Society Canberra/Goulburn, said the trend is being felt across communities of all sizes.

“Across our Western Region communities, we’re seeing more people reaching out who have never needed support before,” Sarah said.

“What they’re asking for is telling. It’s the basics. Putting food on the table, paying bills and being able to get to work or appointments.”

Many people are also needing support more than once, pointing to ongoing financial pressure rather than short-term hardship.

“This isn’t about a one-off tough week,” Sarah said.

“We’re seeing people come back because the pressure isn’t easing. That’s what makes support like the Winter Appeal so critical.”

This winter, Vinnies Canberra/Goulburn is calling on the community to support people experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness and financial hardship across the Western region.

Funds raised will provide practical support including food, clothing, bill assistance and services that help people regain stability.

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

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.

The Western Region includes Boorowa, Cootamundra, Gundagai, Harden, Lake Cargelligo, Temora, Tumut, West Wyalong, Young, Crookwell, Goulburn, Yass.

Interviews available on request.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES
Mia Maze - Manager Marketing and Communications
St Vincent de Paul Society Canberra/Goulburn
Mobile 0491 014 350
Mia.Maze@vinnies-cg.org.au