

Vinnies News

Surge in demand for Vinnies' help as cost of living bites

Increases in the cost of living are forcing West Australian families to go hungry as they struggle to make ends meet, new data from Vinnies WA has revealed.

In the month of June, Vinnies' Emergency Assistance and Support program helped 2,206 families, an increase of more than 7 per cent compared to the previous month.

With Perth recording the largest rise in inflation of all capital cities in the March quarter, 3,700 calls were made to the Vinnies WA call centre during June.

"Food insecurity is the number one flagged issue, and almost all clients who call Vinnies request help with food," said Maija Hildebrand, Service Development Manager at Vinnies WA.

"We're seeing many new people reaching out for help for the first time, with more and more clients worried about the cost of living, inflation and rises in food prices."

Ms Hildebrand said that the number of people experiencing homelessness was increasing.

In June last year, 3 per cent of clients indicated they were experiencing homelessness, that number increased to 6 per cent this June.



The demand for Vinnies services is on the rise

LIMITED EDITION VINNIES VAULT CARD

**How do you magically turn
\$40 into \$54?**

Simply purchase a Vinnies Vault Card in any Vinnies shop in Western Australia!

Get in quick, only in store until 14 August.



A new era begins

On 1 July, David Kennedy took over as State President of the St Vincent de Paul Society in WA.

David follows Gladys Demissie who helped steer the Society through the COVID pandemic and brought members, staff and volunteers closer together. We spoke to both of them for this edition of Vinnies News.

Thank you, Gladys

Gladys Demissie served as State President from 2018 to 2022.

When you look back on your term as State President, what are some of your biggest achievements?

The approach I've tried to take is the idea of 'One Society'. It doesn't matter whether someone gets paid for what they do or whether they volunteer their time, the fact is, we're all here because we have signed up to what the Society is about.

My term has been the COVID term. I'm just so proud of the way that we've been agile and flexible. We were all trying to adapt, but not lose sight of why we're here.

I'm also proud of the work we did through the State President's Housing Fund, which has supported particularly women escaping family and domestic violence.

We've been able to help people to stay in their homes or motels. We helped one woman with seven children stay in a motel, until she finally got a rental. That is a memory that will stick with me.

How did you manage it all?

I told myself I made a commitment. Being State President is a role of service. It's front and centre for me. They talk about the stars being aligned, and it was just the perfect time for me. It was so important to give almost all of myself, because I'm so connected to what Vinnies stands for. I've been really grateful for Susan Rooney, because we've worked really well together. She's a very skilled CEO and very respectful of this position.

I can walk away thinking that maybe not everything worked out, but I think I've made a difference.



Former State President Gladys Demissie

You were only the second woman to lead the Society in WA. How did that affect your work?

When I was first on some of the sub-committees, it was very male-dominated. I thought there were some barriers to break down. But only recently, someone stood up at a meeting and acknowledged that two women – Susan and I – lead this organisation. It's really significant that he said that.

I think diversity is important. I'm proud of our State Council and the diversity. You can't have everyone agree with you. You can't expect others to jump on board if you're not prepared to think there might be a better way of doing this and I just might have to learn. Success only happens when we're all in it together.

Is there a particular philosophy that guides the work you do as a Vincentian?

I am a Vincentian because of my mother. It's what I saw in her. She was always doing this sort of work. I'm about faith in action, so not just having faith but doing something about it. I want to live a life that makes a difference to someone. It doesn't have to be written about or published, but it's just something that you know.

Do you have any advice for your successor, David Kennedy?

David is a no-nonsense guy, but he's also humble and passionate. His heart is in the role and he will do a great job.

What will you do now?

It is a big change. I've been involved with so many issues, so it will be interesting just to step back into a Conference. I will take some time just for me. I've planned a trip to Melbourne to see my daughter and another trip to Singapore. I think I'll do a bit more travel, even if it's just around WA.

We welcome David as our new State President

Meet David Kennedy

David Kennedy started his term as the new State President on 1 July.

Having retired in 2017 from a life in real estate, David is very active, balancing his Vincentian duties with family life – he has four children and six grandchildren. David is a member of the Subiaco Conference, and previously served on State Council as Vice President. He enjoys golf, swimming, cycling, oil painting and some minor consulting work with old client friends.

Congratulations on becoming the new President of the St Vincent de Paul Society in WA. How are you feeling as you begin this new chapter?

Gladys has left big shoes to fill, however I will endeavour to keep up with the help of a great leadership team which includes Susan Rooney, our CEO, Vice Presidents Pauline McIntyre, Danny Cloghan, and Luke Coffey, and Tinashe Kamangira, our State Treasurer. I also have great support from State Council and the office administration executives to ensure we have the ground covered. All of this support gives me the confidence to embark on my term as your State President.

You've said Gladys Demissie has left big shoes to fill – what made her term as State President so significant?

At Gladys' farewell, I highlighted a few things which impressed me about her as State President over the past four years. From the beginning, she has had boundless energy and a total commitment to take on all and everything Vinnies-related and more.

If that's not enough, she had weekly meetings with Susan Rooney, Andrew York and Maija Hildebrand, and created a great team atmosphere. She was also in contact with me as Vice President almost daily.

She made a point of attending Festival Masses whenever she could and travelled to meet Vincentians from Albany in the south to Kalgoorlie in the east, Halls Creek in the north and major towns in between.

Her leadership has been a great guide for me and I hope she takes a well-earned rest before embarking on any new projects in the future.

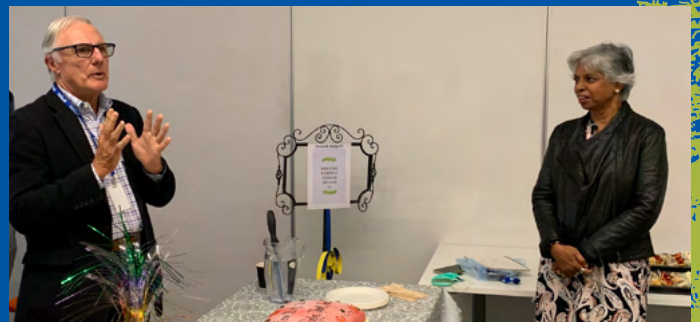
I just want to say, "Well done, you good and faithful servant."

Please tell us some of things you have planned as State President.

I also intend to attend Regional Council meetings and Festival Masses wherever possible, as it provides the opportunity to applaud new leaders and new volunteers in addition to congratulating long serving members. New volunteers are the lifeblood of the Society, and, COVID permitting, I would like to bring back workshops for new volunteers at Ozanam House in addition to leadership workshops and the like going forward.



New State President David Kennedy



Vinnies CEO Sleepout raises over \$900,000

More than 100 West Australian business and community leaders have raised a total of \$900,244 for Vinnies homelessness services.

The Vinnies CEO Sleepout took place at Optus Stadium on 23 June, with other events taking place simultaneously across Australia.

Throughout the night, participants learned about homelessness in Western Australia, the work Vinnies does, and the important role that business and the community can play in reducing homelessness.

With temperatures dipping to around 7 degrees, participants spent the night outdoors, equipped with only a sleeping bag, a pillow, and two pieces of cardboard to sleep on and make a shelter.





Vinnies CEO Susan Rooney, who joined participants in sleeping out, said the funds would go to Vinnies homelessness and housing services.

They include Tom Fisher House, which provides an intensive intervention service for adults with complex needs experiencing long-term homelessness, and two Passages Youth Engagement Hubs – one in Perth, the other in Mandurah – which provide safe and non-judgemental spaces for vulnerable young people to access specialist support and referrals. The Passages Hubs are a joint venture between Vinnies WA and the Rotary Club of Perth and Mandurah.

“We know too well the pressures in housing, the rental market, and the increased cost of living, all of which are making it incredibly tough for West Australians,” Ms Rooney said.



“While many people will find ways to cut their spending to make ends meet, for those that are already vulnerable, the slide into homelessness can come suddenly – in the form of an increase in rent, the loss of a job or a family breakdown.

“The money raised as part of the Vinnies CEO Sleepout will help us support people experiencing homelessness, and provide them access to the services they need to get back on track.”

Ms Rooney also said that business and community leaders had a unique platform to support people experiencing homelessness.

“The advocacy that business and community leaders can undertake beyond this event, by speaking about the issue in their professional and personal lives, can have a lasting impact on the way we respond to homelessness as a society,” she said.



Nollamara shopfront gets much-needed makeover

Sometimes it's the small things that make a really big difference.

A big thank-you to the City of Stirling for helping our Vinnies Nollamara storefront get the much-needed makeover it deserves.

The council provided \$3,156 through its 'Place Grants', which Vinnies

matched. That made it possible to get the façade cleaned and painted, and some new artwork installed.

Shop manager Lois Mehan says everyone's been excited by the new look shop.

"I've been looking at this tired old shop front for some time now, and thanks to the grant from City of

Stirling, we are now a light, bright part of our local shopping centre.

"It has been more than well received by all and sundry and is now highly visible from the street."

We agree – take a look.



Spot the difference: The Nollamara shop before and after the makeover.

National Volunteer Week

Our shop volunteers are some of the most dedicated and hard-working people you will find. Without them, we simply would not be able to do what we do.

During National Volunteer Week, we gave them the opportunity to let their hair down... over a cuppa and some bickies. Here are some photos of celebrations from around the State.



Belmont



Busselton



Call Centre



Morley



Myaree



Stirling

Fundraise your way!

By Aileen Mariner, Fundraising Coordinator

Making a difference for Vinnies has never been easier with our new fundraising site.

When a group of Vinnies volunteers wanted to host a Winter Sleepout fundraiser, we asked if they would like to help us test our new fundraising site. They agreed, and with the help of family, friends and the community, they promptly raised

an impressive \$4,665 to help people in need.

It's easy to create your own stunning fundraiser to help Vinnies. You can even host or join a Vinnies School or Community sleepout.

Downloadable information kits, posters, and social sharing links and QR codes make it easier than ever to share the cause and make a difference.

Simply follow these steps:

- Register your fundraiser
- Spread the word
- Post updates
- Fundraise
- Make a difference!

To learn more please visit www.fundraise.vinnieswa.org.au



Vinnies Winter Appeal 2022

This year, the Winter Appeal's focus is on supporting women and children escaping family and domestic violence.



While Vinnies in Western Australia is not a primary provider of family and domestic violence services, its Emergency Assistance and Support and Housing Plus programs provide victim-survivors with practical

support and medium-term housing during times of crisis.

Domestic violence is the leading cause of homelessness amongst women and children.

If women escaping domestic violence cannot find crisis accommodation, they often find themselves homeless, living in their car, on a friend's couch, or worse, on the streets.

The Winter Appeal is still aiming to meet its fundraising target, and Vinnies CEO Susan Rooney is encouraging people to donate.

"With the recent increases in costs due to inflation, energy bills and fuel prices, I am gravely concerned that we will not be able to help people in need who turn to us," she said.

"Only with your support can we continue giving vulnerable people a hand up. If you have not had the chance to respond, then I ask you to make a kind donation today.

"If you have already donated to our Winter Appeal – thank you. We are very grateful."

Please donate here www.donate.vinnies.org.au

Doing it tough for Passages

Vinnies WA will be running a new and unique fundraising event in September, with participants raising funds to help young people sleeping rough on the streets of Perth.

But there's a catch: The more funds people raise, the worse their sleep.

The Vinnies 'Tough Night Out' is nothing compared to what young people sleeping on the streets experience, but it's great motivation for supporters to ensure participants have the ultimate bragging rights and a super tough night out.

25% Fundraising Target
POLICE MOVE ON NOTICE

Wake up, gather your belongings and move elsewhere on your property or office for the remainder of the night!

50% Fundraising Target
ONGOING DISTURBANCES

You'll also have to turn the radio on or play some form of audio in the background for the entire night!

75% Fundraising Target
BROKEN SLEEP

You'll be moving throughout the night, with the radio on and setting an alarm to wake you up every 2 hours!

100% Fundraising Target
HARSH WEATHER CONDITIONS

In addition to broken sleep, disturbances and a move on notice, the rain has soaked your pillow, you can no longer use it!

By getting involved, not only will people be showing that they care about the young people at Passages and youth homelessness, they will also understand a little bit of what these young people go through each night sleeping rough.

Every day, our Passages youth workers empower young people by facilitating their independence and supporting participation in their community.

The Vinnies 'Tough Night Out' will happen on Friday, 9 September. To register, go to www.vinniestoughnightout.org.au

Passages Youth Engagement Hubs are a joint venture between Vinnies WA and Rotary Perth and Mandurah.

PASSAGES
YOUTH ENGAGEMENT HUB



Mix94.5 supports Vinnies for much-needed cause!



Mix94.5 will be supporting Vinnies WA in July, encouraging the community to help their fellow West Australians in need.

Until 7 August, listeners who have donated to Vinnies will have the chance to win a Meet & Greet and have breakfast with Pete, Matt & Kymba and watch them do their show live in the studio.

Mix94.5 supporting Vinnies WA couldn't come at a more crucial time.

It will run alongside the Vinnies Winter Appeal, which focuses on supporting vulnerable West Australians, including women and children escaping family and domestic violence.

www.donate.vinnies.org.au



vinnieswa.org.au

9 Brewer Road Canning Vale WA 6155
PO Box 1450 Canning Vale DC WA 6970
P: 08 6323 7500
E: info@svdpwa.org.au



Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as the Traditional Custodians of this land, with deep respect. May Elders, past and present, be blessed and honoured. May we join together and build a future based on compassion, justice, hope, faith, and reconciliation.

To respect the privacy of the people we assist, some of the names and images may have been changed.