St Vincent de Paul Society CANBERRA/GOULBURN good works

MEDIA RELEASE

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Demand rises across Far South Coast as more locals reach out for help this winter

Demand continues across Far South Coast as more locals rely on support 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 Far South Coast, these pressures are being felt across the community, with thousands of locals continuing to turn to Vinnies for support.

Over the past 12 months, Vinnies volunteers supported people more than 5,250 times across the region, alongside over 8,0000 instances of assistance provided, with the majority focused on everyday essentials.

Food support, including groceries and vouchers, made up more than half of all assistance provided, alongside strong demand for clothing and transport support, highlighting the growing pressure on household budgets.

Just as importantly, this isn't only long-term hardship. Nearly one in four people supported were reaching out for help for the first time, showing how quickly people are being pushed beyond what they can manage.

Sarah Murdoch, Director of Community Engagement at St Vincent de Paul Society Canberra/Goulburn, said the figures reflect what local volunteers are seeing every day.

"Across the Far South Coast, we're seeing people reach out because the basics are becoming harder to cover food, clothing, getting to appointments and paying bills," Sarah said.

"What's concerning is how many people are reaching out for the first time. These are people who have been managing, but rising costs are pushing them beyond what they can keep up with. This tells us people don't have any buffer," Sarah said.

"When groceries, fuel and bills all rise at once, people need help straight away — and increasingly, they're coming back because the pressure isn't easing."

This winter, Vinnies Canberra/Goulburn is aiming to raise vital funds to support people experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness and financial hardship across the region.

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.

“With demand continuing across the region, 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 South Coast includes Batemans Bay, Moruya, Narooma, Bega, Merimbula, Eden

Interviews available on request.

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