

AUTUMN 2019

Together we are

# MAKING A DIFFERENCE

A newsletter for supporters of St Vincent de Paul Society Queensland



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[www.vinnies.org.au/donate](http://www.vinnies.org.au/donate)



St Vincent de Paul Society  
QUEENSLAND

*good works*



## FROM THE STATE PRESIDENT



The stories inside this edition of *Making A Difference* are a testament to the positive impact Vinnies has had on not only the lives of those who need our help but on the wider community.

Our cover story is an example that the hand up we provide many not always financial, but sometimes it is can simply be companionship and advocacy.

After struggling with homelessness Keith was offered hope after interacting with our homelessness staff on the Sunshine Coast. In his own words 'they were constantly checking to make sure I was ok.'

Sometimes the support we provide coincides with other events in a person's life, leading to a brighter future. Again Keith's story is a great example, where we helped him find a place to live at the same time he secured himself a full-time job with a supportive employer.

Keith not only has a home now but is a highly valued employee of a local business.

Inside this issue you will also read the story of Paw Hel Soe and how our volunteer tutors empower migrants and refugees to make the most of life in Australia. Paw Hel Soe and her family received help from our volunteers and are thriving in their new Brisbane home. But as you will read our support didn't start and end with English lessons. Paw Hel Soe volunteered in our offices, experience that led to her being offered part-time employment. This is another example of how giving a hand up has benefitted the wider community.

*Making A Difference* is a celebration of our ability to help those in need. Happy reading.

Dennis Innes, State President  
St Vincent de Paul Society QLD

## WHY WE HELP



1 in 8



Queenslanders live below the

**POVERTY LINE**

1 in 5



experience

**MENTAL ILLNESS**

## HOW WE HELP

Centres of Charity (Vinnies shops)	Family support centres	Food distribution	Aged and disability services
Mental health services	Child and family support services	Drug and alcohol support	Youth services
Disaster relief	Overseas services	Special works	Housing and homelessness support
Social justice	Financial wellbeing services	Migrant and refugee services	Education services

**Making a Difference** is produced by St Vincent de Paul Society Queensland.

**All correspondence can be sent to:**  
St Vincent de Paul Society Queensland  
PO Box 3351 South Brisbane QLD 4101  
**Email:** dosomething@svdpqld.org.au



## TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

To donate call 13 18 12 or visit [www.vinnies.org.au/donate](http://www.vinnies.org.au/donate)

Follow us on Social Media





## HOPE AND RESILIENCE – KEITH'S STORY

**Thanks to the support of Vinnies and a supportive local employer offering him a chance, Sunshine Coast man Keith was able to rebuild his life after a period of homelessness.**

Keith struggled to find work after moving to the Sunshine Coast and with no regular income, the next four years were especially tough. In between stints of shared and temporary housing, Keith had no option but to sleep in his car. But after bravely asking for help from Vinnies support worker Sally Noble, step by step, Keith began to get his life back on track.

Vinnies role in giving Keith a hand up was life changing, not only in advocating for and assisting him with finding a place to call home, but also importantly giving him hope.

“I was relieved I was finally getting some help, it was a huge weight off my shoulders,” he says. “Vinnies were constantly checking to make sure I was ok. They helped with things like food vouchers, and always told me not to hesitate to call if I needed them.”

With the Sunshine Coast boasting one of the most in-demand rental markets in the country, finding Keith somewhere to live was always going to be hard work, but with the assistance of the Vinnies homelessness program, Keith was able to secure a unit in Mooloolaba.

The roof over Keith's head came at the perfect time, as just two weeks prior he had landed the job he needed at local Sunshine Coast business Sunseeker Caravans.



**HARD WORKER:** Keith's boss Chris Michel (pictured right) says Keith is a fantastic employee and his go to man when he needs something done.

Keith is still living in the Mooloolaba unit and working full-time for Sunseeker Caravans, a job he says he enjoys so much he hopes to stay until retirement.

“I'm thankful. Without Vinnies, and other supporting establishments, people who are in need would not be able to cope with their misfortune,” he says.

Having found stable housing and employment, and knowing the reality of what life can be like without either for the hundreds of people experiencing homelessness on the Sunshine Coast, Keith has some simple advice:

“Don't give up, there is help out there, all they have to do is ask and not feel ashamed of their circumstances. They will meet people in similar situations and they are not alone.”

CELEBRATING  
**125**  
*years*  
**125**  
HELPING QUEENSLANDERS  
Vinnies  
good works

This year we are celebrating 125 years supporting Queenslanders - with our origins starting in 1894 when our first Vinnies Conference was established at St Brigid's Church, Red Hill, Brisbane.

Vinnies has grown to 270 locations and 147 Vinnies shops across Queensland. State President, Dennis Innes said “We're proud that we can continue to provide assistance to people in need just as those Vincentians did all those years ago.”

Keep an eye out for our 125 year celebrations throughout 2019 and beyond.



## AFTER THE FLOODS

**Jim\* always firmly believed a man should stand on his own two feet, and lived this belief as he worked hard on both his property near Dalby and as a grazing contractor.**

But after seven years of drought, Jim bravely admitted he could no longer keep his farm viable. His only choice was to pause his dreams and head north to work as a contractor in order to keep his cattle alive.

As a grazing contractor Jim is responsible for 16 working dogs and maintenance and fuel for his 4WD and motorbike. When times are good he has to employ other contractors to get the work done, but when times are tough he does it alone, often without pay.

When this summer's extreme heatwave hit North Queensland, resulting in temperatures well over 40 degrees, Jim couldn't work and missed out on a month's income.

When the heatwave ended, Jim was looking forward to returning to work to get on top of his bills. Then the rain came, too much of it. The properties he was contracted to work on were decimated by the flooding that inundated North Queensland in February 2019.

His employers lost thousands of cattle, his livelihood, and of the few thousand left, many were sore-footed or suffering from pneumonia, and as a result were unable to be worked.

Jim was on the verge of giving up and selling his own cattle just to pay bills and feed his working dogs when he heard about Vinnies disaster assistance on offer.



Jim called Vinnies Brisbane Helpline and they connected him to volunteers who reassured him help was available.

Vinnies gave Jim food vouchers, paid some of his urgent bills and offered some emotional support. He now feels he can believe again and look positively into the future.

*\* Name changed for privacy.*

If you need financial support following the North Queensland flood please call 1800 846 643 (Mon - Fri 8.30 - 12.30pm) or our Townsville office 4771 4077 (Mon - Fri 8.00 - 4.00pm).

### HOW YOU CAN HELP

Vinnies has been there for the people of North Queensland in the immediate aftermath of the floods and we will be there to help as people recover and rebuild their lives. Your donation will help us continue to make a difference to those in need.



13 18 12



[www.vinnies.org.au/Donate](http://www.vinnies.org.au/Donate)



**Brisbane Powerhouse - New Farm**  
**Cbus Super Stadium - Gold Coast**

**REGISTER NOW >** [ceosleepout.org.au](http://ceosleepout.org.au)

## 2019 VINNIES CEO SLEEPOUT® WE'VE SAVED A PLACE FOR YOU





## REFUGEES ACHIEVING GOALS

**Paw Hel Soe Hla is a true refugee success story. With the help of Vinnies Volunteer Refugee Tutoring & Community Support program (VoRTCS), the 19-year-old secured both a part-time job in accounting as well as a place at the Queensland University of Technology (QUT).**

Paw Hel Soe and her family, who are of the Karen minority from Myanmar, arrived in Australia in 2007 from a refugee camp in Thailand. The north Brisbane resident said the support of her VoRTCS tutors, who volunteer once a week to help the family, has been invaluable.

“Prior to getting Vinnies help with VoRTCS in 2012 I would never had thought of working in an accounting job, I was a girl from a refugee camp,” she says. “The tutors really helped, without them I’d still be in TAFE, learning English, I wouldn’t have been accepted into university so fast.”

Paw Hel Soe said her family has grown in confidence and negotiates life in Brisbane easier since they started weekly lessons with their tutors.

“It was very difficult at first, catching a bus or train, learning a new culture, making friends and learning a new language, at first I only knew my ABCs and very basic stuff like yes and no,” she says.

“VoRTCS tutors helped us with our English and taught us about Australian culture, learning things like how to make an appointment with a GP, reading and understanding letters and other important documents. My parents have learnt so



**VALUABLE EXPERIENCE:** Paw Hel Soe Hla, as a VoRTCS volunteer

much about general conversation and how to get around and my siblings have been helped with their homework so they can do well at school.”

The young QUT student said a key factor in her securing part-time work was also undertaking volunteering for Vinnies herself.

“It helped with working in an office environment because I’d never done that before, as well as using a computer and different software,” she said.

Paw Hel Soe said the VoRTCS program is a great example of Vinnies motto of giving a ‘hand up not a hand out.’

“I would recommend people volunteer with VoRTCS because it really helps people like myself and other refugee families with their confidence and in progressing in their life in Australia.”



volunteer refugee tutoring & community support

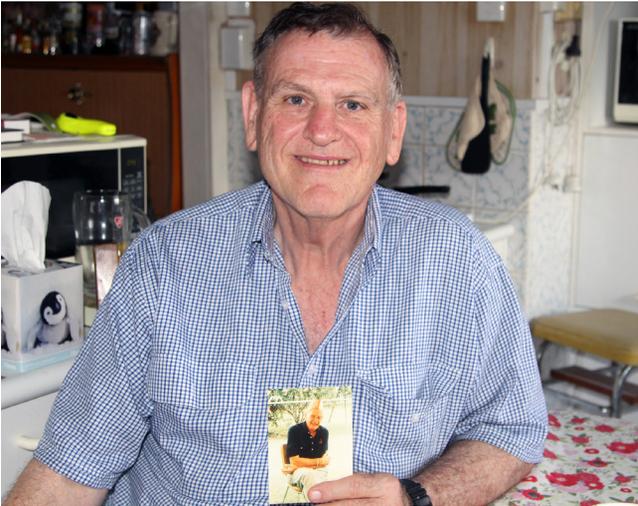
**IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN BECOMING A VINNIES FAMILY TUTOR OR WOULD LIKE TO REFER A FAMILY VISIT:**



[www.refugeetutoring.org](http://www.refugeetutoring.org)



## CARRYING ON A LEGACY



**PROUD:** Tim Willis with a photo of his father Len.

### Choosing to leave a gift in his will to Vinnies was an easy decision for Tim Willis as his father had worked tirelessly for more than 20 years helping those in need as a Vinnies volunteer.

Tim's father Len modelled to him their Christian values of 'doing un-to-others' by demonstrating in practice what hope, encouragement and caring about the community can do to transform people's lives.

He saw the work his father did helping people in Wavell Heights, Brisbane, and knows from personal experience the impact donations to Vinnies can have for people who are struggling.

"Seeing the work my father did as a member of the Society I know the impact that donating to Vinnies can have," he says.

"Dad would volunteer us to do the clothing drives they used to do in the 60s and 70s.

"We just saw his work each week as he was always out helping people, and we wanted to help too."

Tim recalls some of the people his father assisted would come to their home to personally thank him.

Also leaving a strong impression on Tim was the extent of other fellow volunteers who became his father's close mates and Vinnies family during the 60s and 70s. Each of them inspired Tim with their dedication to helping people in need.

Tim's decision to leave a bequest to Vinnies is his way of continuing the legacy of the good works of his father and his volunteer friends.

Tim is now retired after 44 years in the Queensland public service in Brisbane, Toowoomba and Townsville. He enjoys attending church weekly, reading and watching sports while focusing on keeping healthy.

#### HOW YOU CAN HELP

Leaving a gift in your will is a simple, yet powerful way to help those in need after you are gone.



3010 1076



[bequests@svdpqld.org.au](mailto:bequests@svdpqld.org.au)

**A GIFT IN YOUR WILL CAN RESTORE LIVES.**

Request your **FREE Will Booklet** by calling **3010 1076**.



**St Vincent de Paul Society**  
QUEENSLAND  
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## THANK YOU

### A HUGE THANK YOU TO OUR CORPORATE PARTNERS WHO HELPED COLLECT AND DELIVER DONATED GIFTS TO PEOPLE IN NEED LAST CHRISTMAS.

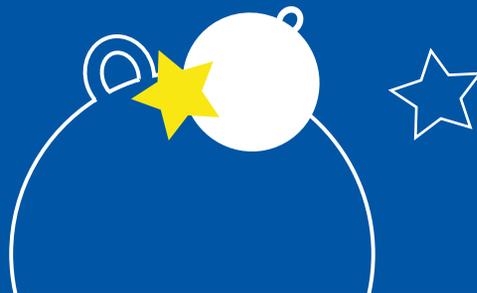
Queensland Children's Hospital; Triumph; Australian Bureau Statistics; Parmalat; Greenslopes Private Hospital; Chempro Chemists; Anytime Fitness; and the Australian Tax Office.

Thanks to EML Payments and Hesta for helping to deliver the gifts that were collected by Greenslopes Private Hospital to families in need in Annerley, Brisbane.



### THANK YOU IGA QUEENSLAND

The sale of Christmas baubles and your ongoing support has meant we are able to offer a hand up to the most vulnerable in our community.



## VINNIES MAKE CHRISTMAS BRIGHTER FOR WARWICK FAMILY

### Thanks to a hand up from Vinnies a Warwick family experienced a much brighter Christmas than the one they were facing.

Vinnies Warwick Homelessness Support Worker Dale Mann says she will always remember making last Christmas memorable for one family member in particular.

The family were struggling and receiving support from Vinnies to pay their rent, and were nominated to receive a Christmas hamper to make a stressful time of year a little easier.

"As we were putting the hamper in their car, as well as some secret presents from Santa, the nine-year-old son asked me if we had any Christmas trees as he told me they couldn't afford one.

"We knew we had to help, says Dale. My colleague found one and I called the young boy over right away and said, 'guess what we've found?' He was so pleased, he told me he was 'very busy today and that he would come in tomorrow to get it', which was pretty funny."

The boy arrived the next day eager to see his new Christmas tree, including decorations.

"We had the tree ready for him and put both his and his little brother's name on it, that way he would share. He was so excited he wanted to put it in his room," Dale says.

"He was so happy that Santa now had somewhere to put the presents."



# BECOME SOMEONE'S HELPING HANDS

Renewing lives through regular giving

- Our Helping Hands are our regular givers – people who want to help us with a recurring donation
- Regular giving helps us provide continual support to people in need and makes a big difference to the lives of Queenslanders
- You will only need to complete the donation form below once and your credit card will be charged automatically
- You can change or cancel your regular donation anytime by calling Vinnies Queensland on 13 18 12

## YOUR DONATION WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Please debit my card: A19MAD

Visa    Amex    Diners    MasterCard

□□□□-□□□□-□□□□-□□□□

Name on card \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

**Option 1** I'd like to join Helping Hands by making a monthly donation of

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ (minimum of \$10)

Please debit my credit card every month until I advise otherwise

**Option 2** I'd like to make a single gift to support the work of Vinnies

\$50    \$75    \$150    \$250    \$500

Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Option 3** I'd like to donate online: [vinnies.org.au/donate](http://vinnies.org.au/donate)

**Option 4** I'd like to donate over the phone: 13 18 12

- Please email my receipt to save on administration costs
- Please send me information to help me consider including Vinnies in my Will
- I have already remembered Vinnies in my Will
- Please tick here if you do not wish to receive future fundraising communications

The Society collects your personal information to process your kind donation and to provide you with direct marketing materials. We may not be able to process your donation or provide you with direct marketing materials without this information. We are strongly committed to protecting your personal information. We can provide you with details of the privacy policy if you would like further information. Our privacy policy is available at [www.vinnies.org.au](http://www.vinnies.org.au)