

Vinnies



Christmas Appeal

SCHOOLS KIT



Vinnies Christmas Appeal



St Vincent de Paul Society
CANBERRA/GOULBURN
good works

Dear Teachers,

Christmas is a season of hope, generosity and connection. It is a time to come together, care for one another, and remember those in our communities who may be experiencing hardship. It is also a powerful opportunity to show that even the smallest act of kindness can make a meaningful difference.

As we launch the 2026 Vinnies Christmas Appeal, we are delighted to share this year's Christmas Appeal School Kit with you. Through your support, young people are encouraged to look beyond themselves and make a positive impact in the lives of others.

This year's theme, "How did we get here?", invites students to consider the circumstances that can lead people to seek support and to respond with empathy, understanding and kindness.

As financial pressures continue to affect communities across Australia, more people are turning to Vinnies for support. Every day, Vinnies members, volunteers and staff walk alongside people experiencing hardship, providing practical assistance such as food, clothing, emergency financial support and accommodation. Just as importantly, they offer dignity, compassion and hope, reminding people that they are seen, valued and not alone.



Every contribution your school community makes will help individuals and families experiencing hardship to receive the support they need during the Christmas season. Together, we can help ensure more Australians experience the hope and joy that Christmas should bring.

Thank you for your ongoing partnership and generosity.

On behalf of everyone at Vinnies, we wish you, your students and your wider school community a joyful, peaceful and blessed Christmas.

*The Vinnies Schools
& Youth Team*



Give a hand up this Christmas

The Vinnies Christmas Appeal helps Vinnies Canberra/Goulburn provide practical support, care and hope to people experiencing hardship during the festive season. Through fundraising and hosting a Giving Tree, your school can help put food on the table and gifts under the tree for people in your local community this Christmas.

Resources

Case Study: "How Did We Get Here?"

Visit page 3-4

Statistics

Visit page 5

How your school can get involved

Raise funds for the Christmas Appeal

Organise a fundraising event to help Vinnies provide much-needed support for people doing it tough at Christmas.

Funds raised will help deliver practical assistance such as food, help with urgent bills, safe accommodation, and other vital support for individuals and families experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness, poverty and cost-of-living pressures.

Visit page 6

Collect donations for the Christmas Giving Tree

Host a Giving Tree at your school and collect donations of new, unwrapped Christmas gifts and non-perishable pantry items.

These donations will directly support people seeking assistance from Vinnies in your local area, helping families share a meal, place gifts under the tree and experience dignity and joy this Christmas.

Visit page 7



“HOW DID WE GET HERE?”

Joanne has spent her professional life supporting people as a social worker. She never expected to be the one needing support.

Living with her partner, Max, and their 11-year-old daughter, Harper, Joanne was able to stay above water on a dual income, with enough left over to create lasting memories for her family.

But as costs began to rise across the board, from food to household bills, Joanne felt the pressure of needing to cut back on household spending. Despite her best efforts to stretch every dollar, and Max going without meals to ensure Harper didn't have to do the same, they were hit with a rent increase, which led Joanne to turn to Vinnies for assistance.

"I worked with very vulnerable families in my past as a case worker, and I used to refer them to services. And now, I'm the one that's needing the services," says Joanne.

"When did this happen? How did we get here?"

For people like Joanne, the rising cost of living means the same pay cheque doesn't go as far as it once did. Her fortnightly grocery bill previously came in at under \$200.

Today, she can only get a fraction of what she used to, meaning she must absorb more of the cost or go without.

Vinnies has been able to ease the load for Joanne, providing food vouchers, clothing through Vinnies Shops, and support with school supplies for Harper.

"I'm disappointed that life is like this, but I'm also grateful that there's kindness and there are services that can help out there."

Vinnies supports more than 100,000 people annually through its members, providing emergency relief including food, clothing, accommodation, support with household bills and much more.

Cost-of-living pressures are driving people to reach out in times of need, including more than one in four people doing so for the first time in the past 12 months. Members have also seen an increase in people experiencing circumstances similar to Joanne's, with a third of households seeking support renting in the private rental market.

As the cost of housing, food, utilities and everyday essentials continues to rise, more people are reaching out for support, as Ben, one of our Vinnies Support Centre Coordinators, can attest.

"We've got more people in private rentals now asking for assistance than people in social housing," says Ben.

Members and volunteers strive to understand each person's individual circumstances and provide support tailored to their needs. This may include food and supermarket vouchers to create space in a household budget to pay a utility bill or cover rent. The Christmas period is another time when Vinnies steps up, providing hampers and presents so that no one has to go without.

"We get parents coming in who are struggling and they just want that little bit of magic for their kids."

"Seeing their eyes light up, the biggest smiles, it's the happiest moment they've had in so long," says Ben.

For Joanne, Christmas will look different this year after she was hit with another rent increase, placing her under pressure once again.

"We haven't even been here 12 months and we have to move out because we can't afford the rent," says Joanne.

Joanne's life looks very different to the one she was living only a few years ago. Her budget doesn't go as far as it used to.

Harper is growing quickly and set to start high school in the new year, bringing added financial pressure with things like new uniforms and a laptop. The load she carries is heavy, but it is made lighter knowing she can turn to Vinnies for support.

As Christmas approaches, after a year of having to go without so much, Joanne is grateful to know there will be food on the table and presents under the tree.

"To be able to provide the things that Vinnies can is unlike anything else, like I don't even have words to describe it. I think it's so important and such a blessing for them to be in a position to be able to help." "And, if I'm ever in a better financial position, the first thing I'll be doing is giving back."

You can make a difference to families in your community like Joanne's by making a donation to the Vinnies Christmas Appeal.

THINK, FEEL, DO REFLECTION

THINK:

What's one thing you learned from Joanne's story?

FEEL:

How do you think Joanne, Max or Harper may have felt during this time?

DO:

- What is one action Vinnies took to support the family?
- What is one action you can do to help someone in your community?

STEP INTO THEIR SHOES

Choose one person from the case study: Joanne, Harper, Max or Ben and finish these sentences:

- I might be worried about....
- I would be grateful for....
- I would hope that others....

1 in 3

Australian households

Experienced food insecurity in the past 12 months.

Source: Foodbank Hunger Report 2025

0%

Of nearly 49,000 rental listings were affordable for someone on Youth Allowance.

Source: Foodbank Hunger Report 2025

254,571

People

Are currently waiting for social housing across Australia.

Source: AIHW Housing Assistance in Australia 2025

1 in 5

People

Experience housing stress, spending over 30% of their income on housing.

Source: ACT Government Housing and Wellbeing Reports

87%

Of People

Identify cost-of-living pressures as one of their top concerns.

Source: Foodbank Hunger Report 2025

60%

ACT households

Experiencing homelessness were living in severely crowded dwellings or temporary accommodation.

Source: ABS Census 2021

Raise funds for the Vinnies Christmas Appeal

Organise a fundraising event to help Vinnies provide practical support to people doing it tough this Christmas. Get creative and put the fun in fundraising!

How to get started

1 Contact our team

Email schools@vinnies-cg.org.au to let us know you're fundraising and to request a presentation from our team at your school.

 [CLICK HERE TO SIGN UP](#)

2 Spread the word and start fundraising!

Promote your fundraising efforts with our Christmas Appeal resources, including posters, newsletter copy and information to share with parents.

 [CLICK HERE TO ACCESS RESOURCES](#)

3 Donate the funds raised

Donate online

- Make a donation online at donate.vinnies.org.au/appeals-act/christmas-appeal-act

Direct deposit

- Account Name: St Vincent de Paul Society
- BSB Number: 062-786
- Account Number: 000 014 760
- Description: (Your School) Christmas Appeal
- Please email any remittance inquiries to giving@vinnies-cg.org.au

Collect donations for the Vinnies Giving Tree

Host a Giving Tree at your school and collect donations of new, unwrapped Christmas gifts and non-perishable pantry items to support people experiencing hardship in your local community this Christmas.

How to get started

1 Decide what your school will donate

- a. **Christmas gifts** for children, teenagers and/or adults
- b. **Non-perishable pantry items** and Christmas treats for food hampers
- c. **Both!**



[DONATION GUIDE](#)

2 Fill out the sign up form

This tells us what your school is collecting and when you would like us to pick up your donations.



[CLICK HERE TO SIGN UP](#)

3 Spread the word

Promote your Giving Tree with our resources, including posters, newsletter copy and information to share with parents.

Tip! Encourage students and families to add a few extra pantry items to their weekly shop or choose a gift to donate during their Christmas shopping.



[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS RESOURCES](#)

4 Start collecting!

Your donations of **gifts**, **pantry items** and **Christmas treats** will go directly to people supported by Vinnies conferences, programs and services during the holiday season.

Please ensure all gifts are new and unwrapped, and that food items are unopened, non-perishable and within date. Every item collected helps make Christmas brighter for someone in your local community.

Contact us

School Engagement Team

Contact our team with any questions or for school related events and guest speaker requests.

Email: schools@vinnies-cg.org.au

★ If you or someone you know needs support,
★ please call our helpline on 13 18 12. ★



**SHARE YOUR EFFORTS
BY TAGGING US!**

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 @Vinnies Canberra/Goulburn



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