Society Spotlight

Jun-Jul 2026

WELCOMING A NEW PRESIDENT

CELEBRATIONS OF SERVICE

CEO SLEEPOUT RESULTS

St Vincent de Paul Society

good works

UPDATE

from the desks of *Joe & Peter*

REFLECTIONS ON THE LAST MONTH

This edition of Society Spotlight marks a time of reflection and renewal for St Vincent de Paul Society Queensland (SVdP Qld).

As Peter steps into the role of State President, we thank Patricia McMahon for her steady and thoughtful leadership over the past four years. She has helped guide us through a time of challenge, opportunity and change.

We are also entering an important new phase, with new members of the Executive Leadership Team settling into their roles and recent State Council changes now in place. Updates to *The Rule* show our ongoing commitment to strengthening how we lead and support our Good Works.

> "We can be very proud of the culture of excellence, dedication and care across the Society in Queensland."

Across the state, we're seeing positive momentum. New and redeveloped retail stores, including Biloela and Pimpama, show our continued investment in local communities. The recent CEO Sleepout was a great success, raising more than $3 million to support people in need.

We're also proud to celebrate the people who make this work possible. In this edition, you'll read about some impressive service milestones and professional recognition. We can be very proud of the culture of excellence, dedication and care across the Society in Queensland.

Together, these moments show who we are — an organisation that keeps growing, adapting and staying focused on our mission.

CEO SLEEPOUT 2026

THREE RECORD BREAKING EVENTS

The 2026 Vinnies CEO Sleepout brought together more than 400 business and community leaders across Brisbane, the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast on Thursday 18 June, raising funds to support Queenslanders experiencing homelessness and further the development of the 500 Homes Program.

Held at The Amphitheater in Roma Street Parkland in Brisbane, Cbus Super Stadium in Robina, and on the sand of Maroochydore Beach on the Sunshine Coast, participants swapped their beds for sleeping bags and a night on cardboard in a powerful show of solidarity.

Across the three locations, leaders from diverse industries united with a shared purpose. The combined effort in Queensland raised over $3 million, contributing significantly to homelessness support services and the delivery of safe, affordable housing. The highest fundraiser in Queensland was Matt Kratuik, raising more than $200,000, demonstrating the strong commitment shown by participants.

This year's event broke records, with more than $10 million raised nationally, for the first time.

"The Vinnies CEO Sleepout is a reminder that we all can play a part in supporting Queenslanders experiencing homelessness," Chief Executive Officer Joe Duskovic said. "As the last few years of our housing crisis have shown us, it's not something we can afford to ignore."

The event also highlighted the growing need for sustainable housing solutions. "Our initial plan was 500 homes, but just as the need in our communities has increased, so has our scope," Joe said.

The 2026 Sleepout once again underscored the impact of collective action and the ongoing commitment required to address homelessness in Queensland. Donations are open until end July. Visit www.ceosleepout.org.au

WELCOMING PETER

A NEW PRESIDENT & COMMITMENT TO MISSION

Peter Dougherty stepped into the role of State President from 1 June 2026, bringing nearly 30 years of experience as a Vincentian based in Gladstone.

Peter has long been guided by a deep commitment to faith, a strong sense of social justice and a desire to provide practical support for people in need.

Peter's Vincentian journey began with an invitation to attend a conference meeting. There, he found a clear connection between his personal values and the work of the St Vincent de Paul Society. Since then, his focus has remained firmly on service, shaped by Christ's words in Matthew 25:40, "whatever you do for the least of your brothers and sisters, you do for me."

As State President, Peter has signalled his focus on supporting members, volunteers, and employees to continue delivering Good Works in a way that is safe, effective, and grounded in mission. He also highlighted the importance of growing our response to the housing crisis, strengthening support for companions, and continuing efforts toward reconciliation.

Looking ahead, Peter is eager to connect with conferences across Queensland, build on the strong foundation established by Trish, and support the St Vincent de Paul Society's continued mission across the state.

THANKING TRISH

A SEASON OF STEADY LEADERSHIP

As Patricia McMahon's four-year term as State President comes to a close, we pause to acknowledge a period of wise and steady leadership.

As the first female State President of St Vincent de Paul Society Queensland, Trish has led with care, clarity and a strong commitment to mission.

Over the past four years, SVdP Qld has faced increasing demand driven by rising cost of living pressures and the housing crisis. Trish provided calm and considered leadership for the Society in Queensland as our members, volunteers and employees responded to this increasing demand.

She joined SVdP Qld in 2013, inspired by her father's work in helping his own community. Trish brought strong governance experience to the role, having previously served as St Stephen's Cathedral Conference President and Brisbane Diocesan Treasurer.

Reflecting on her term, Trish expressed gratitude for the support of State Council and the wider Society, acknowledging the collective effort required to sustain and grow the mission. While stepping down as State President, she will continue her service in the role of Vice President, remaining closely connected to SVdP Qld's leadership and future direction.

OUR PEOPLE

30 YEARS OF SERVICE

Leanne Murray has marked an impressive 30-year milestone with the South Coast Diocese, reflecting a lifetime of service to people in need.

Beginning as a volunteer, Leanne then worked across a range of services including home visits, mental health support and housing, always focused on practical care and connection with companions.

Her experience, resilience and willingness to serve have supported countless individuals and families over the years. Leanne's story shows us how a volunteering opportunity can transform into a lifelong vocation.

We join with Leanne's entire team in sending our heartfelt congratulations to her for reaching this significant milestone, and thank her for her ongoing contribution to SVdP Qld.

25 YEARS OF SERVICE

Congratulations to Jackie Youngblutt on her 25 year journey with us.

Jackie's career began as a social worker in a men's hostel. While she fulfilled various roles over her time at SVdP Qld, she now serves as General Manager of Programs, Fundraising, Marketing and Communications. Each day, she leads with compassion, purpose and innovation.

She has proudly championed social justice, built a culture of care and service, and inspired people across the Society through her integrity, leadership and great sense of humour.

Her commitment to putting companions first is inspired by her favourite quote from To Kill A Mockingbird, *"You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view... until you climb into his skin and walk around in it."*

We are grateful for Jackie's service and dedication to SVdP Qld over many years.

OUR PEOPLE

WELCOMING NEW LEADERS

Since our last edition, Bianca Harris (above right) and Trish Woolley (above centre) have now commenced in their respective roles, alongside Jennifer Boggiano (above left) who joins the ELT team as Executive Assistant.

Bianca brings more than 20 years' experience across development and property and will lead the delivery of housing and infrastructure projects that support communities across Queensland.

Trish steps into the new Service Excellence and Assurance Division, drawing on extensive leadership experience to strengthen systems, governance and service delivery.

Jennifer will support the CEO and ELT, enhancing coordination and day to day operations.

Together, these appointments strengthen leadership capacity across SVdP Qld. For more information about their backgrounds, visit the Executive Leadership Team page on the Vintranet.

RECOGNITION OF EXCELLENCE

Theresa McEwan, Area Manager in the Child and Family Program, has received national recognition after being awarded the *2026 Supervisor Excellence Award* by the Australian Counselling Association.

The national award recognises outstanding leadership and commitment within the counselling sector and reflects the high standard of care provided through SVdP Qld's Child and Family programs.

With more than 10 years of service, Theresa supports teams delivering counselling and family intervention services across South East Queensland.

Her leadership and the work of her team continue to help families navigate complex challenges and build stronger, more connected lives. Congratulations to Theresa on receiving this well deserved award.

MEMBER UPDATES

LISTENING AND LEARNING ACROSS THE NORTH

Representatives of State Council and the ELT recently travelled across the Townsville and Far North Queensland dioceses, visiting 17 retail stores, 14 conferences and six housing and support centres.

The visit spanned multiple towns, providing a broad view of the St Vincent de Paul Society's work in regional communities.

A key focus of the visit was hearing from members, employees and volunteers about local priorities and challenges. Over the course of the six day tour, a consistent theme emerged: a deep commitment to supporting companions.

The visit reinforced the importance of strong connection between State Administration Office and regional areas, where relationships, trust and shared purpose underpin effective service.

Members of State Council and ELT said the visit also provided valuable insight into the scale and diversity of work across SVdP Qld, and the importance of remaining grounded in the experiences of those delivering support each day.

Find more images of the visit on page 19.

MEMBER UPDATES

HELP PRESERVE OUR HISTORY

Members are invited to support an upcoming project focused on strengthening how SVdP Qld manages and preserves its records.

Within conferences, questions often arise about what should be kept and what holds lasting value for the future.

The Membership Advisory Committee is beginning to explore a more consistent approach to archiving. They are inviting input from members with relevant skills or interest.

This is an opportunity to contribute to preserving our history, ensuring important stories and records are not lost.

To express interest, please contact the team at membership@svdpqld.org.au.

60 YEARS OF SERVICE & DEVOTION

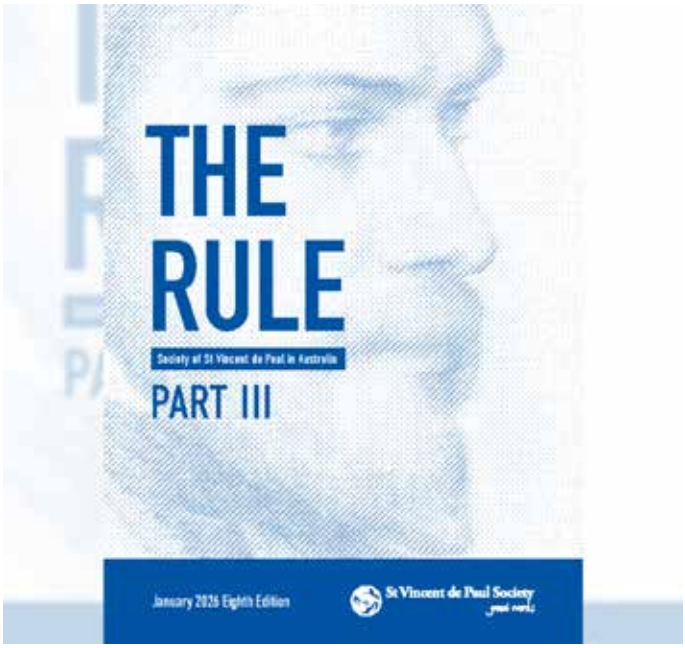
For decades, Jim and Madeline Deveraux have quietly lived the Vincentian call through faith, service, and steadfast commitment.

Celebrating their 60th wedding anniversary last year, the couple's lives reflect a shared journey of care for others and dedication to their community.

As a former Conference President of Our Lady of the Rosary Conference Kenmore, Jim led with compassion, particularly during times of need, while Madeline's support and partnership were ever present. Together, they have modelled service grounded in dignity, humility and connection.

Their story is a reminder that enduring service is built not on recognition, but on faithfulness and walking alongside others, year after year.

SOCIETY SHORTS



THE RULE PART III

The Society's National Council is introducing an update to *The Rule*, the Society's governing document, effective from 1 July.

While the existing parts I and II of *The Rule* continue to guide our spirituality and core principles, Part III has been redeveloped to provide clearer, more practical guidance on governance, operations and expectations within our conferences and the wider Society.

The Mission and Membership team is hosting three information sessions between 2 and 14 July, where participants will have the opportunity to discuss the changes and ask questions.

Register for one of the online sessions at www.trybooking.com/DNLXP, or visit the Vintranet and enter a search for '*The Rule*' to find more information and an FAQ.

STATE COUNCIL CHANGES

Recent changes to State Council reflect both new leadership and strong continuity across SVdP Qld.

Peter Dougherty has started as State President, with Patricia McMahon continuing her service as Vice President.

We also thank Dennis Innes, who has stepped down from State Council after many years of outstanding contribution.

Across the dioceses, Phil Cranny has taken on the role of Diocesan President for Rockhampton, following Peter Dougherty. In the Northern Diocese, Peter Ryan has now been formally elected as Diocesan President after serving in the role in an acting capacity.

For more information, visit the State Council/President page on the Vintranet.

SOCIETY SHORTS

FUEL RESPONSE UPDATE

Rising fuel costs continue to create uncertainty as global events impact supply and pricing.

In response to the Middle East conflict, SVdP Qld established a Fuel Supply Response Team to provide practical guidance as these changes affect how we work and support our communities.

Recent news reports indicate the Federal Government has adjusted fuel excise relief, reducing the discount to 16 cents per litre from 1 July to early August. This means some price increases are likely, even as global markets begin to stabilise.

While the extension will ease pressure in the short term, cost of living impacts remain. We encourage you to stay informed via the Response Updates page on the Vintranet, access the Fuel Saving Fact Sheet, and for members to review the Companion Support Guidance Notes.

BIOELA HUB OPENS

Bryson Head MP, State Member for Callide and Assistant Minister for Regional Development, Resources and Critical Minerals, last week officially opened our newest retail and community hub in Biloela.

The redevelopment of our Dawson Highway site brings together a rebranded Vinnies store and expanded community spaces, including areas for support services, a community pantry and volunteer activities.

The event included a blessing of the new facilities, acknowledging the important role the hub will play in supporting the local community.

SVdP Qld provided support to more than 600 companions in the region last year. The new hub offers a welcoming space for volunteers, employees and community members, strengthening SVdP Qld's ability to respond to local demand.

SOCIETY SHORTS

SUPPORT THAT TRANSFORMS LIVES

THE St Gerard Majella Conference recently assisted a companion and had an opportunity to create lasting change.

When she approached the conference for help with overdue rent, members worked with her and her real estate agent to secure stability and keep her housed.

With that foundation in place, she was able to focus on her next steps, gaining a truck driver licence and securing full time employment shortly after.

Her journey is a powerful reminder that practical assistance, offered with care and respect, can help companions move forward with confidence and rebuild their independence.

Please note, image of the companion has been changed to protect her privacy.

RESTORING BIKES AND CONFIDENCE

A new partnership in Toowoomba is giving hostel residents the opportunity to refurbish donated bicycles, building practical skills while contributing to their community.

Through the program, restored bikes can be used by residents or donated to people in need, providing both transport and support.

At the initiative's launch (above, from left) Julie Lugg (SVdP Qld), Melissa Taylor (Toowoomba Regional Council), Claire Torkington (Ability Enterprises), Chris Barber (Ability Enterprises) and Crisis Accommodation client Michael Gibson.

The initiative highlights how local partnerships can create meaningful opportunities for companions to rebuild confidence, learn new skills and give back.

This is a powerful example of our Good Works in action, where practical support and community connection come together.

SOCIETY SHORTS

SONGS FOR SHELTER CONCERT

The *Songs for Shelter* concert at the Brothers Leagues Club in Raceview brought the community together for an evening of live music in support of people experiencing homelessness.

Now in its second year, the concert built on strong momentum and was led by passionate organisers and local partners.

The event raised around $20,000 with funds directed to the local conference to support companions with food, fuel and housing support.

The audience enjoyed performances by bands including The Go Set, The Nightmare Rangers and Rogues Gallery.

VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITY

Join us for the *Musgrave Park Family Fun Day* during NAIDOC Week 2026, celebrating "50 Years of Deadly".

Held on Friday, 10 July at Musgrave Park, West End, this is a rewarding opportunity to support a vibrant community event.

We are seeking members, employees, and volunteers to assist with set up, pack down, and a range of engaging stall activities, from creative projects to family friendly experiences.

We have volunteer opportunities on Thursday, 9 July and Friday, 10 July. This event is a great way to connect with local families and contribute to a meaningful day.

Register now at https://qld.vinnies.org.au/FFD or scan the above image on your phone to register as a volunteer and be part of this special event.

SOCIETY SHORTS

CYBER SECURITY IN FOCUS

Every day, we rely on information to support our work. Keeping that information secure is essential to protecting our people, the community we serve, and our organisation.

From digital records to paper files, devices, and even conversations, safeguarding information is a everyone's responsibility.

SVdP Qld's new Cyber Security Hub brings everything together in one place, whether it is learning how to report a phishing email, strengthening your passwords, or understanding how to use AI safely, the hub provides simple steps we can all follow.

We had a strong response to our recent Cycle Security survey, demonstrating how committed our people are to building safer habits. You can further your knowledge at one of the upcoming training sessions, including AI is Helpful...Until It Isn't on Wednesday, 22 July.

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

The St Vincent de Paul Society Queensland is seeking Expressions of Interest from members, volunteers and suitably qualified professionals who are passionate about our mission and interested in future Advisory Committee and Board opportunities.

As community need grows, we are identifying people to complement the valued contribution of our current Board and Advisory Committee members as opportunities arise.

We are particularly interested in expertise in property and construction, governance and risk, information technology and digital transformation, aged care, clinical governance and quality, advocacy and public policy, or government and stakeholder engagement.

For more information or to apply, please contact governance@svdpqld.org.au.

SOCIETY SHORTS

PEOPLE CONNECT GOES LIVE

People Connect has now officially launched, introducing a new system for employees to manage their payroll, leave and personal information.

Bringing together previously separate systems into one place, the platform is designed to provide greater clarity, consistency and transparency in how employees manage their pay and records.

A key change for employees is the introduction of timesheets, with hours worked now recorded directly in the system each pay period. Other functions, including leave requests and payslips, are also accessed through People Connect.

Employees and People Leaders can access help and resources through the People Connect Resource Hub on the Vintranet or by navigating through the People and Culture pages.

We'd *love* to hear from *you!*

Would you like your local conference news shared in the next edition? Or do you have any feedback about this edition of *Society Spotlight*?

Email us at internalcomms@svdpqld.org.au

RETAIL UPDATES

The South Coast team were excited to welcome customers to their newest and largest store.

NEW STORE IN PIMPAMA

The South Coast Diocese has officially opened its newest retail store in Pimpama.

More than 1,000 customers passed through the doors over the opening weekend, which also featured a well-attended blessing and community celebration.

The new store reflects continued investment in retail as a welcoming and accessible space for customers, volunteers and employees.

> More than 1,000 customers passed through the doors over the opening weekend.

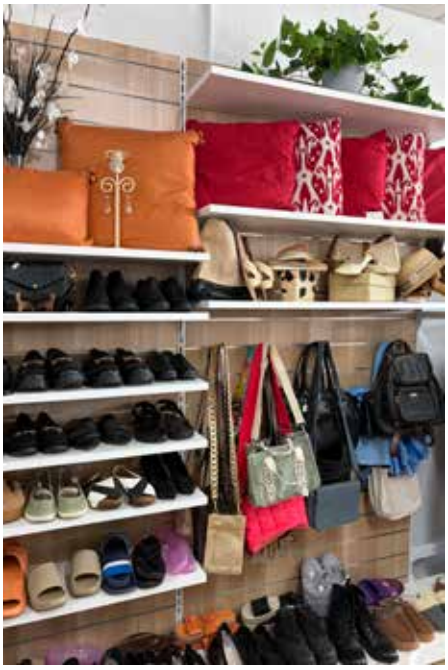
Now the fourth store to feature the "Feel Good Finds" brand and largest Vinnies in its region, it offers an updated shopping experience while supporting local fundraising and community connection.

When new stores attract such strong interest, it strengthens the steady growth of Vinnies retail across the state in meeting our mission.

AROUND THE SOCIETY

INGHAM STORE OPENING

Townsville Diocese recently welcome a newly refurbished store located at Herbert Street, Ingham.



PIMPAMA OPENING

South Coast's newest and largest store celebrated their opening recently. Read more on the previous page.

AROUND THE SOCIETY

CEO SLEEPOUT

CEOs in Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast and Brisbane braved a night in the cold to raise funds for our homeless services.

AROUND THE SOCIETY

LISTENING IN THE NORTH

Members, volunteers, and employees met with a delegation of State Council and ELT on a recent visit to the region.

BIOELA REOPENS

Long queues formed outside the reopened Biolea store, with customers eager to experience the renovated store.

ADVOCACY UPDATE

STRONGER FAMILIES, STRONGER FUTURE

In our April edition, we shared our support for the QCOSS Raising Queensland report.

Since then, SVdP Qld has formally developed its advocacy position, ***Stronger Families, Stronger Future,*** and will be actively advocating these priorities across local, state, and federal government.

The need for action is clear. Across Queensland, over 10,000 families remain on the social housing waitlist, and around one in four children are missing key developmental milestones. These figures reflect growing pressure on families and systems that are not responding early enough.

Our advocacy approach seeks to provide a hand-up, not a handout, by removing the barriers that keep families trapped in hardship and creating conditions for them to thrive.

Each Advocacy Ask frames the hand-up approach across different systems all working together to ensure children and families can thrive.

1. Housing: secure housing is the strongest hand-up.
2. Income: adequate income lets families meet their own needs.
3. Early Intervention: supporting families early is the most effective hand-up.
4. Independence: a hand-up starts with the basics.
5. Families Centric: fix broken systems, not just broken moments.
6. Community Value: relational, not transactional support.
7. Investment: raising Queensland is about hand-ups that last, not handouts that repeat.

Together, these actions aim to strengthen families, support children, and create lasting change across Queensland.

For more information and the full messaging and position, please visit the Vintranet's Social Justice and Advocacy pages.

SPIRITUAL REFLECTION

NO FLASH IN THE PAN!

Love is ordinary and yet extraordinary.

One of my favourite passages in Scripture is Paul's letter to the people of Corinth Chapter 13 where he describes 'love'. Paul says,

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trust, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails!"

Love is seen in the choice to get up and try again, to forgive again, to trust again. Love knocks on the door of the companion believing in the innate dignity of the tired eyes that may greet them. Love sorts through clothing donations profoundly conscious of the worth of those who will wear them and the respect and loved filled services that the sale of said clothing will bring. Love works tirelessly to find housing and a safe space for those fleeing violence in its many kinds and does so in a way that it is a hand up to dignity and worth. Love is profoundly present to the one trapped in the cycle of addiction who may have lost 'hope' and that presence is a small whisper that is light in the midst of darkness. Love is all of these things and more.

> "Love is seen in the choice to get up and try again, to forgive again, to trust again."

But there will be no trumpet blast. It is not 'flash in the pan!' It will not seek the headline nor the byline. It will do all of this and more, it will be all of this and more – because a carpenter from Nazareth walked to the edges of his society – was deeply present to the innate worth of all he encountered – and by thus doing – was called to Calvary and to the cross.

As St Paul concludes his sermon on love, "There are three things that last, faith, hope and love, and the greatest of these is love!"

This is OUR noble calling. This is the Vinnies way. This is the way to ultimate inner liberation. Thank you for all that you do and how you do it.

Br Damien Price cfc