

You are **MAKING A DIFFERENCE**

HOW YOUR SUPPORT OF VINNIES QUEENSLAND IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR COMMUNITY

AUTUMN 2022

Thank you for your kindness and compassion

Sharing the gift of education

Empowering disadvantaged kids to dream big

Celebrating Indigenous achievement

Building solutions to the homelessness crisis



Vinnies
good works

Thank You

FROM OUR
STATE PRESIDENT



Your compassion and generosity are making sure our state's most vulnerable aren't left behind.

What an extraordinary couple of years we have had. At a time when more and more families are struggling to cope with the housing affordability and homelessness crisis, your big-hearted support for Vinnies has never been more important.

This Autumn edition of *You Are Making a Difference* is packed with inspiring stories of your kindness in action. As you read about how you are helping to provide disadvantaged Queenslanders with a place to call home and the opportunity to create a better future for themselves through education, I hope you feel proud of the impact you are having.

This will also be the last edition you receive from me as my four-year term as State President comes to an end. I would like to welcome and thank my fellow volunteer member and friend, Patricia (Trish) McMahon, for taking the reins this coming May. Trish comes with many years of wisdom and experience. She is expertly skilled to serve as our new President in continuing Vinnies work in alleviating poverty.

It has been a great honour and privilege over these last four years. Your friendship and support have given me the courage and determination to get through what has been an eventful period. I couldn't have done it without you.

With my deepest thanks,

Dennis Innes, State President
St Vincent de Paul Society QLD

If someone you know
needs crisis assistance,
please call us on
1800 846 643.



Celebrating Indigenous High School Graduates

You helped recognise the hard work and academic achievement of young Aboriginal students.

The St Vincent de Paul Society Queensland was proud to sponsor a dinner for recent Grade 12 graduates from the Murri School, an Indigenous owned independent community school in Brisbane.

With the school unable to run its usual fundraising activities due to COVID-19 restrictions, Vinnies stepped in with the \$1,000 needed to fill the gap and provide a formal celebration for the graduates. It was a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the success of these students in the face of significant challenges.

The dinner is a powerful example of our Society's mission to grow our reconciliation efforts and provide more support to our state's Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander communities. Thank you for helping make more of this important work possible through your generous friendship.



A hand up in a time of great need

Volunteers like Annette are helping vulnerable Queenslanders keep a roof over their heads – thanks to your support.

In her more than 20 years' service as a Vincentian (volunteer member), Annette has never seen so many people impacted by homelessness.

"I've seen this problem build up over the past few years. It's especially escalated since COVID-19. About a third of people that come to us have nowhere to live," she says.

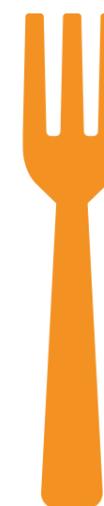
With her fellow Vincentians, Annette is helping struggling Sunshine Coast locals keep or find a safe place to stay. Sometimes that involves helping people reconnect family members who can offer them a place to stay. Other times it involves supporting people to maintain their tenancies.

"We always tell people that rent is the most important thing they can put their money towards right now. Once you lose a house, it's extremely hard in the current environment to find a new one."

"If the cost of rent is causing people to struggle to pay for food, we provide for them from our pantry."



Volunteer members Teresa and Annette collect donated meals from a local high school for Vinnies community pantry.



DID YOU KNOW?

\$51
can feed a struggling
family for a day





The life-changing gift of education

You are providing kids like Alexis the support they need to succeed at school.

With record numbers of Queenslanders struggling with cost-of-living challenges and skyrocketing rents, the need to support disadvantaged kids at school has never been greater.

Household Expenditure Survey data published by the ABS shows a 43% increase in what families spend on children's education. Parents like Glen are faced with the impossible choice of buying the basics like uniforms, school shoes or stationery – or paying this week's rent.

One in five children are starting school developmentally vulnerable. Cody was one of them. When he

came to live with Glen at the age of three, he wasn't speaking.

Glen had fought for 18 months to get custody of Cody and Alexis after the children were removed from their mother due to neglect. Glen had all the love in the world to give his children, but the long legal struggle had left him with little to spend on their education.

That's where you came in. Your generous support for Vinnies meant Glen had access to help through the Children's Education Fund to buy uniforms and school supplies to set up Alexis for school. He says he couldn't be more thankful.

Your generosity can purchase schoolbooks and stationery to help kids like Alexis with their learning.

Alexis is so proud of her school uniform – funded through Vinnie's Children's Education Fund thanks to donations from people like you!

"I want my kids to have a better future than what I had. A better life."

Glen, father of Alexis and Cody

"Vinnies have helped a lot. I spent all my savings trying to get custody of the kids and I'm still trying to get back on my feet."

Across the state, the need for support from families like Glen's has doubled over 12 months. We've received thousands of requests for assistance totalling \$1.1 million.

That's why your support for Vinnies has never been more important. Thank you for the life-changing difference you are making.



When I grow up, I want to be...

Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are dreaming big – and you helped make it possible.

Here's just a few of the children you're helping through the Vinnies Children's Education Fund. Each one is now looking forward to a brighter future!



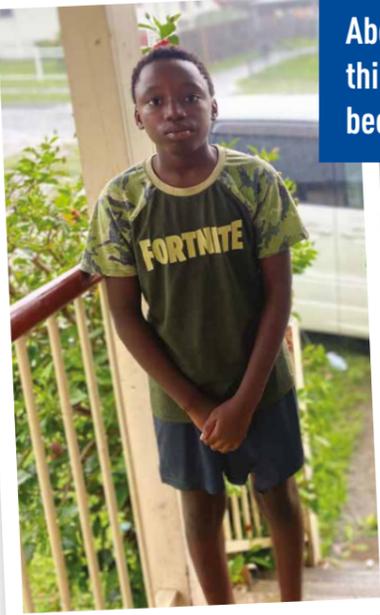
Victoria (10), wants to help others by studying to be a doctor.



Alexis's little brother Cody (4) is looking up because he wants to be an astronaut!



Fides (18), just graduated from high school and is hoping to study psychology at university.



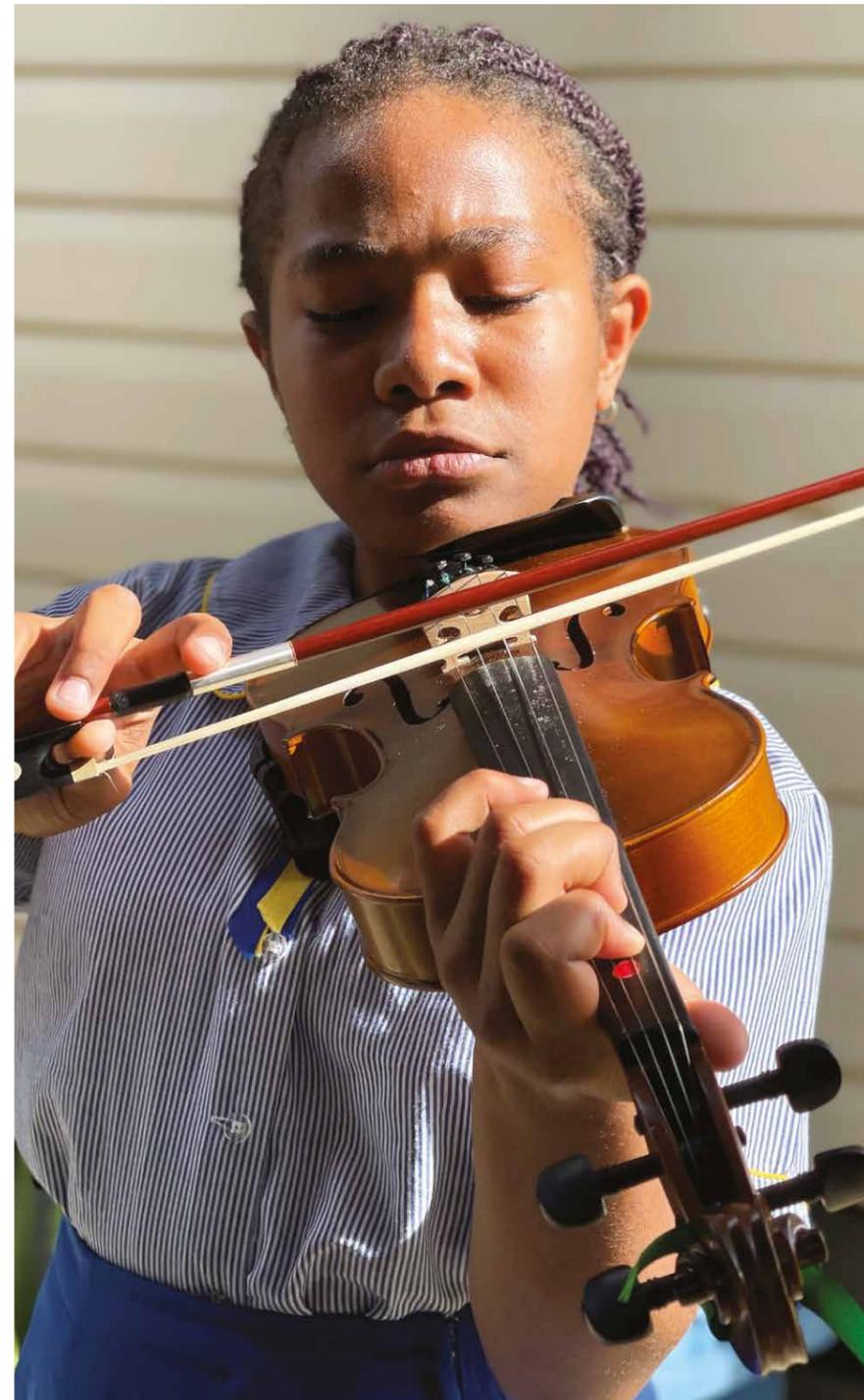
Abel (13), loves to build things and dreams of becoming an architect.



Alexis (5), hasn't decided yet but thinks about becoming a doctor, a teacher or an artist. Her future is unwritten but one thing is certain – it's looking positive thanks to people like you!

The gift of a musical education

You're ensuring learning is more than just books and pens for Aysia!



When Elizabeth and her three children came to Australia four years ago, fleeing domestic violence, they had barely enough money to get settled. Her eldest daughter, Aysia, was very musical, but sadly Elizabeth could not afford to buy a violin.

Thankfully, Vinnies volunteer member, Gail, and her team got right to work. Through the support people like you, the team purchased a new violin through Vinnies Children's Education Fund. If only you could see the look on Elizabeth's face when Aysia played those first notes on her new violin!

"When you struggle to give your child the thing they care about...it can make you feel like less of a parent. But to be able to get help to provide for your children – it really carries us through the tough times".

Now Aysia is not only making beautiful music – she's also thriving at school. Thank you for sharing the gift of education with children who'd otherwise miss out on the chance to reach their potential.

"It was like something lit up inside her when she got that violin. It really lifted her spirits and she's been enjoying school more." Elizabeth, mum of three.

A place *to call* home

You're providing safe, secure accommodation for vulnerable Queenslanders.

With your wonderful support, Vinnies is working closely with stakeholders to deliver on our goal to build 500 new affordable homes across Queensland in the next five years.

By adding to the housing stock, we will address the current housing and rental crisis which is causing terrible hardship to thousands of Queenslanders.

But while we work on building the infrastructure, we must do everything we can to keep struggling Queenslanders in their homes and provide crisis accommodation for those who find themselves on the streets.

That is why, with your generous help, we continue to innovate in the way we deliver crisis and transitional accommodation across Queensland.

A powerful example of this is happening in Brisbane right now. Since decommissioning our 40-year-old South Brisbane Men's Hostel, we have worked with government and other agencies to provide crisis accommodation to 70 women and men at an inner-city hotel.

The service provides residents with their own private room with ensuite, as well as 24/7 support and



Lilly, a current resident at Vinnies inner-city accommodation service, is so grateful for a safe place to live and your support!

access to broader support services. It is also made available based on a person's assessed duration of need rather than an arbitrary time limit.

Thank you for providing dignity and security to those experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

DID YOU KNOW?



A valuable *lesson in* leadership

Byron shares how taking part in the CEO Sleepout changed his perception of homelessness.

2021 was my first CEO Sleepout. Like you, I'm deeply concerned about homelessness in our state, and I wanted to do something to help. I fundraised \$8,600 and spent the night at the old South Brisbane Men's Hostel sleeping with nothing but cardboard for a mattress and sleeping bag. It was a deeply humbling and rewarding experience, which opened my eyes to so many things.

It made me realise how quickly and easily someone can find themselves unemployed and homeless. I got a sense of the security we all take for granted when we sleep at night. I also saw how hard it is to re-engage with society when you don't have a stable base where you can shower, cook or sleep. I realise I live a blessed life.



I'd recommend that anyone thinking about getting involved in the CEO Sleepout just go for it. It's a great opportunity to hold up a mirror and learn more about being a leader.

Byron Rienstra
Managing Director, BPartners

If you or someone you know wants to register or learn more about the Vinnies CEO Sleepout, please visit ceosleepout.org.au





Words of kindness *this Christmas*

When we asked you to send a message of support on Facebook to Vinnies volunteers packing hampers in the lead up to Christmas, we were overwhelmed by your responses. Thank you for your kind words. Here are a few of our favourite messages:

Mary Thank you sooo much to Beryl and the other wonderful volunteers. You can only imagine how much you are appreciated by so many
Kindest regards
10h

Matt A big thanks to all our Vinnies family of volunteers who have helped so many people especially through this present pandemic which is far from over, God bless you all.
19h

Robbie Volunteers are the backbone of the community. You go unseen, but never unnoticed. "Thank you" is all we can say, but it just isn't enough
23h

Joan Many thanks to all the Vinnies volunteers for taking the edge off the pain on those going through tough times. ❤️ ❤️
23h



Volunteer member Beryl is so grateful for the kindness of people like you!

A brighter future

Heidi and Nikolas have a roof over their heads and hope for the future. That's the wonderful difference you make.

You might remember Heidi and Nikolas' moving story from our recent Christmas appeal. They were living in a tent when Heidi was eight months pregnant with their first child.

Having the stability of a secure roof over their heads has given them the chance they needed to rebuild their lives.

I'm happy to report that since I last wrote to you about the family, Nikolas has found work as a concreter. The family are now on track for long-term sustainability. They've worked hard to repair damaged relationships and even spent Christmas day with family members. They're also expecting their second child.

Thank you for being there for vulnerable Queenslanders like Heidi and Nikolas in times of great need.

"When there is a hand reaching out, that can change your life in a big way." Heidi

DID YOU KNOW?



Big thanks to IGA staff and shoppers

The IGA team raised thousands of dollars selling baubles to shoppers at Christmas time. All funds raised will support those struggling to cover basic expenses like food, bills and rent. Thank you to IGA staff and customers across Queensland!



