



Vinnies  
Service Medallion

# PROGRAM INFORMATION



# WHAT IS THE VINNIES SERVICE MEDALLION (VSM) PROGRAM?

The Vinnies Service Medallion (VSM) is a statewide initiative by the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW that recognises and celebrates the contributions of secondary school aged students (Years 7–12) to community service, social justice, leadership, advocacy, and fundraising.

The VSM provides a clear and flexible framework that supports students to take meaningful action through practical, values led experiences and empowers them to be leaders of positive change within their schools and communities.

## WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE?

The VSM program is open to all secondary school aged students in Years 7–12 across New South Wales. While many participants engage through a school partnership with Vinnies NSW, students may also participate independently or through other community based groups, such as parish youth groups, homeschooling networks, or local service clubs, provided they have a suitable adult supervisor.

The program is intentionally inclusive and accessible. Participation is free of charge, and all young people are welcome regardless of religious, geographic, financial, or academic background.

## HOW IS THE VSM PROGRAM STRUCTURED?

The VSM program offers a flexible, tiered model of engagement. Students can begin at any point during high school and progress through the award levels at a pace that suits their circumstances and interests.



**Bronze Certificate** – Introductory engagement through Vinnies initiatives such as fundraising or awareness activities



**Bronze Medallion** – Continued participation and reflection through additional Vinnies initiatives



**Silver Certificate** – Volunteering with Vinnies, with opportunities to support initiatives or appeals within a school or community setting



**Silver Medallion** – Deeper engagement through volunteering, project coordination, or advocacy, demonstrating initiative, time commitment, and peer support



**Gold Level** – A student led project focused on social justice, advocacy, or community impact, reflecting sustained engagement and long-term commitment

While there is no fixed minimum timeframe for completing an award level, the VSM is designed to recognise sustained engagement rather than one off participation. Schools and participants are encouraged to plan activities across the year where possible to support meaningful involvement.

## WHAT DO STUDENTS GAIN FROM PARTICIPATING?



**Skills** – Leadership, teamwork, communication, initiative, and confidence



**Experience** – Practical engagement with community needs and social justice through hands on activities



**Recognition** – Certificates, medallions, and acknowledgment of service through school or community settings



**Pathways** – Evidence of service and leadership that can support future opportunities, including study, employment, or scholarships



**Impact** – A meaningful opportunity to contribute to positive change within their community and beyond

## WHAT TYPES OF OPPORTUNITIES ARE AVAILABLE?

Students can take part in a diverse range of VSM approved initiatives aligned with Vinnies social justice priorities. These may include:

- Preparing snack packs, hampers, or toiletry kits to support people accessing Vinnies services
- Fundraising for Vinnies appeals or emergency relief efforts
- Volunteering in Vinnies Retail or other approved Vinnies services (where available)
- Participating in awareness campaigns, school sleepouts, or advocacy activities
- Supporting community events, donation drives, or peer engagement initiatives

Initiatives can be completed individually or in groups and may be adapted to suit different abilities, resources, and contexts, ensuring participation is accessible for all students.



## WHAT IS REQUIRED OF A VSM SUPERVISOR?

Each participating school, individual, or community group is asked to nominate a VSM supervisor to support and coordinate participant engagement. This may be any staff member, youth worker, or guardian. There are no formal teaching or leadership requirements.

- In a school setting, this could be a Wellbeing Coordinator, Religious Education Teacher, or any interested staff member
- In a parish or community setting, it may be a youth worker or local group leader
- For independent participants, a parent or guardian may act as the supervisor

The VSM is designed to be student led. Participants are encouraged to take ownership of planning and completing their activities, with supervisors providing appropriate oversight to ensure activities are safe, suitable, and aligned with VSM guidelines.

Supervisors are supported by the VSM team and play a key role in:

- Acting as the main point of contact for participants
- Encouraging engagement with VSM initiatives
- Confirming participation for recognition purposes
- Liaising with the VSM team or local Vinnies Engagement Officers

The role is intentionally low burden. Supervisors do not need to run lessons, assess work, or track hours their role is to support participation and verify engagement.

Detailed responsibilities, safeguarding requirements, and step by step processes are outlined in the Supervisor Guide, which is provided upon registration.



## HOW IS THE VSM PROGRAM DELIVERED?

The VSM is designed to be flexible and adaptable across different school and community contexts. It is not a formal subject or curriculum; rather, it is a recognition-based framework that acknowledges existing service and encourages ongoing engagement.

Program delivery typically includes:

- **Student led participation** in approved VSM initiatives (e.g. donation drives, volunteering, awareness activities for Vinnies)
- **Online evidence submission** by participants, including a brief reflection and supporting material (e.g. photos or newsletter extracts)
- **Supervisor sign-off** to confirm participation (no grading, marking, or formal assessment required)
- **Mid and end of year reminders** from the VSM team to support recognition timelines
- **Post activity reflection** prompted through the evidence submission process

This delivery model ensures the program remains accessible for busy schools while allowing flexibility across different learning environments and community settings. The VSM can be embedded within existing school activities or offered as a co-curricular or extracurricular opportunity.

## OUR VISION AND COMMITMENT

The Vinnies Service Medallion is more than a recognition program; it is a pathway for students to live out their values, stand up for justice, and make a lasting impact within their communities.

Whether participating through a school, parish, or independently, every student brings unique strengths and perspectives. We are committed to ensuring the program is accessible, meaningful, and empowering for all young people, regardless of background or context.

Together, we are nurturing a generation of changemakers grounded in compassion, courage, and community. **Change starts here!**

## HOW CAN SCHOOLS SIGN UP OR LEARN MORE?

Schools or community groups interested in participating, as well as students looking to join independently, can register online at [youthnsw.vinnies.org.au/vinnies-service-medallion](https://youthnsw.vinnies.org.au/vinnies-service-medallion) or contact the VSM team at [vsm@vinnies.org.au](mailto:vsm@vinnies.org.au) for more information.

The VSM team, together with local Vinnies Youth Engagement staff, provides support throughout the process, including onboarding materials, initiative guides, supervisor tools, and flexible rollout options to suit different school and community contexts.

We acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the Traditional Custodians of this land, with deep respect. May the Elders, past and present, be blessed and honoured. May we join together and build a future based on compassion, justice, hope, faith and reconciliation.



**Vinnies**  
good works



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**FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT**

**VSM Team**

**Email:** [vsm@vinnies.org.au](mailto:vsm@vinnies.org.au)