



St Vincent de Paul Society
NSW
good works

SUMMER 2019
ISSUE NO. 84

Vision

'YOU'RE NOT ALONE': DROUGHT ASSISTANCE

**THE WAY WE CARE
AWARD-WINNING RECYCLING SCHEME
BRINGING THE JOY TO CHRISTMAS**



CONTENTS

- 4 NEWS
- 8 ACROSS THE STATE
- 13 FUNDRAISING
- 18 OUR SERVICES
- 21 SHOPS
- 23 SOCIAL JUSTICE
- 25 MEMBERS & VOLUNTEERS
- 27 YOUTH
- 29 SPIRITUAL REFLECTION

Vision is produced by the Fundraising and Communications department, St Vincent de Paul Society NSW, and is distributed through the Society to Catholic parishes, schools and relevant entities in NSW.

Supervising Editor: Philip Sen

Designed by: Claudia Williams

All correspondence can be sent to:

Communications Manager
Fundraising and Communications
St Vincent de Paul Society
PO Box 5, Petersham NSW 2049
Email: philip.sen@vinnies.org.au
Ph: 02 9568 0293

© St Vincent de Paul Society NSW 2018
ABN: 91 161 127 340

We'd love to hear what the Society is doing in your area.

Send us an email, or call with an idea for a story or news piece:
felicity.moody@vinnies.org.au
or (02) 9568 0278.

Please DO NOT send original printed photographs. Photos should be emailed as high resolution.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear Friends,

As we mark Christmas and look forward to a New Year, naturally our thoughts turn to those for whom the festive season is a struggle rather than a celebration.

From the farmers whose harvests are failing and whose livestock is dwindling; to the thousands

facing disadvantage, hardship and homelessness in our cities; to those seeking refuge from war and persecution: none will be forgotten.

The concept for the 2018 Christmas Appeal is 'A Christmas Without Joy', and focuses on the real-life impact of poverty on families at Christmas time. At a time of year when hope and joy are foremost in our minds, the succour that the Society brings to so many people in so many ways never ceases to amaze.

This issue of Vision highlights as always the support and friendship Vinnies offers those in need; and how the work of our dedicated volunteers, members and employees is central in assisting the people who turn to us and bringing joy to their lives. As 2018 draws to a close we look back on 12 months of change and of challenge, but most of all a year of opportunity to spread our good works ever further and wider and in new and exciting ways.

Last but not least, these pages celebrate you, the readers! It is only through the dedication of Conference members, volunteers and employees like you that we are able to continue our good works, and as 2018 draws to a close allow me to thank each and every one of you.

Yours faithfully,

Denis Walsh
State President, St Vincent de Paul Society NSW

CEO'S MESSAGE



There is something very special about the way our Vinnies community comes together when disasters strike. When the purpose is noble and urgent, so too is our response. From floods to

bushfires, we are always able to rapidly mobilise to meet the needs of those affected.

This is no more apparent than with the current Vinnies Drought Appeal.

The Society became concerned when our members, volunteers and staff recounted stories from the front line about farming communities dealing with the worst drought since Federation. Though the media buzz about the dismal winter rains this year has died off, our efforts are only just beginning.

Through the hard work of our members, volunteers,

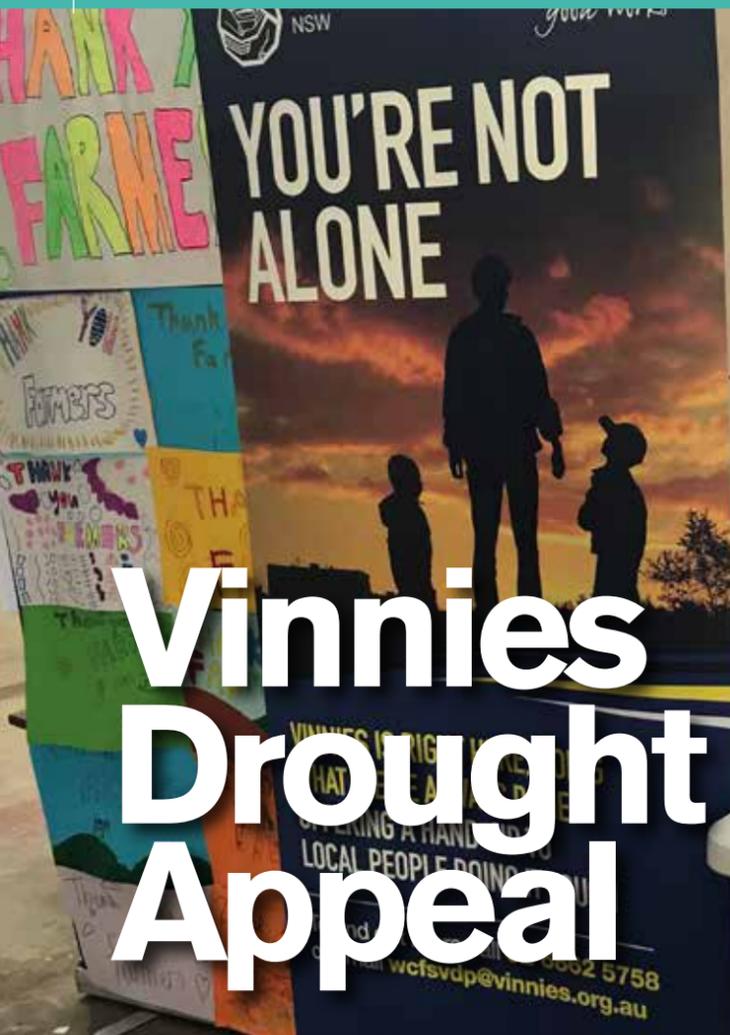
Shops and dedicated fundraising team, at the time of writing we had raised about \$800,000 and counting. The Society has received another \$1m through the National Farmers Federation appeal on Channel 9.

And we are putting this straight back into the areas of need, spending more than \$600,000 so far on immediate assistance and community support.

In essence, we are doing what we have always done: providing a hand up to the neighbours we live among. I'm incredibly proud of the swift action of our members, volunteers and employees though this is only the beginning.

Looking forward to 2019, our good works will go on unabated. Together we continue to bring joy and comfort to the many who need us.

Jack de Groot
Chief Executive Officer
St Vincent de Paul Society NSW



Vinnies Drought Appeal



Michael Lynch, Parkes Show

This winter has been one of the driest in NSW history with 100% of the state declared in drought over winter.

While spring brought a bit of rain to some parts of the State, it hasn't been enough to end the drought or ease the worry for farmers as they head towards an unusually hot, dry summer.

Vinnies decided to step in and help, launching a significant fundraising appeal in early August. As at November, we had raised \$800,000 with more coming in.

The Vinnies Drought Appeal is helping individuals and communities across NSW in three key ways:

- Provide immediate relief through food assistance and household bill payments;
- Assist with animal feed and other farm costs; and
- Organise social events for rural communities to come together and find support.

Different Vinnies Central Councils have been offering assistance in a variety of ways, depending on local needs.

Bathurst:

Vinnies Bathurst Central Council has held a number of community BBQs for farmers throughout Central West NSW. These events are a great opportunity for farmers to spend some time together, get support from their peers, share a meal and reinforce community spirit and resilience during this difficult time.

Vinnies has made drought assistance forms available and provided farmers with vouchers to purchase goods from their local stores, to support local businesses that are also affected.

Farmers have been incredibly grateful for the support, sending their appreciation for our efforts and the amazing donations that have been made to the Vinnies Drought Appeal.

Some feedback from one of the Bathurst BBQ events, "We have not had a get together that size since 2014. I think it has been the first time since then that some have even spoken to each other. So it really did bring us together and I saw so many talking through and sharing their struggles. We are all in it together."

Wilcannia/Forbes:

As at the beginning of November, the Wilcannia/Forbes Central Council had taken around 200 calls for assistance since the drought appeal launched. We have responded by providing almost \$125,000 in financial assistance, as well as \$70,000 in EAPA (electricity) and Telstra vouchers. Our members have also travelled extensively, conducting almost 1,000 farm visits which has involved dropping off flyers in letterboxes and talking to farmers about what they are going through and how we may be able to assist.

Wilcannia/Forbes have been involved in community events that bring farmers together, at which we have provided financial support to the running of the events, as well as having a presence there to further spread the word about how we can assist. These events have been held in towns such as Tibooburra, Nundooka, Dareton, Pooncarie and Cobar. At the Cobar event, the Society contributed towards the catering, covered the entertainment costs and due to a drought appeal donation for Cobar specifically, we were able to also distribute IGA vouchers. This involved 380 farmers coming together to enjoy a "night off" with lots of gifts, fun for the children, a lovely meal, motivating guest speakers, entertainment and the opportunity for agencies such as us to offer our support. We are continuing to make arrangements to support such events.

Maitland/Newcastle:

A large donation comprised of nearly \$79,000 from the Estate of the late Thomas Casey has been added to local Vinnies drought relief efforts in the Hunter region.

Mr Casey was a grazier of Kayuga, via Muswellbrook. A bachelor, he passed away at the age of 88 in 1975, leaving the bulk of his estate to the St Vincent de Paul Society to relieve distress wherever it was identified.

At the time, Mr Casey's estate was valued at \$280,000 and he directed that the funds be left with trustees to administer in perpetuity. He also requested that consideration be given, at times, to people in need in the Maitland Diocese and, in particular, in the Muswellbrook area.

The St Vincent de Paul Society receives a quarterly dividend from the trust, and over the last 42 years has received more than \$2 million. The income has been used in Vinnies' Maitland/Newcastle Central Council area to assist those who are disadvantaged or at risk of homelessness.

The money from the Drought Appeal has helped with household bills and education expenses; food assistance; household water; residential and water rates, fuel; health and wellbeing requirements; vehicle repairs and expenses; and transport costs.



Yeoval, Bathurst Central Council



Elong Elong, Bathurst Central Council

Taekwondo Fundraiser

The Institute of Modern Taekwondo made a cracking effort for the Vinnies Drought Appeal, hosting a break-a-tile fundraiser. Taekwondo enthusiasts and community members were able to take part, donate \$2 and break one of the 1000 tiles at Empower Fitness Brookvale. The event saw great support from the local community with spectators, businesses, students and instructors coming along to support the team who raised nearly \$2,000!





“People seeking assistance are provided with an improved ‘hand up’ approach because we have more time and knowledge about how to offer more intensive support with WE CARE. Members felt better prepared and unnecessary paperwork was removed. There was an opportunity to really focus on the needs of the people we assist,” said Cecily Foley, President of St Augustine’s Conference.

WE CARE is the culmination of three years of consultation with members to harness their vast experience and knowledge of supporting those in need. The six-month pilot and external

evaluation highlighted significant benefits for people assisted, a more rewarding and satisfying member experience, as well as stronger data collection.

Key findings of the pilot include:

- People assisted identified improvements in their standard of living, health and personal safety and security, community connectedness and overall life achievements;
- 58% of the people assisted reported that they were coping better and 25% indicated their financial situation improved;
- Members, volunteers and employees rated the effectiveness of the WE CARE framework 8.2 out of 10. They rated their level of impact as significantly increased. Members, volunteers and employees also reported being more positive about their level of confidence performing their tasks; and
- Referrals increased by 13%.

WE CARE is now embedded in three pilot areas - Bathurst, Lismore and Parramatta. It will continue to be rolled out throughout NSW.

SHOWING HOW WE CARE

Providing a consistently high standard of support for the people we serve and demonstrating our positive outcomes, is an ongoing challenge for the St Vincent de Paul Society. Thanks to a recently-piloted framework, that challenge is now less daunting. Results of the pilot program are very encouraging and plans are underway to implement it across NSW. WE CARE stands for:

- W**elcome every person seeking assistance;
- E**ngage fully with them to better understand their needs;
- C**ollect relevant information;
- A**ssess the most appropriate level of service;
- R**espond in the most appropriate way;
- E**valuate by following up with the person assisted to determine how they are progressing.

Roundtable discussion on homelessness with Minister Goward

Vinnies recently had the opportunity to host a roundtable discussion with other specialist Wagga Wagga based homelessness service providers, alongside the Minister for Family and Community Services and Minister for Social Housing, Pru Goward.

Impressed with a tour of the Edel Quinn facility, Ms Goward engaged in an open and frank discussion on the ideas and concerns of local service providers for understanding and dealing with homelessness in the region. Joining the discussion was Vinnies Executive Director for Support Services, Niamh Mannion, Senior Operations Manager for Case Management, Brett Macklin, and Vice President, Membership, Kathleen Thickitt.

Thank you to Nathalie and her team at Edel Quinn for hosting such a productive visit.



Sleeping Out for a Cause

Four of our Vinnies Central Councils braved the cold on 30 August and hosted Vinnies Community Sleepouts.

The Vinnies Community Sleepouts have been delivered by community groups to support Vinnies good works. However this year was the first time our Central Councils were encouraged to host their own Sleepouts all on the same night, to raise funds and awareness for homeless services and programs in their regions.

Parramatta, Newcastle, Lismore and Wagga Wagga Central Councils all took up this challenge with Lismore hosting its 4th Fred’s Place Sleepout.

The Community Sleepouts were a unique way for locals to come together as a community to actively combat the issue of homelessness by rising to the challenge and experiencing a glimpse of what it is like to sleep out for a night whilst raising much-needed funds. Participants were given nothing more than a beanie, a sheet of cardboard, a cup of soup, and were responsible for finding a place to bed down for the night.

The events attracted 160 participants and raised over \$146,000. Funds raised are going to local services and programs such as the continuation of the services at Fred’s Place in Tweed Heads; assisting vulnerable people in the Lower Hunter with food, payment of utility bills, medical and education costs, clothing and furniture; the provision of emergency and crisis relief in the Wagga Wagga region and in Western Sydney, as well as referral and advocacy services for those doing it tough.

Over the winter season, many schools and communities also braved the cold nights and hosted their own sleepouts to address the harsh realities that people experiencing homelessness face. Some of the schools that took part were St Mary’s Cathedral, St Therese Mascot, St Ignatius Bourke and St Aloysius Chisholm.

Our Vinnies Deniliquin team also hosted their first Community Sleepout, raising over \$17,000 for their local region.

Thank you to all our participants, donors, supporters, and local and state sponsors for the part you’ve played in supporting those in our communities who need it the most.



Vinnies Learning Centre Strengthens the Society

Vinnies Learning Centre is our Society’s easy to use online learning system providing flexible learning opportunities that are accessible from any location.

The introduction of the Vinnies Learning Centre allows us to reach out to people in all our locations, providing the same level of training and the same consistent messages to all. Every Conference, service, program and Shop will have access to the same training.

Members, volunteers and employees will have opportunities to access multimedia learning content which is comprehensive and practical, to better meet personal and professional development needs.

For more information contact learning@vinnies.org.au

Visit from the Deputy Prime Minister

Federal Member of Parliament for Riverina and Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Michael McCormack, launched the 2018 Vinnies Wagga Wagga Community Sleepout at the Edel Quinn crisis accommodation centre.

The Vinnies Community Sleepout was a chance for Wagga locals from all walks of life to get a taste of what those facing homelessness in the town experience – and a chance to do something about it. At the Sleepout, community members were sponsored to spend a winter night in the open air, raising money for Vinnies services.

Mr McCormack explained, "Vinnies plays an important role in helping those less fortunate in our communities and this role is particularly important during the colder months in rural and regional Australia."

"I'm really proud that people in the Riverina are taking part in the Vinnies Community Sleepout to increase awareness of the issue and fundraise for Vinnies services."

Jenni Duff, Wagga Wagga Central Council President, added, "In the Riverina the high cost of living, stagnant wages and unsteady jobs can push anyone into crisis. Many families living on the edge are only a few pay packets away from homelessness."

Money raised went towards the town's main crisis accommodation centre, Edel Quinn. The centre has both a residential program and an outreach support program, and works with men at risk of homelessness to find them stable accommodation and community support.



PRESIDENTIAL CHANGEOVER FOR WILCANNIA FORBES

After four years serving as President for the Wilcannia Forbes Central Council, Jim Rogers hands over the Presidential title and responsibilities to newly appointed Leo Woodman.

A special mass and dinner were held in Parkes in June to thank Jim for serving the Society as Central Council President for Wilcannia Forbes 2014-2018. The dinner was attended by Parkes and Central Council members, volunteers and staff to acknowledge his tremendous work in his term as president. Jim demonstrated great leadership and compassion over the four years and will be remembered for his tireless work across the community. The Society wishes him the best for the future, which he plans to spend enjoying some well-earned rest, more time with family and travel. Congratulations are in order for Leo Woodman (pictured above right), the new President appointed in the Broken Hill Cathedral in September. Leo was joined by members, staff, volunteers and family for Mass and a celebratory dinner. Leo has been a Vinnies member since 1966, when he initially joined the Sacred Heart Conference and was appointed Vice President in 1968. While family and work commitments became a focus in his life, he continued active membership in 2007 and has been active ever since, becoming Broken Hill Regional President in 2014.



SCU Art and Design lecturer Darren Bryant with final year visual arts students Brooklyn Winter and Georgia Gordon.

Vinnies cleans up on recycled rags

Unsellable clothes and material are spared from landfill through this Lismore Vinnies Bag O Rags initiative.

From polishing cars and high-class furniture, to mopping up paint or grease in workshops, or cleaning valuable plates used in print-making, Vinnies recycled rags are in hot demand in the NSW North Coast.

Marketed as 'Vinnies Bag O Rags', they are also an important fundraising source for Vinnies, which processes and packs huge quantities of them in its Matthew Talbot clothing recycling centre in the suburb of Goonellabah.



Recycling and waste manager Angelo Grande with rag cutter Kaylene Rugendyke.

"We're handling one-fifth of Vinnies total clothing donations," says recycling and waste manager Angelo Grande.

"It's the ultimate recycling operation," he says, proudly adding that his team of twenty remove all buttons and zippers – "You wouldn't want to polish your car with a zipper!" – and then blade-shred the rags for compacting into packs weighing from 5kg up to 200kg pallets.

Materials are mixed cotton, flannelette, cotton t-shirt and the top of the range white cotton that retails for \$16 per 5kg pack.

"We believe there's no such word as 'waste,'" Angelo quips, "and I reckon we're putting that commitment into practice, truckload by truckload."

RECONNECT PROGRAM DENILIQVIN

Vinnies Services in Deniliquin works by the Society's ethos that our door is always open to anyone experiencing disadvantage, regardless of their personal beliefs and backgrounds.

The Vinnies Services' Reconnect program works with young people and their families as an early intervention program to prevent youth homelessness. We do this through one-on-one case management, family reconciliation, mediation and assistance to remain engaged in education. This program helps build resilience for young people and prevent youth homelessness.

Our staff are very conscious that presenting at a service for the first time can be daunting and at times embarrassing, especially in a small town, so we endeavour to engage warmly when people present.

Vinnies Services' Reconnect Program has been externally

assessed against the Department of Social Security's 'key criteria' over the past ten years and has achieved an 'A' plus rating in each year of the seven priority areas. Vinnies Reconnect is one of only five programs nationally to have sustained such a positive rating.

This year the Reconnect Program was a finalist in the Deniliquin Business Chamber Awards for "Excellence in Inclusion." Although not taking out the top spot, we were very happy to have made the top three and to have been nominated by a member of the community for this award.



Wollongong Central Council annual festival celebration

Members, volunteers, staff and supporters came together in September for the Wollongong Central Council's two day 2018 Vincentian Festival Gathering.

The event was held in the beautiful surrounds of the Southern Highlands and began with the youth celebration. Students shared stories of their school's social justice and fundraising activities through creative displays.

Members and staff gathered for a candlelit labyrinth walk and retreat on the Friday evening which proved to be a valuable opportunity for members and staff to grow and share in their spirituality. Those who chose to stay overnight came together to enjoy breakfast the next morning, chatting about future initiatives and sharing in their common goals.

Day two saw the celebration of significant contributions of Members at the Membership Festival Gathering. There

was a strong sense of gratefulness and respect in the room as 13 Wollongong Diocese Conferences were recognised for service to the community for 50 years or more. Two teachers were acknowledged for leadership with the inaugural Emmanuel Baily Award, and two senior secondary students were presented with the St Vincent De Paul Award for outstanding achievements.

New Vinnies state youth representative, Michelle Chahine, shared her experience as a young Vincentian and her vision for greater youth involvement in the Society.



Jack de Groot Inspires Students at Champion College

Vinnies CEO Jack de Groot recently visited the idyllic campus of Champion College in Toongabbie.

During informal drinks with the students, Jack answered a myriad of questions on the mission and vision of the Society, what they could do to help meet this challenge and the customary debate over which footy team was going to reach the grand finals. After taking their seats, Jack gave a speech that discussed the life of a Vinnies CEO, the life and martyrdom of Saint Edmund Campion SJ, the assassination of Jesuit Martyrs of El Salvador and the life of our founder, Blessed Frederic Ozanam.

After a final Q&A with the students, Jack encouraged the students to build a holistic character rather than a technocratic professional profile. Many of the students left eager to know how they could serve their neighbours through the works of the Society.



A 40-YEAR VINNIES CAREER

In August staff and volunteers at Sutherland Vinnies came together for a celebration lunch to recognise the contribution of long-standing staff member Mary Donohoe, retiring after 40 years working at the Shop.

Mary and her family have a long history with the St Vincent de Paul Society. Mary joined the Shop as a part-time Retail Assistant in 1978 after seeing her mother, Kathleen, support the work of local Conferences.

Mary was always willing to lend a hand in any way possible and, in appreciation for her dedication and commitment, Graeme Roche, Executive Officer of the Sydney Archdiocese and Broken Bay Central Councils, presented Mary with a plaque and gift.



A Freeman House Success Story

Stephen came to Freeman House under difficult circumstances after he attempted suicide. He was estranged from his children and his family, and had been travelling town to town. His assessment determined he would be eligible for crisis accommodation at Freeman House, with ongoing support from the Community Mental Health team.

In his first week, Stephen stayed in his room in a depressed state, and would really only talk to his case worker. Over time he began to open up more, even going for walks around the block with the student placement psychologist.

A few days later, Stephen was nowhere to be found. His room was empty and support workers had not seen him so police were alerted to check on his well-being.

Two days later he returned to Freeman House, oblivious of what had been going on and the concern of the staff. Having reconnected with his brother who lived in the area, he had stayed with him for a couple of days, not realising that he would be missed back at Freeman House. Stephen's mental health improved dramatically after this incident due to reconnecting with his brother, but also knowing that he was truly cared about by the staff at Freeman House.

After continued counselling and assistance with rental applications, Stephen moved into his own flat and was very grateful for the help and support he received at Freeman House. He continues to reach out to for support when he feels he needs it.

A HELPING HAIRCUT

Local volunteer, Simone, kindly donates her time, skills and supplies to offer free haircuts to people at our homelessness service in Wagga Wagga, Edel Quinn. Simone explains: "Giving people a fresh look can boost their confidence, and really assist them for future endeavours."



From hip-hop to Home and Away

Two new C3West projects, by artists Hannah Brontë and Dean Cross, were presented as part of Druitt Days Live, a major public event in Mount Druitt in August.

Druitt Days Live brought together young people of diverse cultural and faith backgrounds in the Mount Druitt area. The project was a collaboration between C3West, a key program of the Museum of Contemporary Art and Parramatta Central Council with support from Blacktown Arts, Blacktown City Council Street University Mount Druitt and MECA.

Sharing her skills as an artist, musician and event organiser, Brontë collaborated with local young people to produce a concert featuring local musical acts. Throughout the project, she created a series of photographic portraits of participants and community.

Dean Cross's 'Pilot' 2018 took as its starting point the television show 'Home and Away'. Cross worked with a group of young people, including Liberian refugee group LIB Comedy, to devise, write, perform and produce a pilot episode of a new soap opera. The project resists the dominance of Anglo-Australian faces and stories on our screens, providing an opportunity for young people to tell a story that reflects their communities and experiences.



The ABC Visits Castlereagh Industries

There's something very special about Vinnies Bespoke Totes and the ABC recently came to learn more about them at our production site in Coonamble.

Donations of clothes and material that would otherwise be unusable in-store, are unloaded and sorted at Coonamble, then cut and pieced together to create unique, eye-catching tote bags that promote sustainable fashion.

Each bag has a swing tag with a screen-printed image and a short story of the supported employee who made the bag. This is all part of the Vinnies 4 Life Bespoke Tote Project which aims to maximise recycling and keep materials out of landfill, while giving our supported employees valuable work experience and accredited training for greater choice for their career aspirations.

The team of assisted employees who work at Castlereagh Industries shared their enthusiasm for the project with the ABC team, showing the process these bags go through from arrival and sorting to display in the Coonamble Vinnies Shop. The Bespoke Tote piece is part of a greater ABC investigation into recycling and how charities are addressing the issues they are facing with unusable donations, waste and landfill.

The staff members and ABC team were treated to a BBQ to celebrate all the great work that has gone into making the Bespoke Totes.

Our wonderful totes can be found in store today in Springwood, Cronulla, Glebe, Newtown, Brookvale, Bathurst, Nelson Bay, Kiama, Wagga Wagga, Byron Bay and Armidale.

Communities of Change Report

The 'Communities of Change: Western Sydney Now and Into the Future' report, a collaboration between Vinnies and the Western Sydney Community Forum, highlights areas of potential shortfalls in investment and service delivery.

The unprecedented approach for this report – which utilises data on population trends, economic indicators, infrastructure development and community service investment – brings into focus the areas of most need, while outlining the current profile of communities and what they may look like in the future.



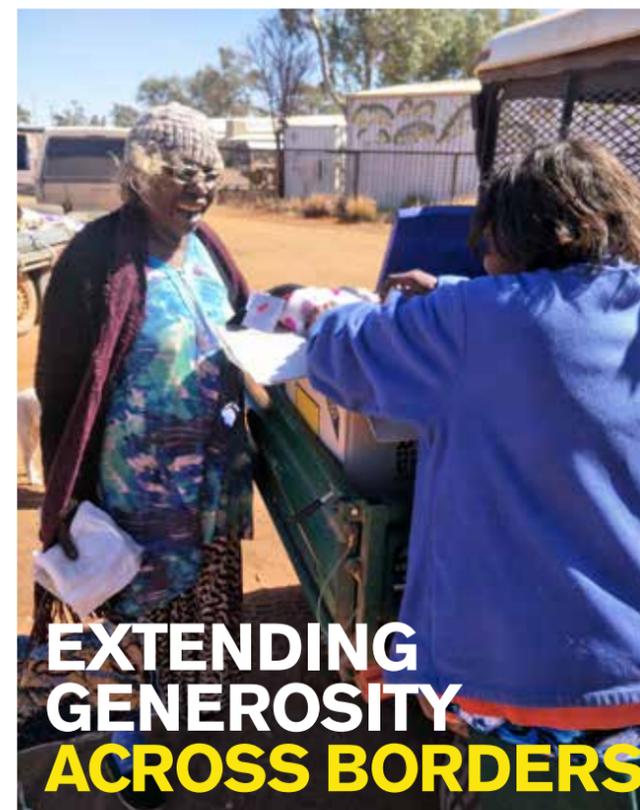
Vinnies Takes the Lead

This year Vinnies took over as lead agency at the Western Sydney Homeless Connect 2018. Each year the event aims to connect those experiencing or at risk of homelessness with various support services on one day, in one location, to achieve real outcomes that help to break the cycle of disadvantage.

Over 53 volunteers and 70 service providers joined together to help make a difference at Centenary Square, Parramatta earlier this year.



Leah McMurray and Caitlin Morrow, social work students at WSU, with Nikki Cummins of the Harris Park Hub



In winter a car load of toiletries and blankets were delivered from Vinnies Western Sydney to assist five Aboriginal communities in Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara.

Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara is a large Aboriginal local government area located in arid country in the remote north west of South Australia. It consists of the Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara and Ngaanyatjarra Anangu communities and has a population of around 2,500 people.

The lack of humidity and cloud cover in the desert at night can mean the heat of the day escapes into the atmosphere, and these communities can experience close to zero temperatures all year round, not just in winter. The remote location means access to affordable blankets and toiletries is a challenge.

The donated blankets were part of the generous Winter Appeal donations received by Parramatta Central Council from schools and Conferences, and included some very special blankets handcrafted by the students of Nagle Catholic College.

The donation, transportation and delivery was a collaborative project between Parramatta Central Council, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation and Aboriginal Community Services South Australia, and we look forward to building these relationships into the future.



Run-draising for Vinnies

This year at the 2018 City2Surf, 22 participants supported Team Vinnies, raising over \$18,000 with Vinnies ambassador, Joe Hildebrand, leading the team on the 14km course. We also had a small but enthusiastic group of Team Vinnies runners present at the Blackmores Sydney Running Festival, who took part in races ranging from 3km to 42km and also raised \$6,954!

Vinnies were proud to be the charity partner at this year's Sutherland2Surf race. While it was a chilly morning with temperatures as low as 8 degrees, our runners conquered the 11km race and finished at the iconic Cronulla beach. Our Vinnies Sutherland Regional President, Tony Cranney, was also on hand at the official presentation ceremony to hand out a prize to one of the runners.

Thank you to Team Vinnies for pumping these runs for a great cause!



A Christmas Without Joy is No Christmas at All

A Christmas without joy is no Christmas at all. Yet that's what too many people are facing.

A Christmas without family, after fleeing from domestic violence. A Christmas without comfort and peace of mind, after bills have mounted up. Or a Christmas without a roof over your head, after losing your home.

Where do you go when you have nowhere to go? Jared and his family were evicted from their home just months before Christmas. With no family nearby to call on for help, he called Vinnies.

"I was standing in the park across the road from our old home. I was so upset. But someone had told me about Vinnies. I didn't have anyone else to call so I dialled the number with shaking hands."

Children don't forget it's Christmas just because they are experiencing poverty or homelessness. For Jared and his wife, the thought that their children would not have a home, a proper meal, or a gift at Christmas was heartbreaking.

NSW President Denis Walsh said, "This year, more people than ever will experience homelessness over Christmas. There's over 116,000 people across Australia either sleeping on the streets, in temporary or inadequate dwellings, or in halfway-solutions like boarding houses or crisis accommodation.

"A Christmas without a home is no Christmas at all. But it doesn't need to be that way."

Vinnies NSW CEO Jack de Groot added, "Inequality and disadvantage are getting worse in our country. The latest government figures show that at least one in ten people pay more than 30 percent of their income on rent, meaning they don't have a lot left over for food and bills, let alone Christmas gifts and celebrations."

He continued: "Independent research also suggests that the rising cost of housing has pushed more than half a million people below the poverty line compared to a few years ago. That includes 200,000 children in need of your help.

"This Christmas, let's think of those people without the money to afford a home; or those pushed to the edge by the daily cost of living, let alone the price of gifts under the tree. Let's not leave them without a new year to look forward to."

This Christmas, the generous support of our donors can change the lives of people like Jared and his family. With their support, many of these individuals and families will be able to have the Christmas they deserve: a Christmas without fear and anxiety, but instead hope and joy.



IGA helps Vinnies bring joy this Christmas

Our valued National Retail Partner IGA is supporting the Vinnies Christmas Appeal again this year, selling \$2 Vinnies branded Christmas baubles at the checkouts from 7 November to 24 December. On top of this, 1 cent from each product marked with the Community Chest logo sold at participating IGA stores from 5 December until 24 December will be donated to the Vinnies Christmas Appeal.

IGA has been a National Partner of the Vinnies Christmas Appeal since 2012. Through sales of IGA Community Chest products and Vinnies Christmas Baubles, IGA has raised more than \$1.5 million for Vinnies! The funds donated have helped Vinnies provide food and vital support to thousands of people experiencing homelessness and disadvantage across Australia.

If you're stocking up on groceries over the Festive Season, shop at your local IGA to show your support. Also keep a lookout for the IGA Christmas advertisement that will be broadcast nationally on TV, featuring the talents of our very own Vinnies Conference Member, Tony Cranny, alongside IGA Ambassador, actor Shane Jacobson.

Vinnies and Box for Monkeys join forces to bring happiness to children over Christmas

This year Vinnies is partnering with Box for Monkeys to help bring happiness to the children we assist across NSW who are experiencing disadvantage, homelessness and instability.

Box for Monkeys have worked with Vinnies to develop a range of activity boxes and back to school packs specifically designed to nurture family relationships and provide fun educational activities for children aged 3 to 12 years old who are going through tough times.

If you would like to purchase a box for a child we assist, please visit the dedicated Vinnies webpage www.boxformonkeys.com/vinnies or for your own children or family and friends from the full product range here www.boxformonkeys.com/shop. They will also be generously donating \$1 from every purchase to support Vinnies work in the community.

Thank you to Box for Monkeys for working with us to help relieve the financial strain on families over a difficult period and bring happiness to children.



Corporate volunteering adds value across Vinnies services

Several of our corporate partners have volunteered their time over the last few months to support our services across Sydney.

The Marian Centre was fortunate to have Johnson & Johnson host a beautiful Mother's Day morning tea for the residents in May, and Genworth hosted a family BBQ and much needed storage room cleanout in June.

In July, a team from Hilton Sydney hosted a BBQ lunch for around 200 men at the Matthew Talbot Hostel and adjoining Ozanam Learning Centre.

Genworth joined the Sydney Night Patrol team in August during Homelessness Prevention Week, putting on a delicious BBQ dinner and offering valued companionship to the Inner Sydney community. They are



continuing to build ties with the Vinnies KEEP Program, through staff participating in KEEP school holiday activities to Skyzone, Taronga Zoo and Luna Park. Thank you Genworth for helping create special childhood memories for kids in the KEEP Program.

A special mention must also go to our corporate partner staff who volunteered their time at the Vinnies CEO Sleepout at White Bay Terminal! Your help played a crucial part in the success of this event, thank you.

Johnson & Johnson delivers school holiday fun

Our friends at Johnson & Johnson hosted a Family Spirit Day Event at their Macquarie Park Office in October, inviting some of the families that Vinnies works with in the Inner West. The kids spent the morning with the children of J&J employees, enjoying a range of fun activities such as a circus workshop, dancing activity, product information stalls, face painting, animal balloons and tasty treats!

Children in the 9-16 year age group had the opportunity to learn more about youth disadvantage, and Donna Boyd from Vinnies helped to give the children an overview of the support that Vinnies provides to the community. They created backpacks to go to children that Vinnies assists in the community who are experiencing disadvantage and homelessness. It was wonderful to see the enthusiasm and the children loved knowing they would be making a small, positive difference in another child's life.

Thank you to Johnson & Johnson for including Vinnies in your family day.



ABERGELDIE DRIVES COMPASSION AND FRIENDSHIP

Halfway through a three year partnership with Vinnies, Abergeldie Complex Infrastructure continues to enable the Vinnies Van in Parramatta to provide meals, refreshments and invaluable companionship to Mt Druitt and Parramatta communities that are experiencing disadvantage.

This November, we celebrated another incredibly generous donation of \$40,000 from Abergeldie. Thank you Abergeldie, your ongoing commitment to support the work of Vinnies in Western Sydney is incredible. We also extend our sincere thanks to all of the Abergeldie staff who have donated their time to volunteering on the van.



Magical Gala Dinner a success for Vinchez Refuge

Thanks to the great work of the Vinnies team at Vinchez Refuge and team leader Mary Ann Tan, the Mayor of Campbelltown Cr George Brticevic selected Vinchez Family Refuge to be the recipient of the 2018 Campbelltown Mayor's Charity Gala Dinner which raised \$41,000.

The black tie Gala Dinner celebrated with a circus theme, complete with trapeze artist and jugglers.

The proceeds from the event are being used to upgrade the teenage recreation area and study room, outdoor playground area and programs to support families escaping domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse and homelessness.

Lagardère Travel Retail shares a lending hand



Lagardère Travel Retail have again thrown their support behind Vinnies this year, raising an extraordinary \$14,219 for our Winter Appeal. This marks a record contribution in Lagardère's giving history to Vinnies!

Lagardère also responded swiftly to the Vinnies Drought Appeal by quickly rolling out a national campaign during August and September across their retail outlets to help bring in much needed funds for NSW farming communities that have been impacted by the drought. We can't thank Lagardère enough for their willingness to help us respond to this crisis, and for equipping us to support these communities as we best we can.

During the festive season, Lagardère will continue the support by running gold coin collections for the Vinnies Christmas Appeal in its retail outlets in international and domestic airports across Australia.

A massive thank you to Lagardère, your generosity continues to surprise and excite us year after year.

FREDERIC HOUSE: 20 YEARS ON

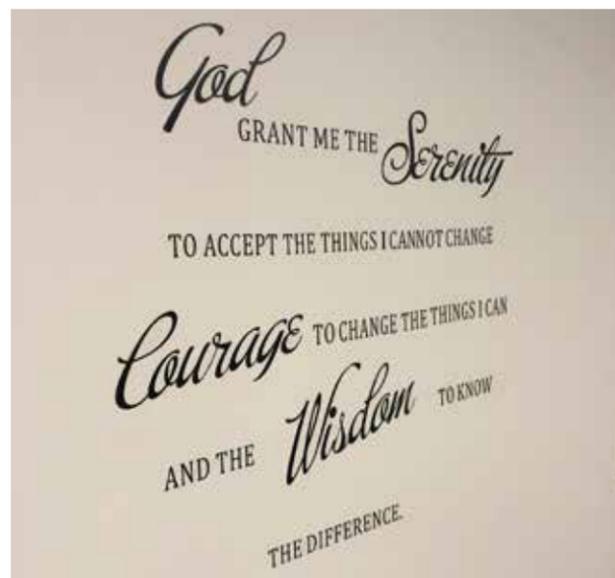
Inside Frederic House, a great deal has changed since we opened our doors in 1998, but some things remain the same.

Frederic House rose from the rubble of old brickworks in Waterloo, near Sydney's Redfern and Surry Hills suburbs.

We continue to provide a home to 61 men, and to be a place of minimal restriction where most of the few rules we stick to apply to staff rather than to residents. Our community continues to be composed of men from a vast variety of backgrounds: they may have been experiencing mental illness, addiction and homelessness.

Frederic House is also an accredited Aged Care facility. Since our first Aged Care Accreditation in 2000 we have managed to comply with the required standards, which were designed, of course, for more conventional places. Doing this ensures a measure of judgement on our service which means the men are safer.

From the time we opened we have been a unique facility



and the only such facility to cover the total costs of all medical care needs of residents, including medication. Clothing, footwear, TVs and more are also provided at no expense to residents.

Inspiration for the way we assist the men came from the Society Members who built the facility, all of whom wanted residents to be afforded the dignity and care they deserve.

Talk and Fork

Talk and Fork is a community BBQ held each Saturday at McCabe Park, Wollongong. The aim is to feed people sleeping rough, individuals in temporary accommodation, boarding house guests and other vulnerable people in need over the weekend when other services are closed.

Talk and Fork is open to all members of the community and provides a nutritious meal, a social outlet, supportive conversations and now, thanks to OzHarvest, fruit, vegetables and bread to be taken away.

Attendees also enjoy an opportunity to build social networks, engage and build relationships with local community organisations and are treated with empathy and respect without judgement. While supporting those most in need, we hope the event may help reduce stigma, judgement and fear of vulnerable individuals and families experiencing homelessness, fostering a greater community spirit.

Talk and Fork has grown considerably since its



inception in early 2018. Early events catered for 15 to 20 people but now regularly feed 80 to 100 people including families with small children.

Attendees have commented that the event may be the only food consumed over the weekend period while other support services are closed; and that the conversations had at Talk and Fork may be the only meaningful conversations that they engaged in that day, on that weekend and sometimes since the previous Talk and Fork event.

Ability Links Community Development Resource Package

Since Ability Links NSW was established in 2013, Linkers and communities have worked together to achieve important milestones on the journey to sustaining inclusion.

They have learned a great deal about what works and what doesn't for people with disabilities, their families and carers, and with different communities and types of organisations.

Together with an advisory firm, ARTD consultants, and the NSW Department of Family and Community Services, the Society and Ability Links have now launched a Community Development Resource Package to capture that work and make it accessible to the broader community.

The package is designed as a guide to help organisations deliver community-based inclusion projects alongside people with disabilities.

It is based on a scan of the available literature in the sector, as well as a review of Ability Links NSW providers' project documentation, plus interviews and workshops with Linkers themselves.

It identifies guiding principles for community development work based on the experiences of NSW Linkers, and takes the reader through the process of engaging with a community, to planning, managing and sustaining a project.

It also provides guidance on monitoring, evaluating and reflecting on project outcomes to track progress and inform continuous improvement.

The case studies contained within it include Vinnies Ability Links initiatives such as Hack Sounds, Beaches for Everybody, Cinema Captioning, and Access at a Glance.

The resources can be found on the Ability Links website at: www.abilitylinksnsw.org.au/resources.html



Next Steps for Local Area Coordination

In July, the Local Area Coordination (LAC) program began another year of operation with the extension of our contract to deliver the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

Since we began work in early 2016, we have supported more than 30,000 people with disabilities to access the NDIS and have conducted hundreds of community engagement and capacity building sessions across our program from Sydney to New England.

An extensive roadshow was conducted to brainstorm with our teams about how best to deliver the program in the 'Vinnies way'.

One of the questions we asked in the Roadshows was: "What is the Vinnies point of difference in the disability services sector". The most common responses included: our person-centred approach, our values, reputation, empathy, commitment to face-to-face meetings, passion, diversity and training, and the fact that we leave no-one behind and genuinely care about making a difference.

The Society's incredible expertise in the areas of homelessness, health and community development and the Ability Links program are essential to us being able to provide a holistic approach. We have a priority to engage with 'hard-to-reach' communities from now on and this is where the reach and expertise of Vinnies members and volunteers will be invaluable in those efforts.

As we carry out our vital work engaging with individuals and communities to explain the NDIS and the National Disability Insurance Agency, we will be engaging much more with existing Vinnies community services. Working together, we will be even better placed to help people to seek access, to help implement and review plans, and to build socially inclusive communities.



On the Road to Independence

Southern Highlands Homelessness Services have partnered with Wingecarribee Volunteer Centre on the 'Volwing' Learner Driver Mentor Program.

This grassroots community-based program is designed to support disadvantaged new drivers, aged between 16 and 24 years, to become licensed drivers by giving them use of a vehicle for on-road practice while a volunteer mentor supervises them. The partnership has gained tremendous support from Moss Vale Motor Group, who have generously provided a vehicle to support program participants.

Southern Highlands Homelessness Services are continuing their support to disadvantaged young people from start to finish by covering all licencing, testing and professional driving lesson costs. This has been made achievable by support from Highlands Drive Safe and Service NSW Mittagong.

Although the program has just kicked off, there has already



been an overwhelming amount of commitment and driven program participants who are very excited about the program and the independence, employment and housing opportunities it brings.

"I never thought that I would have the opportunity to get my licence before others who may not be homeless," said a program participant currently residing at Bowral Youth Refuge.



My Community – Woolloomooloo

This year's creative programs on offer at the Ozanam Learning Centre (OLC) in Woolloomooloo saw a flurry of activity as participants took to the neighbourhood streets with microphones and tripods in hand.

Taking the 'Vox Pop' approach of short interviews with ordinary members of the public to get 'the voice of the

people', the group uncovered extraordinary stories. Katrina, a long-time resident of the area, took a lead role as interviewer, approaching passers-by to ask what brought them to the area that day.

Key sentiments that the final cut video revealed were about a strong sense of community, a special place full of diverse and interesting characters "where everyone knows everyone".

Some passing tourists commented to camera: "We are in a big city, but it's like a village here." The local post woman continued, "I've got the best job in the world delivering mail here in Woolloomooloo"; and the chemist concluded, "We are taking care of the local community".

The group were able to draw out a truth of sorts about Woolloomooloo through their sensitive approach, genuine interest in the local community, teamwork and technical skills. They told a story about a place with a big heart, where people from all walks of life are welcomed; a place that celebrates its indigenous history and living culture, and that looks to the future with optimism.

Dressed By Vinnies Day

The St Vincent de Paul Society launched the very first national Dressed By Vinnies Day on 26 October.

The national event encouraged all Australians who love a fashionable bargain to visit their local Vinnies Shop, find something they love, wear it on the day and share a photo on social media by using the hashtag #DressedbyVinnies. The theme for Dressed By Vinnies Day 2018 was 'Wear it and share it!'.

Long-time Vinnies supporter and ambassador, Joe Hildebrand, got involved and said, "there is absolutely no better way to make great quality clothing affordable to people, raise vital funding for people in need and reduce the massive amount of clothing that is wasted every year. It is win, win, win and the best part is you can look good while doing it."

Jacqui Dropulic, Retail Development Manager for Vinnies NSW, explained, "Being Dressed By Vinnies is easy. This year we encouraged our loyal customers, and people who may never have shopped at their local Vinnies, to uncover a fantastic fashion item and show everyone what they found via social media."



When customers shop at Vinnies, they are also helping us provide assistance to 1.8 million men, women and children experiencing disadvantage in local communities.

To find out more, get ready for next year, and download a free Dressed By Vinnies Styling Guide, visit dressedby.vinnies.org.au

Retail Transformation and the Inaugural Two-Day Retail Workshop

After an extensive two-year process of consultation and development, the Retail Strategy was approved by our Board in December 2017.

This decision laid down the foundation for embarking on a transformational journey, future-proofing our ability to address poverty wherever it impacts families and their communities.

In September 2018, the Retail Transformation team was delighted to host a two-day workshop to build on the successes of the year and to collaboratively and creatively prepare and plan for the following years. As CEO Jack de Groot said: "We are underwriting the future of households across many communities for the next 25 years."

The workshop was attended by personnel from all Central Councils, with diverse experiences and knowledge including Vinnies Shops, distribution centres, the Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) and executive leadership.



Collaboration from various Central Councils on developing retail skills and training.

The workshop provided an opportunity to bring together ideas and to create a future vision for Vinnies Retail. The two days were filled with networking and collaboration across Central Councils, with enthusiastic feedback: "We are one Vinnies and we need to find solutions together."



Keeping Australia Beautiful: CDS Hauls in Awards

The St Vincent de Paul Society has won the inaugural Keep Australia Beautiful NSW Return and Earn Litter Prevention Award, recognising the positive social and environmental impacts it is achieving.

This accolade is the second major award for the Vinnies NSW Container Deposit Scheme (CDS), and acknowledges the organisation's commitment to its 'reuse and recycle' philosophy. Vinnies NSW was also named Social Responsibility Champion at the 2018 National Retail Awards in August.

The NSW State Government launched the Return and Earn CDS in late 2017 in an effort to address discarded drinks containers, which make up 44% of all litter in the state.

Vinnies NSW is a Return and Earn collection partner for eligible containers, providing more than a dozen over-the-counter deposit points in Vinnies Shops throughout Western Sydney, the Illawarra and Shoalhaven, as well as bulk processing sites in Unanderra, South Nowra, Cardiff, Penrith and Wagga Wagga. These sites are soon to be complemented by an expanding network of bulk deposit facilities managed by Vinnies across the state, which are set to open throughout 2019.



The bulk container deposit centres operate Monday to Saturday and boast fast processing, convenient drive-through access, and deposit refunds on-the-spot via reverse electronic funds transfer (EFT).

By November 2018, Vinnies had processed more than 10 million containers, helping to divert approximately 38,400 cubic metres of waste from landfill – that's around 415 semi-trailer loads!

The program provides Vinnies with an additional revenue stream to help fund its Good Works within communities across NSW, receiving a handling fee for every container processed. Customers can also elect to donate their container refund to Vinnies in support of our fundraising efforts.

For more information on the Vinnies Container Deposit Scheme locations, visit www.vinnies.org.au/cds or www.facebook.com/vinniesnswcds

If you are interested in exploring the CDS, you can contact Vinnies NSW CDS project manager Jon D'Astoli on 0427 952 730 or via email to learn more about working together with Vinnies to create a socially and environmentally sustainable future.

ANTI-POVERTY WEEK 14-20 OCTOBER 2018

Anti-Poverty Week is a week where all Australians are encouraged to organise or take part in an activity aiming to highlight or overcome issues of poverty and hardship here in Australia or overseas. It was established in Australia as an expansion of the annual United Nations International Anti-Poverty Day on 17 October.

Anti-Poverty Week was launched in partnership with Mission Australia at the Ozanam Learning Centre in Woolloomooloo with journalist and author Benjamin Law.

Having featured in SBS Australia's reality series about homelessness, 'Filthy Rich and Homeless', Ben shared his experience of taking part.

This included the stories he heard on the street and the insights he gained into homelessness: "There was a strange dislocated feeling that you were suddenly invisible," he noted.

Our CEO Jack de Groot and Mission Australia's State Leader, Tracy Wright, spoke about the need for a national plan to end homelessness.

Advancing Reconciliation: The Rosalie Rendu Lecture

In October, four inspiring women challenged a captivated audience at the 2018 Rosalie Rendu Lecture held at the National Centre for Aboriginal Excellence in Redfern.

The topic was 'Advancing Reconciliation: Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples for Social Justice'.

Keynote speaker, Professor Robynne Quiggin, a legal expert and member of the Wiradjuri nation, began by providing a small snapshot of the ways in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have been purposefully excluded from the economy; how they had been removed from their land and the means of production, and denied the right to self-determination. Yet there were also powerful stories of strength and resistance, she added. In recent years we have begun to see change, largely thanks to the untiring advocacy of strong Aboriginal leaders. More change is possible, and Professor Quiggin affirmed her belief that ending both economic poverty, and poverty of the spirit, is possible. Central to this challenge was the importance of truth-telling – hearing, listening and understanding the diverse experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Panellist Aunty Elsie Heiss, a founding member of the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry Sydney and highly respected Aboriginal elder, spoke with conviction



about the need for all people to know and to share the stories of where they are from. Triple J radio Breakfast news presenter, journalist and Gamilaroi Gomeri woman Brooke Boney shared her love for Australia while emphasising the need to acknowledge that our country's wealth is built on the back of the dispossession of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. And Yeena Thompson, Project Officer of Aboriginal Engagement from the Vinnies Local Area Coordination Program, reminded all members, volunteers and staff across NSW to keep enacting the Society's Reconciliation Action Plan.

Throughout the evening, the speakers drew connections between the work on reconciliation we need to undertake, and the example given us by Sister Rosalie Rendu, who invested her time in building real relationships based on dignity and respect.

Our challenge now is to capture the lessons – both intellectual and emotional – from the evening, and to channel these lessons towards bringing our Reconciliation Action Plan to life.

Missed the lecture?! You can watch it on YouTube here: bit.ly/RosalieLecture

If you would like to receive the latest on Vinnies' campaigns for a more equitable NSW, sign up to our monthly Social Justice e-Newsletter at <http://bit.ly/VinniesSJnews> or contact social.justice@vinnies.org.au



Refugee Camp in My Neighbourhood

Vinnies staff from Support Services and the State Support Office took part in a two-hour guided tour of a simulated refugee journey.

The 'pop-up' event in Auburn, 'Refugee Camp in My Neighbourhood', took place in August. Tour guides, who were from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds themselves, guided participants through the immersive exhibition as they heard and saw the conditions, threats and experiences of fleeing one's home in search of safety. The courage, strength and determination of the tour guides was inspiring and thought-provoking and served as a powerful reminder of the importance of empowering people from refugee background to tell their own stories.



With help from Cumberland Council and The Welcome Studio, a group of children in the Vinnies SPARK program, produced an art installation and video that voiced the children's experience of re-settlement in Australia. The artwork created by these students expressed their positive, surprising, weird and wonderful memories of starting life in Australia.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING FORUMS GATHER PACE

The Society has hosted Affordable Housing Forums alongside Sydney Alliance in Parramatta, Hornsby and Ryde for community members to hear from and discuss with local politicians about the housing crisis and rental stress experienced in their area.

Local renters, including carers and teachers, spoke of their struggles with rising rents and unfair 'no-grounds' evictions. These events were a great way for local communities to voice their concerns to local politicians in different levels of government, directly asking them to explore ways of increasing the provision of affordable rental, and

speeding up its approval, through state legislation and local policies.

Affordable housing is a priority for Vinnies, Sydney Alliance, Local Communities and Australia's Catholic Bishops.

The latter have also called on all levels of government and the community to work together to address rising rates of homelessness and housing stress; and assert the value of housing as a basic human right in their latest Social Justice Statement 2018-19. Bishop Vincent Long released the Statement in September with the CEO of Vinnies NSW, Jack de Groot.

MAKING LONG SERVICE

Glenda Cox said farewell to the Society in July after 45 years of service in the Riverina. Reflecting on her time at the Society, she said: "I have always loved helping people and over the years I have made many friends."

"The needs of people are very much the same as they always have been: kindness, a smile and a friendly face, someone to talk to without being judged and a hand up through hard times. My years working at the Society have been very important in my life, giving me the chance to help people and contribute to my community."



Pat Leonard is a life member of the Society whose contribution to the community began in 1946 after joining the Marist Brothers Junior Conference. He was elected St Mary's Conference President, Broken Hill Council President and Diocese President of Wilcannia Forbes. Taking initiative with friends in 1973 he started the Bishop Fox Memorial



Meal Centre after seeing people eating from rubbish bins. Pat explained, "Over the years, I have enjoyed meeting great people, who love working for Christ... I would like to give a huge thank you to everyone involved, who have worked as part of a great team."



Condobolin volunteer John Costello recently celebrated 70 years of service with the Society. John has been a very active member, holding the position of Conference President and being a strong advocate of visitation. John is still an active centre volunteer, emptying the donation bins on a daily basis and was awarded Life Membership in 2015.

John's 70 years of service were celebrated at a special lunch during National Volunteer Week with Condobolin members and volunteers thanking him for his magnificent contribution to the Society.

Eric William Morgan, a valued and committed member of the Conference and Parish Community of St Patrick's, Glen Innes, recently celebrated his 90th birthday with fellow Vincentians.



Serving in the NSW police force, and being an active member of the Society throughout his life, Eric is now a vital part of the Legion of Mary in the Armidale Diocese, being the President of the Glen Innes Presidium and President of the Armidale Curia.

Alongside his strong Catholic faith, Eric has "always had the love and support of (his) wife and all seven children".

Engaging Shop Volunteers on the North Coast

Over the past months, Vinnies Lismore has run volunteer engagement sessions at various shops throughout the North Coast, including Byron Bay, Murwillumbah, Laurieton and Kempsey.

Team members were given an overview of Vinnies Shops in NSW, starting from the very first Shop in 1922 which sold horse manure, right up to the 240 shops that we now have. It was emphasised that 'change' may be a maligned word, but has actually been constant and critical to our growth, so that we can continue to meet the rising needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged people in the community. We also discussed how the proceeds of Shop sales are spent in the service of others and highlighted the positive impacts that are being made in peoples' lives. Coordinators from the 'Breaking the Barriers' children's program spoke about the vacation care, breakfast clubs, school uniform initiatives and various resilience programs - such as equine and art therapy for children who have suffered trauma - that run in their community in addition to Conference support, homeless services and other Special Works.

Murwillumbah volunteer Frances Tyrie said: "It was very worthwhile and motivating. I didn't realise there are all of these wonderful programs that are supported by our Shop! It was also great to get the volunteers from different days together, it makes us realise that we are an important part of a bigger team which is supporting people in need".



L-R: Letizia Albertini, Frances Tyrie, Joan Kean, Shirley O'Connor



St Clare's Primary School (Narellan) Mini Vinnies group visiting Vinnies Picton.

HAND-ME-UP STUDENTS LEADING THE WAY

Wollongong Central Council has been piloting a student engagement and education program - Hand-Me-Ups - across a number of local schools, with positive feedback and outcomes resulting in plans to expand the initiative region-wide in 2019.

The project invites primary school groups to visit and tour their local Vinnies Shop, hearing from the store supervisor, retail volunteers and Conference members about how donations are sorted, which donations are acceptable, and how proceeds from our Shops fund Vinnies programs and the work of Conferences.

The initiative aims to foster an awareness among young people of the costs associated with disposal of poor donations, and the importance of donating only 'that which you'd give to a friend'.

The students then become ambassadors of this message, and head up a clothing and accessories collection drive at their school the following week, resulting in quality donations from families that otherwise might not have donated at all.



'Risk and Dare' Justice Conference

Jasmine and Dom from the State Support Office joined some bright young people on the first day of the 'Risk and Dare' Justice Conference, hosted by the Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Sacred Heart. 'Risk and Dare', or 'RAD', aims to build on the commitment of young people involved in social justice, to be inspired by voices that challenge and learn how they can act for change.

Jasmine and Dom presented on what justice means in relation to homelessness, and were part of a panel discussing all the ways young people can get involved with Vinnies.



SOUTH COAST VOLUNTEERS SHARE THEIR VOICES

Volunteers are the backbone of the Society, helping hundreds of thousands of people each year.

For some Vinnies volunteers, this is a chance to give something back to the community, using their skills and experience to make a difference in the lives of

people who need assistance the most. For others, it is a chance to develop new skills and experience in a supportive environment.

In an effort to better understand the motivations, aspirations and demographics of its retail volunteers, Wollongong Central Council recently asked their volunteers to complete a survey, with more than 170 volunteers participating across 25 Shops.

Feedback showed there is great camaraderie between volunteers, and they enjoy giving their valuable time as part of the wider Vinnies team. As Jenny said, "I enjoy volunteering because I like to have an input into the community and socialise with people." Respondents also felt that Vinnies cares for its volunteers, staff and members, as well as the wider community.

The results helped identify opportunities to improve the volunteer experience, including improved and ongoing communication. Volunteers have a desire to learn more about how their contribution as a volunteer supports the Society's Good Works in local communities; and Wollongong Central Council has committed to sharing more information with its volunteers and continuing this program of engagement to seek and respond to feedback.

Filthy Rich and Homeless Classroom Resources

Series 2 of 'Filthy Rich and Homeless' aired on SBS in August, featuring Australian actor and presenter Cameron Daddo staying at Vinnies Matthew Talbot Hostel in Woolloomooloo.

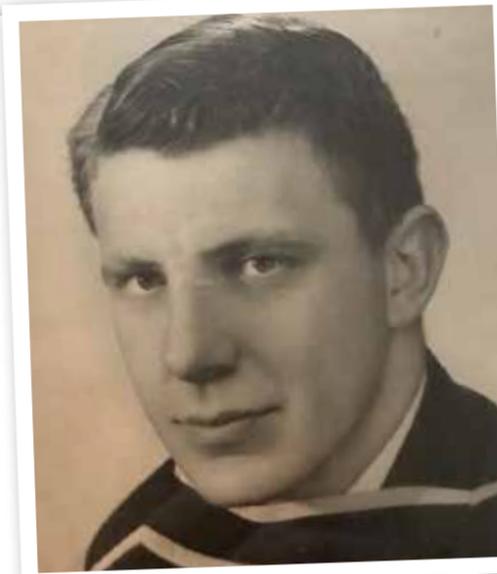
As part of the partnership with SBS, Vinnies developed educational classroom resources enabling young audiences to explore, reflect on and discuss homelessness in Australia. These resources include fact sheets about homelessness, a homelessness knowledge quiz and 'The Cost of Living' game, which can be accessed via the SBS website at www.sbs.com.au/learn/filthy-rich-and-homeless.



Vinnies Youth Open Up about Mental Health

For World Mental Health Day, Vinnies Youth Sydney hosted a free mental health awareness event at Two Wolves Cantina near the University of Sydney.

The event was a great opportunity for young people to come together to discuss their knowledge, experiences and concerns about mental health issues. Thanks to all those who attended, shared and encouraged an open discussion that cut through the stigma of mental health.



Ted Meagher

A Caring, Generous and Gentle Man

Edward (Ted) Thomas Paul Meagher was born in West Wyalong on 21 January 1932 during a 10 day heat wave of temperatures over 37 degrees.

Ted attended St Mary's Convent School, West Wyalong and then Saint Ignatius' College Riverview. St John's College within the University of Sydney was his next stop where he where he studied his Law degree and played rugby, winning the Rawson Cup.

He moved to Barraba, NSW to join a local law firm. During his years there he played Rugby, tennis and cricket and in 1971 travelled to Europe and the UK. Ted eventually moved to work in the State Crown Solicitor's office.

In the early 1990s Ted retired to Mullumbimby, where he wrote his Will, reflecting on what was important to him and his legacy. Ted looked after his family in his Will and also generously bequeathed half of his estate to the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW. Ted had supported the Society for over 25 years and his father, Thomas Paul Meagher, was President of the St Vincent de Paul Society at West Wyalong for several terms.

When doctors recommended a drier climate to help his chest infections, Ted made the move to Cowra, during which he kept in touch with his family. Each year without fail he would travel to Sydney to help his Mum to prepare for the special Meagher Christmas night gathering.

In 2014 he became ill with dementia and in 2016 his brother Tom arranged for Ted to move closer to him in Baptist Care, Canberra. Tom was able to take care of his brother and arrange for him to have the regular Communion, which was important to him.

Ted spent his last years with cherished visits from his family including siblings, nieces and nephews.

On 3 March 2018 Tom contacted Father Hilton Roberts who administered the sacrament of the sick to Ted. About an hour later Ted quietly passed on to his new life.

Edward Thomas Paul Meagher's significant bequest to the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW was valued at over \$4 million, which will go towards the amazing work our services do to help those experiencing disadvantage.

Ted's brothers, Tom and Paul, recently visited the Matthew Talbot Hostel and the Ozanam Learning Centre in Woolloomooloo to see some of the services that will benefit from their brother's extraordinary forward-thinking and generosity.

Although Ted did not have children of his own he wanted to assist children experiencing hardship as well as people struggling with mental health issues.

Ted will be fondly remembered at Vinnies with a permanent memorial. We recognise everyone who has generously left a legacy to the Society in our Book of Gratitude. The book will be presented for prayers at the Annual Mass this year in December.



Reflections from writing our Retail story together...

In September I was privileged to join our retailers' gathering in Sydney to discuss steps forward towards our future vision and sustainability via the Retail Strategy

Some may see this as our 'business' taking over from our 'Mission', but that certainly was not the case! The conversations were themed 'Writing our Retail Story Together', which echoes the very heart of our Mission, about the shared story of our heritage, traditions and the contemporary expression of faith, hope and love in today's world. This is a dynamic story that is renewing, changing, and open to the signs of our present times.

It is understandable that actions of a 'Retail Strategy' could be seen through the lens of a profit-driven marketing campaign built to fuel the pockets of stakeholders. And in many ways that's what this is. But our stakeholders are the homeless, the most vulnerable and disadvantaged. They are those living with mental health and complex disabilities, families broken by domestic violence, refugees and asylum seekers, and those simply doing it tough in current economic times.

Increasing retail revenues is vital to the continuation of our Mission. This Mission, inspired by our founders, responding to the imperatives of the gospels, is the very voice of our spirituality.

The people we care for deserve only the best we can offer, provide, support and share. Our 'hand up' through the actions of the strategy, enables the actions of providing dignity to each person who comes to our care. This is a spirituality that is practical, engaging, relational and - importantly - always responding in love.

Oblate priest Fr Ron Rolheiser reflects. "Spirit-led people never stop growing and never stop changing and recognising the new moment of opportunity."

Fundamentally our Mission calls us always to the deeper waters. It is daunting, it is overwhelming, it is different to our past and there will be times of doubt: but, crucially, it is life-giving.

Bishop Vincent Long of the Diocese of Parramatta has on his Episcopal crest and motto Duc in Altum meaning to "go out into the deep". This speaks strongly of his mission through war-torn Vietnam, his treacherous boat journey, and his time in refugee camps. Every step in the journey was stepping into the deep of the unknown. To this his only companion was faith.

Ours too is a mission which steps into the depths companioned with faith. Whether it is going into someone's home, companioning someone with mental health issues, visiting in prisons, or even developing business strategies or looking toward financial sustainability in difficult times, the Society's Mission – serving Christ in the poor – is always our lead and sacred companion.

May we continue to work together listening to each other's voices into the future enabling respect and love, working for justice, hope and joy to shape our communities justly and compassionately for the common good of those we serve.



Leo Tucker

State Director of Mission and Spirituality

REFLECTIONS ON THE YEAR

"For I was hungry and you gave me food, thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me..."

The St Vincent de Paul Society, as a lay Catholic organisation, aspires to live this Gospel message from Matthew each day. It is to this call that we "serve Christ in the poor". It is through this idea that we strive not only to assist in a crisis, but also transform the human dignity of all we serve. Pope Francis reminds us that without this inspiration, the Society would become simply a "compassionate NGO [Non-Governmental Organisation]".

Our 'good works' are founded on a rich heritage advocating a contemporary spirit of faith in action for a more just and compassionate society. Over the course of 2018, the Society has had a strong focus on spirituality, formation and pastoral care. As Director of Mission I have been fortunate to share and facilitate reflection days in Armidale, Dubbo, Narrabri, Sutherland, Tamworth, Wollongong, Orange and Western Suburbs Sydney Regional Council. These days gathered many of our members, volunteers and staff to share their faith and spiritual journeys and to reflect on their lives as part of this Society.

A formation journey began for four members of our senior staff with the Ministry Leadership Program (aligned with Catholic Health and Catholic Social Services) and the Graduate Leadership and Catholic Culture with the Australian Catholic University. Both programs, grounded in the wisdom of the Catholic tradition, link professional expertise with contemporary business and organisational best practice and provides a needed formation context. These and other aspects of formations will continue into next year.

The development of Pastoral Care, especially in our Support Services, has been an important step forward for the Society. After a State-wide review of our pastoral approach in terms of compassionate care to those we serve, a re-structure occurred at the Matthew Talbot Hostel to develop a defined team of Eucharistic volunteers working closely with the Pastoral Care Coordinator. This group assists with the Sunday liturgy, hospitality and debrief sessions with men: other pastoral assistance will be developed into the future.

The Review Committee also established a Pastoral Care role for Frederic House at Waterloo, with a second Pastoral Care role to be developed at the Matthew Talbot. Future



development of these important and crucial roles for the Society will be envisioned for the future.

Moreover, through the work of the State Spirituality Advisory Committee, a training and formation program is being developed for Spiritual Advisers as well as a defined position description to assist these vital Conference and Council roles.

Finally, we move toward the beatification of Charles Gordon O'Neill, the Society's co-founder in Australia, via meetings with Bishops Terry Brady and Tony Randazzo, author Dr Stephen Utick and our State President, Denis Walsh. It is hoped that a bronze bust of O'Neill will be blessed and established at St Patrick's Church Hill in Sydney near the crypt where the first Conference meeting occurred in 1881. A Mass for Charles O'Neill is celebrated annually on 8 November and the internment of ashes of our Companions are placed to rest annually at the Charles O'Neill Memorial Walk at Rookwood Catholic Cemetery.

Our Spirituality and Mission continues to strengthen the purpose and focus for our good works' as we are challenged to feed the hungry, welcome the stranger, clothe the needy, pondering always the call to love and serve.



Leo Tucker

State Director of Mission and Spirituality

Join Team Vinnies in the Outback!



Fundraise for a cause and join us as we trek the Larapinta Trail to make a difference for the children who turn to Vinnies.

Save your spot today!

Phone 02 9568 0211 or visit <http://bit.ly/VinniesLarapinta>



Trek Larapinta



YOUR SUPPORT CHANGES LIVES

For Jared and his family, the relief provided by Vinnies – the roof over their heads, financial assistance and the emotional support – meant they could breathe a sigh of relief. Thanks to people like you, Jared and his family could actually enjoy a more meaningful Christmas together – something that everyone deserves.

This Christmas please help other people like Jared's family who are facing homelessness.

You generous donation can be made through your parish or you can call 13 18 12 or visit vinnies.org.au/christmasappeal

