



Newsletter

NOVEMBER 2021

Dear Friends,



As I reflect on the current situation surrounding COVID-19, domestic violence, the availability of affordable housing and other important issues facing our communities today, our work, the work of the St Vincent

de Paul Society, our members, our volunteers and our staff has never been more relevant and important for those around us who need that Hand up!

The changes around us, whether social, political, economic or otherwise, consistently requires that we help our communities navigate through this new and increasingly difficult climate, which profoundly impacts the way we assist, our communities, and each other. In many instances, we are asked to be responsible in

weathering these storms, and I understand it isn't always easy. Our amazing community of Vincentians, including all of our staff and volunteers, is a network on which we can all be reliant on when facing these new challenges. It isn't always easy, and we don't always have the answers we need, but at times all that is required is a listening ear.

I understand that the Vinnies Awareness campaign is in progress with several Conferences utilising Vinnies flyers, merchandise, and holding Vinnies Awareness weekends at their Parish Masses. Please remember to reach out if you need more support during these campaigns, however that support might look like.

As always, I thank you all for the amazing work you do, day in and day out! It's often a thankless job but as Voltaire said "Appreciation is a wonderful thing. It makes what is excellent about others belong to us

as well". Let us all appreciate each other and be excellent together.

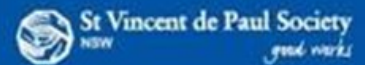
If you have any ideas, suggestions, comments, improvements, or criticisms, please contact me and convey your thoughts. I am grateful for your partnership and dedication to our society which in turn makes it all possible!

And finally, on both a personal and professional note, please join me in praying for Gayl Purchase. As you know, Gayl passed away at the end of October. Despite her illness, her passing was a shock to all of us. Gayl was an esteemed colleague and friend – and a mentor to so many of us who seek to serve Christ in the most vulnerable members of our community. She is dearly missed and her life is a strong witness to the compassion and hope that motivates our good works. Please keep Gayl and her family in your prayers. *May God bless all that you do.*

Michelle Chahine, BBCC President



A message from
Jack de Groot, CEO



Dear Colleagues,

It is with much sadness that I inform you of the death of Gayl Purchase on Thursday 28 October. Gayl has been the Regional Director, Metropolitan within the Members, Volunteer and Regional Operations directorate. Gayl joined Vinnies at the beginning of 2020 to take on this newly created role under the restructure. Unfortunately, the cancer that she had been living with in prior years came back. She has been juggling full time work and declining health for some months.

Gayl has led a remarkable team focused on the growth and development of the membership to better assist the people that we serve. She led the development and

expansion of a few programs like the VYCC and the additional mobile van services. Sam Crosby, who has worked with Gayl described "her service has been – in a word – inspirational. I will miss her calm demeanor and can-do attitude".

The morning after her passing, some of Gayl's colleagues were able to gather and reflect. She was described as:

- *"An incredibly strong woman, who showed bravery till the end. I will miss her sense of humour and amazing support."*
- *"Tenacious in her desire to just be and so, so generous in spirit"*.
- *"Gayl came to Vinnies at such a difficult time with so much change happening*

and with staff so overwhelmed. Yet Gayl was such a wonderful breath of fresh air with her good humored and inspirational leadership! Always so supportive and following up when she knew we were struggling. An absolute legend!"

- *"Gayl's goodness makes me want to be a better person"*

On Saturday 30 October, the State Council met and prayed for Gayl and her family. As her family come together, we will stay in touch and have an opportunity to remember Gayl across the Society. Let us hold Gayl and her family, as well as her colleagues, in our thoughts and prayers.

Jack



Fundraising for the Christmas Appeal



This year’s Christmas Appeal is more important than ever – with COVID related payments being wound back and so many families affected by unemployment and the loss of income during the pandemic. If any conferences have a fundraising idea or want assistance for the upcoming Christmas Appeal, please contact Caroline Casse, the Community Fundraising and Events Coordinator at Vinnies NSW.

There are two fundraising tools available for use by all conferences and these are the Commonwealth Bank Albert Terminals and Personalised Fundraising Pages (for specific events and/ or permanent fundraising pages) on <https://fundraise.vinniesnsw.org.au/>

Some of you may have worked with Caroline when she organised the Albert Terminals for the 2021 Winter Appeal. If your conference is interested in using either of these tools for your 2021 Christmas Appeal that will be held from November 2021 to February 2022, please don’t hesitate to reach out to her at caroline.casse@vinnies.org.au.

“That’s a RAP!” – Our Cultural Competency Framework

Yamma all !

In this edition of the Vinnies Broken Bay newsletter, we’re profiling the Society's Cultural Competency Framework.

A Cultural Competency Framework (CCF) represents a conceptual framework that addresses the cultural and ethical issues within an organisation. The model of the Society’s CCF serves to inform our members, volunteers and employees of the strategic initiatives that have been developed to embed cultural safety within Vinnies.

How does it work?

Located on the Reconciliation page on the MAV’s website, the Society’s CCF model (see image) highlights all the documents and initiatives that have been designed to support engagement with First Nations Peoples.

How do I use it?

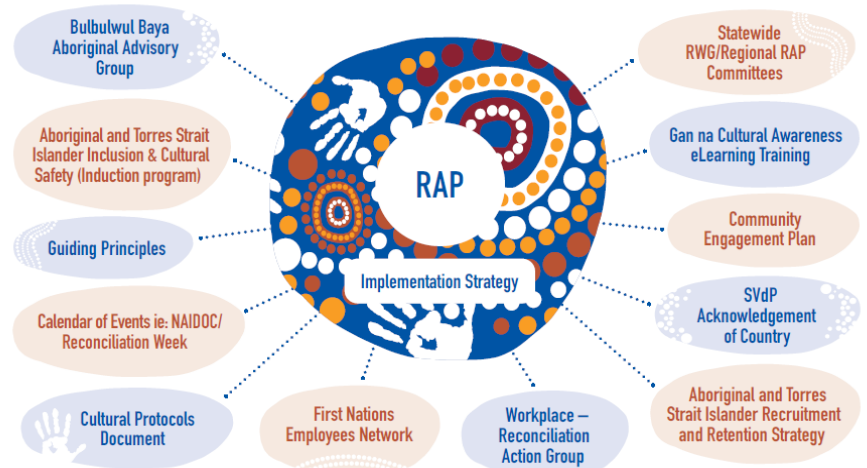
The centerpiece of the Society’s CCF is our Reconciliation Plan, surrounded by the titles of the various initiatives and strategies that have been developed to support its rollout.

Go to this page on the MAVS website: <https://mavs.vinnies.org.au/cultural-competency-framework/>

Click on the different areas of activity and the embedded link will take you to that particular document. Everything you need for our shared journey of Reconciliation is here in one place.

Robert Cohen, Aboriginal Engagement Partner – Vinnies NSW

ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY NSW CULTURAL COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK



For more information about the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW Cultural Competency Framework please email reconciliation@vinnies.org.au

Conversations on the Shadow Pandemic: Rosalie Rendu Forum 2021



“We can’t prevent domestic violence unless we have accountability for the people who use it. Until we can have a conversation about male violence against women, we can’t address the complexity of the issue.”

With COVID-19 being recognised as a global pandemic at the beginning of 2020, a simultaneous shadow pandemic has taken place, resulting in increased rates of domestic and family violence.

During the first quarter of the financial year, impacted by the stay-at-home restrictions implemented throughout NSW, the Vinnies Services team experienced a 20 per cent increase in women and children seeking assistance.

In response, the 2021 Rosalie Rendu Forum on Thursday 21 October brought together an acclaimed and diverse group of women for an in-depth discussion on the rising rates of domestic violence and its implications for women experiencing poverty.

Held during Anti-Poverty Week, the annual event, named in recognition of Sister Rosalie Rendu, took place virtually for the second consecutive year due to the continued challenges of COVID-19.

Following an Acknowledgment of Country from Lisa Buxton, in recognition of the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation, and a spiritual reflection from Brooke Simmons on the history of Sister Rosalie Rendu, host Padma Raman (CEO of Australia’s National Research Organisation for Women’s Safety) introduced the theme of *The Shadow Pandemic* – understanding the

intersectional relationship between domestic and family violence, gender and poverty.

Annabelle Daniel OAM, Chief Executive Officer of Women’s Community Shelters; Christine Robinson, Coordinator of Wirringa Baiya Aboriginal Community Legal Centre; and Rosemary Kariuki, winner of the Local Hero 2021 Australian of the Year award were the three key speakers on the evening.

Peita, a woman assisted by Vinnies, also spoke as part of the discussion to provide a primary insight as an advocate with lived experience of domestic violence. Over the course of 90 minutes, a robust discussion was had on a range of issues including the national women’s safety summit, the NSW Government’s investment in refuges for women and children, educating the entire community – including perpetrators – in order to change behaviours, and the complexities in the understanding and management of domestic violence by police.

Insights from the night:

“People don’t choose to be poor; people don’t choose to live in poverty,” – Christine Robinson.

“No one can think straight or plan a future if they don’t know where they’re going to sleep. Housing is foundational to feeling safe, secure and getting out of survival mode” – Annabelle Daniel

“Education is the main key; talking openly and educating why it’s wrong to hit a human being” – Rosemary Kariuki

“Perpetrators aren’t held accountable for what they put people through and forced to understand what their actions do to victims” – Pieta

A networking session was held following the formal discussion which saw members, volunteers and staff across the Society reflect on the insights offered throughout the night.

Vinnies would like to thank Ms Kariuki, Ms Daniel, Ms Robinson, Ms Raman, Ms Buxton, Ms Simmons, Peita and the Social Justice Team for their involvement in another tremendous Rosalie Rendu Forum.

To view the 2021 Rosalie Rendu Forum, contact social.justice@vinnies.org.au to access a recording of the event.

“We need to stop being bystanders. When you hear something, call triple zero. If all of us can do something and check on each other, extend that hand, we can get change.”

We provide a range of specialised services for women and their children escaping domestic violence. [Find out more about Vinnies refuges and emergency domestic and family violence services](#)





JOIN US AT ST JOSEPH'S WORKSHOP

Many of you will have heard of the high quality of furniture and other items crafted from recycled materials at St Joseph's Workshop in West Gosford.

The Workshop is a volunteer-based service that supports the work of the St Vincent de Paul Society by manufacturing new furniture that is provided to people who are experiencing hardship.

Products include tall boys, dresser drawers, kids' tables and chairs and much more. The items are fed into St Vincent de Paul Society's welfare programs or for sale in Vinnies Op Shops in Sydney and the Central Coast.

This year, despite the COVID-19 lockdown, we made over 700 pieces of furniture with a value of \$70,000.

The service operates from a well-equipped factory and provides opportunities for volunteers to use their skills and



learn new skills in a supportive and welcoming environment. The workshop provides social engagement and a friendly place to create and learn the art of woodworking and furniture creation and restoration.

We have 42 active volunteers, including doctors, pharmacists and business men and women who come in once or twice a week and find it socially rewarding and productive. Everyone is welcome in this creative and supportive environment.

Why don't you come and join us in our good works?!

No experience necessary. The team welcomes new volunteers who can commit from 7.00am to midday for at least one day per week on a long-term basis to achieve purposeful outcomes for those we support and ensure the efficient operation of the service.



St Joseph's Workshop is located at 18 Dignity Crescent, West Gosford.

To find out more, contact Michael Tabone on +61490254268 or stjosephworkshop@vinnies.org.au





A Real Night Out – COMMUNITY SLEEPOUT 2021

Our combined Central Coast and Western Sydney Community Sleepout was attended by over 60 people this year, which was a wonderful result for an online event.

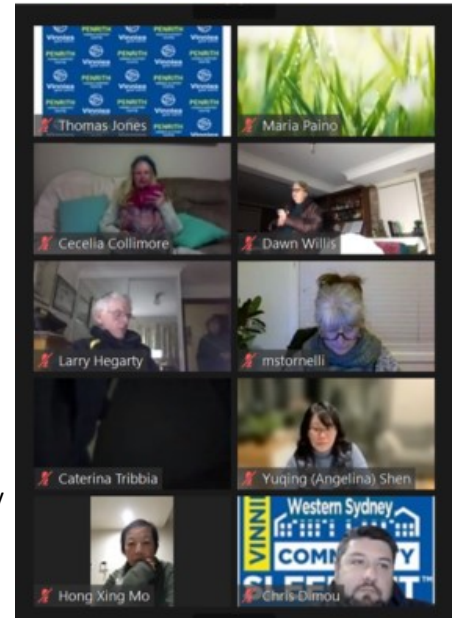
Both Central Coast and Western Sydney exceeded their original fundraising targets, which were subsequently raised, and were subsequently – again – exceeded. Central coast participants raised \$25,767.80 and the state-wide total was \$296,841.40. Thank you to all our fundraisers and donors.

Michelle Chahine and Gayl Purchase hosted the event and took us through the many statistics and facts around homelessness. We heard from the Vinnies Support Centres in Western Sydney and on the Central Coast, as well as from keynote speakers Annette Johnston and David Mehan MP.

In this edition of the newsletter, we're featuring some of the speeches and experiences of the night. It was a fabulous opportunity for us all to connect online and in spirit, even though we were physically distanced, and to share in solidarity our desire to address homelessness in any way we can.

Thanks one and all!

PARTICIPANTS



SESSION BREAK

Soup break

Please stay logged into zoom.
See you back in 10 minutes.
And check out the silent auctions
<https://www.32auctions.com/VinniesCommSleepout2021>

Update on silent auctions

<https://www.32auctions.com/VinniesCommSleepout2021>

Issues? Call us after this presentation on 0484 130 238



A Place to Call Home – Just a Basic Human Right! Community Sleepout Address

I have had a long association with the Society of St Vincent de Paul and I have been a Member of Our Lady of the Rosary Conference at Wyoming since 2014.

A Conference is a group of people, usually drawn from a Parish, who live out their faith by serving Christ through the poor and who work to shape a more just and compassionate society. We meet to share ways in which we can support those in the community who need a hand up. I have the great privilege of serving in another role – that of Gosford Regional President. There are seven Conferences in the Gosford Region, which extends from the Hawkesbury to Ourimbah and out as far as Buckety. These are comprised of incredible, amazing people who express their faith through service to those in need.

We all have an awareness that there are those in our community whose access to opportunity has not been as equal as others; of those whose starting points in life have had more obstacles to navigate. We attempt to ease some of these burdens and make it possible for the person seeking our assistance to build on their own strengths and talents to move forward in the light of their own integrity. We refer to this as 'The Hand Up'.

Our traditional model of service to those who seek our assistance is through visitation in their homes. We recognise that it is a rare gift extended to us to be invited into the home of the person seeking our assistance and our privilege to be the people in whom they share their need.

We do what is within our means by way of supermarket gift cards, food hampers, assistance with telephone accounts. We advocate on their behalf in accessing support. Sometimes people just need a listening ear to relieve loneliness and social isolation. Often, when more specialised supports are necessary, we refer to these wonderful places we call our St Vincent de Paul Support Centres.

Our professional staff are supported by Members and Volunteers. Here, extended supports are available in a range of areas from accessing supports related to Domestic and Family Violence, relieving homelessness, counselling both personal and financial, access to the No Interest Loans Scheme and a myriad of other supports. We can truly walk beside individuals and families as the pathway is navigated for positive outcomes.

We have some Conferences who work out of our support centres.

During the COVID lockdown, our practices adapted to visitation by phone. The person would call our Centres, their details recorded, emailed to the relevant Conference Members who would then phone the person, have a chat about what they need and make a time where food cards could be dropped into their letterbox or a hamper left at their door. I am in awe of the dedication of our members, who went about the mission of serving the poor in the most troubling of times.

At tonight's Sleepout I want to make this point strongly and most clearly. And I make this point on behalf of the people we serve.

That there are so many in our community in dire need of secure accommodation should ring alarm bells for us all. The right to a home is just a basic human right. That so many are in need of this is, I believe, a stain on our society!

Funds raised tonight will be directed to the Central Coast to support the efforts of co-ordinators in our offices at Woy Woy, Gosford and Wyong to assist those in unstable accommodation or who are experiencing any of the facets of homelessness, that you have learned of tonight, to obtain a brighter and more secure future.

So, on behalf of all the Conference Members on the Central Coast, I thank you for your support of Vinnies and all across the regions of Broken Bay for taking the time to join us tonight to help shine the light on Homelessness.

Annette Johnstone
Gosford Regional President





“This problem is not so complicated!”

A word from David Mehan MP at the Community Sleepout

When I attend the NSW parliament for a sitting week, I am able to stay in Sydney for which I receive an allowance for my accommodation and I travel to Sydney by train.

I mention this as it has allowed me to make a couple of observations about homelessness which I'll share with you.

The first observation I also shared with my parliamentary colleagues when I recalled a recent journey home from parliament. I said this on 12 May 2016:

Mr. DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (17:16): *On Thursday 5 May, after completing my duties in this House, I had the privilege of sharing a carriage on the 10.45 p.m. train from Central to Newcastle with a number of my fellow citizens, including five for whom the carriage was their bedroom. I thank those five citizens for allowing me to share their bedroom until about 12.27 a.m. when I left the train at Ourimbah station. It appears the New South Wales transport system is now configured to accommodate a large number of citizens in finding a bed. I counted some 50 to 60 people who had bedded down rough in the public area of Central station and many more were in the gardens outside. I acknowledge my fellow citizens sleeping rough that night for reminding me that when members on both sides of this House speak of our achievements we should not forget that our society, as presently arranged, has an unacceptable number of citizens without a bed. It is our responsibility to do more.*

The second observation I will make concerns my accommodation when I attend parliament.

I have fallen into the habit of staying at the same hotel when I stay in Sydney for the simple convenience of it etc.

The point I want to make though is this. During the first wave of this pandemic, the hotel I use was also used as accommodation for people who would usually be sleeping on the streets of Sydney.

Now of course the hotel had rooms to spare because international travel had collapsed, but the point is this: We were able to effectively end the worse aspect of homelessness, those who have no choice but the street, by providing accommodation.

What that says to me is that this problem is not so complicated as many will often say it is.

Most, if not all, of the problem would be solved by ensuring there was adequate accommodation.

The major driver of homelessness in NSW is a lack of affordable housing. There are 50,000 households on the social housing waiting list and, in NSW, less than 1 per cent of all private rentals are affordable for people on income support.

We know that the total number of social and public housing dwellings across the state has declined over the last ten years.

In 2011 there were 130,664 residential dwellings owned by the state government – by 2020 that number had fallen to 125,334.

My view is that we can't expect to address homelessness without an adequate stock of public housing.

I want to congratulate the Society of St Vincent de Paul for organising tonight's event and for its ongoing work to help those in need and those without.

I'm honoured to be your community leader for tonight's event, and I look forward to working with you all to end homelessness.

**Mr. David Mehan MP,
Member for The Entrance,
NSW Legislative Assembly**





Couch Surfing – ‘I put myself in a similar situation’ The Vinnies Sleepout Experience

As Vinnies Centre Coordinator for the Wyong Support Centre, and an advocate for helping, supporting, and raising awareness for the homeless, I gladly took part in my second Vinnies Community Sleepout.

We passionately raise awareness and funds to address homelessness every day. But there’s something special about gathering as a community to hold an event that puts the spotlight on this important issue. This year the Sleepout was held virtually via Zoom on Friday 27th August.

The night was cold. This year I decided to sleep on the lounge. I gave myself only enough food for dinner, which is a small sample of the provisions I provide the people we assist (PWA) that are homeless and require food support and have no or limited cooking facilities.

My Provisions for the Sleepout included the following. For dinner: 1 x Can Chunky Potato and Bacon Soup; 1 x Protein muesli bar; 1 x Fruit cup (peaches); 1 x Glass of water. My bedding & clothing: 1 x Sleeping Bag; 1 x Pair of Socks; 1 x Lounge.

I chose the lounge this year. Many of the people we assist (PWA) through St Vincent de Paul Wyong VSC and the many other Vinnies Support Centre’s and Hubs that are homeless are couch surfing on either friends’ or families’ lounges. I put myself in a similar situation.



Lounge used for sleepout

I joined the virtual sleepout via Zoom at 6.00 pm. It was hosted by Gayl Purchase (our Regional Director) and Michelle Chahine (Broken Bay Central Coast President). We were welcomed by NSW Vinnies CEO Jack De Groot talking about all the good work Vinnies provides and the impact of homelessness, along with other Vinnies staff, volunteers and community members who have been impacted by homelessness in various regions. The session officially concluded at 8.10 pm.

For the next two and a half hours I was already experiencing some of the impacts of homelessness, which included: back pain, leg

pain and cramping, anxiousness, vulnerability, isolation and cold.

I couldn’t relax, concentrate or especially get adequate restful sleep on a lounge that was way too small for me. Trying to get comfortable through the night from 10.30 pm, I realised it wasn’t going to happen.

The next morning at 6.00 am, after finally falling asleep around midnight I woke up feeling exhausted, sore, lethargic, hungry, cold, in need of a shower and a clean change of clothes.

Homelessness can impact anyone at any time for any reason. Nobody is excluded from being homeless. Homelessness doesn’t discriminate, it can happen at any time to any of us, our friends, our families, our colleagues, our neighbours or even ourselves.

Reasons for homelessness include domestic violence, illness, mental health, addictions and family breakdown.

The Central Coast Region desperately needs more affordable and stable housing options, which unfortunately we currently don’t have in Wyong & Gosford Regions.

The Vinnies Support Centres and Hubs all assist the people daily who are homeless and in need of such supports as housing, food, clothing, blankets, showers, hygiene products and travel supports (opal cards / fuel cards) and many more services, referrals and supports for holistic care. They are the most vulnerable members of our community.

Some of the community members who are homeless also just want someone to listen or they just want to be heard. This is another way the wonderful work each day of conference members, staff and volunteers from St Vincent de Paul provides assistance and support people who are homeless.

**Brad Dingle,
Vinnies Support Centre Coordinator
Wyong Metro VSC**





'How people manage for extended periods is unimaginable' The Vinnies Sleepout Experience

This message of thanks from John of Forestville Conference to his supporters really captures the gratitude of the Society to all who donated and participated in the Central Coast Community Sleepout:

Friends and Family,

Many thanks again for your donations. The local conference has received donations of \$5,265, and the overall Central Coast Sleepout has raised well over \$25,000. This will help lots of people doing it tough.

The format of the Community Sleepout was an information session on Zoom with a soup break and then some advice on what was needed to help address homelessness, before we could go off to sleep.



I dutifully had a bowl of soup for dinner (made with my dear wife's fair hand) and with no alcohol to fortify me for the night ahead.

I learnt that there were 116,000 people listed as homeless, over Australia, in the 2016 census. There are surely more now. In New South Wales, the number of government homes has perversely gone down in recent years.

Domestic violence is the main cause of homelessness. The people sleeping on the street are not the greatest number of those who are homeless. It is mainly those people who are in insecure housing such as – people who are 'couch surfing' or in homeless shelters or the like. Overcrowding, defined as being in accommodation which needs an additional four or more bedrooms, is also a major factor.

We watched a short video of a person's personal experience of homelessness – the man and his infant son I saw on my computer screen were helped by Vinnies. He had lost his job and his wife before becoming homeless. His life is now back on track.

Finding accommodation for men with families is often very difficult. Likewise, large single parent families also find it a problem. This is a rough and incomplete rendition of what I heard but you get the drift.

As for my actual experience, I could keep warm enough but whenever the wind blew hard you certainly noticed it. While I did sleep, an air bed is not recommended for a good rest. You wake up tired. I also noticed far-off traffic noise, which is never a factor normally.

So how people manage this for extended periods, with the added problems of security, is unimaginable.

A night like the Tuesday night before Friday's Community Sleepout, when the rain belted in on the deck and the wind blew, would have been horrific. Having to manage children or sleeping rough while dealing with some form of illness would have also been frightening.

I hope this small taste of homelessness is all that I have to cope with.

So, thanks again for all your help and support.

**John Heike,
Member
Forestville Our Lady of Good Counsel Conference**





Thanks shared by all for Vinnies for good works during lockdown

As COVID-19 restrictions ease and we move out of lockdown, I have been reflecting on the commitment and resilience of Vinnies members, volunteers and staff who have continued to reach out as best they could during a very difficult period to lend a hand to the most vulnerable members of our community.

It has been hard and we have had to adapt our support and services, often at a moment's notice. In mid-October, Jodie Davidson, Hornsby VSC Co-ordinator, and I received these words of thanks from the Federal Member for Berowra:

Dear Shirley, Jodie, staff and volunteers of St Vincent de Paul,

I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank you for the amazing work you all do in helping those in need in our community. Your work with the homeless, supporting people in crisis both young and old is required now more than ever.

These are extremely challenging times for our community and your work in this area does not go unnoticed.

St Vincent de Paul fills a significant need in our community and I just wanted to acknowledge your leadership Shirley and Jodie and the work your team do in providing support to so many young people in the community despite challenging working conditions and higher demands.

I was deeply encouraged when we connected on Thursday 14 October to hear how our community groups and services are tirelessly delivering their support despite the obstacles being faced.

*Please remember my office is open to support you wherever we can. Again, please accept my sincerest thanks,
Yours sincerely,*

*Julian Leaser MP
Federal Member for Berowra*

One of the initiatives that has been

particularly important during lockdown has been the Dignity Food Relief program – through 'The Dish' and Vinnies in Hornsby.

Dignity Housing has placed a freezer at our Support Centre at Hornsby, which has been such a support for the people we assist. It is stacked with delicious homemade meals that individuals and families really love. The Dish is an initiative of the St. Johns Uniting Church at Wahroonga and hot



Hot Meals

meals and desserts are provided each Tuesday and Friday throughout the year. The meals are prepared by schools in the area and Asquith Vinnies, Waitara participates four times during the school holidays. The Dish was originally set up to feed the homeless however at present most of the participants live in either housing or other rental accommodation and the meals at The Dish help them to save to pay rent and electricity.

The meals prior to COVID were prepared at home and taken to Hornsby Park. However, during the lockdown the meals were placed in take-a-way containers. Asquith, Waitara Vinnies Conference has been associated with The Dish for 6 years and all Members past and present have willingly given their time to prepare and serve delicious meals and desserts and the Conference has agreed to participate for another 12 months.

In early October, Leisa Liddelow (the Operations Co-ordinator at the Uniting Church) formally recognised our work during lockdown. Leisa said in the award, "In these extraordinary times you have

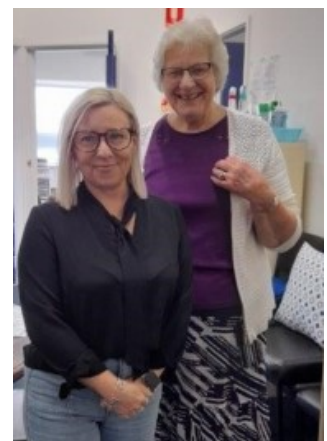
continued to meet the needs of the vulnerable in our community. Your unwavering commitment & support during the COVID-19 pandemic has helped to make a difference in the lives of others."



I would like to thank the CSOs, volunteers and members in Broken Bay for looking after our clients during lockdown period. It was a very difficult time for all. Even with all the difficulties, the clients were still looked after. You so wonderfully put our clients first. Several times as I was passing the centre at Hornsby, the homeless were sitting outside eating the hot meals which had been provided for them.

I really appreciate how well you managed and for all you do for our sisters and brothers in need.

Shirley Kelynack, Regional President Hornsby



Hornsby Regional President Shirley Kelynack and Jodie Davidson



TRUE HEART BREAKS THE BARRIERS OF DISTANCE



A call came out from the Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes in September – “Can you lend a hand?!”

For many local communities of the region there was a drastic shortage of the basics due to the COVID pandemic. Essentials like toiletries and cleaning products have been in short supply. The call came through the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry in Sydney. So, Conferences of the Northern Beaches region banded together and started a Toiletry Drive for the Wilcannia, Lightning Ridge and Brewarrina communities. Despite the limitations of lockdown, we had a tremendous response and I could only just fit all the donations in my van, which were delivered to the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry’s Reconciliation Church at La Pouse.

In mid-October I received this message from ACM in Sydney:

Dear Vinnies Northern Beaches Team,

The Aboriginal Catholic Ministry Sydney would like to thank you for your generous donations and for supporting our Toiletry Drive to help affected Aboriginal communities in Brewarrina. These communities have been hit hard with COVID 19 and supplies for cleaning, disinfecting products and toiletries was in great need.

With your help, we will be able to support over 50 families. All donations will be distributed through the MacKillop Family Services, Brewarrina.

Thank you once again for your kindness and generosity.

*Sincerely,
Aboriginal Catholic Ministry Team*

A big thank you to all who donated and helped out!

Mick O’Farrell
Regional President, Northern Beaches



Much needed funds for Killara Refuge!

The Prince of Wales Hospital's Resident Medical Officer's Association (POWH) fundraised over \$8,000 – truly surpassing their \$5,000 fundraising goal for the Vinnies NSW Killara Refuge, the crisis refuge accommodation and case management service for women with children who have experienced domestic/family violence in the Eastern suburbs.

The POWH Team organised a month-long fundraiser in September, with exciting activities being held every Friday night over Zoom. Activities included a trivia night, a cook-a-long (making a delicious stir fry and butterscotch pudding with caramel sauce), a Pilates class and a high-intensity interval training class. The team also sold fun (COVID-safe) merchandise such as baked goods, masks, tote bags and earrings as well in the hospital. The funds raised will assist the Killara Refuge in purchasing new beds and mattresses and other necessities that are required. Vinnies NSW would like to thank the Prince of Wales Hospital's Resident Medical Officer's Association for fundraising and making a difference for the vulnerable in the Killara region.

If you know of any organisations that would like to fundraise for Vinnies, they can do so here:

<https://fundraise.vinniesnsw.org.au/fundraise-your-way/> or by contacting events@vinnies.org.au

Bunnings Chatswood fundraiser a great success

With COVID-19 restrictions easing, Barry Finch and his team were out again running one of their famous BBQ fundraisers. On Sunday 24th October at Bunnings Chatswood they raised \$2,160, banking \$1,700. There was \$1,000 of it donated through the trusty Albert Terminal. Bunnings is a generous host of these fundraising days and we are very grateful for their support. Funds raised will be used to support various programs to help those in need.

We thank all those who lent their time to serve and cook at the BBQ event. Please reach out if you wish to participate and lend a helping hand in future BBQ fundraising days. You can email Barry.Finch@vinnies.org.au to register your interest.

A 'thank you' to St John the Baptist Freshwater Conference

From Freshwater – the Conference was asked to assist a mum and daughter with schooling needs. We were able to give the daughter an iPad for her schooling at a special needs school. Mum kindly gave us this update to keep us informed of her daughter's progress:

Dear Vinnies team, Just giving an update that the iPad and apple pen has been amazing for Candice. At the moment it is helping her homeschool. Thanks for helping us, it's made an enormous difference especially during lockdown. Kind regards

A client with two teenage boys that were struggling during the COVID lockdown asked if the Conference could keep an eye out for any second-hand bikes for the boys. One of the Conference's donors kindly offered to buy the boys a new mountain bike each. He said he always remembered the day his dad gave him his first bike. This is the thank you message the boys' mum sent.

Please let the kind man know how much we appreciate the bikes.

The boys couldn't believe it. I had been searching the streets for council pick-up bikes for them.

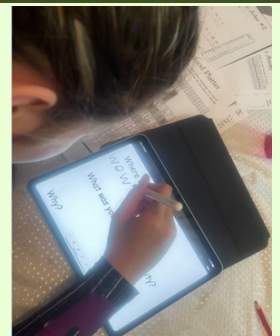
When I gave them the bikes you brought them, they just screamed with joy saying, "One of my mates has one of these - They are the best! I can't believe you got one of these for us, how did you it?"

Then I explained how a kind man brought them. Again, they asked a lot of questions, "Why, he doesn't know us and why would someone want to do that?"

This started a great conversation about giving back in the future and being grateful for living here and with beautiful people like you and "the mystery bike man", as the boys call him.

Thank you so much. You really made a big difference in our lives. I think I was the happiest to see the boys' eyes light up and ride away so proud of their new bikes.

As Conference President Mick O'Farrell says, "This is what is all about!"

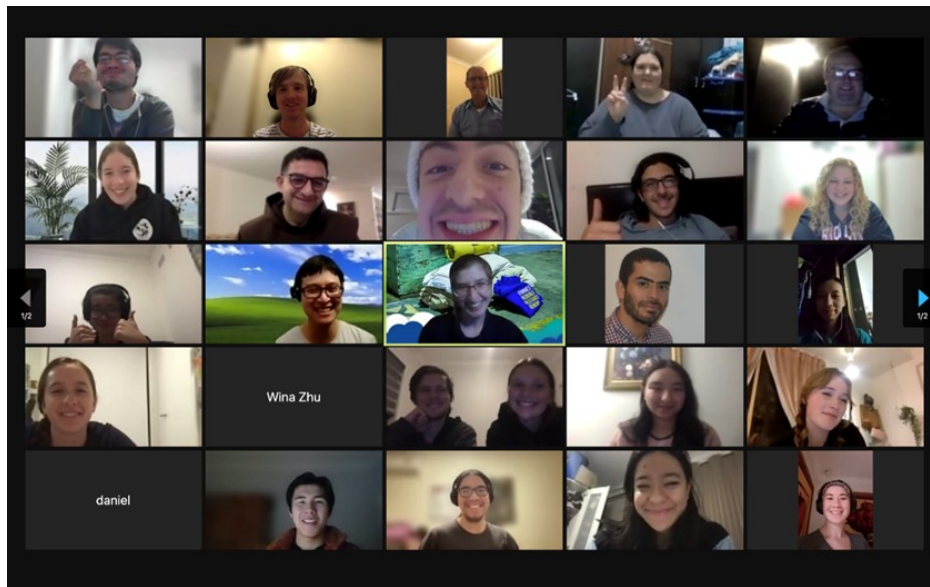




YOUTH UPDATE

If you would like to know more about or connect with Vinnies Youth in your local area, please get in touch with Kate Conroy, Vinnies Metro Youth Engagement Officer at kate.conroy@vinnies.org.au

Young Adult Conference Sleepouts 2021



The Asquith and Chatswood Young Adult Conferences joined forces this year with the Sydney Youth & Young Adults Conference to host their 2021 Vinnies Sleepout. On the 10th of September at 7.00pm, twenty-seven Vincentians came together online to sleepout. They joined from all over Sydney; from balconies, floors, tents and cars to raise awareness for those experiencing homelessness. It was an astounding success, with the young adult members raising \$1,460.25 and coming together for an educational and entertaining evening online.

Through their discussions with guest speakers: Father Paul Ghanem OFM (Reservist Padre in the Australian Defense Force & Adelaide Archdiocese Supply Priest), Tony Cranney (Sydney Central Council President) and Michelle Chahine (Broken Bay Central Council President) they developed an understanding of the importance of Vinnies faith in action and their knowledge of resilience. With these discussions and reflections, they will continue to grow their Vincentian values of commitment, compassion, empathy, respect and integrity and the courage to advocate and hope for the future.

Chatswood Young Adult Conference Update

The Chatswood Young Adults Conference has been breaking through the barriers of the lockdown, which has altered the work of our volunteers. We have been involved in developing a video to support our application for a government grant to equip the newly renovated Vinnies Youth and Community Centre (VYCC) in Brookvale with additional technology infrastructure to support its operations.

We are eagerly anticipating the commencement of the 'Vinnies Youth Listening Ears' program whereby volunteers will be paired with residents of local nursing homes who they will converse with each week. The program aims to provide one of society's most vulnerable groups with connection and interaction to boost their mental wellbeing, which in turn should support their general health.

As NSW continues to emerge from COVID related restrictions, our conference is excited about the prospects of increasing our visibility in the community by hosting several fundraising events and hands-on activities.

Cailin Geraghty
Chatswood Young Adult Conference President



YOUTH UPDATE

RE:Vinnies - Youth Online Gathering (REconnecting and REinvigorating Vinnies Young Adults!)

The Vinnies Youth online gatherings, called RE:VINNIES, continue to happen every month. The gatherings are held to give all the young adult members and volunteers an opportunity to stay connected with the Vinnies Youth community and to grow their personal engagement and formation with Vinnies. The online gatherings have expanded beyond the Metro Region and we are excited to connect with any young Vinnies person across the state at these fun gatherings.

In July, Joy Bowen, one of the Vinnies Mission, Spirituality and Pastoral Care Partners shared with the young adults her knowledge and wisdom about communication, compassion and active listening. They also had some fun online activities and time to chat and catch up.

In August, Maddie Sirris, the Vinnies NSW Vice President – Youth joined the young adults to celebrate International Youth Day. Maddie shared her Vinnies journey and some of the great work being done by Vinnies Youth across the state. In September, David Barrow, Sydney Alliance Lead Organiser, lead a great workshop on Storytelling and Advocacy. Equipping the young adult members and volunteers with the confidence and skills to share their own personal Vinnies stories to their peers and the broader community. In October, the young adults gathered online during Anti-Poverty Week to hear about the work being done by Vinnies to support the millions of people affected by poverty here in Australia. The guest speakers were Jacinta McGrath, Vinnies Social Justice Youth Representative, and Kathleen Thickett, Vinnies Community Engagement Committee Chair. Kathleen gave an insight into a new Vinnies initiative taking place within our Social and Affordable Housing Services – the POD Project. This initiative is all about a unique contribution from Vinnies Conferences that will work with tenants to help build safe and engaged communities. Supporting activities for tenants to get to know their neighbours, learning opportunities, and community connection, all such important aspects of breaking the cycle of poverty. The young adults are looking forward to engaging with this wonderful Vinnies initiative.

If you're a young person we welcome you to jump online for any



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”

of the RE:VINNIES sessions. If you'd like more information about the RE:VINNIES youth online gatherings, get in touch with Kate Conroy – Vinnies Metro Youth Engagement Officer kate.conroy@vinnies.org.au or check out the [NSW Vinnies Youth Facebook page](#).

Social Justice Youth Network

In October, the NSW Social Justice Youth Representative, Jacinta McGrath, hosted an online information session. It was an opportunity for young adult members to find out more about social justice, how Vinnies advocates for change together and to meet potential young adult social justice comrades! It was a well-attended event and we look forward to sharing more news with you as the network grows and introduce you to the new Social Justice Representatives from each of our Young Adults Conferences in the Broken Bay Central Council – watch this space!



Vinnies Youth Connecting with Year 12 students

During October Vinnies Metro Youth reached out to the Year 12 students in the Diocese, wishing them all the best as they complete their HSC and personally thanking them for any involvement they have had with Vinnies throughout their school years. Then, most importantly, we invited them to join Vinnies Metro Youth! We are keeping in touch with them and connecting them in with our Young Adult Conferences and Vinnies Youth Programs for 2022.

Luke Antoun, Broken Bay Youth Rep, will host a meet and greet event for Year 12 school leavers keen to know more about Vinnies Youth and meet some of our amazing young adult Members, hear about the Good Works being done and how they can be involved. Watch this space as we share with you more news about our events and new members over the coming months!



Hey there,
We just want to say a BIG thank you for being a member of Vinnies during your high school years and most of all, we want to wish you all the best for your next adventure. You've been an incredible part of a new generation of young people who are shaping a culture of inclusion, authenticity and generosity and your dedication to the Vinnies cause means everything.
But this doesn't need to be the end! We'd love to stay connected with you. Our good works spread far and wide across NSW so there's plenty of opportunity.
To find out about how you can volunteer in your community or connect with a Vinnies Uni club, click here to tell us your details. You can also stay in touch and hear about upcoming events and get together by following our Facebook page.
New South Wales Vinnies Youth
And feel free to reach out to us and the youth team anytime at metroyouth@vinnies.org.au. We can't wait to hear what you do next!
Marissa, Faith & Luke
Vinnies Metro Youth Representatives





HAVE ANY OF YOUR DETAILS CHANGED RECENTLY?

It's vital we keep updated data on all of members, so if you have changed any of the following, please let us know:



Address



Phone number



Email address



Conference



Membership status



Changes to name

Reminder to Members

We are constantly updating our records in the Society People system. It is important that Vinnies has your most recent and current details, so that we can advise you of any Society news, changes, etc.

Have you changed any of the following recently?

- phone number and email address
- membership status and Conference
- address
- changes to first/last name

Have you left the Society and are still receiving information?

Please let us know by contacting your Member and Community Engagement Coordinator at: John.Ferguson@vinnies.org.au

Considering Recruitment Weekends post-lockdown?

As the lockdown eases, there is a great opportunity to renew in-person engagement with local communities and ensure Vinnies continues to have a strong presence for vulnerable people in our local areas.

Are you considering a recruitment/information weekend at your local parish? These can be held at any time of the year, but there are significant social justice days in the national and international calendar that can provide that extra opportunity to highlight the good works of the Society.

International Volunteer Day is Sunday 5 December.

Other social justice events in 2022 include the World Day of Social Justice (Sunday 20 February) and National Volunteer Week (Monday 16 – Sunday 22 May).

If you would like to consider having a recruitment/information campaign at your local Parish at any time during the year, you can receive support and planning help from your Member and Community Engagement team.

Notices can be provided for requested inclusion in Parish bulletins in the lead up to the Vinnies weekend, and on the weekend itself, suggested speaking notes can be provided to a Vinnies Member to speak at the Masses, a Vinnies table can be setup with flyers, information packs and membership application forms. Parishioners will have an opportunity to meet with Conference Members before and after Masses to ask questions and explore Vinnies as an opportunity for them to get involved.

If you'd like to discuss further, please contact John.Ferguson@vinnies.org.au

MAVS Platform

Have you seen the updated Member and Volunteer Support website?

This site exists to share resources, news, contacts, and events with our members and volunteers. We want to provide members and volunteers with the tools, information and resources that will assist you in your service.

<https://mavs.vinnies.org.au/home/>

We really want to know what you like and want in the Member and Volunteer online resources platform. Broken Bay Central Council has its own page:

<https://mavs.vinnies.org.au/conferences/broken-bay-central-council/>

For requested updates, please email john.ferguson@vinnies.org.au

There are also lots of other updates happening on MAVS which you can check in on anytime here:

<https://mavs.vinnies.org.au/mavs-latest-updates/>



Important dates in the Social Justice Calendar

Social Justice Diary 2021– resources for Members

For suggested content to be added to your Parish bulletins, or to talk after Mass, and for ideas for your Conferences, please refer to the MAVS social justice page:

<https://mavs.vinnies.org.au/social-justice/>

Coming Social Justice events

5 December – International Volunteer Day.

This day is mandated by the UN General Assembly and held each year on 5 December. Here in Australia and around the world we recognise the vital contribution volunteers make in responding to challenges facing the world and supporting individuals and families in need. Volunteering brings people together to build up strong and inclusive communities. The theme for 2021 is “Volunteer now for our common future”.

On this day, we want to raise awareness of the work that St Vincent de Paul Society Members are involved in, how this provides a hand-up to those in need in our community, and how friends and broader networks can join the with the Society to help respond to challenges our community faces. You can find out more about International Volunteer Day at Volunteering Australia: <https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/get-involved/events/international-volunteer-day/#/>

10 December – Human Rights Day.

December 10 is the anniversary of the adoption by the United Nations (UN) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948. The UDHR sets out a certain set of rights that are the basic and minimum set of human rights for all citizens. These rights belong to everyone regardless of race, colour, religion, sex, language, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Some include the rights to life, liberty and free

speech, to social security, health and education among others. Promoting and defending the rights of vulnerable individuals and families is where the good works of the Society so often reside.

Visit the Vinnies Social Justice Network website (<https://socialjustice.vinnies.org.au/>) to find out more about campaigns to address homelessness, poverty and to promote Indigenous justice, for example. Consider joining the Social Justice Network at: <https://socialjustice.vinnies.org.au/join/>

Recent Social Justice events

17 – 23 October – Anti-Poverty Week. The Society of St Vincent de Paul is a major sponsor of Anti-Poverty Week and has long sought to raise awareness of poverty in Australia. The theme this year was “Poverty exists. Poverty hurts us all. We can all do something about it.”

We have continued to support the *Raise the Rate for Good* campaign – calling for the JobSeeker Payment to be increased, so that everyone receives at least \$67 a day. Find out more at: <https://raisetherate.org.au/>. And Vinnies NSW has been calling for in calling 5,000 new social housing homes to be built every year for the next 10 years as part of the *Build Homes, Build Hope* campaign: <https://socialjustice.vinnies.org.au/campaigns/>

During Anti-Poverty week the State Government announced almost \$485 million in accommodation for women and children escaping domestic violence. NSW CEO [Jack de Groot](#) said, “This is the kind of announcement we have been seeking from government for some time, so it’s very pleasing to see happen. There is a strong need for more accommodation for women and children who are experiencing domestic violence and this is the sort of thing that will provide significant help.

“It’s also important to note that, from today [19 October], women leaving violent

relationships can start accessing payments of up to \$5,000, in a two-year trial funded by the Federal Government. “That said, after the Commonwealth’s Women’s Safety Summit largely left accommodation off the agenda, it’s good to see NSW leading the way on that issue. ...There is always a need for more accommodation like this but this is a really good step in the right direction,” Mr de Groot said.

17 November event marking the 14 November World Day of the Poor

A range of Vinnies NSW teams worked with the Social Justice Network to host an “Embracing the Challenge of Mutual Sharing” webinar on the evening of 17 November.

The title of the webinar draws from one of Pope Francis’ key themes in his [Message for the World Day of the Poor](#) this year. Pope Francis reminds us that there is an inseparable link between Jesus, the poor and our community of faith. We are called to reach out and meet Christ in the suffering endured by people experiencing poverty. He calls on all societies to adopt a new approach to poverty. Building bonds of mutual sharing will break down the barriers of exclusion, restore dignity and strengthen the solidarity of communities. Genuine involvement in the lives of our sisters and brothers will make us ever more attentive to emerging forms of poverty as well as new possibilities for Christian love and charity. Guest speaker at the webinar was Bishop Vincent Long Van Nguyen DD OFMConv, who reflected on key theological and social teaching themes of the Message and their significance in our good works.

Leo Tucker, Executive Director of Mission and Spirituality, spoke of how the Pope’s call for ‘a different approach to poverty’ resonates with our Vincentian spirituality. And Vinnies Members highlighted a range of exciting initiatives responding to emerging forms of poverty in this era of the COVID pandemic. To find out more about this event, visit the Social Justice Network website at <https://socialjustice.vinnies.org.au>