



THE VINCENTIAN

A NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS

September 2025

The Vincentian – Issue 3 – 2025

In the St Vincent de Paul Society, September is a month of festivals, as we celebrate the feast days of Blessed Frederic Ozanam and St Vincent de Paul.

St Vincent de Paul and Bl Frederic Ozanam did and were many things in their lives. Crucially, they were people whose love transformed the world they lived in.

The groundbreaking way St Vincent de Paul inspired thousands of people in the 1600s to give their lives and resources to a new network of hospitals, accommodation and services is why he is often known as the architect of modern organised charity.

The short life of Frederic Ozanam, 200 years later, is a powerful sign of what's possible when dedicating your life in service to others.

As patron saint of charity, St Vincent de Paul was the natural spiritual patron of the new Society formed by 20-year-old Frederic and his companions.

It's astounding that another 200 years later, there are millions of members and volunteers of the St Vincent de Paul Society around the world working in the same spirit.

May the Society's great works of charity always be inspired by our founders and patrons.

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SPOTLIGHT ON



St Vincent de Paul Society
NSW
good works

GOOD WORKS
SUMMIT '25

REGISTER NOW: GOOD WORKS SUMMIT 2025

The St Vincent de Paul Society NSW cordially invites you to the inaugural Good Works Summit 2025 - a landmark event bringing together Members, Volunteers and employees of the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW aged 18+ to learn, connect and be inspired by community leaders and by each other.

What to expect:

- Inspiring keynote speeches from key decision-makers on combatting poverty and from leaders from across the St Vincent de Paul Society
- Interactive workshops and panel discussions
- Networking opportunities with fellow Members, Volunteers and staff
- Evening dinner and awards ceremony celebrating outstanding contributions

Contact:

- Please forward all enquiries to: membership@vinnies.org.au
- Agenda and exciting speaker announcements coming soon!

Register:

Please speak to your Conference President to register, or scan the QR Code. There is no cost to register to attend the Good Works Summit.

Details:

- **Date:** Saturday, 11th October 2025
- **Time:** Arrivals and Registration at 9am. Official proceedings: 9:30am - 4:40pm. Dinner and awards ceremony: 7pm - 10pm.
- **Location:** Bankstown Sports Club | 8 Greenfield Parade, Bankstown NSW 2200
- **RSVP:** Thursday, 11th September 2025 by 5pm.
- **Accessibility:** The venue is fully accessible. Please let us know during registration if you have any specific accessibility or dietary requirements.



"Let us do without hesitation whatever good lies at our hand"

- Blessed Frederic Ozanam (founder of the St Vincent de Paul Society)



SPOTLIGHT ON



IN LOVING MEMORY

Elizabeth (Betty) Cotter 1933-2025, was a member of the Milton/Ulladulla St Mary Star of the Sea Conference and a retail volunteer for 35 years. She joined the Society in 1990 and continued to serve until her recent passing in September.

During this time, Betty served as Conference President from 2012-2016, and as Vice-President from 2023-25. Betty managed the conference's Mollymook Flats, which served as respite accommodation for the People We Assist until the start of 2025.

We thank Betty for her dedication and service to the Society and to the Shoalhaven community.

WHAT'S NEW



SAVE THE DATE – 2025 ROSALIE RENDU FORUM

We are excited to announce that the 2025 Rosalie Rendu Forum will be held online on Thursday 16 October 2025 from 6:30pm. This year's theme is: **"Raising our Voice - Speaking up for Social Justice"**.

The Forum honours the legacy of Sr Rosalie Rendu and acknowledges the contributions that women make in the community, inspiring women's leadership, and raising awareness of critical social justice issues.

Advocacy for social justice is a key element of the good works of the Society. We share an obligation to identify and address the structural injustices that cause inequality, poverty and exclusion. We are called to empower the people we assist to speak for themselves and to speak up on behalf of people when they are ignored.

This forum will draw on the expertise of leaders who have been engaged in advocacy in different settings and using different methods to address the consequences and, importantly, the very causes of injustice that have affected the people they serve and with whom they stand in solidarity.

Stay tuned for more information!



VISIONS OF WOMEN LEADING FOR MISSION

We'd like to bring to your attention an upcoming event involving a group known as the Young Catholic Women's Fellowship.

This Fellowship focuses on the formation, accompaniment, voice, and contribution of young women in the Catholic Church in Australia. More information about the program is available on the NCE website: Young Catholic Women's Fellowship - National Centre for Evangelisation, Australia

The 2024/2025 cohort, which includes our very own Vincentian Ashley Carvalho, are completing their studies and will be part of a free online seminar offered by Australian Catholic University (ACU): Visions of Women Leading for Mission. The seminar will be held on October 9 from 7pm-9pm AEDT and is a great opportunity to hear young women discern ways of supporting women in leadership in the Church in Australia.

We strongly encourage as many Vincentians as possible—and others in your community who are interested—to attend and witness the thoughts and aspirations of these inspiring young women.

WHAT'S NEW



HELP REBUILD LIVES WITH DIGNITY AND PURPOSE – ADELE HOUSE VOLUNTEER NEEDED

Adele House is a residential rehabilitation facility operated by the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW. Located on a beautiful site in Bucca near Coffs Harbour, Adele House provides men overcoming substance dependency with a safe, supportive environment to heal and build new futures. The program combines rehabilitation, life skills, and employment training to help residents gain independence and reconnect with community.

We are looking for compassionate volunteers to join our mission. By giving your time and skills, you can make a meaningful difference in the lives of men working towards recovery. Whether you have a few hours a month or a little more to spare, your support helps create hope and opportunity.

A variety of volunteer roles are available. You might help our staff facilitators run gardening and landscaping activities and employability workshops, or share your knowledge in practical areas such as trade skills, cooking or budgeting. No special qualifications are needed, just patience, respect and a commitment to walk alongside people as they rebuild their lives.

If you'd like to learn more about volunteering at Adele House, please contact us today. Your involvement helps ensure that every person is given the chance to thrive.

For more information, Email volunteering@vinnies.org.au or scan the QR code



VOLUNTEER CALLOUT: SOUTH WEST SYDNEY VAN BBQ CREW

The South West Sydney Van Service is hosting a BBQ every Tuesday morning at the front of the Vinnies Shop in Macquarie Fields—and you are warmly invited to be part of it!

Whether you're a seasoned cook or simply enjoy helping out, this is a great opportunity to share your passion, connect with the community, and support the good works of the Society.

Interested in joining the team? Sign up for the South West Sydney Van Service, and a team member will be in touch to get you on board.

For more information, Email campbelltownvv@vinnies.org.au



WHAT'S NEW



LAUNCH OF MODERN SLAVERY STATEMENT

More than 41,000 people in Australia work in modern slavery conditions, according to estimates from the Global Slavery Index (GSI).

These unjust conditions include forced labour, debt bondage, deceptive recruiting for labour or service and the worst forms of child labour.

Peter Houweling, NSW State Council President, recently launched the Society's latest Modern Slavery Statement.

The Society's Modern Slavery Statement outlines the steps the Society has taken to address the risks presented by modern slavery.

WHAT'S NEW



A WELCOMING PLACE FOR EVERYBODY, EVERY DAY

As part of building an even more inclusive and safe Society, we are commencing a series on our commitment to a workplace that welcomes and celebrates each other, free from discrimination, bullying and harassment of any kind.

As you know, everything we do in the Society should be grounded in care for all. That care extends not only to those we serve, but to every one of our members, volunteers and employees.

Everyone has the right to feel safe, respected and valued, free from racism, bullying and discrimination of any kind. That's why the Society upholds Zero Tolerance for Racism.

Creating a culture grounded in fairness, empathy, and compassion is a shared responsibility. At the heart of this are respect and human dignity, which recognise each person's rights and inherent value, including cultural identity and life experience.

We each have a responsibility not only to embody our values but also to speak up when they are compromised. If you witness racism or discrimination, don't stay silent. A calm and respectful reminder that racism is not accepted here can make a meaningful difference. If something continues to concern you, please raise it; or call it out for what it is.

Our Code of Conduct and Diversity and Inclusion Policy are here to support you, and to affirm our shared commitment to a Society that welcomes and respects everyone.

We also provide learning opportunities, like the Djurali First Nations Cultural Awareness modules, and a new course on Building a Respectful Workplace.

We encourage you to engage with these tools, as they can help each of us reflect, learn, and grow in the way we relate to others.

Every respectful conversation, every act of courage and kindness, brings us one step closer to a truly inclusive culture.

Thank you for the role you play in making the Society a safe and welcoming place for all.

Peter Houweling
NSW State Council President

Yolanda Saiz
Chief Executive Officer

WHAT'S NEW



SUMMARY OF DELIBERATIONS - JULY 2025

The National Council meeting was held on 26-27 July 2025 and was held at the National Council Secretariate office in Canberra. **Below is a summary of key matters discussed at the National Council Meeting.**

UPDATE ON SAFEGUARDING MATTERS

The Society Safeguarding Standards Office provided an update on the progress of safeguarding initiatives, noting that a number of policy resources had been developed for National Council itself to ensure alignment with the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS).

Of particular note, the redrafted Safeguarding Risk Management Plan (SRMP) was tabled and is focused on ways to prevent, identify and mitigate safeguarding risks to children and adults. It addresses the range of settings, activities, and physical environments where the work of National Council currently takes place or could take place in the future. These revised policies and procedures were endorsed by National Council, sitting as the body corporate.

National Council, sitting as the Church Authority in the safeguarding space, reviewed the progress at 30 June 2025 for all leaders in the Society (i.e. Members of Councils, Directors of bodies corporate and their respective Executive Leadership Teams) to have undertaken the five training modules developed by Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd which incorporate the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards. There was a high rate of completion which demonstrates the Society's aspiration to achieve those National Catholic Safeguarding Standards that focus on the responsibilities of leaders across the Society in Australia.

National Council continues to promote this mandatory training for only Society personnel in leadership roles. At the same time, National Council acknowledges that each jurisdiction has their own safeguarding training that covers the legislated safeguarding requirements of their own state/territory as well as the relevant components of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards where these are relevant (i.e. the NCSS are over and above the legislated obligations).

CGI YOUTH EVENT

National Council acknowledged the convening of the International Youth Jubilee and 3rd International Youth Meeting in Rome (27 July to 3 August 2025) which was attended by Society Members including Ashley Carvalho (National Council & WA), Lachlan Dent (Qld), Gabriel Nelson (Samoa), Anna Kaitu (Kiribati), Petelo Taunga'o e Tu'itonga Lelea (Tonga), and Stephanie Tanai Kevi (Solomon Islands).

SPIRIT OF YOUTH UPDATE - AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC YOUTH FESTIVAL (ACYF)

The Australian Catholic Youth Festival (ACYF) is being held in Melbourne in November 2025. The Society has proudly maintained a presence at every ACYF in the past, recognising the event as a vital opportunity to engage with young people, witness their faith in action, and nurture emerging leaders within the Church.

The Spirit of Youth (SoY) Standing Committee is committed to fostering national inclusivity, encouraging youth representation from across all jurisdictions, and offering practical support to help make this possible. Past involvement in this event has identified young people who are interested in joining the Society and has produced a number of current leaders across the Society. National Council is liaising with SVdP-Vic to make this an inviting event for the many thousands of young people who will be attending from across Australia.

CONGRESS 2023+ UPDATE

When addressing the impact of Congress 2023+ against the themes of Congress 2023 to transform, renew and revitalise the Society's mission in contemporary Australia, a number of outcomes have been identified and discussed. Members are working together and there has been definite strengthening of relationships.



WHAT'S NEW

SUMMARY OF NATIONAL COUNCIL DELIBERATIONS FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT JULY 2025 (CONT.)

New ideas of how best to serve our companions have been realised and leadership pathways have been recognised. There have also been a number of operational outcomes including mentoring, best practice and leadership guides. The great work will continue on the projects borne from Congress 2023+ as we continue to shape our Society for the future.

AMENDMENTS TO THE RULE PART III

National Council is moving towards the final stage of approving the proposed revisions to Part III of The Rule. Once National Council endorses the revisions, these will be forwarded to the Council General International Statutes Committee for review before being presented to the Board for endorsement.

It was noted that proposed amendments to Part III of The Rule are to be presented to the General Assembly for endorsement which is scheduled for June 2026.

PUBLIC POLICY MATTERS

The National Council Social Justice Advisory Committee and Vincentian Refugee Network Members agreed that the priorities in Let's Build a Fairer Australia! document be retained as the Society's source document on federal policy and that it be updated biannually. The current priorities include:

- safety net
- housing and homelessness
- First Nations peoples
- refugees
- gambling reform
- welfare and taxation reform, and
- secure work.

ANU TAX PAPER

The ANU's latest welfare and taxation reform paper, including the GST and other models aimed at reducing poverty and financial distress was tabled.

The paper finds that households struggling the most financially include single parents, low-income renters, and working age welfare recipients. The welfare payments proposed in this paper are designed to boost the incomes and living standards of these households. Four models have been proposed.

At its May meeting National Council agreed to the ANU paper being publicly launched at Parliament House in the latter half of 2025. The paper will be made available to Government on 25 July, it is proposed that it be released publicly at the same time. The NCS will continue to pursue an event at Parliament House. Parliament resumes sitting on 22-31 July and again from 5-14 August 2025.

OCEANIA - ITVP OCEANIA

"The ITVP is the representative of the President General International (PGI) in the Region and, where appropriate, speaks on behalf of the PGI. When specifically authorised he or she can speak with the authority of the PGI. The ITVP oversees the works of the Society in his or her Territorial Region with the support of designated Coordinators, who together form a Regional Support Team. Coordinators include Zone Coordinators who report to the (CGI) ITVP and Thematic Coordinators." The Rule Part II Section 3.23 (Page 44 of the Oceania Rule).

Over the weekend of 26-27 July, National Council had the pleasure of formally farewelling Br Frank Brassil former ITVP for Oceania. Br Frank had been in this role supporting National Councils across the Oceania Region for eight years. This celebration was shared with the Presidents of New Zealand and Tonga, Mr Gerry Stevens and Mr Tevita Moengangongo Lolohea. It was a fitting farewell that acknowledged Br Frank for his tireless efforts over the last 8 years supporting all the Oceania National Councils. Frank is highly regarded in the International space, and I know will be sadly missed by all.

In June 2025, Mr Paul Trezise was chosen to be the International Territory Vice President - Oceania. This appointment was confirmed by the International President General.

I would like to formally congratulate Paul on his appointment and very much look forward to working with and supporting Paul in this very important role.



WHAT'S NEW



SAFETY IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

At the Society, keeping our people safe is a top priority. Whether you are a member, volunteer, or employee, we all share the responsibility of creating a safe workplace for each other and for the people we assist.

Reporting hazards

If you notice something that could cause harm – such as a trip hazard, unsafe equipment, or a potential fire risk – please report it to your Conference President, Regional Manager, or relevant manager straight away. You can also report it using our Integrated Risk Management System (IRMS). Acting early helps us implement controls to prevent accidents and keeps everyone safe.

Consultation on our updated WHS Policy and Procedures

We've recently updated our Work Health and Safety (WHS) Policy and procedures to strengthen how we manage safety across all our operations. We want to hear your feedback. Please take part in the consultation process and review the two important documents via the Safety Consultation Hub on the MAVS Website, including an online feedback form.

Food safety reminder

Many of our services involve food preparation, handling and serving. We all play a role in ensuring every meal we provide is safe and of the highest quality. To help us achieve this, please remember to wash your hands regularly, check use-by dates, store food correctly (keep hot food hot and cold food cold), and keep preparation and serving areas clean. Follow guidance in the factsheets we've prepared for you on handling third-party meals. We will continue to work on our food safety practices throughout the year.

Online safety induction module

If you haven't yet completed the mandatory online safety induction, we encourage you to do so as soon as possible. The induction provides important information about our values, safety responsibilities, and how we can all contribute to a safe and respectful environment.

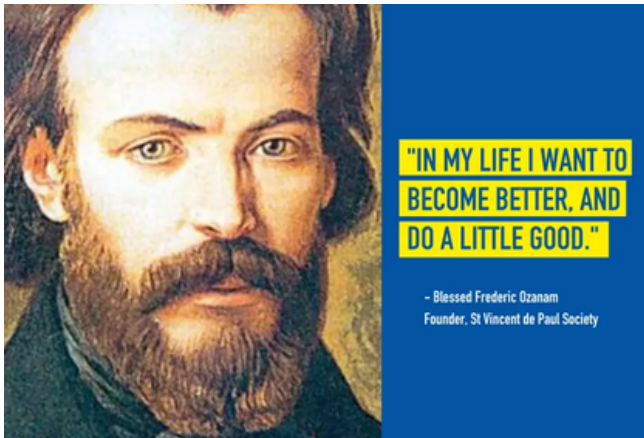
Where to find safety resources

All safety information and resources can be found on the MAVS website. Remember to log in to access the internal resources, tools, and guidance that support you in your good works.

Together, we can continue to be a place where everyone feels safe, supported, and valued.

WHAT'S NEW

CEO REPORT: KEY IMPACT AND UPDATES



Story of our Impact

Ali*, who arrived in Australia from Afghanistan with his family, is a graduate of the Society's Employment Pathways for Refugees (EPRI) program. This program supports refugees and humanitarian migrants living in South West Sydney and Greater Western Sydney through a work training program, and by building confidence, skills and relationships.

Ali was supported by the Society's EPRI team to successfully complete his VET course and workplace training, despite his lack of English language skills. Ali made a positive impression with his attitude, disposition and work ethic during the Truck Driving Pathway, where he worked as an offsider.

Prior to this, Ali had been unable to attempt any training or qualifications and had found it impossible to secure a job. The distress of this was impacting Ali's own wellbeing and his family's. The EPRI team found ways to think outside the box and helped to integrate Ali within the team. Following his participation in the program, Ali is now permanently employed at the Society where he is a valued team member, and a happy, working dad and husband.

Through the EPRI program, the Society has supported approximately 220 refugees through its work training program. 20 have gone on to secure employment with the Society and 19 have found jobs externally. 103 participants have completed Vocational Education and Training (VET) qualifications, and 89 people have gained their forklift licenses. You can learn more about participant's experiences with the program by watching the short video on MAVS Website, created by one of the participants.

Highlights FY2025

- Built strong relationships with leaders including Premier Chris Minns, Social Services Minister Tanya Plibersek, Minister Rose Jackson, and the Governor-General Sam Mostyn. This included securing a \$2.43 million funding commitment for Rosalie House from Prime Minister Albanese, \$400,000 grant through Homelessness Innovation Fund, for capital works to refurbish the Swansea site.
- Co-hosted events such as the Vinnies CEO Sleepout launch, the new Vinnies truck launch, the opening of Mercy House, and various McKell Institute events with federal ministers.
- Participated in panels and conferences, including the 5th Financial Inclusion Conference and the NADA Conference, showcasing the Society's impact and thought leadership.
- Secured \$2.4 million from the Prime Minister to redevelop Rosalie House domestic and family violence service and \$400,000 from the Homelessness Innovation Fund, for capital works to refurbish the Swansea site.
- Improved employee engagement from 81% to 86% and raised wellbeing scores from 74% to 78% and progress score from 62% to 74%, surpassing all industry benchmarks.
- Expanded our reach in community including securing and standing up Adele House; securing and opening Mercy House and undertaking development of the Swansea site, both for transitional housing for survivors of domestic and family violence; started the AOD Freeman House Hub; started Placed based pilot roll out at Nagle Centre; expansion of Vinnies Vans; and evening services; and piloted the Staying Home, Leaving Violence program.

(Continued on next page)

WHAT'S NEW

CEO REPORT: KEY IMPACT AND UPDATES (CONT.)

Other updates – FY26 Q1

- Our tender application to the Federal Department of Social Services (DSS) under the Financial Capability and Wellbeing Program for Emergency Relief & Financial Assistance was successful, bringing our annual base funding from \$2.3 to \$4.6 million. This funding goes to the front-line work of our Members in Conference Assistance Work across the State.
- The weekend of 5 July the State Council, Board Directors and Executive gathered at Mary MacKillop Place in North Sydney for the annual State Council Retreat.
- The Winter Appeal has enjoyed a terrific response with over \$2 million collected over the course of the campaign.
- The Vinnies CEO Sleepout raised \$2.8 million raised in NSW for its 20th year.



- A new and expanded Vinnies Shop opened in Wollongong in June vastly improving results selling four times the product of the previous shop.
- Media coverage remains strong and positive:
 - St Vincent de Paul Society NSW was mentioned 571 times across mainstream media during the month of May, June and July 2025. Specifically in the month of July, Society NSW was mentioned 76 times across mainstream media, generating potential audience reach of 3.3 million views.

- Society's social media new monthly follower count increased by 72.9%. Meanwhile on the Vinnies Shops Facebook page, the overall follower count doubled, with new monthly followers increasing by 375%.
- Top coverage has included Vinnies Finds launch, CEOSO, Disaster Appeal, Winter Appeal and One of the many highlights was a positive Vinnies Shops pricing story that we worked on with News.com.au
- On 11 October the Society will hold our first "Good Works Summit" at Bankstown Sports Club, bringing together members, volunteers and employees from across the State to learn and collaborate. This event is a revitalisation of our annual Member Forum, including a larger venue and the invitation of key thought-leaders from Government and other sectors. Everyone is encouraged to attend – and registration details are being circulated.
- Two special services were attended by the Society closely aligned to Homelessness Week. One was a Memorial Service in Martin Place with Catholic Cemeteries and Payce Foundation remembering those who lived life on the margins and had passed away through the year. The second service was at Catholic Cemeteries Rookwood in the Charles O'Neill Walkway for the interment of the ashes of people who experienced homelessness.
- On 8 August the Executive Director of Mission and Formation attended the official launch of the Christian Alliance Council of New South Wales. The launch was attended by the Premier, Hon Chris Minns and 2 more than 50 Heads of Churches, Archbishops, Bishops, Presidents, Members of Parliament, other leading Christian charities and organisations.

WHAT'S NEW

Strategy Communications

TWO YEARS OF THE SOCIETY'S STRATEGY

I'm pleased to share a strategy update with you that coincides with the successful completion of two-years of the Society's 2024-2028 Strategic Plan, "Strengthening Communities, Transforming Lives".

Over the past two years, outstanding progress has been made to take new and improved approaches to accompany the people we assist, grow our services and programs, and uplift capability and systems internally.

Highlights of this include our work to expand services and programs with the new Mercy House, the new site at Swansea, the doubling of Alcohol and Other Drug residential capacity with service delivery at Adele House, designing the Membership & Volunteer Strategy, and a new Vinnies Vans Strategy.

Growth that strengthens the organisation is also clear in the expanding network of Vinnies Shops, our 'Return and Earn' CDS sites, excellent Employee Engagement, and in the launch of *Vinnies Finds*. The Property Plan and Privacy & Records projects continue to make excellent progress.

Strategic Key Results from Q4 FY25

The latest Strategic Key Results show we are on track or ahead of schedule on most of these important measures.

- Since 2023, collaborations have resulted in a 500% increase in referrals from Vinnies Vans to other services.
- Stability outcome targets are being exceeded for women aged 55+ and First Nations people, respectively, ensuring equitable outcomes for the most disadvantaged communities.
- Members and Volunteers report via the Voice Survey that they feel significantly more recognised for their work, and recruitment is on track for the FY28 target of 5,000 members.

Building Strategic Maturity

We are also striving to build the organisation's strategic maturity, and great progress has been made by way of refreshed progress tracking, prioritisation of strategic initiatives, targeted tool kits, support and resources.

We look forward to the launch of the Strategy Delivery and Impact Hub on the Staff Portal, which will centralise further strategy updates, tools and resources for strategic initiative delivery and reporting.

Looking Forward

We are pleased to share the nine Strategic Initiatives for FY26, that we are invested in to continue delivering on our five-year strategy.



The full FY25 End of Year Strategy Update is available on MAVS, with more details on strategic progress.

Thank you for everyone's contribution to our mission and the successful delivery of our strategy to strengthen communities and transform lives.

WHAT'S NEW



VINNIES SERVICE MEDALLION LAUNCHES FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

St Vincent de Paul Society NSW is giving young people the opportunity to give back to their local communities with the launch of a new service-based program designed for high school students.

The Vinnies Service Medallion (VSM) is a free to join program allowing students in Years 7-12 to demonstrate strengths beyond the classroom by recognising their contributions to community service, leadership, advocacy, and fundraising initiatives through the Society.

The VSM provides a clear and flexible framework for students to engage in social justice while acknowledging their impact through a formal award.

"The Vinnies Service Medallion is a great opportunity for young people to complement what they learn in the classroom by gaining skills that can make an impact in the community right now," said Joy Kyriacou, St Vincent de Paul Society NSW Director Programs.

"This is a significant new state-wide program that allows young people to make an impact, do good in their communities and engage with complex issues in age-appropriate ways."

"By creating this new offering tailored for high school students, the Vinnies Service Medallion recognises the strengths of young people and encourages them to stay connected with Vinnies – and with helping others – throughout their lives," Joy said.

Designed to complement existing service and leadership programs operating in secondary schools, the VSM is being launched across New South Wales following a successful pilot over the past 18 months.

Over 100 students from Catholic Schools across the Sydney Metropolitan region, including Cerdon College Merrylands, St Clare's Catholic High School, Loreto Normanhurst, Casimir Catholic College and St Joseph's Gosford participated in the pilot.

"The Vinnies Service Medallion has been well received by students and teachers, deepening their understanding of social justice issues and offering practical opportunities to give back to the community," said Jack de Groot, Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese CEO.

"The program is led by students and can be adapted for the needs of each school that takes part," Jack said.

"It's a great way to instil values that will last a lifetime and make a difference in people's lives right now."

Service opportunities available to students participating in the VSM include preparing snack packs, hampers and toiletry kits to be distributed by Vinnies services; fundraising for appeals; volunteering at Vinnies Shops or services; and taking part in advocacy projects.

"The VSM will be an impactful platform for students in high schools to action their faith through their 'good works'," said David Gearin, Diocese of Wollongong, Education Officer for Pastoral Outreach, Advocacy and Justice.

"All of our schools are 'to make Christ known to all their students'. This medal not only recognises our preferential option for the poor and that Christ dwells especially in our poor, vulnerable and marginalised - it will inspire and compel them to move actively towards them, to blur the lines of marginalisation and at the same time increase levels of wellbeing and potential for full lives of meaning and purpose," said Mr Gearin.

St Vincent de Paul Society NSW has over 12,000 members and volunteers in communities across the state, who have supported 100,000 people this financial year.

To learn more about the program, visit youthnsw.vinnies.org.au/vinnies-service-medallion or contact vsm@vinnies.org.au.

WHAT'S NEW



MATTHEW TALBOT NEWCASTLE CELEBRATES 50 YEARS

For the past 50 years, the Matthew Talbot Homelessness Service has been a beacon of hope for the Newcastle and Lake Macquarie communities.

Offering invaluable support for men and men with children experiencing or at risk of homelessness, the half-century milestone was brought up last December with case workers, local MPs and people supported by the service celebrating a legacy that has changed thousands of lives for the better.

Located close to the city CBD, a short walk from the Newcastle interchange in the suburb of Wickham, the Matthew Talbot Homelessness Service provides a range of assistance to people in need, including accommodation, case management and assertive outreach.

When the service first opened its doors in the 1970s, the dominant group in need of assistance came in the form of men sleeping rough. Fast forward five decades and the circumstances people are faced with are more varied and complex.

‘We’re having a lot of people who are navigating the service system for the first time,’ says Glenn Beatty, Matthew Talbot Homelessness Service manager.

‘We’re having elderly people that we’ve never seen before – an 85-year-old man who was evicted on a no-grounds eviction who had nowhere else to go.’

More than 630 people were supported by the main Matthew Talbot Homelessness Service in the past financial year, along with an additional 200 people through the Newcastle Assertive Outreach program – working to identify and house rough sleepers – run in conjunction with Hunter New England Health and Homes NSW.

With close to 2,200 people waitlisted for social housing in Newcastle and the number of rough sleepers growing from six to 49 in the span of 12 months, one of the greatest challenges facing the service is the length of time required to secure a housing outcome for people seeking assistance. Over the past three years this duration has risen by 88 per cent from 82 days (FY 2021/22) to 154 days (FY 2023/24).

For those working on the frontline of the service each day, the most meaningful remedy that could be taken to support people amidst the current crisis is housing.

‘We really need to see a significant investment in affordable housing in this country otherwise we’re facing an even worse crisis as we go on,’ says Glenn.

‘One of the things that we’re strong believers in is what we call a Housing First model. No matter what other challenges somebody’s having in life, if you can get them into good, stable and secure housing, it’s much easier to work alongside them to address other challenges.’

VINCENTIANS IN ACTION



MEET MARISSA, NEW VICE PRESIDENT, YOUTH

For over a decade, Marissa Papaspiros has been transforming lives through her work as a member of the Society. Now, Marissa is stepping into a new role as Vice President, Youth on the NSW State Council, bringing deep compassion and experience, as well as professional expertise in assisting people through her work with children.

While studying teaching, she learned about Buddies Days and soon found herself volunteering with the Brekky Van and Night Patrol. Before she knew it, Marissa was leading a young adult Conference.

All these years later, her skills with people from all walks of life have impressed and reassured people previously hesitant about helping others, even her younger brother.

That's what the Society does, Marissa says, "It teaches you those skills and humanises people."

Marissa currently works as a behaviour therapist with neurodiverse children, while pursuing a diploma in counselling. Her day job has a similar philosophy to her Vincentian good works.

There, she runs a program that prioritises students being 'happy, relaxed and engaged', which doesn't begin teaching until children feel safe. "That's the thing with what we do with Vinnies as well. You need to have the rapport and the sense of trust and safety," she explains.

As Vice President, Youth, Marissa's priorities include ensuring young leaders remain connected to core works, services and programs. "If you're not on the ground, then you lose a little bit of that passion, or that connection to why we do what we do," she emphasises.

Her second focus is on continuing strong relationships between traditional and youth Conferences. She believes in learning from experienced members' decades of experience.

The little things can mean a lot and an observation of the way a member asked a person we assist something as simple as, "How do you take your coffee?" has inspired Marissa to continue growing in her Vincentian character. "It's about that sense of restoring dignity to that person in everything we do," she notes.

When asked for advice on sustaining long-term involvement, Marissa suggests letting secondary responsibilities take a back seat, while sustaining the motivating good works: "Just keep volunteering, because it brings you back to why we do what we do."

Marissa's last piece of inspiration and encouragement for us was a favourite saying of hers from St Mary MacKillop, paraphrasing, 'Do what you can with what you've got and calmly leave the rest to God.'

Thank you and congratulations on your new role, Marissa!

VINCENTIANS IN ACTION



STUDENT PLACEMENT TO LEADERSHIP: ANNETTE'S VINCENTIAN JOURNEY

When Annette Johnstone started her student placement at the Society's office in Newcastle in 1984, little did she know it was the beginning of four decades of service, including her recent election as the Broken Bay Central Council President.

"It was absolutely wonderful," Annette recalls of that first experience, where she supported and enabled the network of members making their visitations.

A Conference President explained to her that 'we give the best of our first fruits' to those in need. Annette would telephone Conference members each afternoon to distribute requests for assistance. "The only thing that's different in 41 years. Now we email them," she said.

Life took Annette away from active membership for periods of further study, work, marriage and raising children, but the Vincentian spirit drew her back each time.

When she moved to the Central Coast in 2014, Annette filled in a parish welcome form, expressing her interest in social justice and the St Vincent de Paul Society. She's been at both ever since, including serving on the Parish Council of Our Lady of the Rosary Parish, Wyoming.

The consistency of the Society's values impresses Annette. "That same ethos and mentality that was there in 1984," she reflects.

"It's that ever-present Vincentian spirit. The generosity, kindness, and integrity of the members are still here."

The Society has also been a beneficial source of community for Annette through the different phases of life. A fellow member's invitation to a quilting group was the start of a new passion and friendships that sustained her through the COVID-19 lockdowns and beyond.

As Central Council President, Annette will prioritise increased membership, communication, and consistent service delivery. "You can go to Hornsby and ask for assistance, and you will get the same level and type of assistance that you can get at Wyoming or at Wyong," she explains.

In these tasks, Annette will work alongside the Broken Bay Conference Presidents, staff and volunteers. "They are so pragmatic and realistic and know what their community needs."

Joy in service will sustain Annette in her new role, a joy she wishes to share with everyone. "Where else can you give stuff away like we do every day?" she asks. "If the general community knew how much joy there was in this work, everybody would want to join."

VINCENTIANS IN ACTION



DEMPSEY MEDAL HONOURS JIM GOTHARD

James Gothard of St Catherine Laboure's Conference GyMEA was honoured with the Dempsey Medal at St Mary's Cathedral on Sunday 6 July.

The Dempsey Medal is awarded annually by the Archbishop of Sydney to members of the Catholic clergy and laity for outstanding contributions and service to our Catholic Church.

Jim has been a member of the Conference for over 27 years and was Conference President for eight years. He is a Life Member of the St Vincent de Paul Society. In sacramental ministries in the parish, Jim served as an acolyte for many years, as a Reader and as a Minister of Holy Communion.

Frank Tierney, GyMEA Conference President, was delighted at the recognition for Jim, who he has known for more than 30 years and seen his wonderful contributions to St Catherine Laboure Parish first hand.

"Jim goes about doing the work of Christ without any fuss or fanfare. He is a true example of our Catholic faith," Frank said. "One of the things that stands out about Jim is his total humility."

Jim was joined by family and friends at the special Mass at St Mary's Cathedral as he received the wonderful accolade.

On behalf of the St Vincent de Paul Society, congratulations Jim!

VINCENTIANS IN ACTION



PAT AND KAY CELEBRATE 125 YEARS OF SERVICE WITH A PAPAL BLESSING

Members, volunteers and staff gathered on 29 June to celebrate 75 years of service of Condobolin member, Patrick Ticehurst. Some of Pat's family attended the event, as well as Peter Houweling, NSW State President and Leo Tucker, the Society's Executive Director, Mission and Formation.

Pat joined the Society in 1950 with the Marist Brothers College Junior Conference. When he returned home from boarding school, he would make visitations to the hospital with a fellow Vincentian and press clothes for the Mission in a wool press. As well as general Conference activities, Pat also cut rags for the Centre two days a week for around 30 years while working as a farmer. Pat was awarded Life Membership in 2015 and regularly attends Central West Regional meetings.

Pat has expressed how his Vincentian work has always been very special to him. He feels blessed to have been able to be there to assist those in need for so many years and thanks God that our wonderful, caring Society still exists.

"Pat loves a chat and mixing with people and has always been dedicated, loving and caring to family and his community," Kay Ticehurst said of her husband of 65 years. Together, Pat and Kay have four children, 12 grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

Kay Ticehurst was also celebrated for 50 years of service. During this time, she has held the roles of Conference President, Regional President, Central Council Vice President, Twinning Officer, Spiritual Adviser and shop volunteer. Kay was also awarded Life Membership in 2015.

"I have always felt a need to help people to reach their needs at the time," Kay said. "I do love helping people. It's just hard to say no. I think helping people is so important and I stress - you must listen and no judgement."

"We give thanks for our Vincentian vocation – really we are just small links in our wonderful Society, which has had, still has and please God, always will have, great compassion for helping those less fortunate," she said.

This incredible dedication was recognised with a Papal Blessing for Pat and Kay, presented to them at Mass by Fr Getulio and Jim Rogers, Wilcannia Forbes Central Council President.

Thank you and congratulations, Pat and Kay, on an incredible 125 years of combined service to the Society and community!

VINCENTIANS IN ACTION



MINI VINNIES GATHERING LAUNCHES NEW ANTHEM

Over 200 students and teachers from Catholic Primary Schools across the Sydney Metropolitan region converged on Australian Catholic University's Strathfield campus last Thursday for the 2025 Mini Vinnies Gathering.

The annual event, hosted by the Society, saw students enjoy a fun day of faith, social justice and learning about the impact the Society NSW makes in communities every day.

The highlight of the day was the launch of a new Mini Vinnies anthem, written and performed by the OLC Music Collective – comprised of people supported by the Ozanam Learning Centre.

The Mini Vinnies anthem will be performed by students in schools for assemblies, commissioning ceremonies and more. As part of the recording of the song, students from St Anthony of Padua College, Austral, visited the Ozanam Learning Centre to perform backing vocals.

The OLC Music Collective has performed throughout Sydney for many years, making appearances at the Vinnies CEO Sleepout and being featured on A Current Affair. Their new album 'All Our Tomorrows' is out now after a release performance on Thursday 31 July.

"It's wonderful to be able to bring together schools from across the Sydney Metropolitan region, allowing students to connect through shared faith and values," Christina Gilio, Member and Volunteer Experience Manager, said.

"We hope that students will carry what they experience as part of Mini Vinnies throughout their lives, living out values of compassion, social justice and a commitment to caring for the community."

"Having the OLC Music Collective develop a new song for Mini Vinnies will be a wonderful way to engage students. We were delighted to have them perform the song as part of the Mini Vinnies Gathering – it was certainly the highlight of the day," Christina said.

The Society NSW additionally held a Secondary Schools Gathering, bringing together 100 students from across Sydney, at ACU's Strathfield campus the following day. Students had the opportunity to learn about the Vinnies Service Medallion, a newly-launched student-led service program being rolled out in secondary schools across the state.

Acknowledging the Catholic Weekly with gratitude for their reporting.

VINCENTIANS IN ACTION



MUSIC FROM THE MOUNTAINS TO THE CITY: BUSKING FOR VINNIES GROWS

From the mountains to the city, this youth-led grass roots fundraiser has grown into a movement for change. This August, *Busking for Vinnies* struck a powerful chord with multiple events raising thousands for those who need it most.

On 12 August, Gilroy Catholic College students took over Parramatta's Centenary Square for the 31st year of *Busking for Vinnies*.

"Our students have the opportunity to perform and also fundraise for homelessness," Christine Lewis, Music Teacher, said.

The Gilroy Catholic College musicians created a rich tapestry of sound that brought cultures and generations together for a good cause in the heart of a bustling city.

Locals heard old and new tunes, from the high BPM of the Spice Girls to the resonant tones of the Guzheng 古筝, a traditional Chinese instrument. Passers-by stopped to listen and gave generously. Over \$1800 was raised for St Paul's Conference Winston Hills.

But the money, while welcome, was only part of the story. "This wasn't just about fundraising," said Roydon Ng, one of the Society's School Engagement Officers. "It was about awareness, about young people showing they care, using their voices and their music to spark change right in their own community."

On the other side of the region, St Columba's Catholic College students took to the footpath of Springwood on 8 August, transforming the town centre into a stage

of solidarity for Homelessness Week 2025. Their performance marked the expansion of *Busking for Vinnies* beyond Parramatta and brought with it heartfelt melodies, big conversations and generosity. \$840 was raised to support the St Thomas Aquinas Conference Springwood.

Backed by Blue Mountains City Council, the event reflected a strong spirit of collaboration between schools, the Society and local government, highlighting how music and mission can work hand-in-hand.

"Every song was a statement," said Roydon. "A statement of faith, of love in action, of what happens when young people step up to serve."

More performances are planned for throughout the year, in collaboration with dedicated students and teachers from:

- Catherine McAuley Westmead
- Parramatta Marist High School
- Our Lady of Mercy College Parramatta
- Mount Saint Benedict College Pennant Hills
- St Edmund's College Wahroonga
- St John Paul II Catholic College Schofields

As *Busking for Vinnies* continues to grow, the message remains the same, that everyone can use their gifts and talents to serve, share hope and make a difference.



VINCENTIANS IN ACTION



WORDS OF APPRECIATION FROM SARAH*

Supporting people we assist during difficult times is both an honour and a responsibility taken to heart by Catherine Lythgo, Case Worker Outreach and Hubs.

Catherine's work specialises in collaborating with members to achieve outcomes with people we assist in the Nowra and NSW South Coast regions.

"I am grateful to work with the Society, John Purcell House, Nowra, and Conferences, in an environment that values compassion, empathy, and dignity," Catherine said. "I'm pleased our work with Sarah* reflected the principles we stand for as a team."

Sarah* was shy, with a quiet demeanour, and was originally assisted by Ulladulla Conference, who referred her to Catherine for support. Over time, a foundation of trust was built, overcoming distrust of other services based on prior experiences. The collaborative support for Sarah* gained her confidence to engage with treatment and support over twelve months.

Sarah* send a beautiful message to Catherine, for everyone at the Society, which we share with her permission:

It is with pleasure that I write regarding the support system provided to me by Catherine and the team at St Vincent de Paul, Ulladulla.

I cannot say thank you enough for the kindness afforded to me by the good people I met Catherine, Maureen, Jeff and others.

I was never made feel anything but welcome there; and when one deals with anxiety and depression on a rather constant basis, it warms the heart to know that people do care.

Never was I made feel an imposition, it was a family warmth, kindness and support always afforded to me.

I looked forward to having time with people who cared how I was faring, about me as a person and managing my personal pain.

Help with my approach to dealing with self-worth when it's been lacking over the years and the hope that it has given me to go on.

The network created by such good people can only bode well for the times ahead. It is an excellent example of the goodness of those who care.

The time I was afforded, the unbelievable support, made a very welcome change for me...not the least in the loss of a family member and assistance to attend medical appointments and such.

I cannot say thank you enough and send blessings to every person I encountered at Vinnies in that part of my journey.

Thank you for your deeply appreciated recognition, Sarah*. It inspires us to continue giving our best to people who need it most.

VINCENTIANS IN ACTION



“WE’RE DOING REALLY GOOD” — TONY’S LIFE AFTER VINCENTIAN HOUSE

When Tony found himself without a home and with a newborn son to care for, Vincentian House offered support in his time of need.

Seven years on, Tony and his son, Jandy, are living independently and loving life.

“We’re doing really good,” says Tony.

Currently living in social housing, located a short walk from Jandy’s school, Tony’s current circumstances are a far cry from the challenges faced while trying to access support in his darkest hour.

“Out of everything I tried – hundreds of phone calls everywhere – just trying to get help for a single man with a child, nothing was happening. The only place that even thought about taking me was Vincentian House.”

Gaining a lifeline from Vincentian House – a service operated by the Society supporting parents with children – Tony was made to feel welcome as soon as he set foot through the doors. From the uncertainty of homelessness, he and Jandy were given a self-contained unit that became a home.

“It was a place where I could actually stop, breathe and see a future.”

Going on to spend 12 months at Vincentian House while working with the case management team to find a permanent home, Tony was able to make use of additional support offered at the service, such as counselling and learning how to cook.

This support continues to be of value years later with Tony crediting it with helping him to become a better parent.

“The lessons I learnt here, I still use in my daily life and I’m really grateful for that.”

Tony is one of many people supported by our services over the years. Thanks to the generosity of donors, we’re able to intervene in times of crisis and help people write the next chapter of their lives.

“It certainly made a difference to me and my son.”

Much has changed for Tony nearly a decade on from his introduction to Vincentian House. He has a safe place to call home. Jandy is thriving in school. He’s even thinking about a move to the country, using money he’s saved up to buy a little property, for a change of pace and scenery.

Life has presented Tony and Jandy with more challenges than most. With a little help from Vincentian House, he has the stability to be the dad he wants to be for his son.

“We couldn’t be happier.”

Tony revisited Vincentian House earlier this year where he opened up on the support he received and how it continues to make an impact in his life. See Tony share his experience by scanning the QR code:



VINCENTIANS IN ACTION



NEW MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE PRESIDENT ON SERVICE, COLLABORATION & RENEWAL

Earlier this year, John Setz stepped into the role of Maitland-Newcastle Central Council President, serving a large territory, from Morisset to Taree and inland to Merriwa. As Central Council President, John represents Maitland-Newcastle on the NSW State Council.

First and foremost, John's leadership style is practical and committed to people's dignity.

"I'm big on the idea of a hand up, not just a handout," John emphasised. "If someone is coming back to us month after month, we need to ask what's happening behind the scenes and how we can support them to move forward."

John notes Conference assistance at critical junctures in life as particularly meaningful. When a younger person who was being assisted completed a security guard course, a hefty security licence fee appeared as an obstacle. "We covered that cost and he has been independent since," John said.

Another firsthand encounter demonstrating the impact members make was when a widow sought assistance amid grief and enormous financial complexity. The Conference's referral to a financial counsellor and advocacy prevented the loss of the family home and enabled her to manage her debts. The Conference also provided emotional support amid the bereavement.

John's Vincentian journey is also the story of his family. His parents, Mark and Jenny, both served as Conference Presidents, and his father was known colloquially in Wingham as 'the Vinnies Man'. Mark was always on call to deliver furniture or support families in need and his philosophy was 'there but for the grace of God go I'.

"My parents were immigrants from Holland and service was part of our household culture. I grew up with that example."

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VINCENTIANS IN ACTION

NEW MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE PRESIDENT ON SERVICE, COLLABORATION & RENEWAL (CONT.)

The family history of service stretches back even further, with John's maternal grandfather distinguishing himself in the Dutch labour movement and being made a papal knight. Dutch heritage and a teaching background are qualities John has in common with Peter Houweling, the NSW State Council President.

As a former teacher with a strong family history in the Society, John knows how to build community and sustain service over the long term.

Youth and families are among target cohorts for new members, and John is positive about growing engagement.

"As one young mum said to me, 'you're asking the most time-poor people in the community to commit more time.' That's true but if we can make involvement practical and meaningful, people will come," John said.

The Maitland-Newcastle Central Council covers a wide geographical area with diverse services and John sees collaboration between members, volunteers and employees as essential.

"We work pretty well together up here," he said, pointing to connections with shop volunteers, Regional Presidents, and service managers.

A priority is building stronger awareness of existing services, sites and operations, such as Vinnies Vans, Matt Talbot, 'Return and Earn' Container Deposit Scheme sites, and Distribution Centres.

John knows the value of excursions, planning to take Central Council meetings out and about to see the breadth of the Society.

"Most members of the Central Council have never visited Matt Talbot or the Cardiff services," he explains. "So, we'll go there as part of our meetings. Seeing it first-hand will be an eye-opener."

Demystifying member leadership is another priority for John. "People sometimes think leadership roles are onerous," he said. "But at Conference or Regional level, it often comes down to forwarding emails and organising agendas."

John is also clear-eyed about the rebuilding ahead. "There's work to do," he admits. "But if we stay focused on making people's lives better, and if we support each other as members, the future is bright."

VINCENTIANS IN ACTION



FRAN SHARES NSW AWARD WITH ENGADINE-HEATHCOTE CONFERENCE

Earlier this year, a long-standing parishioner at St John Bosco's Engadine reached out to the Conference with a proposal. The Premier of NSW recognises a number of volunteers during National Volunteer Week and the parishioner proposed nominating a tireless member for these awards.

Maryanne Stuart MLA, Member for Heathcote, made the nomination with assistance from a few helpers. Shortly afterwards, Maryanne let us know that the nomination had been successful!

Maryanne then called Frances Postill, Secretary of St John Bosco Conference Engadine-Heathcote, inviting her to attend a special awards function at the Art Gallery of NSW.

Never one for attention, Fran explained she was on a short holiday, "somewhere in the Nullarbor desert" and must decline the invitation, rather than disappoint husband and family.

On Thursday 22 May, hundreds of volunteers gathered at the Art Gallery of NSW for the Premier's Volunteer Reception. Anthony Weir, current Engadine-Heathcote Conference President, attended at Fran's request.

Following speeches, it was time for the awards. Little did we know Fran's award was one of only two to be presented that night.

Jodie Harrison MLA, NSW Minister for Women, presented the Community Service Award on behalf of Premier Chris Minns, who was assisting flood affected communities.

"If I get any sort of award, make sure you know that the award is for everyone in the Conference," Fran said.

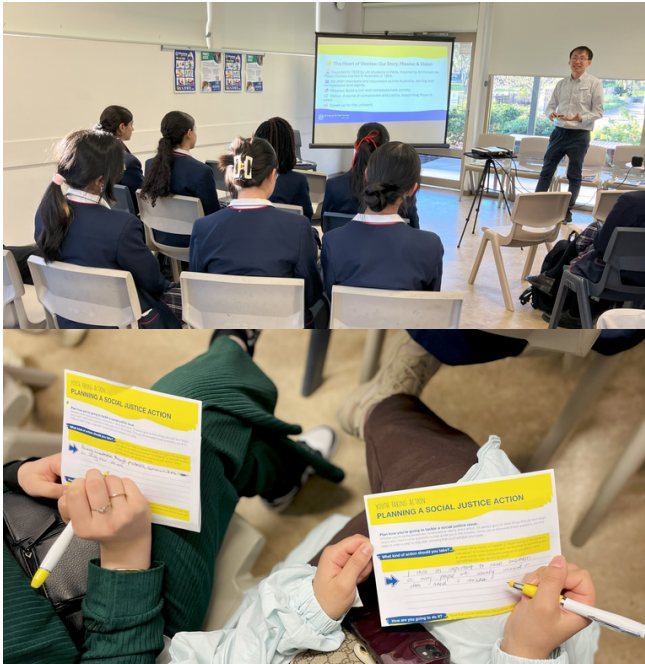
Fran's work with the Society, over many years, has been tireless. Fran gives her time to visitations in our local area, and has volunteered in other roles in the Society which include Conference President, 2017-2024, almost eight years as a Vinnies Shop volunteer, and service as the Social Justice Officer for the Society's Sutherland Shire Region.

"She leads by example with care, humility and generosity. For all who know Fran, her deservedness for recognition would come as no surprise," Anthony said.

"Thank you to all of our members and volunteers for your time, your service, but above all else, your care for others," he said.

Congratulations, Fran and Engadine-Heathcote Conference, on your recognition in this award. Thank you for all you do!

VINCENTIANS IN ACTION



CUMBERLAND YOUTH STEP UP FOR HOMELESSNESS WEEK: VINNIES EMPOWERS A NEW GENERATION

They're informed. They're passionate. And they're not afraid to speak up.

Today's generation of young people is the most socially conscious we've ever seen — and during National Homelessness Week 2025, Vinnies and Cumberland City Council made one thing clear: it's time to turn that passion into action.

At a powerful Youth Social Justice Workshop held on 6 August at the Auburn Centre for Community, young leaders from across the region were invited not just to learn about homelessness, but to take the lead in addressing it. We aimed to empower them with the knowledge and opportunity to take part in our programs and take action into their own hands.

"It's not about waiting until we're older to make a difference," said Roydon Ng, Vinnies Schools Engagement Officer. "Young people are already leading change — and Vinnies is here to support them every step of the way."

Addressing the increasing rates of homelessness in the Cumberland area is a multifaceted task, with many services working alongside to improve the lives of locals in need.

Our statistics, Social Justice Action Framework and Catholic Social Teachings asserted the importance of action for participants. In addition, Senior Constable Gabriella Di Marino, Youth Officer at Auburn Police Area Command, challenged misconceptions by affirming that homelessness is not a crime, and outlined how police are working alongside various local services.

Furthermore, Claudia Encina, Community Development Officer with Cumberland City Council, spoke on the council's actions with advocacy, partnerships and commitment to their Homelessness Action Plan 2024-2027.

As the session closed, the challenge was laid down: what will you do? From joining Vinnies Van teams, helping out in shops, running winter sleepouts at school, or volunteering at local support centres — there are countless ways for young people to get involved.

"We wanted to equip young people to lead with love, to listen deeply, and to build a future where everyone has the chance to belong and succeed," said Roydon.

This workshop was more than a one-off — it marked another milestone in a growing partnership between Vinnies and Cumberland City Council. From the launch of the Vinnies Van Service in Merrylands (as part of Council's "Well-being Project") to years of joint community events, both organisations are committed to creating real change together.

If your parish youth group or local school would like more information about student involvement with Vinnies, please reach out to Roydon Ng on 0487 001 186 or email roydon.ng@vinnies.org.au

VINCENTIANS IN ACTION



VINCENTIANS AND SERVANT LEADERS: 2025 STATE COUNCIL RETREAT

A spirit of reflection, renewal, and commitment to Vincentian servant leadership animated the 2025 State Council Retreat held at Mary MacKillop Place, North Sydney, from Friday 4 July to Sunday 6 July.

The State Council Retreat followed a State Council meeting earlier on the Friday, and on Saturday they were joined by members of the NSW Board and the Executive Leadership Team. Members of the National Council of Fiji, with which the Society in NSW has an international twinning relationship, were also welcomed to the retreat for the Saturday.

Leo Tucker, Executive Director of Mission and Formation and State Council Spiritual Adviser, began the journey with a reflection on the washing of the feet of the Last Supper narratives of the Gospel of John on the Friday evening. This set the scene for Craig Farmer from Transform Leaders who facilitated sessions on the practice of Servant Leadership, sharing a wealth of insights from his experience working with the Society.

The sessions were grounded in the National Council's framework on the Vincentian Way, especially regarding Vincentian Leadership and Effective Stewardship embracing our Catholic Social Principles, with connections to the Society's Leadership Framework.

Craig's sessions invited participants to reflect on their personal leadership through five key questions:

1. Sense of Purpose— Why do I lead others?
2. Core Values— What values shape my decisions and interactions?
3. Leadership Qualities— What traits do I admire in those who have led me?
4. Defining Success— What does success look like in my leadership?
5. Expectations— What should others expect from me, and vice versa?

Small group sessions shared these reflections, encouraging connection and mutual learning.

The model of Servant Leadership, based on humility and empowerment, was explored through the scriptures, Catholic tradition and current leadership theory, with inspiration drawn from Pope Gregory the Great, Stephen Covey, Simon Sinek and others.

(Continued on next page)

VINCENTIANS IN ACTION



VINCENTIANS AND SERVANT LEADERS: 2025 STATE COUNCIL RETREAT (CONT.)

*"The true shepherd is not concerned with exalting himself
but in serving others with the love of Christ."
- Pope Gregory the Great,*

Liber Regular Pastoralis, Book I, Chapter I

The retreat also highlighted the Society's commitment to the twinning relationship between the Society in NSW and the Society in Fiji. Members of the Fijian National Council were warmly welcomed to sessions on the Saturday via an online link, as part of strengthening the ongoing relationship between Vincentians internationally.

"The day's program was very informative, and I did not realise the impact - to differentiate my role as a Good Leader and a Servant," Mr Semesa Vilise reflected, as Acting President of the National Council of Fiji. "Thank you for including Fiji in your Retreat program. It meant a lot for me."

Leo Tucker and Corinne Lindsell, from the Society's Mission & Formation team, organised the retreat and facilitated sessions on Pastoral Care Formation and Training. Vincentian Pastoral Care is animated by hope, trust, accompaniment and dignity.

Participants reflected on Vincentian Pastoral Care's grounding in empathy and inclusion, underlining the sacredness of member work and the Vincentian call to 'serve in hope'.

The Saturday night dinner included a much-enjoyed trivia session where banter and a competitive spirit shone.

Sunday Mass, joining the parish community at Mary MacKillop parish, concluded the State Council retreat, with participants renewed in their Vincentian spirit, leadership and service.

VINCENTIANS IN ACTION



STANHOPE MEMBERS COOK UP A FUNDRAISING HIT WITH WINTER WARMER SOUPS

St John XXIII Conference Stanhope Gardens had wonderful success at their winter fundraising initiative of selling soups cooked by Conference members and friends at the parish this July.

“The night was an incredible success, with nearly 100 soups sold,” Roger Perera, Stanhope Gardens Conference, announced.

“Members took responsibility to cook the soups – some chicken, pumpkin, lentil,” he said.

“One parishioner actually made a Burmese Laksa. That was very popular!”

During Winter, the Conference decided it would be appropriate to cook up warm soups. The fundraiser was very cost-effective with member donated ingredients and labour.

The first batch was sold after a Saturday Vigil Mass, and then more were sold after Sunday morning Mass. The soup fundraising initiative is now in its second year and complements the Conference's Bunnings BBQ and fundraising appeals.

“We owe a special thank you to all the wonderful parishioners of St John XXIII Glenwood-Stanhope Gardens,” Roger said.

“Their unwavering support has significantly impacted the lives of those in need, and we couldn't be more grateful.”

Stanhope Gardens Conference has a wonderfully supportive parish priest in Fr Jolly Chacko, who regularly attends Conference meetings, and allows the Conference to store supplies under the Church.

The Conference thanked the parishioners for their support and generosity, noting the Conference's focus on supporting families experiencing financial hardship, homelessness,

Thanks to the parish's enthusiastic participation and kind donations, Stanhope Gardens Conference managed to raise nearly \$800 over 24 hours.