



Newsletter

SUMMER 2022

Broken Bay Central Council President - Michelle Chahine's Message

Dear Friends,

These last couple of years have been unprecedented for our members, staff, clients and the entire organisation, as the impact of Coronavirus has been felt by everyone right across Australia.

As an organisation we have had to make many hard decisions that have had an impact on many of you to successfully navigate this challenging period. Thank you for your resilience and patience as we attempt to return to what was our normal.

I'd like to extend a warm welcome to Kate Lee, Regional Director Metro, who has only recently joined us, but has certainly hit the ground running. Please reach out to Kate and welcome her into our team here at Broken Bay. I'm sure Kate is looking forward to meeting you all soon.

Congratulations to our very own (and yes John, we claim you!) John Donnelly on the wonderful news that he has been awarded the Medal (OAM) of the Order of Australia. What a fantastic testimony to the countless hours of service to the community that John has given over the many years. Thank you, John, for your many years of service to St Vincent de Paul.

On that note, I would also like to mention my very own conference president Alan Henson, President St Patrick's Conference Asquith on his upcoming 50-year anniversary with the society. Alan, you are an amazing president, a wonderful mentor and an outstanding role model for all Vincentians. I thank you for your many years of service and your friendship.



At a time when many in the community are suffering, let us remain committed to delivering exceptional and unwavering support to all in need.

Thank you for your ongoing efforts during this period. We hope you and your families remain safe and healthy. May God bless all that you do.

Yours sincerely,

Michelle Chahine,
Broken Bay Central Council President

Regional Director Metropolitan - Kate Lee's Message

It was my great pleasure to join the St Vincent de Paul Society three weeks ago as the new Regional Director for Sydney Metro.

In that short time, I've had the opportunity to meet several members already. I've been privileged to witness the incredible work and commitment of members as they support and serve their own communities with such compassion and respect.

The past two years of upheaval has been challenging for many communities - but this also means there has never been a more important time for the social justice mission of the Society.

Prior to St Vincent de Paul, I have worked extensively in membership-based organisations, having started my career representing nurses and helping to grow the membership of unions.

Since then, I've held a number of senior roles in the public service, most recently as the Executive Manager of Engagement at the Workplace Gender Equality Agency.

I am so grateful for the warm welcome I've received from the members, volunteers and staff as I join you in the St Vincent de Paul mission.

As our COVID restrictions start to ease, I look forward to getting out to meet more of you soon, hear how I can support the incredible work of members and expand that mission and vision even further.



Kate Lee, Regional Director Metro



Australia Day Honour for John Donnelly



Australia Day brought the wonderful news that John Donnelly has been awarded the Medal (OAM) of the Order of Australia.

This award recognises John's amazing service to the community through social welfare organisations.

Principally recognised is his work as President and Vice-President of the Vinnies Broken Bay Central Council, and membership on the NSW State Council. Also recognised is John's work with the Knights of the Southern Cross, the Catenian Association of Australia, the Warringah Circle, the Probus Club, the RSL and in many other positions.

Announcing the Australia Day Honours, Governor-General the Honourable David Hurley congratulated all on the list saying,

"Collectively the recipients, whose achievements span community service, science and research, industry, sport, the arts and more, represent the strength and diversity of Australia.

"It has been a challenging couple of years and the recipients announced today are a reminder and reflection of the richness of spirit, selflessness and good in our community ...

"To the individuals being celebrated today; thank you for your contribution to Australia and congratulations on being recognised by your peers and your nation."

Congratulations from all of us John!

FAREWELL NEERU. EVERY BEST WISH!

Members of Broken Bay and staff across Metro region gathered in Sydney on 26 November to bid a fond farewell to Neeru Pradhanang, who has left the Society to take up a new position with Transport NSW.

Neeru came to Vinnies in May 2015 and has served as Operations Support Officer – Metro. Over the past six years, she has been such a great support to the Regions and Conferences of Broken Bay as well as the many services, centres and teams across the metropolitan region. Neeru performed so many duties, including getting this Broken Bay newsletter formatted each quarter!

John Donnelly, former Central Council President, thanked Neeru for her many years of service. He noted her untiring efforts at Vinnies and her kind manner of assisting all Members and Staff, which embodied the Christian mission and values of the Society.

In a message to all her colleagues, Neeru said, "What an amazing journey it has been! I'd like to thank each one of you for making my time at SVdP so much fun and memorable. I am grateful for all your support and deeply appreciate the valuable experiences I have gained. It has been a real pleasure being part of the journey in making a difference in people's everyday lives.

"I wish you and the Society nothing but the very best in the future, and truly hope that our paths cross again."

Thank you too Neeru! All the best in the future!

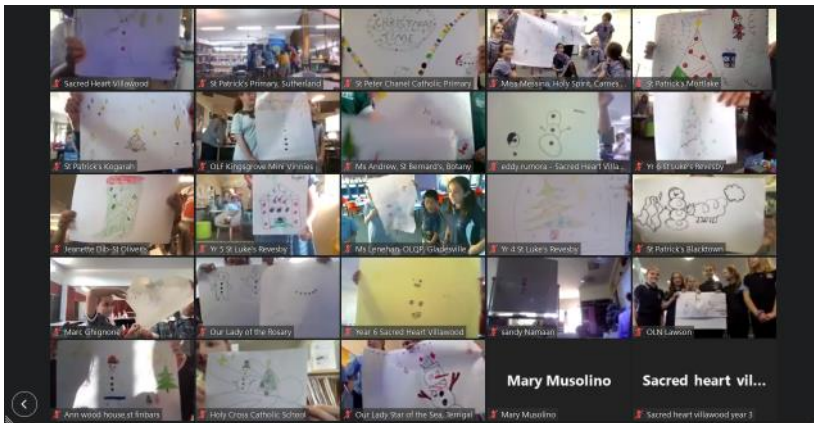




The blessings of the Christmas Season that came from Broken Bay students

Christmas cheer continued again to spread in Broken Bay schools. While students were preparing to have a holly jolly Christmas at home, they also generously contributed to their schools' Vinnies Christmas Appeal. Vinnies trucks and amazing Conference members picked up boxes and boxes of hampers, snack packs and presents from schools to people Vinnies assists. Many schools did a fantastic effort fundraising and raising awareness of the true meaning of Christmas and our faith.

On the 1st and 2nd December, an inaugural Virtual Vinnies Gathering was held for Metropolitan schools to come together for a fun afternoon of games, learning and reflection. Over 600 students across the three Central Councils attended, with Holy Cross Catholic Primary School Kincumber placing 2nd in the Primary School competition.



Previews of Teen Vinnies and Vinnies Youth were promoted with fun activities such as Vinnies Trivia, Spot The Difference, charades and dancing to the Mini Vinnies song.

It is such a blessing to have so many families and school communities involved in supporting the amazing work Vinnies does following in the footsteps of Jesus. We hope everyone had a very merry Christmas and a fantastic start to the New Year.

Fiona Pelosi,
Metropolitan Schools Engagement Officer

“Ngara” - Listen, Hear, Think

The Metropolitan Sydney Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Committee has representation from all areas of Vinnies, including:

- ◆ Membership representation from the three Metro Central Councils
- ◆ Retail and logistics reps
- ◆ Vinnies services reps
- ◆ Membership, Volunteer and Regional Operation Reps
- ◆ And of course, representation from our First Nations peoples.



We have adopted the name “Ngara” meaning “Listen, Hear, Think”, and are working towards implementing the Vinnies RAP in the Metro region.

Planning is underway to hold celebrations of our RAP launch in three locations across Sydney: Bankstown, Mt Pritchard and Wyong. The Wyong launch will be on Wednesday 11 May at 10.00 am at the Vinnies Support Centre.

This will be a wonderful opportunity to celebrate our RAP and to connect with First Nations organisations and communities across Sydney.

To read more on the RAP and find information on various items such as ‘Guiding Principles’, ‘Cultural Protocols’, ‘Community Engagement Plans’ and ‘Gan Na Cultural Awareness eLearning Training’, please have a look at our Reconciliation page on MAVS:

<https://mavs.vinnies.org.au/cultural-competency-framework/>



YOUTH UPDATE

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



Vinnies Metro Youth Christmas Gathering

Vinnies Metro Youth held their annual Christmas Gathering in early December 2021. They were fortunate enough to be able to gather safely in person for a fun afternoon.

The gathering was co-hosted by the Metro Youth Reps and gathered about 20 young people from all over the Metro Region.

It was a great opportunity to thank them for all the hard work they have done throughout 2021 and to hear about the opportunities to come in 2022.

If you haven't had an opportunity to work with our members and volunteers of Vinnies Metro Youth, make sure you do in 2022!!! They are wonderful, young, vibrant and talented people who love being part of Vinnies.

Chatswood Young Adults Conference News

The Chatswood Youth Conference has had an active presence at youth events over the past few months. Conference members attended the World Youth Day Celebration mass in St Mary's Cathedral on the Feast of Christ the King (21st November 2021). Our Conference joined youth from around Sydney to celebrate the role of youth in the church as we eagerly anticipate the next international World Youth Day gathering in 2023 to be hosted in Lisbon, Portugal. Following the mass, members had the opportunity to hear testimonies from previous World Youth Day gatherings and to share a meal in fellowship with youth from across several dioceses.

Our Conference has also participated in a series of online youth gatherings focusing on various topics ranging from storytelling to mental health and self-care. These gatherings have provided social interaction between Vinnies conferences in addition to providing valuable skills to support us in our roles.

On the 6th December, Catherine Ho (a conference member) presented to a group of year 12 students to encourage them to continue engaging in social justice activities beyond high school. Such events are important to foster a younger demographic within volunteer work.

The Chatswood region conferences have also undertaken several outreach and fundraising efforts through setting up information stalls in Chatswood Mall, hosting Bunnings BBQs and undertaking bucket appeals in the lead up to Christmas.

Our Conference also enjoyed attending the Vinnies Youth Christmas gathering where we had fun interacting with Vinnies volunteers from across the Sydney Metropolitan region and playing games together.

Cailin Geraghty, Chatswood Young Adult Conference President



SACC & BBCC Young Adult Members with Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP



Vinnies Youth Buddies Day Program



Unfortunately, the Buddies Day Program was impacted by the lockdown throughout 2021, but we are looking forward to getting the program back up and running for 2022 and cannot wait to be running Buddies Days in the Broken Bay Central Council again.

Buddies Days is a Vinnies Youth Program, operating throughout NSW, which offers the families being supported by Conferences and Vinnies Support Centres another opportunity for support.

For those who are not familiar with the Buddies Day Program here is some background... Vinnies Buddies Days are held for children of families that are supported by the St Vincent de Paul Society in a variety of capacities. It is a care and respite program that consists of a fun day of activities for children in primary school, to give them a break from any hardships they may be experiencing.

Vinnies Young Adult Volunteers take the kids out for a day, usually to places such as ten pin bowling, the zoo or museums. We also work with Catholic Secondary Colleges who hosts the kids and Vinnies Young Adult Volunteers on their school grounds for the day, with senior students running the activities and games. Buddies Days are held on a Saturday or a Sunday, we provide a private bus to collect the kids and Vinnies Volunteers, all food for the day is provided. There is no cost for kids or volunteers to participate in a Buddies Day.

Each Regional Council in the Broken Bay Central Council has been allocated a Buddies Day date in 2022 for Conferences and Vinnies Support Centre Staff to refer kids onto the Buddies Day Program. Regional Presidents & Vinnies Support Centre Staff will distribute Buddies Day Permission Forms and Information Packs when your Buddies Day is coming up.

Vinnies Buddies Days aim to...

- ◆ Provide outreach to children of families, supported by Vinnies, who are doing it tough
- ◆ Provide activities that encourage children to develop new skills, enhance their self-confidence and broaden their friendship networks, most importantly while having fun!
- ◆ Provide a day of respite to parents or guardians
- ◆ Promote friendship, compassion, dignity and community
- ◆ Provide an opportunity for volunteers to actively assist in helping those less fortunate



If you would like more information about the Vinnies Buddies Day Program, please get in touch with the Vinnies Metro Youth Engagement Officer metroyouth@vinnies.org.au or your Vinnies Support Centre Coordinator.



Christmas Hampers Key to Christmas Appeal



Waitara making the difference for families

Our Lady Of The Rosary Cathedral Church in Waitara and the local community were so generous in donating hampers this year. And Members of the Asquith Youth Conference were just as generous in helping us to make the Christmas deliveries. We distributed hampers to 55 families.

Of course, there are a lot of logistics in running the Christmas Appeal and ensuring the hampers get to their destination. But it's the destination that gives meaning to our work.



Let me tell you briefly about the destination of some of these hampers – a beautiful family that has many crosses to bear. They have kids with special needs, there are some mental health needs and there are elderly parents being cared for. Yet they are always cheerful and grateful even for a simple phone call to see how they are.

The kids were so excited to hear that Christmas hampers were coming. One of the boys was up at 3.00 am that morning waiting for the "Vinnies angels" to arrive.

When they arrived that day, the mother was so impressed with the young Members' enthusiasm and commitment. "You're carrying too much!", she told them. "TOO EASY!", they replied.

So here is the family at Christmas. They all gather for the present opening – laying everything out and going through it

as a family. The elderly parents also take part. They love the beautiful shampoos and other goods as, usually, they can only afford the cheap 'no frills' brands.

One boy claims the Cheerios and is very excited about that. The mother speaks of all the goodies in the bags.

The boys ask mum what she would like for Christmas and jokingly she says, "a duck". You can imagine the excitement when, opening one of the presents, there is before them a duck cup! They all wonder how we knew!

The boys pick up every item and carefully look at it and make sure the whole family knows what has been given to them. The family just loved the vouchers and how beautifully everything was packaged.

At the end of present opening they all say a prayer for us.

This Christmas, Vinnies Youth were their only visitors, and the only presents were from Vinnies.



Shirley Kelynack, President - Our Lady of the Way Conference Waitara



Christmas Hampers Key to Christmas Appeal



Chatswood lends Santa a helping hand

You would have read in the last edition of this newsletter how Mick O’Farrell and the Northern Beaches Conferences had raised essential household items for disadvantaged communities in Wilcannia and Brewarrina who were struggling under COVID restrictions.



Barry Finch delivers toys to Janice Ban

Well, in the lead up to Christmas, the Chatswood region also lent a hand to make sure Santa made it to these communities with toys and all the best wishes of the Season.

Chatswood President

Barry Finch had so many toys donated during the Christmas Appeal by Forestville Church and Our Lady of Good Counsel Primary School. The wonderful generosity of the parish and school extended far beyond the boundaries of Broken Bay.

Barry and Christine Anthony at the Vinnies Support Centre in Chatswood organised with Janice Ban at the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry in La Perouse to deliver these toys to Brewarrina and Wilcannia Forbes.

Janice wrote back to Christine and Barry saying,

“The Aboriginal community here in La Perouse and Redfern are very grateful for the generous donations of your Parish and the School. We are hoping to deliver the rest of the donations to Brewarrina this month. Again, Thanks a million!”



Every contribution makes the difference

We are only small congregation at St Rose Collaroy Plateau, with bigger churches on our boundaries.

Our School St Rose, donated all our 17 hampers and the Conference delivered them to our clients.

Considering our small congregation, we raised \$6,643 in donations with the Christmas appeal. COVID has really reduced our Sunday Mass attendance as it has across the Diocese.

Rex Harding OAM OPL, President - St Rose of Lima Conference Collaroy Plateau





Christmas Hampers Key to Christmas Appeal



Spreading the Christmas cheer!

Mater Maria College Warriewood supplied four carloads of Christmas hampers for Narrabeen Conference. The staff of Mater Maria also chipped in with some wonderful Christmas toys and presents for our single mums and their children. Their generosity was overwhelming. St Joseph's Primary School supplemented these with 36 Woolies Bags of Christmas hampers full of Christmas cheer.



The participation of both schools in our hamper drive certainly made it a happy and joy filled Christmas for the single mums and

their families who are doing it tough in our Parish. On their behalf I say a big thank you and God Bless you all again for your generosity and may 2022 be a great year for all concerned.

Because of COVID restrictions we had our clients pick up their hampers at the time we allocated to them. This worked out very well and we were all able to social distance.



The biggest message I wish to convey is this:

I wish you could have seen the tears rolling down the cheeks of many of our single mums as they loaded up their cars in the church yard. Some were left speechless at the extent of the generosity of Mater Maria College and St Joseph's Primary School.

Tom Colman, President - St Joseph's Conference Narrabeen

'Community Effort' in Berowra

Our hamper items came from two sources.

- ◆ Our local community via a collection box we had at the Bendigo Bank in Berowra
- ◆ St Bernard's Primary School

Over a period of two weeks we collected items from the Bendigo Bank – to which we are very grateful for their support.

St Bernard's Primary school as usual collected items from the school children from a list we supplied. Our Conference packed and delivered 14 Hampers consisting of 60 boxes of food, toiletries, and Christmas goods.

One of the members allows us to use their garage to sort, assemble and pack the hampers. This was carried out on the week of 21st Dec 2021.



Deliveries were to Berowra, Brooklyn, Mooney Mooney, Mt Kuring-gai and Cheero Point. All clients were very grateful for our hampers.

We would like to thank the following organisations for the donations that contributed to the hampers:

- ◆ Our local school – St Bernard's Primary School
- ◆ The parishioners of St Bernard's Parish
- ◆ The very generous community of Berowra, who left their donations at the Bendigo Bank in Berowra.
- ◆ Bendigo Bank – without their help we would not have been able to collect these items

Thank you to those committee members and parishioners who volunteered to pack and help deliver the hampers.



John Ryan, President - St Bernard's Conference Berowra



Christmas Hampers Key to Christmas Appeal



Davidson to Coolah – Our annual journey

We are all aware of the devastating effects COVID lockdowns and the spread of the virus have had on so many people.

Our School communities are among those most affected during these difficult COVID times.

Home schooling has been a challenge for teachers, parents and children. So it was a great surprise that we received an email from St Martin’s School Religious Co-ordinator offering to continue our traditional Christmas hamper donations to Coolah.

St Martin’s School community have generously collected the Hampers over 15 years for the Davidson St Vincent de Paul Conference members to take to their twinned country Conference in Coolah (400 kms North West of Sydney).

Coolah is a beautiful town, surrounded by farms, which over the years has been affected by drought and floods.

It was during a particular long drought affecting our country friends that Sydney Conferences were asked to twin with a country Conference to help them survive the challenging times they were experiencing. Davidson Conference contacted their Parish school for help and St Martin’s School came on board and the rest is history.

Each year (even in 2021 Covid times) the school community donates enormous hampers and toys to the families doing it tough in the Coolah areas. A St Martin’s parishioner, Dom Bragge, offered to drive his trailer and, along with our Conference members, the hampers have been transported to Coolah over the past 15 plus years.



It is not about the destination there and back in one day (800 km approx) but the journey!!

We meander along country roads admiring the beautiful scenery, stopping for coffee and morning tea and on the way home, dinner! Some years the countryside is parched and dry but this year we were gifted with lovely green paddocks after the heavy rainfall in the preceding weeks. In fact, Coolah had experienced floods the weeks before we travelled there.

Our Coolah Conference members, Peter & Judy Manning, treat us to a delicious lunch at their farm and show their true country hospitality. Peter has a stock of funny stories that entertain us every year.



Peter Manning Coolah President and Dom Bragge who delivered the hampers

Davidson and Coolah St Vincent de Paul members are so grateful to the teachers, children and parents of St Martin’s school.

When life during Covid isn’t easy for many, Davidson families are still reaching out to help others. Like our Parish patron Saint, St Martin de Porres, our Parish school families really do make a difference in so many lives.

Thank you St Martin’s School Community for your generosity and to Dom Bragge for helping over many years in the transport of the hampers to Coolah.

Carmel Smith, President - St Martin de Porres Conference Davidson

PS We wonder how many city St Vincent de Paul Conferences are still in touch with their twinned country Conference given to them so many years ago ???



Christmas Hampers Key to Christmas Appeal



A Real Team effort!

One hundred and eighteen hampers and parcels were delivered to 98 clients on the 18 December 2021 by 18 groups of enthusiastic and happy parents of St Kieran's School, together with a couple of dedicated parishioners.

The hampers were sourced from the Parish (40), St. Kieran's primary school (24 plus many individual toys and presents), Blackmores, a 41year supporter, (35) and private donated (4).

Whilst all the School contributed generously to the hampers, the final assembly of the hampers by Kerrie Wetzlar and her three mothers was amazing to witness.

Last year the hamper assembly was too physically demanding for me but this year there was my son Sean, with assistance from Br Tu, Anne, Ann, Catherine and Tim. On the day Ryan and Dave, two young men from last year, loaded the hampers into delivery vehicles

The delivery teams not only gave us information on clients who had left addresses but, in some cases, delivered the hamper to them in suburbs five kilometres away!

Some delivery teams sent back some reflections on their experiences on the day:

Lucinda, aged 7 years, actually wrote;

Delivering the hampers was really fun. I loved the happy look on their faces (as) they received our hampers. I feel sorry for those in need but it looks like we made their day. I think we did a great job! We Nailed It!

Leigh

This year was the first time my family participated in the deliveries... it was a reminder of many in the community who must be particularly isolated at this time and how this small act could bring some happiness. It was such a positive experience to be involved in and

despite the masks, we made sure we smiled with our eyes to your clients. Can I also congratulate you on the coordination - it was incredible. You certainly run a well-oiled machine!

Catherine

This year was our first experience delivering Hampers with St. Vincent De Paul. Two of my children, Miles (age 7) and Allegra (age 9), attend St. Kieran's Catholic Primary School and they were both involved with donating items for the hampers through their classes. The experience of delivering hampers was humbling, rewarding and a privilege to be a part of. Especially for my children who live a very comfortable life, the opportunity to meet people who were struggling and less fortunate was a real eye opener. They met people who were struggling with poverty, health issues, loneliness and other more complex issues that my children wouldn't be able to grasp. But, what they did understand was that these people were so grateful to receive these boxes of donated goods and it was an absolute privilege and pleasure to be a part of that in some small way. To be able to spread the spirit and joy of Christmas by delivering these hampers was very special. After such a tough year for so many it was clear that these hampers, and even just the gesture of giving these items, was very much appreciated. Thanks for giving my family a chance to be a part of it. We enjoyed it so much we did two 'runs' and my daughter Allegra said she would have been happy to do it all day.



Miles and Allegra not so sure at the start

Lea

Each year I look forward to helping deliver hampers to people in the area. I enjoy knocking on the recipient's door and seeing the eagerness in their voices at the hampers arrival and seeing how appreciative they are of the valuable work St Vincent's de Paul do. The little chat we have puts a smile on their face and lets them know someone cares. The joy I feel fills me with Christmas spirit which is always meant to be shared. It is a privilege to give a small amount of time and effort to provide a big difference and brighten someone's day. Thank you for this opportunity. I look forward to doing again next year.

Dominic:

This year assisted by my wife, we were fortunate enough to help with delivering Christmas hampers for Vincent de Paul via St Kieran's church and school community donations, led by the tireless John McCarney. It was such a joy to see the recipients' eyes light up at the generosity and kindness shown to them by our community's hamper gifts. It's always humbling to see how some in our community live and offers us some perspective on "first world issues" many grumble about through the year.

Lastly, a hamper recipient rang the Parish Office after comparing her hamper with a friend's hamper. Apparently, the friend had a gift voucher in her hamper and the caller, who had no gift voucher, thought that there had been a mistake in assembling her hamper. I explained that the hampers were individually made by over 70 donors with varying financial means. She apologised for the call and thanked me for the hamper. The support of the SVDP Conference by the Augustinian Community has been wonderful throughout the year. My final comment is how extraordinary generous the St Kieran's faith community is in donating resources, both time and financial, and the professional expertise used in compiling the hampers. All this in addition to the massive Christmas Appeal results of the Parish.

John McCarney, President – Manly Vale



Christmas Hampers Key to Christmas Appeal



A big "Thank You" from Manly and Freshwater

We had a fantastic response to our Christmas appeal and would like to thank all our parishioners for their generous support. We would also like to thank the students, their parents and teachers from St Pauls College, Stella Maris College, St Mary Immaculate and St John the Baptist schools for their ongoing support of our Christmas appeals. They never fail to step up when we ask for help. Also, a thank you to St Augustine's school community for their generous support. Thanks for all those who supported our giving trees, the hampers, the vouchers and gifts were unbelievable and made Christmas very special for many families.



We delivered over 90 hampers (thank you boys from St Pauls who did a delivery run for us) on your behalf and our families were very pleased and grateful to receive them. They are amazed that a stranger has taken the time to make their Christmas special.

We would also like to thank Blackmores and the Mounties Group (Harbord Diggers) for their ongoing support – they have been helping us for many years.

We would like to thank our conference members who put in a lot of time to organise the hampers and then deliver them.

This is a letter we received from a single mum:

I want to say a very big thank you to everyone who helped prepare a hamper for my 10 year old son and myself over Christmas. It really meant a lot to us and especially now as I have injured myself and can't walk for two weeks. The goodies were amazing.

Bruce Whittet, President - St Mary's & St Athanasius' Conference Manly.

Mick O'Farrell, President - John the Baptist Conference Freshwater.

2021 Christmas Appeal Wrap Up!

As we enter a brand-new year, the Vinnies Community Fundraising and Events Team would like to thank all conferences that worked with us during the 2021 Vinnies Christmas Appeal.

Our online portal was used by 22 conferences in NSW as well as 10 external parties raising an amazing \$35,000 last Christmas.

If any conferences would like to fundraise for the 2022 Winter Appeal or would just like to fundraise in general, then you have access to Commonwealth Bank Albert Terminals and Personalised Fundraising Pages on <https://fundraise.vinniesnsw.org.au/>. All you need to do is reach out to Caroline Casse on caroline.casse@vinnies.org.au to organise.

Thank you all again – it has been a pleasure, yet again, to work together in support of those in our community who need our help.



Dropping you a line at Christmas

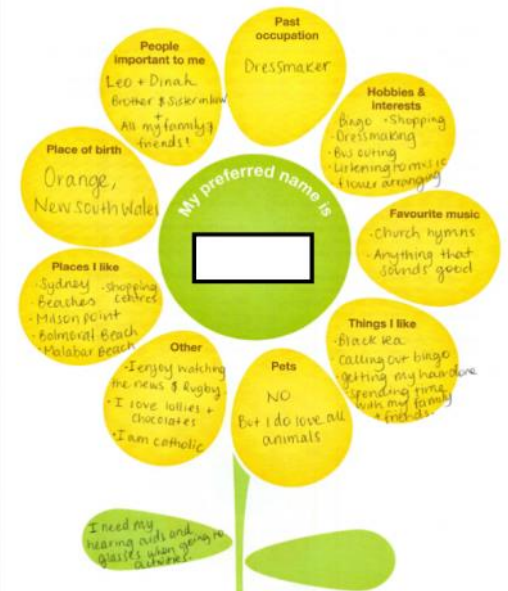
For many residents of Aged Care centres, Christmas can be a particularly lonely time of year – even more so after lockdowns and restrictions on visiting.

Prior to Christmas, 12 residents at Columbia Aged Care Services were matched with 12 Vinnies Young Adult Members, to provide that vital social connection. This was a program intending to provide that special phone call or Zoom call in the lead up to Christmas, and possibly on Christmas Day as well, to residents of an Aged Care facility that otherwise do not receive any other social calls or visits.

With the opportunity to continue this program in the New Year, it provides a special connection particularly addressing social isolation and loneliness – one of the biggest issues our community is facing at the moment.

Both residents and Vinnies members, completed a ‘sunflower’ design that summarises their interests and background. Members and residents were matched as closely as possible on common interests.

A big thank you to those Vinnies Members that made a difference in these elderly people’s lives during Christmas 2021!



Vale John Alfred “Alf” Murray



Alf migrated to Australia from Scotland after his service in the Royal Signals Corps was completed. He was an army cook and saw action on Cyprus when the Greeks and Turks were having a brouhaha over ownership.

He had been an apprentice boilermaker but tossed it in due to a difference of opinion with his father, and to Australia’s sunny shores he felt inclined to roam.

Alf secured a job at Garden Island Naval Dockyard. The fact that in earlier times he had worked on the Royal Yacht Britannia up on the Clyde probably helped a lot.

He lived in Stanmore in the inner west and joined the Conference of St Michael’s, their boundaries adjoined those of my old Conference in the sixties - St Pius V at Enmore. When he joined our Conference - St Rose of Lima, Collaroy Plateau, he became my wingman on client visits. We got on well as we had a lot in common, Scot’s ancestry, ships, military history, and the faith of our fathers.

The amazing fact also was, that Alf had carried the banner for the Chief of the Murray clan, and I was the overseas representative of the Clan Gregor Society in Australia at the time of our meeting. Regardless of these similarities and the fact that I am involved in



Remembering John Alfred Murray
1936 - 2021

numerous Caledonian Societies, I could hardly understand him when he spoke. He had the heaviest Glaswegian accent I have ever encountered.

I can still remember our Parish Priest remarking on his accent at Alf’s Funeral Mass.

He was well loved by all at the “Vets”. He worked tirelessly for them when he could, as well as the RSL. They even named the computer room that he had set up in his honour, complete with commemorative plaque.

The one thing most people loved about Alf was his generosity which was boundless. I can still remember him, slipping one of his \$10 notes into a client’s hand when he thought I wouldn’t notice and whispering “Thistle heelp yee to git bye laddie”.

Anyone who thinks Scots are tight never met Alf. They may be frugal but not lousy.

He was over generous to the Society leaving an expensive coin collection that was his hobby. Celtic people have moved around the world to follow the sun and it was a lucky day for us when this great man of faith decided to call Australia “Home”.

Rex S. M. Harding OAM, President - St Rose’s Conference Collaroy



On being the Church of the Poor

Reflection of Bishop Vincent Long OFM Conv at Vinnies Online Forum for World Day of the Poor, 17 November 2021



Pope Francis' vision of the Poor Church

Thank you for the invitation to speak at this forum. You Vinnies are the living embodiment of the Church of the poor that Pope Francis envisions. In fact, ever since his surprise election eight years ago, he has been leading us towards the periphery. We have a sense that the Pope is unambiguous about the direction the Church should take.

He is decisive in implementing the ecclesial vision of the Second Vatican Council. I'd like to describe this in terms of a movement from clericalism to service, from self-reference to openness, from splendour to simplicity, from triumphalism to humility, from a siege mentality to engagement, from safeguarding our privileges to learning to be vulnerable in order to convey God's compassion to those who are on the edges of society and the Church.

It is those precarious liminal spaces where the true cost of our discipleship is counted, because we dare to walk with the Samaritans of our time, just like Jesus did before us. The crisis of diminishment that we face (numbers, influence, wealth, most of all, credibility) allows us an opportunity to divest ourselves of all the unnecessary trappings, to focus on what is our core mission, to act more prophetically and to live more fully, more creatively, more boldly, more at the periphery.

The World Day of the Poor that the Pope himself initiated four years ago has been part of his strategy to realise this vision. It is a day when the whole Church is reminded in a visible way of our commitment to be with the poor and to make them the centre of our pastoral endeavour.

Pope Francis went to Assisi, the city of his namesake, to celebrate this occasion with 5,000 people including the local homeless and Afghan refugees. The theme for this year's World Day of the Poor is "for the poor you have always with you" from the words of Jesus at the Anointing in Bethany just before his Passion. Sometimes this sentence is taken to mean that the poor will be around in every time and every place, and therefore we should not worry too much about eradicating poverty or alleviating the poor.

Nothing can be further from the truth. The Pope says that Jesus was actually reminding the disciples that he is the first of the poor, the poorest of the poor, because he represents all of them. It was also for the sake of the poor, the lonely, the marginalised and the victims of discrimination, that Jesus accepted the woman's gesture. Therefore, far from dispensing his disciples from their duty of care to the poor, he identified himself with them in every place and every generation. It is in serving them and their cause that we become his true disciples.

"The poor you have always with you", should not make us indifferent, but summons us instead to a mutual sharing of life. The poor are not people "outside" our communities, but brothers and sisters whose sufferings we should share, in an effort to alleviate their difficulties and marginalisation, restore their lost dignity and ensure their necessary social inclusion.

More than just charity

The Pope goes on to say that the encounter with the poor is more than just charity, or acts of benevolence, important as they are. Our encounter with the poor should be a

genuine sharing, an establishment of community, a desire to get to know those who may have been invisible to us.

Aware of the many unjust situations around the world, the Pope calls the Church to be a place of respite, healing and hope. It is our calling to be a counter-witness to self-centred and fear-induced behaviour. He writes: "The silent cry of so many poor men, women and children should find the people of God at the forefront, always and everywhere, in efforts to give them a voice, to protect and support them in the face of hypocrisy and so many unfulfilled promises, and to invite them to share in the life of the community".

Thus, sharing God's blessings for us with the poor is at the heart of Catholic identity. St Francis of Assisi used to say that the poor are not simply entitled to our surplus. Rather as children of the same Creator God, they are entitled to the goods which are entrusted to us as a matter of their equal birthright. Hence, true love of the poor is not simply a matter of acting with mercy and compassion to those in need with our wealth, power and privilege intact. Rather, it is rooted in our radical equality, common humanity and shared inheritance. It finds expression in solidarity, communion and justice.

In our society, we also have people who experience the poverty of isolation and loneliness, homelessness, modern-day slavery, trafficking, relational poverty, the experience of being abused or the victim of violence. These circumstances are often drivers of material poverty, or the result of material poverty. The Gospel calls us to a conversion of heart and this conversion is primarily a conversion to a new consciousness and way of living. It moves us from a place of self-concern and apathy to connection, shared humanity and solidarity with all.

Modelling on the early Church

COVID has taught us "no one is saved alone", the Pope writes elsewhere. That knowledge demands a new politics of inclusion and communion. It equips us to avoid both excessive individualism and the aggressive populism that thrives on identifying enemies at home and abroad. "Fraternity," the Pope insists, "is the new frontier", capable of knitting together the competing demands of



Bishop Vincent continues...

liberty and equality. The fraternity that we are called to live and to signal to the world of the new social ordering is not merely a rejection of individualism. It is about a way of life that is based on **reciprocal** and **interconnected** relationships. It is inherent in the indigenous wisdom which acknowledges the radical independence and reciprocity within diverse webs of life. Thus fraternity is a mindset and practice of community and a circular, harmonious relationship with all life and nature. It contrasts with the Western paradigm of domination of top-down linear thinking, separation of nature and humanity, competition, and divisions.

Our society has been shaken by a global pandemic. The poverty which existed in our communities has been exposed and the hardest hit are those who were in poverty before the pandemic. Other types of poverty are on the increase, such as mental ill-health, domestic violence, food poverty.

From its entry onto the world stage in Jerusalem 2,000 years ago, the Christian community was known for its service to the poor. In fact, the early Christians saw themselves as being fundamentally rooted in Christ and the Gospel ethos in regard to how they lived, how they related to each other and shared resources and how their way of life displayed the characteristics of an alternative society.

Central to these characteristics are concern and care for the weak, the lowly and the vulnerable. We are told that this early Church was poor, few in numbers, marginalised by the dominant society and persecuted by the authorities. Yet it was a powerhouse of prayer, love and solidarity. They showed to the world that it was possible to imagine a world outside the totalising and destructive power of the empire, and instead to live with an alternative system of fraternal concern, compassion and communion.

Today, we are challenged to reclaim the vision of a poor servant Church that shone like a light in the darkness of the world. We must model on the Church that shone forth its best rays of hope when it was poor, persecuted and powerless.

Re-imagining Vincentian charism

St Vincent de Paul indeed is essentially a lay-inspired and lay-led Catholic organisation. Blessed Frederick Ozanam was prophetic in

so many ways and his vision of the church making a difference to the world by active engagement on the part of committed men and women disciples was one of them. Without naming the church as the People of God, Frederick championed the fundamental notion of the baptismal identity and mission of each and every Christian. St Vincent de Paul was conceived not simply as an accessory of the institutional church. Rather, it was a concrete expression of the witness of solidarity on the part of the baptised. Its works of charity were motivated by God's love and mercy for all.

I happen to think that many lay groups like St Vincent de Paul are carrying the baton that has been passed to them by their spiritual forebears. Against the tendency to domesticate the radical Gospel spirit on the part of the mainstream, these women and men disciples hold the rest to the dream. They keep the flame of the Gospel burning bright. In this sense, they are doing the greatest service to the Church by their radical witness at the margins. It is for the sake of the Church and for the sake of the Kingdom that they are called to raise their prophetic voice; they speak for the voiceless, amplify the voice of the poor and marginalised, and make them count.

“St Vincent de Paul is uniquely placed to facilitate the rebirth and transformation of the Church”

The ministry of Jesus, as portrayed in the Gospels, was not just a matter of doing good deeds. It was ever an expression of the divine pathos for marginalised and afflicted humankind. In their encounter with Jesus, people experienced not simply a humanitarian gesture but also a glimpse of God's unconditional love. Pope Francis recently spoke about the temptation of the church to become a compassionate non-governmental organisation. This happens when despite doing work in the name of the church or in the name of God, we fail to convey the love and presence of God.

St Vincent de Paul is not a secular organisation. Even in the climate of mistrust, it must not divorce itself from its spiritual origin and heritage. Ultimately, it is concerned with the kingdom vision of Jesus.

It seeks to develop a community of hospitality, fraternity and justice, which is an alternative model to the economy of extraction and predation. As members of St Vincent de Paul, we endeavour to follow the compassionate Jesus and be the sacrament of God's compassion and care for the least and the last. The Church is first and foremost an oasis of hope and Good News. The church can only be the conduit of compassion and speak the language of hope to a broken humanity when it truly personifies powerlessness and stands where Christ once stood, that is, firmly on the side of the outcast and the most vulnerable. We must therefore learn to be a soothing presence, a warmth of God's care and a gentle reach of God's hand, affirming, healing and uplifting.

Conclusion

Guided by the kingdom vision of Jesus and open to a world of change, the Church can live up to its prophetic call to be a beacon hope for humanity. We can be an alternative relational paradigm for those on the margins, where the poor and the forgotten can be brought into a new unity; a Church that advocates life at all costs and promotes peaceful life in a war-torn and violent world; a Church that models justice in an age of greed, consumerism, and power; a Church centred on the risen Christ, empowering a consciousness of the whole.

St Vincent de Paul is uniquely placed to facilitate the rebirth and transformation of the Church. Drawing on the example and legacy of Frederick, we too can shine the light of the Gospel to the social challenges in today's world. We too can hold the church to account on the litmus test of its mission, which is the care of the least of our brothers and sisters. Then we can rise to being the church that Christ calls us to be, moving forward: an oasis for the weary and troubled, a field hospital for the wounded, a refuge for the oppressed and a voice for the voiceless.

I'd like to conclude with the appeal of Pope Francis: "The poor are present in our midst. How evangelical it would be if we could say with all truth: *we too are poor*, because only in this way will we truly be able to recognise them, to make them part of our lives and an instrument of our salvation."

Most Rev Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFMConv
Bishop of Parramatta



MEMBER PROFILE

I have met a lot of dedicated Vincentians during my 50 years of service

My name is Alan Henson and currently I am a member of the St. Vincent de Paul Society at Asquith. I joined the Society in 1972 when I lived at Mosman and was a parishioner of the Sacred Heart Parish.

At that time there were eight Members, seven of whom were at least 20 to 25 years older than me. The Conference also had a Spiritual Adviser, who was an assistant priest at Mosman. Some time after I joined the Conference, I took on the role of Conference Secretary and fortunately Alison, my wife, is an excellent typist and was able to type up the minutes.

The Conference met every Tuesday night and basically followed the same format that is used now. There were visits to be made and unfortunately, I am unable to recall much.

However, one visit I recall was when the Catholic Adoption Agency received a request from a couple who wished to adopt. The agency contacted the Society requesting a visit to the couple and, having made the visit in the company of another older member, I thought at the time how unprepared I was to make such a visit.

Another visit I recall was to a house which when we arrived appeared to be a boarding house with some units for rent at the back and the door to the unit was open and a young woman was sleeping. Despite making a lot of noise knocking and shouting we were unable to wake her up, so we just had to leave.

Each Sunday two Members would visit the male patients at the Mosman Community Hospitals and check if there was anything they required, maybe a letter to be posted, a phone call to a relative.

The Society at that time also operated a Sheltered Workshop at Frenchs Forest and each year about November the Members went there on meeting night and participated in the work that was carried

out, e.g. assembling Christmas lights, checking to see that they worked and packing them into packages. Other work included packing Christmas cards, placing pre-printed letters in addressed envelopes, weighing and packing potatoes.

The Conference had a recruitment drive and we were able to welcome two new female Members – one of whom stayed with the Conference for a lengthy time and was a President for a numbers of years.



Every Friday Mosman Conference would go to Redfern to assist in visitation to clients requiring assistance in the Redfern and surrounding suburbs. There would be a lot of visits to make and probably not enough time was spent with the clients. Most required food vouchers and we would write out a voucher for a local supermarket.

I also volunteered at the Mathew Talbot Hostel. I assisted in the canteen one afternoon each week where men could purchase coffee, hot pies, sweets, ice creams etc. Another volunteer would take over at about 5.00pm and I would assist

with the evening meal, collecting used plates, cutlery and cleaning and putting the dishes through the dish washer and storing the dishes and cutlery for the next meal. I also cleaned the tables and floor after the men had finished their meal.

About the year 1996, the Conference started to involve the local Catholic primary school in providing Christmas hampers to needy clients.

I stayed with Mosman Conference until 2005 when Alison and I moved to Asquith and I joined the local Parish Conference of which I am currently the President.

The St. Vincent de Paul Society is a very strong brand and I have met and worked with a lot of dedicated Vincentians during my 50 years of service, and I have made a lot of friends.

**Alan Henson, President
St Patrick's Conference Asquith**

A word from Shirley

Congratulations to Alan for 50 years of service to St Vincent de Paul!

Alan sets an amazing example to us of what it is to be a real Vincentian. He dedicates his time and energy to the clients – making sure they are well looked after and supported to the best of our ability.

Alan is an excellent role model for all of us. He is a totally dedicated man not only to the St Vincent de Paul Society but to his marriage of 62 years. He is a very committed family man. Our Society is a much better place for having the commitment of such a great person.

Congratulations Alan, and sincere thanks for all you have done for us and for the wonderful person you are.

**Shirley Kelynack
Regional President, Hornsby**



The Gate that leads to Life

Fr Greg Boyle of Homeboys Industries, (if you have not seen his clips on the internet, you are in for a treat) reminds us:

Jesus, in Matthew's gospel, says, "How narrow is the gate that leads to life." Mistakenly, I think, we've come to believe that this is about restriction. The way is narrow. But really it wants us to see that narrowness is the way... It's about funnelling ourselves into a central place. Our choice is not to focus on the narrow, but to narrow our focus. The gate that leads to life is not about restriction at all. It is about an entry into the expansive. There is a vastness in knowing you're a son/daughter worth having. We see our plenitude in God's own expansive view of us.

To narrow our focus, I see that is what Vincentians are doing regularly. The work is focused on giving a hand up; providing for those in need; those marginalised and on the edges of society.

It is with that focus that we become "experts" in understanding the people we serve, their needs, fears, and wounds. Their wounds can often cause them to behave in ways that are difficult to understand and deal with.

In an online prayer session our team organises, (The Well, every week Tuesday morning 10am and Wednesday evening at 7.00pm) a very experienced member spoke of three very different people that came for assistance that day: one very distraught and grateful, one belligerent, and one other needing help. To move in and out of those spaces takes experience and wisdom and a good dose of the gifts of the Spirit!

We as Vincentians and Dr Gabor Mate, (a leading professional who works with addicts and those traumatised) know that:

Our true nature is to be connected. In fact, if that wasn't our true nature, there would be no human beings. The human species – or any species – could not evolve without being grounded in their bodies. You couldn't have a bunch of intellectuals walking around out there in the wild, wondering in an abstract sense about the meaning of life, when there's a sabre-toothed tiger lurking behind the next bush.

To offer connection and relationship in love, freely and without judgement to those that are suffering and present in all different and challenging ways is our call and challenge and some days it is easier than others.



Prayer

Open my eyes to see you.
Open my ears that I could hear you as I cry, when I am hungry,
when I am scared, when I feel beaten.
Open my heart to you and to others, to receive help and
support and love.
Give me strength to endure.

Amen

Joy Bowen, Mission, Spirituality and Pastoral Care Partner
0447636619



Raise Your Voice for Social Justice in 2022

In 2022, Members, volunteers, employees and supporters of the Society will continue working together to influence decision-making processes that impact the people we assist. As *The Rule* explains, poverty and exclusion are not just personal issues – often, they are the result of unjust economic, political or social structures. And as people who care about creating more just and compassionate communities, Vincentians have the opportunity or even a responsibility to shape these structures.

Federal Election 2022

One key opportunity to influence change is the election cycle. In the lead-up to the Federal Election (due to be held by 21 May 2022) National Council will release a series of policy papers outlining key proposals for a fairer Australia. We will work to give our people opportunities to understand and discuss these proposals, which will focus on improved responses to housing and homelessness, adequate income support, the importance of secure work, a more compassionate response to people seeking asylum, and self-determination for First Nations people, including constitutional recognition. We will also provide support to Members interested in engaging with local candidates and future MPs to push these issues higher up the agenda of individuals and parties seeking to represent their communities over the next three years. If you are interested in getting involved, please email us social.justice@vinnies.org.au

If you are keen to get involved in advocacy, email us. In addition, here are other opportunities in 2022:

Build Homes, Build Hope

In the wake of last year's disappointing NSW Budget, and with the NSW election scheduled for 2023, we are determined to continue our *Build Homes, Build Hope* campaign, calling for the Government to invest in 5,000 new social housing homes yearly for 10 years.

In December, Social Justice Representatives then came together to discuss what actions we should take to urge the Government and Opposition to commit to new social housing. Amongst other actions, we agreed to bring Members, volunteers, supporters and staff together online to share information about new generation social housing and the positive impact this is having on the lives of tenants. We also agreed to launch a letter writing campaign. For more information or to join us online, email us.

People Seeking Asylum

2021 was another incredibly difficult year for people seeking asylum. In Australia, COVID amplified their challenges, with many losing their jobs or their housing due to their precarious immigration status. People seeking asylum from Afghanistan also

had to grapple with the knowledge that their families in Afghanistan faced significant risk, but that there were limited to no pathways for family reunion.

As the situation in Afghanistan unfolded, Vinnies NSW signed on to an open letter coordinated by the Refugee Council of Australia, calling on all Parliamentarians to respond to the crisis. Many Members and volunteers subsequently contacted their Federal MPs in support of the letter, asking more be done for the people of Afghanistan.



The Hope out of Horror webinar, co-hosted by Broken Bay Central Council, Social Justice around the Bay, and Jesuit Refugee Service brought nearly 200 people together to hear directly from people seeking protection in our communities, reflect on their experiences, and discuss how we can work together to shape more just and compassionate responses.

There is, of course, so much more to be done. 2022 creates new opportunities for our communities to unite and advocate for better, more humane responses. On Palm Sunday, we remember the warm and joyful welcoming of Jesus in Jerusalem and we reflect upon the ways in which we can warmly welcome and stand in solidarity with those seeking protection. Should COVID-19 allow, rallies will be held on Palm Sunday, 10 April 2022 and we will be coordinating a Vinnies NSW presence. If interested, please email us.

Social Justice Forum

Every two years, interested Members, volunteers, employees and supporters gather for this all-day event to reinvigorate our advocacy efforts, discuss key issues, develop new relationships and plan how we might go about seeking positive change.

The pandemic presents uncertainties, but is tentatively scheduled for Saturday 28 May 2022 at Mary McKillop Place in North Sydney. If you are interested in attending, please speak with your Central Council Social Justice representative, or email us.

[You can also subscribe to the Social Justice newsletter](#) to receive up to date information on the Social Justice Forum and other news.



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

Feeling the heat? Take the summer survey

Many people live in homes that cannot be kept cool in summer, or warm in winter. This not only means high energy bills, it can also cause poor health.

As part of our efforts to help make more homes more efficient, Vinnies NSW is a proud supporter of the Healthy Homes for Renters Campaign.

Over summer, the campaign is collaborating with Sweltering Cities to learn more about how the heat is impacting on people across Australia.

While for some, summer means days at the beach, for others it can mean sleepless nights in hot homes, worrying about your electricity bill, or leaving your house to go to a cooler location.

You can share your story of summer heat by completing the 5-minute survey [here](#). If you would like hard copies of the survey to distribute to people who may not have internet access, please email social.justice@vinnies.org.au

To find out more about the Healthy Homes for Renters Campaign, visit: <https://www.healthyhomes.org.au/>

**HEALTHY
HOMES FOR
RENTERS**



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/>



Community Connections – does this interest you and your Conference?

Is your Conference looking for ways to engage with your community, promote the Vinnies brand and let people know what your Conference is about?

We have various options available to Conferences, all with support from your Member and Community Engagement team. Consider the following:

Vinnies Market Stalls

If you have a local market that is regularly held, then a Vinnies stall may be just the thing needed to let your local community know about the various works of Vinnies.

Contact John.Ferguson@vinnies.org.au and we can liaise with the Market Organisers to arrange a date for the Vinnies stall to be held. We can provide flyers, merchandise, tables, tablecloths and a Vinnies marquee. We will assist with setup and pack down on the day. All you need to do is ensure a few Members (at least 2 at all times) are available for the duration of the markets to talk to the community about the good works that our wonderful Members and Services provide.

Shopping Centre tables

One way for the community to get involved with Vinnies as well as learn about the works that Vinnies do, is through shopping centre tables. If your local Shopping Centre looks like a great location to host a Vinnies table for a day, please let your Member and Community Engagement Coordinator know. We will contact the Shopping Centre to request permission to setup a Vinnies table. On the day, we will provide tables, chairs, Vinnies tablecloth, merchandise and a list of groceries that the Community can donate to provide support to your local Vinnies Support Centres (VSC). As shoppers enter the Shopping Centre, they may like to take a slip of paper that contains a list of desired groceries for donation.

Shoppers can buy as little or as much as they like, and then leave their donated grocery item in a shopping trolley next to the Vinnies table. At the same time, they may like to have a look at some of the Vinnies flyers, utilise some of the merchandise, and chat to a Vinnies Member. The Member and Community Engagement team

will provide all materials to Members and liaise with the Shopping centre. All you need to provide is a few Members (at least 2 at all times) to be available for the duration of the day, and to drop off the donations to the closest VSC. Our team can be available on the day to assist if you prefer.

Vinnies Awareness Campaign at Parishes

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. Approaching social justice events include 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.

School Fetes

Vinnies Marquee, flyers and merchandise can be available for your local school fetes – a wonderful way to let the parents and staff of your schools know about Vinnies. Please contact your Member and Community Engagement Coordinator.

Using the MAVS social justice updates

Take the opportunity to speak about Vinnies at Mass. Member speaking notes, bulletin summaries and ideas for action on key days for social justice are regularly added to MAVS and can be found at <https://mavs.vinnies.org.au/social-justice/>.





Child Safe Training & Compliance checks

The St Vincent de Paul Society NSW is a committed child-safe organisation. So that we can meet this commitment, we have developed policies and procedures to ensure that we comply with all relevant legislation so that all children, young people and vulnerable persons who come into contact with Vinnies are kept safe and are supported to the best of our capacity.

So, a reminder of the following compliances that are required for all Members, volunteers, and employees:

- **NCC Police Check** (renewed every 3 years)
- **NSW Working With Children's Check** (renewed every 5 years)
- **Vinnies NSW Child Safe Familiarisation Training** (every 2 years)

Other compliances relate to additional Vinnies' training. Most are available online on the Vinnies Learning Centre and some also face-to-face. Log on to your Vinnies Learning Centre homepage to see which you are required to do and other courses that may interest.

Child Safe Training: conveniently available on the [Vinnies Learning Centre](#). However, if your Conference would like to take advantage of a group training session, either [via zoom](#) or [in person](#), please contact your Member and Community Engagement Coordinator. We can arrange for training for groups of 10 or more. If the training is in person, we can also provide assistance for online Police Checks and accessing the Vinnies Learning Centre. Please contact John.Ferguson@vinnies.org.au for further details or to register your interest.

A Note on Member and Volunteer Recognition of Service

The St Vincent de Paul Society NSW acknowledges the great contribution members and volunteers make to the work of the organisation and the people it serves.

It has a Member and Volunteer Recognition of Service (Badges and Certificates) procedure to recognise members and volunteers who have provided 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, 55, 60 or 65 years of service to the Society.

The new five-year anniversary badges and certificates were introduced by State Council in 2021.



Central Council, Regional Council and Conference Presidents, supported by staff in regions, may also hold local events such as morning teas; arrange for special mentions at Mass; or organise a card and gift for members reaching significant milestones in their service.

2022—Key Social Justice dates for your Diary

These social Justice days throughout 2022 provide a great opportunity to promote Vinnies awareness in your local community and to highlight both the good works and the policy advocacy of the Society.

26 January: Survival Day / Australia Day
20 February: World Day of Social Justice
21 March: National Harmony Day
16 - 22 May: National Volunteer Week
26 May: National Sorry Day
27 May - 3 June: Reconciliation Week
5 June: World Environment Day
19 - 25 June: Refugee Week
20 June: World Refugee Day

3 July: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday
3 - 10 July: NAIDOC week
28 August: Social Justice Sunday
25 September: Migrant and Refugee Sunday
10 October: World Mental Health Day
16 - 22 October: Anti-Poverty Week
20 November: World Day of the Poor
5 December: International Volunteer Day
10 December: Human Rights Day

For suggested content to be added to your Parish bulletins, to talk at parish Masses, to run recruitment drives, and for ideas for your Conferences, please refer to the MAVS social justice page: <https://mavs.vinnies.org.au/social-justice/>]