

## December Newsletter

### Vinnies Van Service Coordinator – Keith Dowling

As of November, I celebrated my first 12 months in the roll as coordinator of the service and I'm pleased to say that I've enjoyed that small milestone and eagerly look forward to the next year.

Some statistics to start with; by the end of this year, *Vinnies Van Service* will have supported **over 2,000 individuals** with food distribution, **63%** of whom were young families with children.



**The Orange Vinnies Van—Community Sleepout** was held on August 25 and was a successful event in raising awareness of the homelessness issues in our community. We were supported by local agencies including Orange City Council, Orange Youth Hub, Housing Plus, Dept of Community and Justice, Veritas House and a special thank you to Uniting Church, who hosted the day/night in their grounds. We had 19 participants who raised over \$3,000

from their sponsors and generous donations from Rotary Clubs of Orange and North Orange, contributing in combination \$3,000—local businesses also supported the event with Nile Street Café providing soup and bread rolls for dinner and the Rapid Relief Team serving up a hearty breakfast. Councillors David Mallard & Gerald Power attended in the afternoon along with Andrew Gee. The organising committee are keen to hold it again next year.

**Community Expo:** The Van had a presence at the Central West Community Services Expo held at the PCYC on 6th September. It was an opportunity to network with other service providers and exposure with the community.



**Torpy Street Event:** In collaboration with Dept. of Community and Justice, the Van and a couple of volunteers held a “Get to Know You” afternoon for 2 hours on 14th September for the tenants. We assisted 18 people with food and personal care items as well as bedding and kitchen utensils with the help from Mel at the Warehouse. A number of these new tenants have been further assisted through Conference Care and Support.

**Food Handling Training:** It has been a while since we've had training around Food Safety essentials, so a refresher of **Hygienic Practices for Food Safety** course was held in October for our food preparation crew it was also an opportunity for recent and existing volunteers to be in unison with these objectives.



**Sausage Sizzle Event:** As part of our regular recruiting efforts, we will be held a free sausage sizzle awareness campaign at Ashcroft's Peisley Street IGA in October. This event was an opportunity to thank our sponsors and importantly capture community members who express an interest in volunteering with the van. As a result of exposure through Orange City Life magazine, I've had 20 enquiries leading to membership applications.

**Van Visits:** I've had some great support from Kim Colbourne (School and Youth Engagement) liaising with schools and coordinating van visits in Bathurst and Marina Gray (President Bathurst Central Council) in preparation for the Bathurst Vinnies Van establishment there.

I also thank all my wonderful colleagues for the support you've shown me throughout my inaugural year – it bolsters my confidence immensely. Have a joyful festive season everyone!