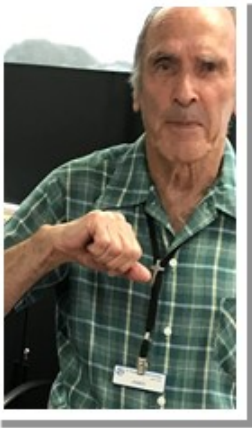




# Newsletter

**FEB - MAR 2021**

## **MESSAGE FROM GREATER WESTERN SYDNEY CENTRAL COUNCIL PRESIDENT - JAMES MCLAUGHLIN**



**Dear conference members,**

2020 has gone and 2021 has arrived

As we waved 2020 good bye and good riddance, we looked forward to 2021 with enthusiasm and relief that we could see the beginning of the end of the Covid19 virus. 2021 meant conferences gearing up to getting back to what we do best; helping people in need;

The recent floods and the devastation they have caused are plain to see and the pain will be felt for some time. With the support of our Conferences, Vinnies Support Centres and Shops we can play a part in restoring faith and the belief that the future is not something we should be afraid off.

**Best wishes to all !**

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## **MESSAGE FROM METRO REGIONAL DIRECTOR - GAYL PURCHASE**

We have certainly begun a strong comeback for 2021 with the realisation that despite all the issues we encountered last year we are forging ahead to continue our support of those most vulnerable in our community. Through our combined efforts we have been able to support to over 800 people in the Greater Western Sydney region seeking assistance in the months of January and February.

We have also closed our Wentworthville office and are seeking new premises for our regional office, but in the meantime we are co-habiting the Penrith Vinnies Support Centre for the interim.

All these impositions and changes to our familiar routine have made us resilient. We are working together to commence home visits and conference and regional meetings are continuing, both in person and some still virtually. Besides home visits, many conferences have already implemented other ways of serving the community, for example through aged care visits. Our Community Engagement team are exploring additional opportunities for engagement within our local communities and will present these ideas at our Central Council meeting to Regional Presidents as opportunities arise for indications of interest for members.

My thanks again to the hard working staff, volunteers and members as we work together as One society.





## SPIRITUAL REFLECTION

What an unbelievable and chaotic time this last year has been and perhaps too this year. Everywhere I turn there seems to be challenge, change and chaos, not only globally but here in Australia, in our organisation, in our families, friends and networks. And no wonder! The steady stream of “fear and trembling” channelled into our homes via so many devices do little to remind us of our roots, our faith, our trust!

There are some things in life that we can change by sheer will power. Such occasions give us the feeling of “being in charge,” of having things “under control.” We can change a reservation, we can change jobs, we can change schedules. But sometimes, when we struggle to change things, nothing happens. Sometimes a gale begins

to blow, and the waves break into our boat so that it is almost swamped. We have no power or control, and we cry, just like the disciples, to a Jesus that “seems” to be unaware, asleep.

It is impossible not to hear ourselves in all of this. We are disciples in our boats on precarious seas. Storms arise. We want to trust and, in our thoughts, perhaps we do, but when the real “up close and scary stuff” comes, we flounder and fail. As Mark reveals in this narrative, to experience any degree of deliverance in such circumstances one must choose, surrender, and trust a response that is more powerful than any pathology we can draw upon. Know that our God will breakthrough in all circumstances! How that stance would illuminate our

responses, our view, and our actions. Did you know that “do not be afraid” is the most repeated phrase in the new testament!

Were the disciples at that moment of utter terror willing to find God in their own struggle with life’s circumstances---and let it change them? Do we? The challenge is not so much to discover forgotten courage in ourselves but to put our faith again and again in the One we trust to be more powerful than the storms that rage in our lives. God is big and we do not have to have everything figured out.

**Joy Bowen**  
**Mission, Spirituality and Pastoral Care Partner**

### **A SOUL SO PURE.....**



**Vale Wendy L Davidson Gupta, St Clair Conference - A life of Giving**

***A soul so pure,  
That nothing else in it did endure,  
But the love of all humanity,  
She believed she was working in His service,  
And not merely for charity.***

Wendy loved people in all her relationships. She loved to help everyone. She was a part of the school group of her sons, to offer volunteer work. She was a part of the St Clair junior soccer club, to help the organisers in managing the kids. She worked at Target all her life and helped the customers. She was a union representative and helped both the management and the staff to carry out their responsibilities in the fairest manner. When she joined Vinnies conference eleven years ago, she seemed to have found a place where she could turn her love for helping those in the community, who needed it the most.

Wendy was a perfectionist, so those she helped, could get the best that she could do for them. She would thus take extra efforts to learn all the rules and explore websites and talk with the service providers to learn how things could be done. She also ensured that if she could not help through Vinnies, she would tell the clients where else they could go for help. She had all this printed out with telephone numbers and references, so that the clients did not have to waste time. Not only did Wendy do this for

herself, she made copies for all the conference members, so that they also could do the same. She was not satisfied with only taking the desired action for the clients but wanted to ensure that they knew what was being done for them. So, she will write down the actions she had taken and go and drop the notes in their letter boxes. It did not matter to Wendy whether the person asking for help was a refugee or an ex-convict. She was convinced in her heart that this was the responsibility of the government and she had no reason to be the judge. When kids were hungry, or they did not have proper clothes or they had no bed to sleep on, to Wendy they were human beings and they were entitled to the basic human dignity. It pained her very much when someone had no roof over their head, as they had lost the house, they were living in. It was not for her to judge why they did not pay the rent or instalments. She always wished that the community should look after such situations and lobby the government for suitable action.

Wendy brought out a personal touch in everything she did in her responsibilities. She did not need to have a reason for doing them. It was in her nature. Like the client who was infirm and lonely, and she baked a cake for his birthday. In every conference meeting she would make something special so that the meetings became more a social get together than mere business. Her coconut and jam tarts were favorites of everyone.

***She is not there today, but the atmosphere of the conference meetings from formal to social, that she has created, will live on forever.***



# SOCIAL JUSTICE

## Addressing the root causes of injustice

### **Build Homes, Build Hope**

Our main focus has been on the need for more government investment in social housing.

Even before the pandemic, we were in the midst of an acute housing crisis with almost 38,000 people homeless in NSW alone. The NSW Government's recently updated social housing waitlist shows 51,395 applicants (over 100,000 people) are now on the waitlist for social housing. Many of these people can expect to wait more than ten years.

This is why we – along with many other organisations – are calling on the NSW Government to invest in at least 5,000 dwellings annually for the next ten years.

Many of you would have signed our [Build Homes, Build Hope campaign](#) last year. All told we collected more than 15,000 signatures, meaning it qualified for debate in Parliament. By the time this newsletter is printed, this debate will have taken place. We hope it will help grow support for more investment in social housing amongst Government decision-makers.

Across the Parramatta Diocese, many members have also engaged with their MPs locally in order to seek their support for more social housing investment. We were very pleased when Ms Prue Car, the member for Londonderry, recognised the efforts of the St Marys Conference to raise awareness of the issues, in Parliament.

Several Social Justice Representatives are now looking to invite key members of Parliament to local roundtables for more detailed discussions around social housing, and for the opportunity to learn more about the homes the Society has already built and which are now offering people the foundation they need to rebuild their lives. If you would like to get involved in

this work please email

[social.justice@vinnies.org.au](mailto:social.justice@vinnies.org.au)

Our goal is to influence the NSW Government's June budget, where we hope to see social housing investment at the scale required to significantly reduce homelessness and the social housing waitlist. Such investment would reap benefits for years to come both from an economic perspective, but more importantly, through lives transformed.

### **Raise the Rate for Good**

In recent years, approximately one in three people assisted by members of the St Vincent de Paul Society have been JobSeeker recipients (formerly called Newstart). This is understandable, as there is extensive evidence showing that the old rate of this payment – \$40 a day – was woefully inadequate. People who, for whatever reason, were locked out of employment opportunities, were too often forced to choose between essentials such as rent, bills, food and healthcare.

Following the Federal Government's introduction of the coronavirus supplement in March last year, this group no longer needed the same level of support. The supplement resulted in a historic reduction in poverty levels according to researchers from ANU. We heard many stories from people in our communities about how they could now afford the basics, how they no longer spent so much time and energy worrying over money. One person told us she could now 'live like a human being again'.

But following cuts to the coronavirus supplement in September last year, and

again in January, the number of calls for assistance from this group has now started to increase.

The Federal Government plans to decide the future of the coronavirus supplement by the end of March. As it does so, many of our members have continued to show their support for the Raise the Rate for Good Campaign, calling on Government to ensure the rate is permanently set at a level that allows people to cover the basics. I hope that by the time you read this article the Federal Government will have made a decision in line with this campaign. If it hasn't, you can get involved in efforts to make sure our social security system supports everyone to live with dignity by emailing [social.justice@vinnies.org.au](mailto:social.justice@vinnies.org.au) or by visiting [raisetherate.org.au](http://raisetherate.org.au).

**Caterina Tribbia**

**Social Justice Representative for Parramatta Central Council**

**Rhiannon Cook, Policy and Advocacy With the support of the Social Justice network of Western Sydney and NSW as a whole.**

**Interested in making a difference for a more just and inclusive community? Join us !**

**BUILD** homes  
build **HOPE**



## SOCIAL JUSTICE

### Penrith's social housing wait list grows to almost 1,700

By Emily Feszczuk - February 3, 2021, 15:44

*Caterina Tribbia from the St Vincent de Paul Society. Photo: Melinda Jane.*

#### Share this story



The St Vincent de Paul Society NSW is calling on the State Government to take action for the thousands of people that are in need of a home. This comes as the latest government figures show that the social housing waitlist in Penrith has grown to almost 1,700 applicants.

St Vincent de Paul Society Parramatta Social Justice Representative Caterina Tribbia, who is a part of the St Marys conference, said lack of housing is a big issue in the area.

“In Penrith there are currently 1,679 applicants with 179 listed as priority housing with a wait of five to 10 years and even longer for families needing a three-bedroom home,” she said.

“It is not just people who don’t work but immigrants, single parents, people with disabilities or mental health issues and those whose partner might have passed on and they can no longer afford private rent.”

Ms Tribbia said St Vinnies wants the Government to build 5,000 new homes each year across NSW for the next 10 years, to address the social housing issue.

“The Government needs to invest in more housing and St Vincent is happy to help provide wraparound services which will have flow-on benefits to the whole community, such as less strain on the health and criminal system,” she said.

“They need to have a strong emphasis on a modern approach to social housing with no huge complexes, but well-maintained homes sprinkled throughout the community to avoid problems.” A NSW Land and Housing Corporation (LAHC) spokesperson said it’s aware of people wanting more social housing built in the Penrith Local Government Area and around NSW and has projects underway.

“We are working strategically to identify local demand for suitable homes and recycle ageing, outdated properties to build more new homes, which meet the needs of tenants,” the spokesperson said.

“The NSW LAHC currently has 50 housing projects in various stages of delivery in the Local Government Areas of Penrith, Blacktown, Cumberland and the Hawkesbury and nine of these projects are in the Penrith LGA.



## A BIG THANK YOU !



James McLaughlin, Max Denton and Gayl Purchase

### Community Fundraising & Events

*“Do you know a local school planning a School Sleepout or Mini Vinnies activity? Or are they new to Vinnies and looking for ways to get involved?”*

*As many of you know Vinnies NSW is proud to have launched a state based Community Fundraising Website with fantastic results! This is an especially useful resource for schools, allowing them to create personalised fundraising pages and access a wide range of resources and support from the Community Fundraising team.*

*Whether schools are contributing to the Winter Appeal, holding a School Sleepout or have their own fundraising idea, this site will provide them with everything they need and we encourage you to share this resource in your communications with them. All funds raised by schools can be transferred back to their local conference.*

*To learn more, head over to <https://fundraise.vinniesnsw.org.au/> or contact Olivia – [olivia.andrews@vinnies.org.au](mailto:olivia.andrews@vinnies.org.au)”*

## 10K Christmas Donation by Ryde Parramatta Golf Club Ltd

### Vinnies Christmas Appeal 2020



*Peter Humphrey, President Richmond Conference and Daniel Cody of Bede Polding College with students Picking up contributions for the Christmas Hamper appeal 2020*

Richmond Conference distributed over 50 hampers to those in need in the Vineyard, Windsor, South Windsor, Bligh Park, Richmond, Hobartville, North Richmond, Grose Vale areas.

Contributions for the SVdP Christmas hamper appeal were received from Sr Monicas Primary School, Bede Polding College, Richmond Parish and Caroline Chisholm Glenmore Park.

The photos show the President of Richmond Conference Peter Humphreys, picking up and thanking Students and Teacher Daniel Cody

from Bede Polding College, for their contribution to the Christmas Hamper appeal.



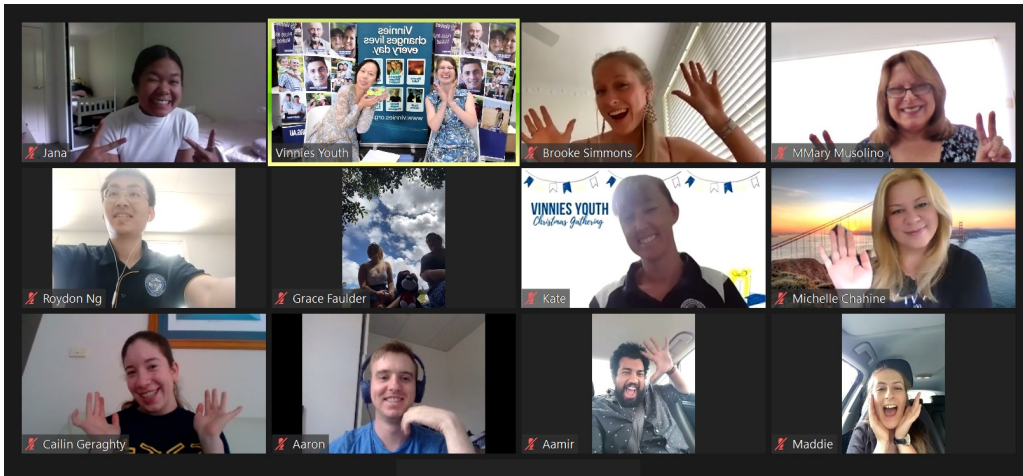


## YOUTH UPDATE

### Youth Articles

Vinnies Metro Youth consists of a diverse group of passionate and fun young people from Parramatta Central Council, Broken Bay Central Council & Sydney Central Council. These amazing young volunteers and Members give their time and talents to help those

in their local communities all throughout our Region. We have volunteers who participate in our youth programs such as Buddies Days, we have Members who meet regularly with their Vinnies Young Adult Conference, and we have volunteers who serve on various Vinnies leadership teams, they truly are a passionate and skillful group. If you would like to know more about or connect with Vinnies Youth in your local area, please get in touch with Kate Conroy, Vinnies Metro Youth Engagement Officer [kate.conroy@vinnies.org.au](mailto:kate.conroy@vinnies.org.au)



### Vinnies Pop Up Stall at the Central Deanery Youth Mass

On the 29th November 2020, I was invited to run a stall after the Central Deanery Youth Mass at Mary Queen of the Family Parish in Blacktown. The Central Deanery is made up of 12 parishes within the Catholic Diocese of Parramatta, and this mass brought together youth across several of these parishes to celebrate the year that was 2020.

It was a pleasure to interact with a number of youth and young adults who came by the stall, most who initially came by just for the freebies, but stayed on to engage in meaningful conversation with me about all things Vinnies, from their involvement in Vinnies initiatives at school, to their desire to “do more than just fundraise”. I was delighted and inspired to hear a group of 15-year-old girls tell me that they have always wanted to know how they could get more involved in Vinnies and really make a difference. It’s these energetic and empowered young people at the ready that fuel my hope for a greater youth representation within Vinnies!

The stall was also a perfect opportunity for me to launch the start of my recruitment for the formation of a youth conference within Parramatta Central Council, which is my main goal for 2021. I truly look forward to bringing together the next generation of Vincentians in our central council who are full of passion, wisdom, justice, creativity and motivation!

If you know any 16 to 30 year olds who are looking to put their faith in action, please let them know to send me an email at [faith.lam@vinnies.org.au](mailto:faith.lam@vinnies.org.au) with ‘Expression of Interest for Parramatta Central Council Youth Conference’ as the subject line. Stay tuned for news about this exciting development!

Faith Lam – PCC Youth Representative





## SCHOOLS AND VINNIES VAN

### MINI VINNIES FORMATION PROGRAM

The Metropolitan Schools Engagement Team is delighted to present Elizabeth Nwosu the first GOLD AWARD for the new Mini Vinnies Formation Program (MFVP). Launched in July 2020, the MVFP is a series of extra-curricular activities nurturing students, who undertake the project, to be a light in the world, inspired by the spirit of Blessed Frederic Ozanam and Gospel values. Upper Primary students who participate in the MVFP engage in activities covering four sections: Personal, Local, Global, Environmental. Elizabeth Nwosu, a Year 6 student from St Patrick's Primary Blacktown (Parramatta Central Council) has completed all 16 modules of the MVFP in just 6 months of what usually is a 2 year long program. Her work in the MVFP has also been previously been acknowledged by the Metropolitan Schools Engagement Team who have included one of her written poems in the Term 4 Vinnies Metropolitan Schools Newsletter. Roydon Ng (Metropolitan Schools Engagement Officer – Parramatta Region) presented Elizabeth Nwosu with her award on Wednesday 16 December 2020 and spoke to students at the school encouraging them to register for this free program. Around 80 students across the Metropolitan region have joined the MVFP with more Year 4 to 6 students expected in the new year. The Teen Vinnies Formation Program for Year 7 to 12 students will be launching in Term 1, 2021.



### Western Sydney Night Patrol



Even though we've been operating now, since March 2020, on a reduced roster of 4 nights instead of 7, we are happy to share that the van service ,thanks to our awesome volunteers has been running extremely well.

Our patrons can still be assured to get a warm cuppa or a cold drink accompanied by a sandwich and a biscuit and other little surprises that we pack for the teams to take out on their shift and of course the much needed presence of a friendly face to chat to for the night.

Due to the pandemic a big percentage of our school teams were not able to service their shifts, St Marks Catholic College at Stanhope Garden being one of them. In lieu of going out on their night patrol run the school team, co-ordinator Collette Seckold advised us they'd like to help Vinnies out in some other, but equally meaningful way.

Collette therefore organised a gift drive at her school with the help of the students, parents and teachers and they contacted us just before Christmas to organise the delivery of their gifts.

Gifts which were already wrapped and labelled with gender and age of the lucky recipient. These gifts, were given to our patrons on Christmas night along with Christmas pudding and lollies.

Our heartfelt thanks and appreciation to Collette and St Marks Catholic College as a whole for their timely and much needed gifts which was a true act of the Vinnies spirit of giving.



## Western Sydney Community Sleepout 2020

Last year in 2019 the Lourdes Young Adults Group at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Seven Hills and the Good Shepherd Youth Choir at Plumpton of the Central Deanery of the Diocese of Parramatta were able to participate in large groups for the Vinnies Western Sydney Community Sleepout 2019. However, this year with the COVID-19 pandemic, both groups wanted to participate but had to find a way. So, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October, 2020 when it was announced that the Vinnies Western Sydney Community Sleepout 2020 was going to be held virtually, leaders from both groups decided that we would collaborate together and join forces in an Virtual Zoom Sleepout with 26 participants sleeping in our backyards, couches and even in our cars!

It was a night with prayer, song, icebreakers and reflection and inspiring talks from our guest speakers: Marilena Aguas-Cruz, a parishioner of Mary, Queen of the Family Parish, Blacktown who shared her powerful testimony on her volunteer work in Social Justice and her personal story of experiencing domestic violence and how Vinnies was there to support her.

We received a message from Faith Lam, Youth Representative of Vinnies Parramatta Central Council to encourage us to join our local Vinnies Conference and to act by signing the petition for social housing. Our last speaker Patrice Moriarty, Social Justice Co-ordinator of the Diocese of Parramatta shared with us what we can do as at a personal level, as a Central Deanery and at a Diocesan level to solve homelessness in Western Sydney.

### ***Some of our participants shared their experiences of the sleepout this year:***

James Llagas from Good Shepherd Plumpton said: "This year's sleepout was definitely different: seeing all these people online, in their cars and in their backyards truly shows the commitment and care we have for those who are in need, especially

the poor and homeless. Even in these daunting times, this event gave us an opportunity to learn and become stronger both individually and as a community!"

Sarah Lenthall from Our Lady of Lourdes Seven Hills said: "This was my first Vinnies sleepout, so I was excited for the experience. While on the Zoom call with other participants I got a very strong reminder about why I was giving up my bed for the night. I must admit that sleeping in the back of a ute wasn't that comfortable, but it was still a roof over my head, which I appreciated especially when the storm hit! While the storm scared me and made me think of going home it also reminded me that people are sleeping out in this kind of weather each night and some of them get wet. So, while I was trying to get back to sleep, I prayed for all those who didn't have a roof over their heads that night and that they would be safe. I would 100% recommend the sleepout to anyone. It's an eye-opening experience that I can't wait to do again next year!"

Patricia Pacleb from Good Shepherd said: "This year, my sister and I gave up the luxury of our comfortable beds for a night on the bare floor of our lounge. It was an unsettling night which painted the reality of the hardship many individuals and families experience daily. I remember getting woken up by the loud thunder and rain in the middle of the night and was terrified for those sleeping rough. Having to go to work early the next morning with an aching back, I questioned how individuals can survive a day of work without a restful sleep and cope with their other countless problems. As a whole, this experience was truly humbling and reinforces the need for greater support to help our brothers and sisters overcome homelessness."

Ian Epondulan from Our Lady of Lourdes said: "This is my third time doing the Vinnies Western Sydney Sleepout, the first

two times previously at Western Sydney University Rydalmere Campus. This year I slept in my backyard with a sleeping bag but it proved more challenging as I was on the concrete floor with no cardboard box provided as in previous years and the "bed bugs" (moths and cockroaches) and the loud thunder, lightning, wind and rain made it an interesting experience! Nevertheless, it's always a reminder that this is just a small glimpse of what it really is like and to be grateful for the little things we take granted for. Through the use of technology we were still able to connect as a community to share our stories and overall, this unique experience hopes to build the friendships between the two groups as well as to shine a spotlight on homelessness and raise needed funds for Vinnies NSW."

### ***Important actions:***

- Sign the *Vinnies Build homes, build hope* Petition: <https://socialjustice.vinnies.org.au/petitions/build-homes-build-hope/>
- If you know someone who needs help – NSW Homelessness Hotline: Link2Home – 1800 152 152
- Join your local Vinnies conference by contacting your local parish representative
- Join the mailing list for the Diocesan Newsletter – <https://parracatholic.us18.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=be4e849a8a85f8486e6dba530&id=b21d08726>

On behalf of the Lourdes Young Adults Group, Our Lady of Lourdes Parish Seven Hills and the Good Shepherd Youth Choir, The Good Shepherd Parish Plumpton, so far in total as of the 30<sup>th</sup> of October 2020 the total combined effort raised is currently \$2,767.25 more than what anticipated of our goal of \$1,000 and it is thanks to the generosity of parishioners, friends and family. The funds raised will go directly to services that support those at risk of homelessness. God bless.





## LEFT OUT HIGHLIGHT HOMELESSNESS IN VINNIES SLEEP OUT

On any given day there are about 116,000 Australians who do not have a roof over their head or enough food to eat.

The annual Vinnies Sleep Out is an opportunity for Australians to get a glimpse into the realities of homelessness by 'sleeping rough' for a night and raise awareness and funds for Vinnies homelessness services.

Once again this year, Mark Kunach from our School Security Unit together with colleague Thiru Arumugam, and City of Parramatta Councillor Sameer Pandey, participated in the Vinnies Sleep Out, albeit in a different way due to COVID-19.

On a night of heavy rain, the trio, named 'Left Out', slept under a tent in Sameer's backyard in sleeping bags and used cardboard as insulation. The team remained true to the guidelines eating soup, buns, water, tea and coffee with a banana at the end to help sustain them.



*Images: The Left Out team at the beginning of the night and again in the morning.*

Mark is a strong advocate for this cause saying, "I support Vinnies because they are out there every night with food vans and you will see their stores across the country; amongst many other services they provide. Donations go directly to these immediate support services, staffed by volunteers, and I like to think when a homeless person gets a hot drink, a feed and importantly a chat at a Vinnies food van, they feel just a little bit better and there is renewed hope for better days ahead."

Mark also chose to wear his RUOK t-shirt to help raise awareness of mental health (and disability) amongst the homeless and more generally amongst the population.

Doubling their fundraising effort from last year, this year the team raised over \$2000. Well done!

## A HOME IS A RIGHT NOT A PRIVILEGE

**Save the Date!**

**Vinnies Western Sydney Community Sleepout 2021**

**Planning has commenced for the NSW Vinnies Community Sleepout 2021. It is being held on Friday 27 August 2021.**





## VINNIES SUPPORT CENTRE

### A Heartfelt Thanks

The Penrith Vinnies Support Centre was recently inundated with a number of generous food donations from the St Nicholas of Myra Penrith Conference, Corpus Christi Cranebrook Conference and Centrelink Penrith.

The photo only shows about a third of the donations that the centre received in the past week alone. All of us here at the Penrith Vinnies Support Centre wish to say a massive thank you to the Conferences and Centrelink for their generous donations, it is truly appreciated.

A number of weeks ago we were contacted by the Centrelink Community Engagement Officer for the Nepean and Blue Mountains regions wishing to organize a donation drive for the centre. Boxes were

placed in a number of different offices for workers to donate items such as food and toiletries

The generous donations from the two Conferences continues to demonstrate the strong partnerships



that the Vinnies Support Centres and the Conferences can offer to each other to continue to support the community.

**Thank you for all your generous donations!**

## Meet and Greet

### *Metro Region Central Councils' Meet and Greet Gathering*

On Saturday, 7 November, a combined group of Metro Central Council Members and staff gathered from Parramatta, Broken Bay and Sydney Arch. It was an opportunity for Members of similar and different roles to acquaint themselves with those in other Central Councils and share how each worked. The objectives were to:

-Provide a forum to bring Conference members from the three Metro Central Councils together to meet, discuss their roles with others in similar roles, share ideas, knowledge and learning

- *Improve member experience and engagement*
- *Explore new and innovative membership models for the future*
- *Discuss proposals for member and community engagement initiatives and member recruitment opportunities.*

The morning gathering was wonderfully supported by the Central Council Presidents, Regional Council Presidents and each Central Council's Member Treasurers, Spiritual Advisers, Twinning Officer, Youth Reps and others in key membership roles.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Many conferences have continued community engagement activities as much as possible throughout COVID, and although COVID has severely restricted our opportunity to expand on this, there are several plans in progress to ramp up our engagement in 2021.

This includes a Vinnies stall at community market days with flyers and marketing give-aways, to inform the Community of the various works Vinnies are involved in, and how we can provide a hand up to those in need. Members may like to be involved in Aged Care visitation in the Chatswood area, to help reduce the social isolation of the high percentage of residents that never receive visitors.

Besides giving back to the Community it's also a great recruitment exercise if people would like to volunteer or become a Member of St Vincent de Paul. Further opportunities will become available depending on the COVID environment and updates will be sent through your Regional Presidents.

Please contact [lauraine.steward@vinnies.org.au](mailto:lauraine.steward@vinnies.org.au) for further details.



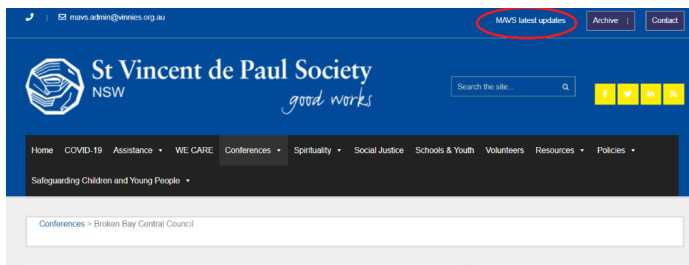
## Member and Volunteer website

A reminder about the resources, news, contact and publications available for you on MAVS. Here you can find the latest on COVID19; Programs for assistance; Updates on Conferences and Spirituality; Social Justice content; Schools and Youth; Volunteers; Safeguarding Children and lot of resources available for your use.

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

Parramatta Central Council have their own page:

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



For requested updates, please email

[lauraine.steward@vinnies.org.au](mailto:lauraine.steward@vinnies.org.au). This is a great opportunity for sharing the news from our Conferences and Regions with each other.

Looking for a way to let your Community or Parish know more about Vinnies? For suggestions on additions to Parish Bulletins or a speaking notes for a few minutes after Mass about upcoming Social Justice events and the work Vinnies does to address Social Justice, please visit the Social Justice page <https://mavs.vinnies.org.au/social-justice/> and look for 'Social Justice Diary 2021 – Resource for Members'.

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/>

The Vinnies Members Induction video has been updated - please refer to the bottom of this page. <https://mavs.vinnies.org.au/resources/recruitment/>

### Celebrating 50 years of service :

- George Keane Kingswood St Joseph's Conference
- Kevin Sloane Lalor Park St Bernadette's Conference
- Noel Richardson Seven Hills Our Lady of Lourdes Conference

### Celebrating 30 years of service:

- Anna Smith Kingswood St Joseph's Conference
- Carmel Dobson Glenbrook St Finbar's Conference
- Greg Burton Castle Hill St Bernadette's Conference

### Celebrating 20 years of service:

- Tony Testa Rooty Hill St Aidan's Conference
- John Barret Plumpton Good Shepherd Conference
- Rose Franco Glenwood/Stanhope Gardens Bl John XXIII Conference

### Celebrating 10 years of service:

- Joseph Sciberras St Marys Our Lady of the Rosary Conference
- Marie Johnston Castle Hill St Bernadette's Conference
- Maria Magele Plumpton Good Shepherd Conference
- Kevin Balkin Emu Plains Our Lady of the Way Conference
- Sofia Barons Wentworthville Our Lady of Mt Carmel Conference
- Johannes Schoemaker Kingswood St Joseph's Conference
- Roger Bigland Glenbrook St Finbar's Conference

### Celebrating 5 years of service:

- Michelle Collins Emu Plains Our Lady of the Way Conference
- Theresa Burgheim Lawson Our Lady of the Nativity Conference
- Paul Ryan Lawson Our Lady of the Nativity Conference
- Siew Hoon Loh Rydalmere Holy Name of Mary Conference

