



APRIL 2020

## MESSAGE FROM SYDNEY ARCH CENTRAL COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANTHONY (TONY) CRANNEY

### WELCOME TO OUR FIRST NEWSLETTER OF 2020!



In any organisation, communication is important and ours is no exception since it gives us the opportunity to do many things including the sharing of our stories, learning from each other's experiences and recognising the efforts and achievements of Members, volunteers and staff.

I am sure that I would not be the only person overwhelmed at times with everything going on around us. From ongoing changes within our own organisation to drought, bush fires and now the pandemic which has caused so much pain and suffering, not just to the community, but on a very personal level that we and our responses can feel inadequate.

I have said it before and will say it again, that while we have dedicated Members, volunteers and staff striving to fulfil our Society Mission, in part by sharing of ourselves in who we are and the support we can offer with the poor on a person-to-person basis, we have a big chance of making the world a better place. I would like to thank everyone for their ongoing efforts and encourage more of your good work over the year ahead and request your continued prayers for drought breaking rain and for all who suffer.

I really hope you enjoy the newsletter.

## MESSAGE FROM REGIONAL DIRECTOR METROPOLITAN - GAYL PURCHASE

Our staff and Members have enthusiastically taken to the new methods of delivery of service as a response to the Covid-19 Pandemic. Their generosity of time, talent and willingness to adapt to new practices demonstrate our shared commitment to the Vincentian Mission and Vision in the service of those we partner with and is an inspiration and source of motivation for us all.

While Regional Offices and Vinnies Shops have closed, our Vinnies Services Centres remain open across Metro region, continuing to support Members, do phone visits, food drops and other services, with some staff supporting Members from home and this system seems to be working well. All locations still open operate with social distancing measures to ensure all safety measures and practices reduce risk as much as possible.

There is a need more than ever for us all to remain connected and to assist with this we have updated COVID-19 advice on the MAVS site at <https://mavs.vinnies.org.au> to ensure members are kept up-to-date on current services and our new ways of delivering assistance. As I joined Vinnies just a short time ago, and we have travelled through these extraordinary times, I have been humbled to witness the true Vincentian spirit demonstrated as we have encountered crisis after crisis - drought, bushfires, floods and now a pandemic. I offer my sincere thanks and appreciation to staff and Members for their support during my first three months with the Society.





## VINNIES CONTINUING ITS GOOD WORKS THROUGH THIS PANDEMIC



EXPERIENCES  
FROM THE  
FRONT LINE

### Food/Goods Drive

The 5 food/goods collection points across Sydney have grown busy thanks to the generosity of Member, Vinnies' networks, staff and the community.

The State fundraising team is looking for content from front-line workers, including our Members, about the support they are providing to people affected by the coronavirus pandemic and the level of need. Examples of people assisted in relation to COVID-19 can be sent, along with the following details, to

[Alyssa.Robinson@vinnies.org.au](mailto:Alyssa.Robinson@vinnies.org.au)

- Are you seeing the impact of COVID-19 in your Conference work and what kinds of things are you seeing?
- Can you provide some brief examples of people you are assisting, and how have you been able to support them?
- What are your thoughts about all of this? How are you feeling? Who are you most worried for?
- What do you see in your front-line role with Vinnies, that you think the outside world should know more about?

You can send photos of yourselves (permission for us to share them publicly can be by using the Media Consent form that was attached in an email Conferences received or otherwise state your consent in the email when you send your stories).



CARE IN A  
CRISIS

### Isolation visit

21 March Mum and dad with 4 young children were in 2 weeks' self-isolation as they had been overseas. The cupboards were empty and they needed a bit of everything.

On this occasion they had us as support! The joy on all their faces was amazing.

This is now an everyday part of our St Vincent de Paul work and the generosity has started with people donating so we can do this

### **Member and Volunteer (MAVS) microsite**

As resources are developed, they are usually sent to Conferences. But these and others are also stored on the MAVS site:

<http://mavs.vinnies.org.au>

Click on the tabs at the top of the page to explore – the site is regularly updated to include a lot of helpful resources relevant to Membership and the work of Members.



# BUSHFIRE APPEAL

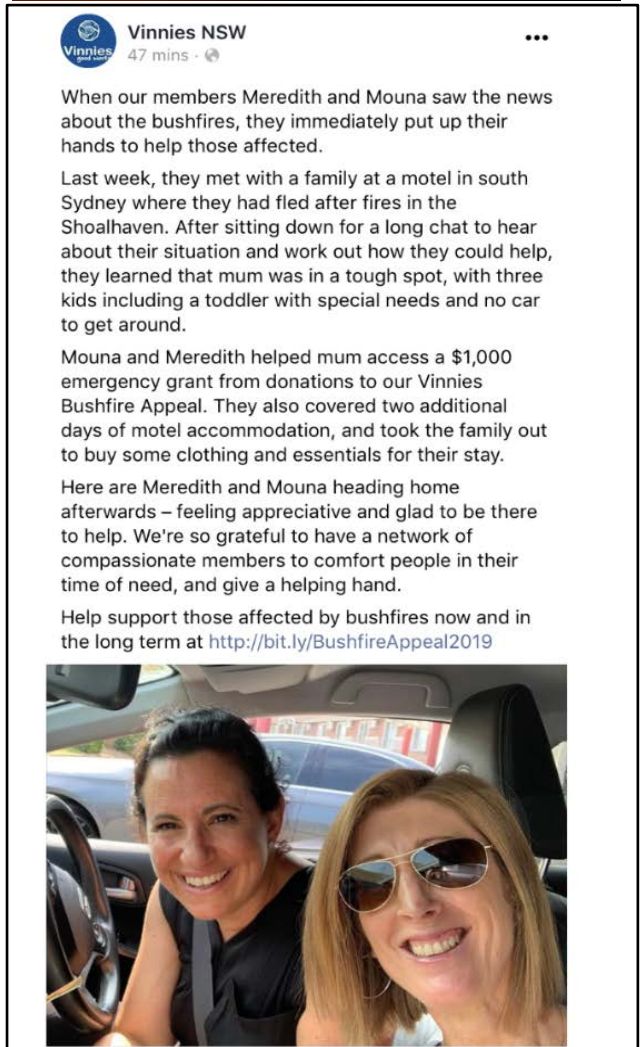
## Vinnies' New Friends

On Sunday 2nd February the Cambodian Friendship Group organised a bushfire fund raising dinner held at the Golden Palace Restaurant, Cabramatta.



John Zammit and Joan Watson from Sacred Heart Conference Cabramatta represented the society at the dinner. Jenny Tew and her colour coordinated host and hostesses made us, and all who attended feel so welcome. Some 400 guest enjoyed a 15 course banquet meal and none stop music and dancing. The word friendship really said everything about the night, you could sense the community spirit and the joyful interaction of all who attended. To top it all off, the Saint Vincent De Paul was presented with a cheque for \$11,000 towards the Bushfire Appeal. This is the first time The Cambodian Friendship Group had undertaken such a fundraising event; it was a pleasure for us to represent the Society and I am sure the friendship between the SVDP and the Cambodian Community will continue into the future.

Thanks,  
John Zammit



The call to action across the Society has engaged thousands of Members, volunteers, staff and the support of the community, in collecting and organising the delivery of many goods from water to clothing to much needed cash.

A significant role in the tradition of Vinnies, has been to offer personal support to fire victims, sitting with them and helping to work out how we can help. The above is such an example, both Members and both employees of Sydney Catholic Schools in appropriately, Family Educator (family support and engagement) roles.





**SCHOOLS AND YOUTH**



**What a terrific Metropolitan Vinnies Youth Christmas Gathering!**  
There is so much fun and the sharing of ideas when our brilliant and dedicated young people get together.



**Dressed By Vinnies**  
Vinnies Youth supported the “Dressed By Vinnies” event at the Aurora Hotel, Surry Hills.



**Your Lady of the Rosary Catholic Primary School, Fairfield**

Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Primary School community, Fairfield, donated a very generous amount of toiletry and snack items. As a result, the school staff put together a tremendous amount of packs for Sydney Vinnies Van Services. As part of their Spirituality Day with Christina Gilio, their Vinnies Schools Formation Officer, they also made a delicious collection of sandwiches and fruit salad to go out on Liverpool Night Patrol and created thoughtful Cards of Hope for visitors at our services.

**Teen Vinnies Gathering**

This inaugural gathering was attended by 32 secondary schools from Broken Bay, Parramatta and Sydney Archdiocese. Thanks to ACU, Strathfield, for donating the use of their facilities and to our amazing young adult volunteers.

In one of the workshops students made beautiful Christmas cards of hope for people seeking asylum on Manus Island and Nauru. In the workshop students learnt more about the plight of those who have been in offshore detention and the hardships faced.

It was great to see the compassionate response from the students. Vinnies NSW has proudly supported people seeking protection since the 1960s.





## SCHOOLS AND YOUTH CONTD.....

### Vinnies Youth Voices in 'Sydney Alliance'

Sydney Alliance is a diverse coalition of community and religious organisations, unions and tertiary groups that use the tools of community-driven dialogue and action to make the city a better place to live. Sydney Vinnies Youth Rep, Marissa Papaspiros was surrounded by other inspiring young adult members of the community when she graduated as an intern to Sydney Alliance. She was joined by other Vinnies Youth in celebrating this presence and voice of Vinnies.



*Marissa and Simon are Members of the Sydney Youth and Young Adult Conference. Both are advanced-trained Co-ordinators of our Youth Programs and very active in many aspects of Sydney Vinnies Youth.*



Youth Programs

Buddies Days, Homework Help and Green Team engage many young adult volunteers who spend days and time with many children whose families are supported by the St Vincent de Paul Society. The large number of referrals of children reflect the great trust that our clients have in our Members and staff who support them.





## **COMMUNITY SUPPORT**



Members and staff of the Rozelle Region hosted a pre-Christmas fundraiser at Bunnings Ashfield, by means of cakes and sweets stall. Members and staff baked and prepared a huge amount of goodies in the days leading up to the event which was gratefully received by the public. This event was also supported by the Northern Suburbs Regional Council Crows Nest office through their Administration Assistant, Lauren, who gave up her Saturday to show her support. It was an enjoyable event with every Conference represented in raising over \$4000. Staff and volunteers also supported the Society's Bushfire Appeal, meeting the community and sharing our story.

### **ROZELLE REGION'S FAMILY CHRISTMAS BBQ**

Members, volunteers and staff joined for their annual community Christmas BBQ bringing much needed cheer to so many. With Members cooking up a storm for approximately 200 people, the children and parents along with Members, volunteers and staff were able to enjoy a game of soccer, face painting and crafts. Vaughan Kelly of Gladesville Conference and a long time Member, couldn't resist joining in on the fun, having a shamrock painting on his cheek. When the guest of honor appeared, dressed in red and joyfully singing Christmas tunes, all focus turned to him and everyone joined in with his singing whilst the children excitedly received their Christmas gifts.



### **OPERATION BACKPACK - SOUTHGATE SHOPPING CENTRE SYLVANIA**



Operation Backpack is an initiative to support those in need within our community during the back- to -school period. Many local shoppers generously donated new stationery and school supplies in the collection bins around the shopping centre. All donated school supplies were distributed to local families across the Sutherland and St George Regional Councils by local St Vincent de Paul Society Members and volunteers.

### **HOMICIDE VICTIMS' SUPPORT GROUP**

Ebony and Ivory Houses, Garrawarra, are run by the Homicide Victims' Support Group. All are very appreciative of the hampers the St Vincent de Paul Society supply via the great work the Helensburgh Conference and President, Paul Morahan.



### **INNER WEST COUNCIL SUMMER FESTIVAL**



Rozelle Region Members packed lolly bags to be handed out at the annual Summer Festival where they held a Vinnies stall to raise funds for our Bushfire Appeal.



## COMMUNITY SUPPORT

### GARRAWARRA VISIT AND SPECIAL MEMBERS MILESTONE



Terry and Julie O' Hara

In December, the Oyster Bay Conference attended their rostered visit to Garrawarra Aged Care, Waterfall. 10 Members joined approximately 20 residents and staff in celebrating Mass and mixing with residents. Father Andrew was his usual caring and loving self, assisted by acolyte, Ian. The dedicated and compassionate staff members, Elena and Madeline oversaw everything.

Basically it was business as usual except for one fact: Terry and Julie O'Hara (pictured) reached an incredible milestone by their attendance -30 consecutive years of visiting Garrawarra on behalf of the St Vincent de Paul Society! Congratulations to both for not just this achievement, but for their life of dedication together and acts of Christian charity to the Church, the Society and the wider community. Both are wonderful role models on how to put Christian faith into everyday practice and valued by the guidance they give and the example they set.

### CHRISTMAS APPEAL 2019

Conference Members from over 90 Conferences across Sydney Central Council prepared and delivered thousands of hampers, with the support of other volunteers and staff and many generous donors including school communities, Parishes, pre- schools, work places and the general public.

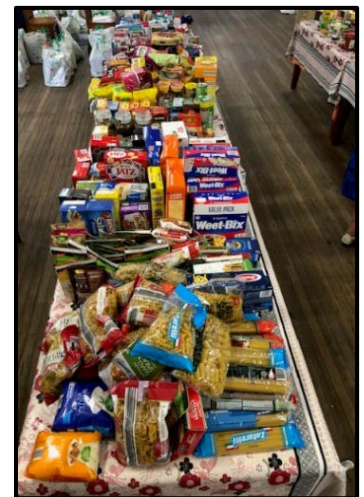
Thanks to all who committed many hours of their time to bring joy and hope by sharing good will this Christmas. And to top it off, all surplus donations were sent to areas affected by drought and bush fires.

The Hurstville Community Support Centre made up 173 Christmas food and gift hampers, some home-delivered to due age, frailty and disability.

Valued contributors included K-Mart Hurstville, BIG W Rockdale, Davies Chocolates, Club Central Hurstville, members of the public, Lilliput Corner Childcare Centre in Brighton-le-Sands

The generosity of school communities was extraordinary: St Gabrielle's Bexley, Mater Dei Blakehurst, St Raphael's South Hurstville, St Thomas Mores Brighton-Le-Sands, St Marys' Star of the Sea Hurstville, Marist Bros Kogarah, St Patricks Kogarah, Our Lady of Fatima Peakhurst, Marist Bros Penshurst.

Certificates of appreciation were made up and posted to all groups that donated . Due to the large amount of food donations received, it was possible to provide additional food hampers to clients during the period when less services are available.



**All Members and staff are extremely grateful for the support received!**

## HOW DO CONFERENCE MEMBERS PROVIDE A CONSISTENT APPROACH TO CARING FOR THE PEOPLE WE ASSIST- THEY DEMONSTRATE WE CARE!

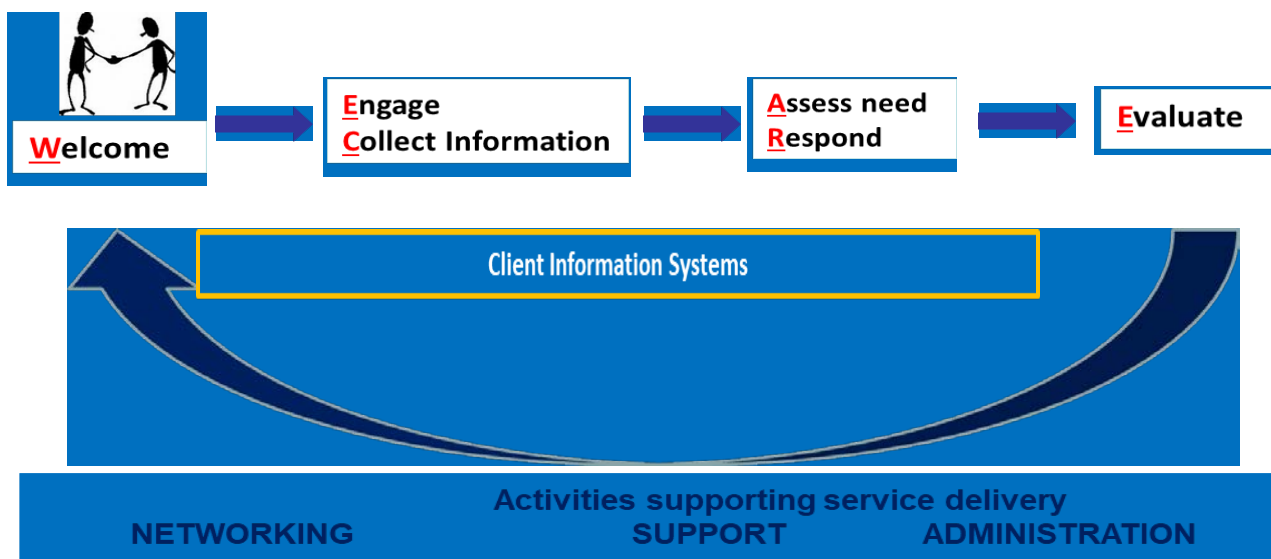
The We Care project is Conference-based and commences with training and then ongoing support.

The State Membership Support team runs the project with the support of SACC staff. Its framework aligns with the Society's strategic plan because it:

- Reinforces that the people we serve are at the heart of what we do and enables them to inform our decision making.
- Creates opportunities for new approaches/models for service provision.
- Offers pathways for involvement and volunteering that could support existing membership numbers or introduce new forms of membership.
- Promotes good governance, transparency in decision making and accountabilities.

The project aims to further assist individuals experiencing financial distress to move towards financial wellbeing, to create a client-centred service model by assisting Members, volunteers and staff to improve our ability to offer a 'hand up'. It encourages that we learn from each other too and share our success and ways of working.

A few SACC Regional Councils and a selection of Conferences have joined others across NSW by opting to get involved in these early stages. We Care is dependent upon feedback provided by Members, e.g. how Members value ongoing education and learning, collaborations within and between other Conferences, techniques to further improve conversations on home visits, affirmation of good practices already happening within the Conference, feedback on a set of survey questions being asked of 1 in 10 clients. This feedback will assist to evolve and improve practices and the way the Society delivers support.





## SOCIAL JUSTICE

The Vinnies Social Justice Network is a community of people committed to building a more just and compassionate NSW. Together, we take actions like collecting signatures for petitions, visiting our MPs, and hosting community events. Our network is for everyone.

### CAMPAIGN INFORMATION

Check out our NSW Social Justice Website: <https://socialjustice.vinnies.org.au/>  
For any information on the below, contact [social.justice@vinnies.org.au](mailto:social.justice@vinnies.org.au) or Sarah Boyle in the NSW Vinnies Social Justice Team ([sarah.boyle@vinnies.org.au](mailto:sarah.boyle@vinnies.org.au) or 02 4032 3545) or Mark Ludbrooke ([mark.ludbrooke@vinnies.org.au](mailto:mark.ludbrooke@vinnies.org.au) or 0448 832 400).

### JOIN OUR CAMPAIGN FOR MORE SOCIAL HOUSING

Following the launch of our *Build Homes, Build Hope* campaign in September, Vinnies Members and supporters began campaigning for the NSW Government to invest in much-needed social housing.

So our petition can be tabled and debated in NSW Parliament, we are seeking a total of 10,000 signatures of support. Vinnies' Members also continue to meeting with MPs to make sure they know we need more social housing.

We've also started collecting stories from people who live or lived in social housing about the positive impact that it plays in their lives, and stories from people who are waiting for social housing about the challenge of securing an affordable, secure and safe place to call home. To share your experiences with clients or for more information, contact the Social Justice Team.

### SHARE YOUR STORY ABOUT COST OF LIVING

Vinnies NSW is updating its Social Justice Statement on the cost of living. To inform the development of this statement, contact the Social Justice Team. Alternatively if you'd like to share a story about the impact of rising energy costs on families on low incomes, the lack of affordable transport options in your area, issues accessing affordable health or education services and Newstart recipients who may be struggling to make ends meet, you can email the team.



### ACT TO END STREET SLEEPING

The St Vincent de Paul Society NSW has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Institute for Global Homelessness, the NSW Government, the City of Sydney, and a number of other not-for-profit organisations to collaborate to set targets: reduce rough sleeping in the City of Sydney by 25% by end of 2020 and by 50% across NSW by 2025.

As part of this collaboration, we took part in Connections Week in Sydney. Over two mornings and two evenings participants met and gathered personal stories and information from people sleeping rough about their housing and healthcare needs. This information was used to create a by-name list that will help agencies to know and support individuals on an ongoing basis, to understand the issues that lead people to sleep on the streets and to provide the evidence needed to make systemic changes across Sydney and regional centres.



## SYDNEY ARCH CENTRAL COUNCIL MEETING TEAM



Attached is photo from our Sydney Arch Central Council (SACC) Meeting Feb 2020

- SACC President, Tony Cranney (foreground)
- Regional Council Presidents and SACC Youth Rep
- Regional Director- Metro
- Member and Community Engagement team staff
- State Mission, Spirituality and Pastoral Care Partner staff

## WE ARE NOW VIRTUAL ...



If you want a Zoom session setup, contact Paul Longobardi at [paul.longobardi@vinnies.org.au](mailto:paul.longobardi@vinnies.org.au). Alternatively, for TEAMS meeting, you can access MS Teams how-to guides on MAVS <https://mavs.vinnies.org.au/resources/training-and-development/ms-teams-guides/>

### **DROUGHT ASSISTANCE**

As farmers and rural communities across NSW continue to struggle with the impact of the extensive drought, the St Vincent de Paul Society has begun delivering \$15 million in assistance through the Drought Community Support Initiative.

For more information contact the Drought Relief Team on 1300 846 643.

### NEWTOWN SHOP NEWS

We had a very special customer at Vinnies Newtown today, Myra DuBois dropped by with ABC TV + iview to find some unique treasures while in town for her upcoming show at the Sydney Opera House.

Thanks to Myra for dropping in & supporting our work in the community by purchasing a handbag to go with her vibrant look.

Funds raised in our shops go directly to helping provide essentials and assistance for people struggling locally.

Look great while helping support those who need it with your next purchase at Vinnies, find your nearest shop at [www.vinnies.org.au/shops](http://www.vinnies.org.au/shops)







## **SOCIETY FESTIVAL MASSES**



Festival Masses are a traditional prayer and thanksgiving event across all Regional Councils each year. Our nearly 1000 Members and many other volunteers, staff and friends gather and celebrate. Members and staff, volunteers and friends from Sutherland and St George Regional Councils gathered at Our Lady Star of the Sea Parish, Miranda.

Regional Presidents, Geoffrey O’Loughlin (St George) and Tony Cranney (Sutherland along with Vice Presidents, Frank Tierney and Denis O’Brien) agreed that of the many such Masses over time this was as beautiful and uplifting as any of them. Most Reverend Bishop Richard Umbers along with Parish Priest Father John Greig and seven other local Parish Priests inspired all with their presence and ongoing support.

Acolytes, choir, Mini Vinnies’ representatives, Family Educators and Bernadette, Parish Secretary played their part in making the night so successful as well as all of the Miranda Conference including their President, Pat Cudmore. The Sutherland Mayor Cr Carmelo Pesce along with Cr Tom Croucher were generous in accepting the invitation to attend. They assisted in congratulating and presenting the pictured Members with their Service Awards.

## **CATHOLIC COMMUNITY MASS FOR FIRE VICTIMS**



Photo: Archbishop Fisher with Sydney Archdioceses Central Council President, Tony Cranney and State Council President, Peter McNamara

Archbishop Anthony Fisher was very complementary to all those responding to the bush fires and was particularly generous in his praise of the St Vincent de Paul at the special Mass at St Mary’s Cathedral for those affected by the bushfires.



**NSW Annual  
Festival Mass**