



# Newsletter

April 2024

## Broken Bay Central Council President - Michelle Chahine's Message

Dear Members, Volunteers and Staff,

As we reflect on the Easter season and its message of renewal and hope, I want to take a moment to express my gratitude for all that you do here at Vinnies Broken Bay.

Your dedication to serving those in need is truly inspiring, and it is because of your hard work and commitment that we are able to make a difference in the lives of so many people in our community.

Easter is a time of reflection, and I am grateful for each and every one of you. Your passion for helping others is a shining example of the values of compassion and empathy that we hold dear.

In the spirit of Easter, let us continue to reach out to those in need, offering a helping hand and a listening ear to those who need it most. Your kindness and generosity are making a real difference in our community, and I am so proud to work alongside each of you.



Thank you for your dedication and hard work. May the spirit of Easter continue to inspire you in all that you do.

Warm regards,

**Michelle Chahine, Broken Bay Central Council President**

## Regional Director Metropolitan - Ashvini Ambihaipahar's Message

I am thrilled to share with you the remarkable progress we've achieved in our ongoing mission to serve those in need. From January to March 2024, you and our dedicated team have provided vital assistance to over 1,700 primary people – a 5% increase compared to the same period last year.

Our dedication to fostering membership and community engagement remains unwavering. Through recruitment drives, we've warmly welcomed new members into our Vincentian family across various conferences, including Chatswood, Willoughby, Epping, Waitara and St Joseph's Workshop, just to name a few.

Our impact within schools and youth communities has been profound. From active participation in events like O-week to engaging with the local schools across the regions, we're actively cultivating partnerships and collaborations. Our initiatives extend to educational endeavours, such as engaging students in Catholic Social Teaching and conducting workshops to raise awareness about homelessness. Our engagement with Mini Vinnies and High School Conferences, we have seen remarkable participation, empowering the next generation to effect positive change through workshops, volunteer opportunities, and community outreach.

We are eagerly anticipating the Winter Appeal and community sleepouts, cherished events that not only ignite a profound sense of communal unity but also serve as lifelines for those facing hardship.

On the horizon is the launch of the Woy Woy Van service, a beacon of hope for the Central Coast region. And we are poised to extend our reach, with aspirations to expand our footprint to serve the Hornsby area as well. This marks a significant step forward in our mission, reaffirming our commitment to making a tangible difference in the lives of individuals and families across our communities.

As we continue our journey of compassion and service, I am profoundly grateful for each member of our St. Vincent de Paul Society family. Your unwavering dedication and generosity are the cornerstone of our mission, and together, we will continue to make a meaningful and lasting difference in the lives of those we serve.



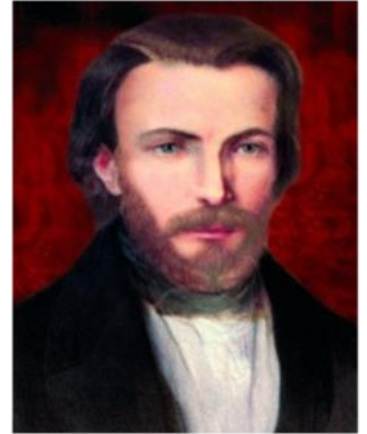
**Ashvini Ambihaipahar  
Regional Director, Metropolitan**



## YOUR GOOD WORKS ARE OUR MISSION, IN ACTION –THANK YOU!

*Faithful  
to the spirit of its founders,  
the Society constantly strives for renewal,  
adapting to changing world conditions.  
It seeks to be ever aware of the changes that occur in human society  
and the new types of poverty that may be identified or anticipated.  
It gives priority to the poorest of the poor  
and to those who are most rejected by society.*

The Rule, p. 16



## WINTER APPEAL 2024



As housing security becomes more precarious due to rising rents, cost-of-living pressures and a shortage of affordable housing, the Society is hearing daily from people who in years gone by would never have needed to seek support.

The theme of this year’s Winter Appeal is ‘Working Homeless’, focusing on the emerging trend of people who are experiencing housing hardship and disadvantage despite being in employment. These are people who hold jobs that should offer stability, yet are sleeping in cars, tents or relying on the goodwill of others.

This demand is being seen on a daily basis by the Society. Two years ago, 19% of people seeking assistance from our members in NSW were experiencing homelessness or living in temporary accommodation. Today, that figure has concerningly grown to 30%. As the pressures faced by the working homeless and other vulnerable people in our community intensify, it is vital that the Society is able to offer support to those in their time of need.

Funds raised through the Winter Appeal will be used to fund our core programs including supporting people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, and also people struggling with poverty and cost-of-living pressures.

**The Society thanks our dedicated Members and Volunteers for the important role they play in raising funds for the Winter Appeal so we can continue to meet the rising need of the most vulnerable people in our community.**

The Winter Appeal will launch on 1 May 2024.

Materials to support your Winter Appeal efforts, such as posters, donation envelopes and conference booklets should be available from 17 April 2024.

# COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Thanks to all of our wonderful Members and Volunteers who have spread the news and lifted the profile of Vinnies NSW in their local communities over recent months. Expos are a great way to engage with the community, promote the Vinnies brand and let people know what your Conference is about. Here are some events where Vinnies has had a presence.

## Hornsby Harmony Day Expo

“On 21 March, we had a Vinnies table at a wonderful Harmony Day expo organised by Hornsby TAFE. Harmony Day, celebrates diversity, fosters inclusiveness, respect and the idea that people of all cultures can make a valuable contribution to society. Hornsby Vinnies joined with other local communities and groups. It was great to see what local organisations we can tap into for our clients. We were able to give information around what we do at the centre at Hornsby.

“Many people were surprised to know we were more than the shop and that our welfare section had so much support for members of our local community. It was certainly a great way to promote our good works.”

*- Shirley Kelynack, Hornsby Regional President*



## Central Coast Seniors Expo

“Central Coast Council hosted their annual Seniors Expo on Thursday 21 March at Wyong racecourse - with over 500 visitors. The vast array of 80 services and organisations were available for the seniors to visit and get usual information from health, housing and support services to social and recreation services.

“St Vincent de Paul Wyong Support Centre Coordinator and Members and Volunteers attended for the second year, promoting all the good work and services that Wyong VSC provides the Wyong Region community.”

*- Bradley Dingle, Vinnies Support Centre Coordinator, Wyong*

## Willoughby Council Volunteer Expo

“I had the pleasure of joining with Regional President Barry Finch and Forestville President El Herlianto at the Lower North Shore Volunteer Expo in Chatswood on 6 March. It was a great way to promote our programs and services as well as tell people about our Conferences. There are so many benefits that come from volunteering – learning new skills, meeting new friends and making a real difference in our communities.

“Everyone visiting our table knew ‘Vinnies’, but many didn’t know about the breadth of our good works and the many ways they can get involved. It was also great to catch up again with volunteers and staff of other organisations like the SES and Guide Dogs NSW.”

*- John Ferguson, Member & Community Engagement Coordinator*





## Making the difference for mum and daughter

Ruby\*, a single mum with two children, reached out to St Vincent de Paul at Wyong Support Centre in mid-January as she was in need of a single bed, mattress and manchester.

Recently, her eight-year-old daughter was back in Ruby's care after the father was found by the Department of Communities & Justice to be neglecting her.

Ruby attended her appointment through the Toukley Conference where she was provided assistance with food support and discussed her request for furniture.

After her appointment, Toukley Conference advised us at Wyong VSC that she required a single bed base, mattress and manchester for her daughter.

A welfare furniture voucher was sent to Auburn Distribution Centre and the bed and other items were delivered by mid-February.

Ruby contacted us at Wyong VSC via phone on the afternoon the goods were delivered. She said a huge 'thank you' and was so appreciative of the St Vincent de Paul Society and its Wyong Support Centre.

Her daughter loves her new bed and was very excited to sleep in it that night.

- *Bradley Dingle, VSC Coordinator, Wyong*

*\*not the client's real name*



## Thank you to our Volunteers

Sometimes we just go about our day doing what we do, not realising the impact we may have on the people who cross our path.

You are one of those people

I have no idea really about who you are or what you are like, having only seen you for ten minutes at a time most Fridays.

But you have picked me up on some bad days with your kindness and compassion and on those days, it meant the world to me.

Thankyou for making me feel worthy and Thankyou for warming my heart.

Your kindness is appreciated and does not go unnoticed. You are a good woman, who does good things and makes people feel better about their day.

KIND Regards



Natasha Payne ▸ V Stories

2 hrs · 📷

A customer brought this in for one of my lovely volunteers at Wyong today. This is why we do what we do 🥰💙



## Pride of the Workshop!

Many of you will have heard of the high quality of furniture and other items crafted from recycled materials at St Joseph's Conference Workshop in West Gosford.

The Workshop is a volunteer-based service from Members who support the work of the St Vincent de Paul Society by manufacturing new furniture that is provided to people who are experiencing hardship.

Products include tall boys, dresser drawers, kids' tables and chairs and much more. The items are fed into St Vincent de Paul Society's welfare programs or for sale in Vinnies Shops in Sydney and the Central Coast.



*Craftsman Daniel Garcia*

And occasionally we receive a special request. Recently, we were asked by Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Church in Wyoming if we could make a chair for Bishop Randazzo. Father Peter brought a chair as an example of what he was looking for and we asked our member Daniel Garcia to replicate it.

You can see in these photos Daniel's skilled craftsmanship.

This is just another good news story from the Workshop. I feel so honoured to work with my fellow members and I would like to acknowledge their great skills and commitment.



- *Wayne Gibb, President, West Gosford St Joseph's Workshop Conference*

## Pymble Sacred Heart Conference Commissioning Mass

On Sunday 19 November 2023, the Pymble Conference celebrated the commissioning of 15 new Members and Associate Members. This was such a moving ceremony that was attended by Regional President, Barry Finch and two former Conference Presidents, other members of the Conference and in the embrace of the broader parish community.

Our conference has grown over the last two years from seven members to a Conference consisting of, at the moment, 23 members. The oldest member is 98 years young and the youngest – less than 30 years old. This growth in Conference members has given us the ability to increase our support in our local community and to go further afield in our outreach programs.



Our Parish Priest, Fr Irek, suggested that the Commissioning should take place during the 9.30am Sunday Mass so that the whole Parish Community could share in this special day. It was followed with a celebratory morning tea.

We are very thankful for the initial guidance from El Herlianto regarding the procedural process and for assistance from John Ferguson. Our special thanks were extended during the Mass to our Parish Priest, Fr Irek and to the whole Parish community for their strong support of the Conference.

Our Conference consists of members who all work as one and who share one vision. Each contributes according to the skills they have and discern where the Spirit leads them.

- *Carolynne Wawrzyniak, Pymble Sacred Heart Conference President*





NSW SOCIAL JUSTICE  
**NETWORK**

# SOCIAL JUSTICE FORUM 2024

**SATURDAY 1 JUNE 2024**



Do you want positive change for the people we assist - addressing the root causes of poverty and systems that perpetuate disadvantage?

The Society NSW's flagship social justice event - the [2024 NSW Social Justice Forum](#) - will be held on **Saturday 1 June** at Mary Mackillop Place in North Sydney.

This is an opportunity to connect with others who share a passion for more just and inclusive communities.

#### Join us as we:

- Learn more about the root causes of poverty and unjust structures
- Discuss how we can work together to alleviate need, and shape fairer systems and structures that will uphold the rights of those in our communities
- Share your thoughts and experiences, and help shape our social justice advocacy agenda
- Come together to forge solid relationships

All members, volunteers, employees and supporters of the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW are welcome to attend.

This is a free event, with lunch and refreshments provided, but registrations are essential. Please register [here](#).

Having heard from experts, change-makers and fellow leaders, we hope you'll leave the forum inspired to take action, and with the relationships, knowledge and resources you need to do so.

Need more information? Contact the NSW Social Justice Team at [social.justice@vinnies.org.au](mailto:social.justice@vinnies.org.au)

#### WHEN:

**1 June 2024,**

**9:00am – 4.30pm**

#### WHERE:

**Mary MacKillop  
Place,**

**7-11 Mount St,  
North Sydney**

(a short walk from  
North Sydney station)





## Our call to rebuild essential social infrastructure and programs



The Society has lodged its NSW [2024-25 Pre-Budget Submission](#) calling for the NSW Government to rebuild essential social infrastructure and programs across housing, homelessness and cost of living.

Our submission outlines 11 recommendations in response to the persistent cost of living crisis that disproportionately affects people already doing it tough in our community.

Broadly, these recommendations are to dramatically increase social housing supply with wrap-around supports, increase homelessness services and program funding, extend food relief programs and make energy more affordable.

With economists predicting this year will continue to be difficult for households, we believe it is critical that the NSW Government prioritises investment to strengthen our social safety net so that people can feed their families and have an affordable, safe and healthy place to call home.

### What can you do?

Read the [Pre-Budget Submission](#) and forward it on to a friend.

Attend our [2024 Social Justice Forum](#) on 1 June in North Sydney

Join us in our upcoming **Affordable Housing Campaign** (details to come).



## REBUILDING ESSENTIAL SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND PROGRAMS

NSW 2024-25 Pre-Budget Submission

February 2024

## Host a local conversation about affordable housing

The Society NSW and the Sydney Alliance are running a campaign calling for more Affordable Housing in the lead up to local government elections in September this year. Local Councils can use planning policy to ensure that affordable rental housing is included in local developments. However, there is no mandatory requirement for NSW Councils to set and meet targets to provide affordable housing. This often means people on low or fixed incomes are priced out of the areas where they work or have lived for many years. Some Councils are listening to local people, such as Hornsby and City of Sydney, while others are not, such as Parramatta and Ku-ring-gai.

The Social Justice team is seeking expressions of interest from people who might be interested in either hosting or joining a small team to start a conversation in their local community and with their local Council about how we can make housing fairer. We need local people who know the local area and want to get involved. Please reach out to us if you are interested to explore more at [social.justice@vinnies.org.au](mailto:social.justice@vinnies.org.au)



## Woy Woy

# Vinnies Van - Lend a Hand!

Can you lend a hand by volunteering some time to the **Woy Woy Vinnies Van** service?

This is a Special Work of the St Vincent de Paul Society. The service consists of a van, operating once a week on a Friday providing meals, blankets, toiletries, hot beverages and, most importantly, companionship to people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

There are three ways that you, your parish or school community, business or friends can help:

- Create a team of volunteers (16 years and over) to **join the Woy Woy Night Patrol** which runs at three sites in Woy Woy.
- Get a group together to **join a monthly donation roster** – making sandwiches, snacks packs or toiletry packs for the Vinnies Van.
- **Join as an individual** get involved with one of the teams.



Volunteers can show people in need that people do care, creating a genuine community of friends from all walks of life. We can also provide people with access to other Vinnies support.

If you can contribute some time once a month and are interested in finding out more, please email the team at to [woywoyv@vinnies.org.au](mailto:woywoyv@vinnies.org.au) or contact Viniana Tamanitoakula, Vinnies Metro Vans Volunteer Support Officer at [Viniana.Tamanitoakula@vinnies.org.au](mailto:Viniana.Tamanitoakula@vinnies.org.au)



Food assistance and vouchers



Fuel vouchers.



Financial assistance.

**206 RAILWAY ROAD**  
WOY WOY.

**FRIDAY 7:30PM - 8:00PM.**



Clothing and other material goods.



Accommodation



A friendly face and listening ear

**226 RAILWAY ROAD**  
WOY WOY.

**FRIDAY 8:05PM - 8:35PM.**

**LIENS PARK and BURGH ROAD**  
WOY WOY.

**FRIDAY 8:45PM - 9:10PM.**



# CHRISTMAS APPEAL

## Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Primary

Thank you so much to the Mini-Vinnies students of Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School, Terrigal, for their kind donation and all of their efforts to assist vulnerable members of our local community. These food items were donated to Coast Shelter, which provides cooked meals for anyone who walks into their premises in North Gosford. Thanks again to the teachers and students of Our Lady Star of the Sea Primary.

*- John Calman, Terrigal Conference rep at Star of the Sea Primary*



## Coolah Hamper Visit

It would not seem like Christmas without our annual Hamper delivery to our twinned Vinnies country Conference, Coolah, 400kms NW of Sydney. For nearly 20 years the families and teachers from St Martin de Porres Primary school in Davidson have generously donated hamper items and toys to the families in need from Coolah and the surrounding areas.

The size and quality of the Hamper baskets and toys is amazing and every year seem to get bigger. Thanks to Dom (one of our Parishioners) and his trailer and a couple of Davidson Vinnies members, we are able to transport the Christmas cheer to this lovely little town Coolah, the home of the Black Stump! This year Dom brought along a niece and nephew who were a great help with lifting and packing the goods into the trailer and car.



The wonderful hospitality we receive from our friends of Coolah Vinnies is very appreciated and we look forward to our trip each year. 800kms in one day is a long trip but we wouldn't miss this Christmas tradition.

We are so grateful to the St Martin's School community teachers, parents and children for their generosity and support over so many years.

*- Davidson St Vincent de Paul members.*



*Vinnies Coolah members Peter, Judy and Kris with Tony, Dominic and his niece and nephew - Lara and Simon*



# OCEAN ROCK POOL

The annual Ocean Rock Pool Charity Swim was held on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> January. The weather forecast was for a hot, sunny day, perfect for a swim.

The whole of the Northern Beaches thought the same and we have never seen so many people at the beaches! Parking was at a premium.

The day started around 8:00 AM at Palm Beach Pool when the two buses and private cars dropped off swimmers. It was starting to warm up so the swimmers lost no time jumping in the pool. This year a group of cyclists and runners also competed covering about 34 KMS by the time they finished at Fairy Bower.

The novel idea to raise much needed funds for mental health on the Northern Suburbs was the brain child of Michael Harrold assisted by his great team. The charities benefiting from the swimmers donations were Lifeline Northern Beaches, Vinnies Northern Beaches, Gotcha-for-Life and Hammond Care Foundation.



So far \$47,000 has been raised, nearly \$9,000 going to Vinnies. Our daughter, Louise and her friend Matthew, completed the swim and raised over \$1,800 in support of our Vinnies work regarding mental health issues.

We were the face of St Vincent de Paul at the pools, proudly wearing our Vinnies caps and T-shirts. Lifeline were also with us to encourage the swimmers and thank them for their wonderful and generous donations to help those in need.

There are 14 rock pools between Palm Beach and Manly, most quite accessible except North Curl Curl, one which involves a bush track and stairs. Well worth it when you get there!

Mick Harrold and team provided drinks and lunch along the way, to keep the swimmers going, thanks to various sponsors. Some cycled between pools and one hardy group of young men and a lady or two ran. An amazing feat made even more amazing as they always arrived soon after the buses!



Carmel and Tony Smith

They donated to Vinnies with our sincere thanks as did a group of young men with special needs who visited at least three of the pools to cheer the swimmers on.

It was a fun, HOT day, but definitely worthwhile in not only raising funds but developing relationships and connections with many generous people.

Well done to all the swimmers, cyclists, runners, supporters and organisers who generosity gave their time and financial support to the worthy cause of mental health.

- Carmel Smith, Davidson St Martin de Porres Conference President



Mum Louise and son Kai



## New store for Northern Beaches



On the 21<sup>st</sup> December, Retail opened a new store on the Northern Beaches, located in the beachside suburb of Newport.

This small boutique style store has been praised by the local community, with positive feedback from customers and donors alike. Whilst the store is still actively seeking volunteers, we were blessed to onboard several local community members in the initial weeks of trading who are enjoying their Vinnies volunteer journey.

Father Richard Sadowski, the local Parish Priest, kindly blessed the store on the 19<sup>th</sup> December as part of the official opening. We were honoured to be joined by Conference Members across the Northern Beaches Region, including Avalon Conference and Mona Vale Sacred Heart Conference.

Our Newport store has a wonderful variety of clothing, accessories and homewares for men, women, and children. You will also find a great selection of the Vinnies REcycle range which offers beautiful pieces for the home, whilst minimising landfill and supporting sustainability.



- Gemma Presley, Acting Regional Manager, Retail Metropolitan, Retail and Logistics

## Vinnies re/CYCLE Range – Selling Fast

Every item has an impact. With the current fast pace of fashion consumption, nearly 6000 kilograms of clothing and textile waste goes to Australian landfills every 10 minutes.

re/CYCLE is our new eco-friendly range. Made from recycled textiles and materials, our new circular approach means some of our pre-loved items along with many other diverted textiles are being used to create a range of classic yet colourful styles with minimal impact on the environment.

The re/CYCLE range has just been refilled across locations in metro

Sydney. The range includes woven rugs, Turkish towels – and bathmats are a much welcome addition to our donations in store.

Selling fast in all locations. This is another great initiative in becoming more eco-friendly in our approach to revenue building. Much like all items sold in our shops, profits from re/CYCLE sales will support people experiencing poverty, homelessness and hardship throughout the state.

To find out more, visit: <https://www.vinnies.org.au/nsw/get-involved/vinnies-recycle-range>



## Metro Youth at University Orientation Days

2024 has started off big for Youth membership recruitment. Vinnies Metro Youth were in attendance at 10 different university and college campuses during orientation weeks/days throughout February, promoting the Society to the next generation of Vincentians and Society volunteers. Vinnies Uni Clubs have been holding welcome gatherings to bring together their new recruits and welcome them to the Society. We look forward to seeing the amazing work these new members will achieve.



*Vinnies Metro Youth Engagement Officer at the  
Campion College O-Week stall.*

*University of Technology, Sydney, Vinnies Society  
members at their O-Week stall.*



*University of Notre Dame Vinnies Society  
President, Vinnies Sydney Youth Representative  
and Vinnies Metro Engagement Officers attending  
the O-Week stall.*

*NSW Vinnies Society Welcome Picnic*



## Vinnies Metro Youth Programs

Vinnies Metro Youth members and volunteers continue to do good works through the amazing Buddies Day and Homework Help programs. These programs are all about supporting the children in our community with extra care and compassion, taking them out for a fun day on the weekend or spending the afternoon with them helping with their school work or learning new things. Our trained and supported members and volunteers are positive role models to the children and participate alongside our children, ensuring their time with us is both safe and lots of fun!



*Volunteers for the Vinnies Metro  
Homework Help Program*

*Christmas Cards made by the children  
as part of the Homework Help  
Program*



*Buddies Day volunteers and children  
participants*

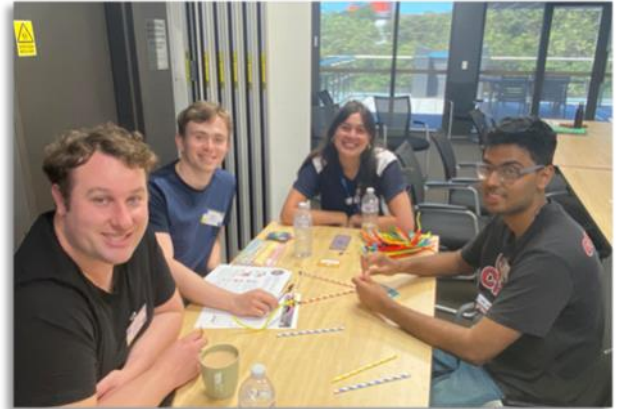


# YOUTH MEMBERS RETREAT & PLANNING DAY

On Saturday, 23 January, Youth members from across Sydney Metro Region met at State Office at Lewisham for a Retreat and Planning Day. This day aimed to foster collaboration and connection between Metro's different university Youth groups:

University of Sydney Vinnies Volunteers  
Chatswood Young Adults Conference  
Notre Dame Vinnies Society  
Sydney Youth and Young Adult Conference  
University of Technology Vinnies  
Macquarie University Vinnies  
ACU Health and Science Vinnies Society.

Throughout the day, the Conferences were provided the opportunity to develop their Vincentian identity and collaborate to devise key goals they would like to achieve this year.



Our Youth members, guided by Rebecca Hall (Wollongong Youth Representative) and Marissa Papaspiros (Sydney Youth Representative) were invited to create a vision board for their team's aspirations. We explored the history of the Society, the value of a Home Visits and what being a Conference means.

We welcomed a panel of diverse members and volunteers, to share their experiences and knowledge of Vinnies:

Michelle (Broken Bay Central Council President)  
John (Sydney Archdiocese Central Council President)  
Vaivi (Vinnies Van Volunteer)  
Sarah (Past UNSW Vinnies Youth Conference President)  
Amy (Past UNSW Vinnies Youth Conference President).

Alysha Wong-O'Connor (Youth Engagement Officer, Metro) facilitated a session providing the groups with a detailed understanding of the different volunteering programs offered by the Society, as well as useful engagement strategies to recruit potential volunteers and members during Orientation Weeks. The Youth Executives were then joined by Ashvini Ambihapahar (Regional Director, Metro) who, with Alysha, Rebecca and Marissa supported the groups to engage in clear planning and strategy development for the year ahead including the logistics of running programs and welcome events. The groups then collaborated to develop their empathy for the people we serve by playing the 'Brain Architecture Game'.



This event was very valuable to all members who reflected and developed their Vincentian identity amongst like-minded peers.



*It is my hope that, ...whenever we attempt to read the signs of the times it is helpful to listen to young people and the elderly. Both represent a source of hope for every people. The elderly bring with them memory and the wisdom of experience, which warns us not to foolishly repeat our past mistakes. Young people call us to renewed and expansive hope, for they represent new directions for humanity and open us up to the future, lest we cling to a nostalgia for structures and customs which are no longer life-giving in today's world.*

*Challenges exist to be overcome! Let us be realists, but without losing our joy, our boldness and our hope-filled commitment. Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of missionary vigour!*

- Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* ('The Gospel of Joy'), 2013.



## Vinnies School Social Justice Workshops

The Vinnies Metro Schools Engagement Team has a suite of social justice workshops designed to facilitate meaningful engagement in social justice issues and provide opportunities for participants to put their faith into action. Workshops are delivered to primary students, high school students, and teacher or parent groups.

School Social Justice Workshops include an introduction to the St Vincent

de Paul Society and hands-on activities (with donated materials from the school) to support Vinnies good works and further the educational understanding of the various social justice issues covered in the workshops.

Workshop topics include: Housing and Homelessness, Poverty and Cost of Living, Human Dignity and Catholic Social Teaching, Migrants and Refugees, Environmental Stewardship.

If you or a school you engage with would like to know more about these workshops, contact [Metro.Schools@vinnies.org.au](mailto:Metro.Schools@vinnies.org.au)



## Vinnies Metro Youth at Ignite Conference

The Vinnies Metro Schools & Youth staff and Youth members had a fun and inspirational 4 days back in September 2023, gathering with hundreds of Catholic high schoolers, leaders, teachers & parents at the 2023 Ignite Conference. We saw and experienced real-world formation, powerful worship and faith in action. We got to meet people from all over Australia and cannot wait to cross paths with them again, hopefully joining a Vinnies Conference or volunteering at a Vinnies Service.

Ignite Conference is an event of Ignite Youth, a national Catholic youth ministry of Emmanuel Community in Brisbane, hosted in Sydney by the Diocese of Broken Bay at the Broken Bay Cathedral Precinct in Waitara.

A very special shout out to the Vinnies NSW Youth Spiritual Advisor Maddy de Dassel for attending to run the Vinnies stall with Vinnies Metro staff. We look forward to attending the 2024 Conference - if you'd like to know more about it, please contact the Vinnies Metro Schools & Youth Team.

## Vinnies Resources for School Communities

Vinnies NSW Schools & Youth Engagement Team have many wonderful and engaging resources available for school communities, and we encourage all Conference Members to also take a look at these resources and let your school community know about them or to speak with the Schools Engagement Team.

**Vinnies Spirituality Guide for Liturgical Year (B)** [https://bit.ly/](https://bit.ly/MiniVinniesSpiritualityGuideB)

[MiniVinniesSpiritualityGuideB](https://bit.ly/MiniVinniesSpiritualityGuideB)

**Mini Vinnies Kit** <https://bit.ly/MiniVinniesStarterKit23>

**Vinnies High School Conference Kit** [https://bit.ly/](https://bit.ly/VinniesHighSchoolConferenceStarterKit23)

[VinniesHighSchoolConferenceStarterKit23](https://bit.ly/VinniesHighSchoolConferenceStarterKit23)

**Vinnies Social Justice Factsheets** <https://youthnsw.vinnies.org.au/resources/>

You can also find many more resources at the Vinnies Youth website <https://youthnsw.vinnies.org.au/>





## VINNIES SERVICE MEDALLION (VSM) PROGRAM

As members of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, we are passionate about making a positive impact in the lives of those facing disadvantage. We are equally committed to fostering the next generation of compassionate leaders who embody our values of social justice and service. The Vinnies Service Medallion (VSM) program is a testament to these commitments, offering a structured pathway for young people (Years 7-12) to become active agents of social change.

The VSM program empowers young leaders through a unique combination of learning and action. Students engage in meaningful volunteering and fundraising activities, directly addressing pressing social issues like poverty, inequality, and environmental justice. This hands-on experience allows them to develop essential skills like leadership, teamwork, communication, and problem-solving, equipping them to become future leaders in their communities.

Structured in three progressive stages, the VSM program journey allows students to deepen their involvement and understanding at each level:

- **Bronze (Years 7-8):** Introduces students to key social justice concepts and provides opportunities for initial engagement through volunteering and fundraising activities.
- **Silver (Years 9-10):** Offers tailored volunteering opportunities focused on specific community needs.

- **Gold (Years 11-12):** Encourages advanced involvement in social justice initiatives, including advocacy and project management.

The 2023 VSM pilot program in the Metropolitan Region was warmly received by six participating schools, paving the way for its exciting statewide rollout in 2024. We encourage schools interested in joining this impactful initiative to contact us at [vsm@vinnies.org.au](mailto:vsm@vinnies.org.au).

VSM coordinator, Maggie Lipu, strongly believes that the program simply draws upon the multitude of strengths that young people already possess. "The VSM program simply harnesses the strengths of young people and allows them to make a lasting difference today."

There are many ways you can be involved in supporting the VSM program and empowering young changemakers:

**Spread the word:** Share this article with your family, friends, and colleagues to raise awareness of this impactful program.

**Support the program:** Your time and financial contributions can significantly contribute to the expansion and success of the VSM program.

For more details about the VSM program and how to get involved, please visit the [VSM website](https://www.vinnies.org.au/vsm) or contact the VSM team at [vsm@vinnies.org.au](mailto:vsm@vinnies.org.au).



SAVE THE DATE – 2024 Mini Vinnies Gathering

Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> July 2024, Australian Catholic University, Strathfield

*Invitations and more event details will be released .*

**The Mini Vinnies Gathering is an encouraging opportunity to bring together the passion and enthusiasm of our youngest members across Sydney, Broken Bay, and Greater Western Sydney Central Councils. Students and teachers receive both spiritual and social justice formation and we encourage Conference Members to attend with their local Mini Vinnies school group to support and encourage their young members.**



## ‘LEADING WITH IMPACT’

### Unlock your Leadership Potential with ‘Leading with Impact’, the Society’s New Leadership Program from the University of Notre Dame

Last year, the Society rolled out a new leadership program that was co-created with the University of Notre Dame.

**Leading with Impact** is specifically designed for aspiring and current Regional and Central Council Presidents, as well as any interested member of the Society thinking about future leadership positions. It provides a unique opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to lead with purpose and impact from a Vincentian perspective.

The course draws on the University’s vast experience in leadership development for Catholic organisations.

Participants will gain formation and a deeper understanding of leadership theory, while also learning practical strategies and best practices for leading and managing service-orientated organisations. It is broken down into seven modules:

- Formation
- Leadership and management
- Governance
- Financial reporting
- Counselling skills for leaders
- Supporting member and volunteer engagement
- Digital communication and security

Starting in 2023, the first cohort was a pilot group consisting of member leaders from different Central Councils. They have completed 4 of the 7 modules and we have received very positive feedback.

We are planning to start with a new cohort in the second half of this year and are calling on expressions of interest from members. Participants can be current leaders, those who aspire to be in a leadership position, or those who demonstrate leadership skills but may not yet recognise themselves as a leader.

Young Vincentians are encouraged to apply.

The program is delivered in an in-person group setting at the Notre Dame campus in Broadway. Travel and accommodation are paid for by the Society.

If interested, please contact Linda Paull [linda.paull@vinnies.org.au](mailto:linda.paull@vinnies.org.au) to secure a place.







# Please ASSIST A STUDENT

Access to education is a proven way of assisting individuals to reach their full potential and is a pathway to breaking the cycle of poverty. Students are supported at all levels of education - primary, secondary and tertiary - and the program is highly valued by participants.

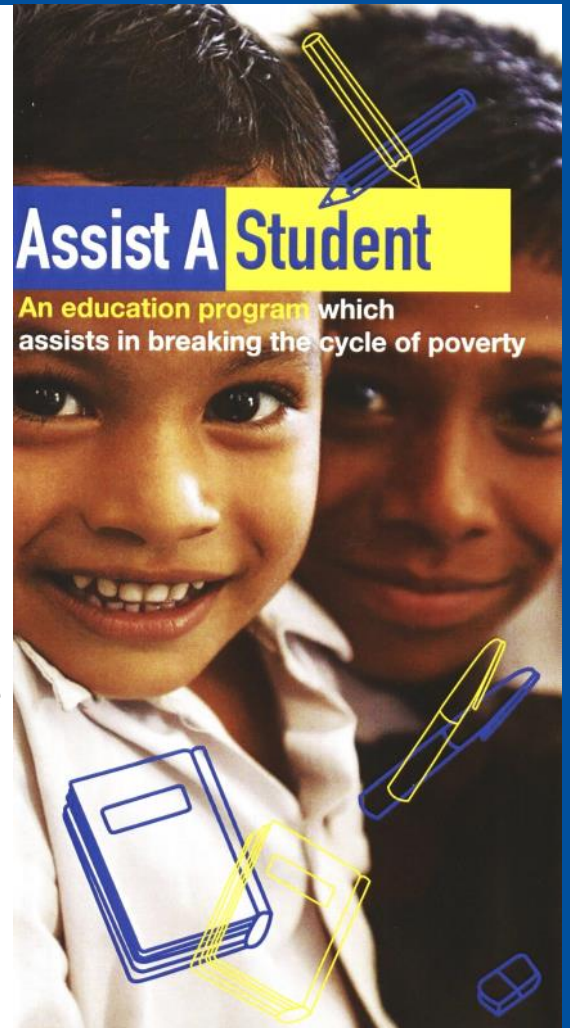
The **Assist A Student** program gives you the opportunity to provide funding to support the education of a student in one of our partner countries for one year.

In many Asia Pacific countries, poverty excludes individuals from reaching their full potential by being a barrier to opportunities, including accessing education.

Your donation of \$100 or more will make all the difference for a primary, secondary or tertiary student in one of our partner countries.

The **Assist A Student** program reflects the Mission of the St Vincent de Paul Society - to serve the poor with love, respect, justice, hope and joy. We do this by sharing some of ourselves - what we have - with those in need in our neighbouring countries.

Think of the great opportunities that you or your Conference can make in bringing education into the reach of young people around the world.



- I am an individual assisting a student; OR
- I am assisting a student on behalf of a group

NAME (group or individual): \_\_\_\_\_

CONTACT NAME (for group): \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

SUBURB: \_\_\_\_\_

STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ POSTCODE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

**I would like to donate (Donations over \$2 are tax deductible):**

\$100    \$200    \$300   OR  \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to receive a certificate for this donation.

Thank you for your support.

**Payment method:**

Debit my credit card (details below)

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Mastercard    Visa   Card Expiry: \_\_ / \_\_

NAME ON CARD: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

Cheque, payable to 'St Vincent de Paul Society'

Please complete your details and send to:  
 Assist A Student Program,  
 St Vincent de Paul Sate Council Office  
 PO Box 5  
 PETERSHAM, NSW 2049



## Community Connections – does this interest 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 [MetroMembers@vinnies.org.au](mailto:MetroMembers@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 20 – Sunday 26 May 2024).

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 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.



## Member Support for Compliance

St Vincent de Paul Society NSW is a committed registered child-safe organisation. So that we can meet this commitment, we have developed support for Members. The following 3 compliances are required for Members, Volunteers, and Employees:

- NSW Working With Children Check (every 5 years); Police Check (every 3 years); Vinnies Child Safe /Safeguarding (every 2 years).

**Without all 3, a Member's status is set to 'inactive' in the database and they can't engage in any Conference activity.**

### Applying for Background Checks-Working With Children's Check (WWCC) and Police Check

- Instruction documents are available – just ask your Conference President or Member & Community Engagement Coordinator (MCEC) at [MetroMembers@vinnies.org.au](mailto:MetroMembers@vinnies.org.au)

For assistance, ask a co-Member or contact your MCEC or your Vinnies Support Centre Coordinator.

#### Working With Children's Check (WWCC)

- Go to <http://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/> Once your WWCC is acquired or renewed, results go to you. Advise your President and MCEC of: WWCC number, expiry date and confirm your DOB. We use these details to verify and register you with The Office of Children's Guardian as a volunteer Member with Vinnies. Your WWCC details are added to your Society records.

#### Online Police Check

- Go to: <https://svdpmetroregion.nationalcrimecheck.com.au/> Results go to Vinnies. Once applied, advise your MCEC. Once processed, you'll be advised and your Police Check details will be added to your Society records.

### Vinnies NSW Child Safe /Safeguarding Training

- **Online:** The old Vinnies Learning Centre system has been replaced by the new MAVS (Members and Volunteers) Training Portal - you will receive an email with log-in details to the Training Portal to complete your Child Safe/ Safeguarding training.
- *Additional short 30-45min courses are required too which will be shown on your homepage: Orientation, Code of Conduct, Privacy, Safety. Other optional courses are shown in the content library.*

If you have problems related to navigating the training portal or logging in, email [MAVS.Support@vinnies.org.au](mailto:MAVS.Support@vinnies.org.au) and feel free to Cc your MCEC.

Zoom sessions will be held regularly, each is 1.5 hours. Ask your MCE Coordinator or email us at [MetroMembers@vinnies.org.au](mailto:MetroMembers@vinnies.org.au) and we'll assist you in registering, but generally at least 5 Members are required. Face-to-Face sessions require 10 Members so generally the Conference or Regional President will get a group together and book with your MCEC. **We're always happy to be of service!**

## New Members and Volunteers (MAVS) Website – coming soon

Our new refreshed volunteer and members portal known as the MAVS website (that includes the Training Portal) is due to launch in mid-April. It is secure, easy to use and an excellent way of keeping in touch with news items and articles of interest. It aligns with Vinnies' goals to **Excel, Grow and Cultivate**. Our key aim is to continue to improve automation and to create a sense of community for our Volunteers and Members.

The MAVS website will keep you informed on coming events, provide easier ways to apply for volunteering opportunities and complete training. Here's an insight into what some of the other new features and benefits will include:

- **Improved and refreshed website:** offers an updated look/feel to the MAVS website
- **Ease of sign-in to the MAVS website:** once registered, you will experience a secure and easy way to sign-in.
- **Self-Service Profile:** you can enter and update some of your own personal profile details.
- **Learning:** you will be able to view your learning and complete any necessary training that is required.
- **Volunteering opportunities:** for those interested in volunteering, the new MAVS website has an easy and simple way to search for volunteering opportunities.

MAVS Training: From 20 February 2024 all learning/training became available from the new MAVS website. If you require any assistance with training, please contact us at [MAVS.Support@vinnies.org.au](mailto:MAVS.Support@vinnies.org.au) and we will send you specific instructions on how to access this. These have already been sent to all new Members and those due to complete training.



# CUSTOMISED VINNIES FUNDRAISING PAGES FOR CONFERENCES

When using our Community  
Fundraising Portal, you can:

- Update and personalise your page at any time
- Share your personalised URL or QR code for quick and easy online donations
- No cash handling required by your conference and all donors will receive a receipt automatically via email
- Saves you time and paperwork

**Please see here for other conference pages:**

**[fundraise.vinniesnsw.org.au](https://fundraise.vinniesnsw.org.au)**

If your Conference is interested in having a customised page or just want to have a chat about fundraising, please don't hesitate to reach out to Caroline on [caroline.casse@vinnies.org.au](mailto:caroline.casse@vinnies.org.au).



**St Vincent de Paul Society**  
*good works*



# Vinnies NO INTEREST LOANS

**A safe way to borrow.  
An affordable alternative to credit.**

Borrow up to \$2000 for essential goods and services. Repay only what you borrow over a term that suits you\*.

\*limits apply

**NO FEES  
NO CHARGES  
no worries!**



## What is NILs?

No Interest Loans (NILs) provide individuals and families on low incomes with access to safe, fair, affordable credit with no fees or charges – ever.

## Am I eligible?

- ✓ I hold a Health Care Card / Pension Card OR earn less than \$70,000 before tax (\$100,000 for couples or people with dependants)
- ✓ I have lived at my current or previous address for at least 3 months\*  
\*exceptions can apply
- ✓ I can show that I can afford to repay the loan

## What can I use NILs for?

Loans are available up to \$2000 for essential goods and services including:

- Household Items
- Car Repairs & Registration
- Medical & Dental
- Technology
- Furniture
- Education

## Loans are not available for:

Bills, cash, debts, food, fines or penalties



Call : **1800 484 664**

Email: [nils@vinnies.org.au](mailto:nils@vinnies.org.au)

Visit: [vinnies.org.au/NILS](http://vinnies.org.au/NILS)



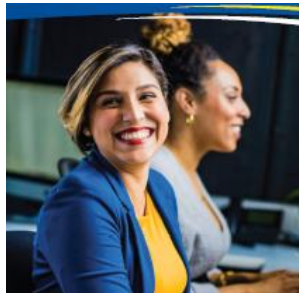


## Vinnies Assist—13 18 12

### WHAT IS VINNIES ASSIST?

Vinnies Assist provides information, referral pathways and resources that can be accessed by, our Members, Conferences, Volunteers, Staff and external stakeholders to obtain up to date information from across all the Society's 7 Directorates:

Office of the CEO, Vinnies Services, Finance, Membership, Volunteers and Regional Operations, Corporate Services, Commercial Operations, Fundraising and Communications.



### WHAT WE CAN PROVIDE:

Vinnies Assist aims to bridge the gap for members, volunteers, staff and the general public requiring up to date information, guidance and support to assist the People we Assist:

- Telephone support to meet immediate needs
- Access to crisis and short-term accommodation
- Immediate referral services to our Welfare services
- Support to access Vinnies Services across NSW
  - Homelessness & Housing
  - Disability & Inclusion Services
  - Health Services
- Support in accessing external services

**The Vinnies Assist operational hours 8.30am - 4.30pm**

### ACCESSING INFORMATION OR REFERRAL SERVICES

can be made by contacting **13 18 12** pressing **option 5**, emailing [vinnies@vinnies.org.au](mailto:vinnies@vinnies.org.au) for general information or to make a referral to our Vinnies Services or Member support services — [intake.officer@vinnies.org.au](mailto:intake.officer@vinnies.org.au).

### 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 five-yearly 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 like to 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.

### 2024—Key Social Justice dates

These social justice days through 2024 provide a great opportunity to promote awareness of Vinnies in your local community and to highlight both the good works and the policy advocacy of the Society.

26 May: Sorry Day

27 May - 3 June: National Reconciliation Week

1 June: Vinnies NSW 2024 Social Justice Forum

5 June: World Environment Day

16 - 22 June: Refugee Week

20 June: World Refugee Day

7 - 14 July: NAIDOC Week

30 July: World Day Against Trafficking in Persons

5 - 11 August: Homelessness Week

25 August: Social Justice Sunday

1 September: World Day of Prayer for Care of Creation

29 September: World Day of Migrants and Refugees

10 October: World Mental Health Day

13 - 19 October: Anti-Poverty Week

13 - 19 October: Rosalie Rendu Forum (day to be confirmed)

Mid November: World Day of the Poor (day to be confirmed)

25 November: International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

3 December: International Day of People with Disability

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/>



## 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:

[MetroMembers@vinnies.org.au](mailto:MetroMembers@vinnies.org.au)

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

### MATTHEW TALBOT HOSTEL OZANAM LEARNING CENTRE

Calling all Members and Volunteers. The Matthew Talbot Hostel and Ozanam Learning Centre are seeking your support in their good works assisting the homeless and vulnerable people of Sydney.

The three types of roles available are:

#### Community Support Volunteer—Ozanam Learning Centre (weekdays 10am-4pm)

- Greeting and assisting all who visit the Centre
- Handling phone enquiries and providing administrative support

#### Dining Room Attendant—Matthew Talbot Hostel (weekends only)

- Capacity to lift e.g. chairs onto tables, trays of cutlery
- Helping to set, clear and clean tables

#### Kitchen Support Attendant—Matthew Talbot Hostel (weekends only)

- Assisting in preparing, serving and clearing tea service
- Assisting with vegetable preparations

If you are interested in lending a hand and would like to find out more, please contact the Volunteer Engagement Coordinator—Metro, Christopher Stevens at [Christopher.Stevens@vinnies.org.au](mailto:Christopher.Stevens@vinnies.org.au)

## THANK YOU

### MAVS Platform

Have you visited the 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 [MetroMembers@vinnies.org.au](mailto:MetroMembers@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/>