



Newsletter

Greater Western Sydney Central Council Newsletter EDITION 1, 2024

Metro Regional Director - Ash 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 has provided vital assistance to approximately 3,882 primary people—a staggering 25% increase compared to the same period last year.

Our dedication to fostering membership and community engagement remains unwavering. Through intensive recruitment drives, we've warmly welcomed new members into our Vincentian family across various conferences, including New Liverpool All Saints, Hoxton Park, Glebe, Marsfield, Kensington, and Beverly Hills. With three more recruitment drives on the horizon, our community continues to expand and thrive.

Moreover, our impact within schools and youth communities has been profound. From active participation in events like Oweek to meaningful engagements with regional council meetings, 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.

Looking forward, we have the Winter Appeal coming up and community sleepouts. These gatherings not only foster a sense of community spirit but also provide vital support to those in need.

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.

Ash



*Do your little bit of good where you are;
it's those little bits of good put together
that overwhelm the world.*

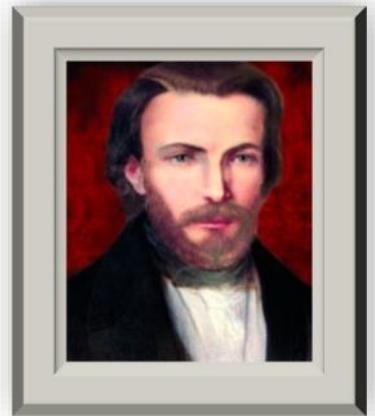
Desmond Tutu



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 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.

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Newsletter

Blackheath Conference - helping put the Vinnies Strategic Plan into practice

Blackheath is a small Conference of 8 members. But there are many ways in which we feel we are “walking the talk” of the Vinnies Strategic Plan issued last year.

The first Goal in the Plan is to EXCEL - by amplifying the impact of our service offering.

[The Strategic Plan indicates that drivers of Goal 1 include](#) *strengthening internal pathways, networks and collaboration between Conferences.*

In seeking to strengthen *internal pathways*, our Conference works closely with colleagues in Metro Members and in the various other divisions within the Vinnies structure. Whilst not wishing to offend others who have assisted us, we feel we must single out the wonderful support we have received, and continue to receive, from Metro Members staff such as Lauraine Steward and Janice Stokes, and more recently from Earnest Henry and Paul Longobardi. Our successful fundraising efforts at the recent Christmas Appeal were greatly assisted by Earnest in arranging a number of support items for us.

Over many years now we have also had a very successful *collaboration* with the Katoomba Vinnies Conference, where we share the operation of the Katoomba and Blackheath Family Assistance Centre (FAC). Currently Blackheath Conference staffs the FAC on Mondays and Katoomba Conference on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Our two Conferences have found this to be a very successful way to provide assistance to members of the Upper Blue Mountains community.

The Presidents of the two conferences share minutes so that each knows what the other is doing, and they are in regular contact on issues of relevance to both conferences.



Blackheath members Elizabeth Doolan and Les Hayward inputting food voucher into CAMS at the Katoomba and Blackheath FAC -

person being assisted not shown for reasons of privacy



The second Goal is to GROW – by [extending the reach of our services](#).

The Strategic Plan indicates that a key success driver in Goal 2 (and indeed in all three Goals) involves *developing “partnerships”*.

Partnerships have been and continue to be fundamental to the successful operation of Blackheath Conference.

Whilst our Conference has always worked in partnership with our local Sacred Heart Blackheath parish, often receiving referrals from our Parish priest when people knocked on his door seeking assistance, the onset of Covid in 2020 added a new dimension to the partnership.

As we were unable to operate out of the then very confined space in the old FAC premises in Katoomba, we were permitted by the Parish to operate out of our much larger Blackheath Parish Hall, where “social distancing” was possible. This meant that, except during complete lockdown periods, we continued to offer a place for people to visit and seek our assistance. When Government restrictions allowed, people travelled from across the Upper Blue Mountains to receive assistance from us in Blackheath.

After the Covid crisis had settled, the Parish started an initiative to bring local people together on Wednesday mornings in the Parish Hall. It’s called Cuppas Together and offers morning tea and camaraderie to parishioners and community members. It clearly filled a need and has been very successful.

In further partnership with the Parish, our Conference has offered Vinnies support during the time Cuppas Together operates. We do this from a separate meeting room beside the Hall, so that people can have the necessary privacy in their contact with us. But generally the people seeking our support also participate in the camaraderie of Cuppas.

Another recent Parish initiative has been the development of a Kitchen Garden beside the Parish Hall. The people we assist in Vinnies have also benefitted from the produce from the garden.

Recently, our Conference has also developed a strong partnership relationship with the local Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre (BANC). BANC delivers programs for activities across the Upper Blue Mountains, through government funding. Its vision is a diverse, inclusive and connected community which works together to build its resilience, and its social, environmental and economic sustainability. BANC is an excellent local partner to assist us in seeking to achieve our own strategic goals.

Being aware of the various types of assistance we can offer, BANC regularly refers people to us. And when Vinnies ceased offering EAPA assistance some years back, we were able to refer people to BANC for that assistance, as they were the only Blackheath body offering EAPAs.

Somewhat ironically, when Vinnies decided to allow conferences to again start offering EAPA assistance, the funding that BANC had been relying on to carry out this work was reduced. Being aware that Vinnies was again able to provide this assistance, BANC offered our Conference the use of their premises to carry out EAPA interviews, should we decide to take on the EAPA role.

This is a clear example of growing our support offering, by extending the reach of our services in partnership with BANC. So members of Blackheath Conference decided to accept the challenge. A number of us did the compulsory EAPA training and commenced to offer EAPAs last November using BANC’s premises. In addition, BANC’s receptionist has been taking the EAPA bookings for us. A win win for Blackheath Vinnies, BANC and the community members in need of this type of assistance.

But it doesn’t stop there. Even though our sister Conference in Katoomba had decided that it would not, at this stage, recommence offering EAPA support (there is an ongoing EAPA provider in Katoomba so the urgency that existed in Blackheath didn’t exist in Katoomba), one of our Katoomba colleagues did the training and, whilst remaining a very active member of the Katoomba conference, has joined our Blackheath EAPA support roster. This is another clear example of our two conferences furthering the driver of *collaboration between Conferences* in Goal 1.



From left Vinnies members John Tweedie (Blackheath conference) and Karen Edwards (Katoomba conference) with Jade Hudson (BANC co-ordinator) and Marg Golledge (BANC receptionist - seated)

The third Goal in the Strategic Plan is to CULTIVATE – by enabling our people, operational and financial capabilities so that we can deliver more and better outcomes.

The Strategic Plan indicates that drivers of Goal 3 include *member engagement, community engagement and local fundraising.*

In addition to our engagement with the Community through our relationship with BANC and being a visible presence at activities like Cuppas Together, we use our Winter and Christmas Appeals as a means of both member and community engagement.

As well as Parish presentations after Mass for both our Winter and Christmas Appeals, we also maintain a visible presence at Appeal time on Blackheath’s main street, Govetts Leap Road, and at the Blackheath Growers Market.

Whilst the main aim of our Appeals is successful fundraising, we also engage with people about our work. Indeed, one of our current and very active members joined the Conference after having initially engaged in conversation with Conference members at the Growers Market during one of our Appeals. A wonderful example of what can happen when we get out into the community.



Blackheath Growers Market 10 December 2023 -Blackheath members from left Sigi Cerveney, Karen Hayward, Les Hayward and John Tweedie
Marquee, T-shirts, caps and table cloth courtesy of Metro Members



The Conferences of St Clair & St Marys got together to run a BBQ on Remembrance Day 2023, Saturday 11 November at the Minchinbury Bunnings Warehouse. Members from both Conferences attended on the day from 7.30am - 5.00pm

A very successful day was had by all selling over 70kgs of sausages, 20kgs of onions and over 200 drinks.

The support for the Vinnies brand was amazing and humbling that it was hard to keep up with the never ending line of people wanting to support the Society.

Many thanks to members of the St Clair Conference, Earnest Henry for Society support with the loan of BBQ kit including aprons, caps, utensils, bread containers and an Eftpos terminal. We raised over \$1,600 on the day but more importantly showcased the Society and the work we do as well as a great team building day. The eftpos terminal proved a God send as approximately 90 transactions were completed by people who didn't carry cash.



L-R: Members of Our Lady of the Rosary Conference St Marys: Violet Peloe, Peter Morgan, Denis Corkill, Charlie Borg & Leon Ross (Nepean Regional Council President)

Katoomba Conference members shared Christmas lunch on 22 December with the residents and the Housing staff. Due to heavy rain, they made the best of it in the underground car park. Despite the damp conditions, the festive mood and warm connections were apparent.



Residents Janet & Greg Kelly & conference member Lucian Keegel

Our Members. all so compassionate and active, walk the Mission of Frederic Ozanam:
In my life I want to become better and do a little good...
Yours must be a work of love, of kindness, you must give your time, your talents, yourselves.



My Vincentian Story by Peter Humphrey of St Monicas Richmond Conference

As a young teacher I had long desired to find some way of living out the Christian Spirit, service organisations like APEX were not satisfying my need. So in 1980 when our Parish Priest called for people to join the St. Vincent de Paul Society I went along to the Orange St. Joseph's Conference. I was greeted enthusiastically mentored and started home visitations that week. The Conference members were almost all retired men to whom I am eternally indebted for the thorough grounding that they gave me in the Vincentian Spirit, introducing me to the works of Federick Ozanam and St Vincent, and giving me such excellent examples of love and dedication.

2 years later I was invited to join the Bathurst Diocesan Council of the Society as their Youth Representative. A bit old I thought at 33years, but I accepted the challenge. Then 3 years later when elections were held for the position of Diocesan President I nominated as a could not see any other willing candidates and gained the job. this was a great challenge as I had no previous leadership experience. The Term was for 5 years and I travelled extensively throughout the Diocese which extended from Lithgow to Coonamble and from Mudgee to Cowra. During this time, we had the Nyngan Flood, upgraded a number of Vinies shops, introduced electricity vouchers and implemented central banking. It was a wonderful experience with many inspiring and spiritual people.

At the end of my term as Diocesan President I became the Conference President for several years before moving to Kurrajong where I joined the Richmond Conference and again met many wonderful people, Ron Horan, Vince McMahan, Max Doyle and many others. Eventually I was persuaded to take over the Presidency from Bill Jansen. I said for 1 year only but I think it extended to 5 years.

So all up its been 40 years of membership and I have learnt so much through meeting such inspirational people, not only other members of the Society but especially the people we have assisted whose love and endurance in the face of poverty and hardship is amazing. and leads to the question. Could I love and endure under similar conditions?

Peter Humphrey

On behalf of members of Richmond conference and the Nepean region, I congratulate Peter on receiving a lifetime membership and thank him wholeheartedly for his many years of dedicated service which, by his own words, has been a rich experience. A tremendous achievement indeed. Congratulations Peter and may you continue to serve the Society and clients for many more years.



Award being presented: Left to right: Lachlan O'Donohoe ,Jane Wilson, Kirsten Pietersen ,Fred McEnearney Peter Humphrey, Michael Want , Catherine Little John, Emanuel Deguara



St Monica's North Parramatta Conference – Felicitation of members with Lifetime Service Awards and 10 Year Service Award during the 9am Sunday mass on 28th January 2024

Father Ephraim Lam, Parish Priest of St Monica's Church, North Parramatta felicitated Peter Handcock and Peter Mooney with Lifetime Service Awards and Felix Chiu with 10 Year Service Award for their selfless service and commitment to the Vinnies cause.

Father Lam shared a few words of appreciation to highlight the work done by them and spoke of the people they have helped over the years and the difference that they have made to those lives. Father also acknowledged the contribution of their spouses and invited them to come forward along with their husbands to receive the awards.

Father Lam highlighted St Monica's North Parramatta Conference contributions over the calendar year 2023.

~ 135 visits this year which included:

35 visits with Christmas hampers (each hamper had four to five shopping bags) which meant organising around 150 shopping bags.

Around 100 visits during the year to provide support with Food Vouchers, Vinnies Stores Clothing Vouchers, household furniture items and essential white goods.



Felix Chiu, Margaret (wife) and Fr Ephraim Lam



Peter Handcock, Kris (wife) and Fr Ephraim Lam



Peter Mooney, Marea (wife) and Fr Ephraim Lam



Christ the King Primary School North Rocks

Leading in Faith & Social Justice

The North Rocks Parish has always been a Generous and caring community.

This is consistently borne out by the generous support that is always forthcoming during the Vinnies Winter & Christmas appeals. Continually providing overwhelming financial support, as well as food and toys for the under privileged in our local community.

It is no surprise that this generosity flows through to the parish school. There is an abundance of innovative social justice projects that emanate from this school community. The school Principal, along with teachers, parents and students realise the importance of social justice as an important part of their Christian lives and religious education.

During 2023, the school community assisted the North Rocks Vinnies conference with several initiatives including “starter packs” consisting of toasters, electric jugs, dinnerware, cutlery, mugs, glasses and pots and pans that were distributed directly to the clients and also by the Harris Park Vinnies Support Centre.

The “build a bag” initiative provided a bag of essential items for homeless people. Thirty of these packs were distributed through the Matthew Talbot centre in Woolloomooloo. Excess items were forwarded to the Harris Park Vinnies Support Centre for distribution. These packs included a large duffle bag which contained a ground cover, a blanket, a torch, a first aid kit, 2 drink bottles, hand warmers, 2 pairs of socks, a notebook and pen, deodorant, toothbrushes, toothpaste and a raincoat.

Conference members were invited to attend the school winter sleepout and address students explaining the situations and circumstances that lead to homelessness and also the affect it has on both the homeless and their families.

A financial donation, collected from the students and school community was presented to our conference during mission week.

The supply of festive foods provided an essential and important part of our Christmas hampers. This provided an opportunity for all to enjoy and celebrate the spirit of Christmas.

It is a privilege to be involved with such a caring, generous and supportive community. The support our conference receives from Christ the King school community is always overwhelming. In the 12 years that I have been involved as a Vincentian, I never cease to be amazed and inspired by the continued support and innovating programs fostered by the social justice team at Christ the King Primary School North Rocks. I hope that other parish and school communities will take up the challenge and initiate programs similar to those shown by this progressive school.

Ron Giacomelli

President North Rocks Conference





FAITH IS ALIVE AT CHRIST THE KING PRIMARY SCHOOL

At Christ the King Primary School, faith is not a static concept. It is a vibrant and dynamic force that pulsates through every facet of the educational experience. Here, faith is alive, breathing life into the corridors, classrooms, and interactions that define the school's community. The ethos at Christ the King goes beyond mere religious education; it fosters an environment where faith is an active participant in shaping character, influencing decisions, and inspiring actions. This living faith is a guiding light, instilling a sense of purpose, compassion, and understanding among students, teachers, and staff.

Build a Bag:

In a heartwarming mission at Christ the King, the Build a Bag initiative is not only extending a helping hand to the homeless in their time of need, but is also nurturing teachers. The mission's core objective is to alleviate the suffering of the homeless by providing them with care beyond this noble cause, the initiative is the Fruits of the Spirit, drawing inspiration at Christ the King are not only rooms, but are actively witnessing approach the mission with compas-

The initiative involves a profound and students discuss the significance linking them to specific Fruits of the a powerful educational tool, con-principles that guide it.



the spiritual growth of both students and tive is to alleviate the suffering of the home-bags that cater to their daily essentials. Be- ingeniously intertwined with the teachings of ration and guidance from God's word. Stu- hearing about these virtues in their class- their teachers embody these values as they sion and dedication.

dialogue within the classrooms, as teachers of each item being placed in the care bags, Spirit. This intentional conversation serves as necting the act of charity with the spiritual

*Knowledge of the poor and needy
is not gained by pouring over books
or in discussions with politicians,
but by visiting ... where they live,....
feeling the cold they feel
and learning from their lips the causes of their woes.*

Blessed Frederic Ozanam



Our Holy Father, the Pope, has often spoken about the great opportunities that come our way when older and younger generations get together. He often speaks in term of the family, but I believe these words from his 2013 Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* (commonly known as ‘The Gospel of Joy’), really capture the opportunity more broadly in society.

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!

John Ferguson, Metro Member and Community Engagement Coordinator and State Social Justice Coordinator

Vinnies Vans

The Sydney Vinnies Van Service, a vital community resource providing essential services, has seen a remarkable increase in demand recently.

To meet this surge, the Sydney Vinnies Van Service has adeptly expanded its operations, launching three new daytime services in Maroubra, Haymarket, and Liverpool.

This expansion is a testament to the collaborative efforts of local councils, parishes, schools, and community members.

These additional services are a significant complement to the existing nighttime services across Sydney, Bay-side, Randwick, Liverpool, Greater Western Sydney, and Ryde, enhancing Vinnies reach and impact.

The Ryde Vinnies Van Service, a recent addition in December 2023, has quickly become a cornerstone of the community, operating twice weekly with plans to extend further.

The anticipated service in Woy Woy reflects our unwavering dedication to community service and its proactive approach to growth and outreach.

This ongoing expansion underscores Vinnies commitment to not only meet but anticipate the evolving needs of the communities they serve.

For more information or about how to get involved:

viniana.tamanitoakula@vinnies.org.au





Metro Youth at 2024 University Orientation Days

2024 has started off big for youth membership recruitment, Vinnies Metro Youth were in attendance at 10 different university and college campus 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 seeing the amazing work these new members will achieve.



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



UTS (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.



UNSW 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 chil-



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 participants.



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/MiniVinniesSpiritualityGuideB>

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

Vinnies High School Conference Kit <https://bit.ly/VinniesHighSchoolConferenceStarterKit23>

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



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 impacts 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



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.

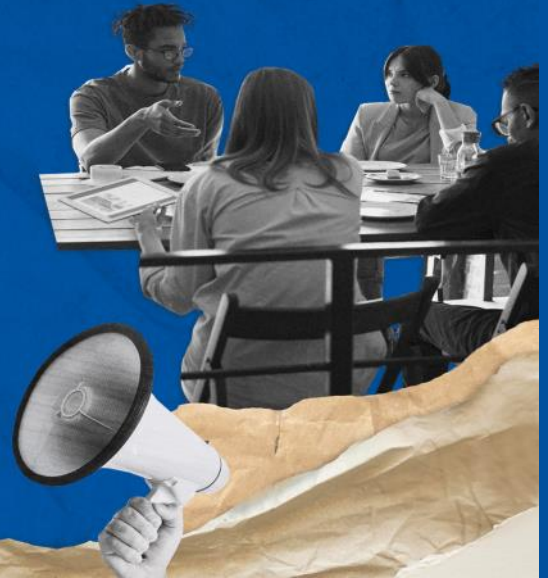
The Social Justice team are seeking expressions of interest from people who might be interested in either hosting or joining a small team to start a conversation in their local community and with their local council about how we can make housing fairer. We need local people who know the local area and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



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

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)



DOING GOOD TOGETHER

makes a difference



*Be part of our social and affordable housing
POD project, a partnership for good*

Conference led community development

Amélie Housing seeks partners willing to support delivery of the NSW Social and Affordable Housing (SAHF) program. The program requires collaboration between the various arms of the Society to support safe engaged communities in Society owned housing developments.

Our SAHF promise requires we fully utilise Amélie Housing staff, SVDP Support Services including Tailored Support and local Conferences to enhance the housing tenants' lived experience. (Strategic Directions 2015-22)

Experience has shown that safe engaged neighbourhoods require broad community involvement and our Conferences can spearhead locally relevant engagement activities. This collaboration is the Point of Difference our wider network can offer those suffering housing stress. You are invited to be part of the POD Project. This could be an activity for new and experienced members.

Amélie Housing, with local Conference members, are conducting discussions to explore this unique collaboration. The POD projects sets us apart from other community housing providers. Share your thoughts and explore how we can formalise this vital point of difference.

The POD Project is a positive opportunity designed to provide companionship to our tenants. This is how we build safe engaged communities.

Want to know more?
Contact: POD@amelie.org.au



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

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.



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, the Member's status is set to Inactive in the database and 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

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

Working With Children's Check

· 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 volunteerMember with Vinnies. Your WWCC details will be 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 related to navigating the training portal or logging in, email 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 and we'll assist you in registering, but generally at least 5 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 very 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.

We want to help you by providing a simple automated way of communicating more effectively. 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



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

Visit: vinnies.org.au/NILS



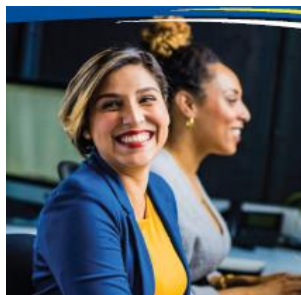


Vinnies Assist—13 18 12

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 for general information or to make a referral to our Vinnies Services or Member support services — 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 throughout 2024 provide a great opportunity to promote Vinnies awareness in your local community and to highlight both the good works and the policy advocacy of the Society.

26 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/>



Please ASSIST A STUDENT

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.

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



Naw* is 22 years old and lives with her Aunt while attending West Yangon University in Myanmar.

She is studying Translation and Interpretation, as well as Burmese, Short Stories, Poetry and Drama, English and Communication Skills.

Naw knows that an education will help her “earn money and I, too, will support others”.



Andre* is in 3rd grade and lives in Indonesia with his family.

He likes playing football and wants to become a policeman one day. He likes helping his parents and goes to Sunday School.

Andre says “thank you and God Bless all the people who have helped me.”

Nur* is in Year 12 and studies at a Vocational High School in Bandung, Indonesia. She lives with her mother who has recently lost her job.

Nur says that the support “helps her mother to worry less about fees”. Nur wants to be a Tour Director and travel around the world. She thanks all donors to the *Assist A Student* program who help young people to achieve their goals.



**all names have been changed*

- 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 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.

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.

Using the MAVS social justice updates

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





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

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

THANK YOU

MAVS Platform-for edit awaiting MAVS team

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. Sydney Central Council has its own page:

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

For requested updates, please email 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/>