



St Vincent de Paul Society
good works

BROKEN BAY MEMBER NEWSLETTER

November 2025
edition #2

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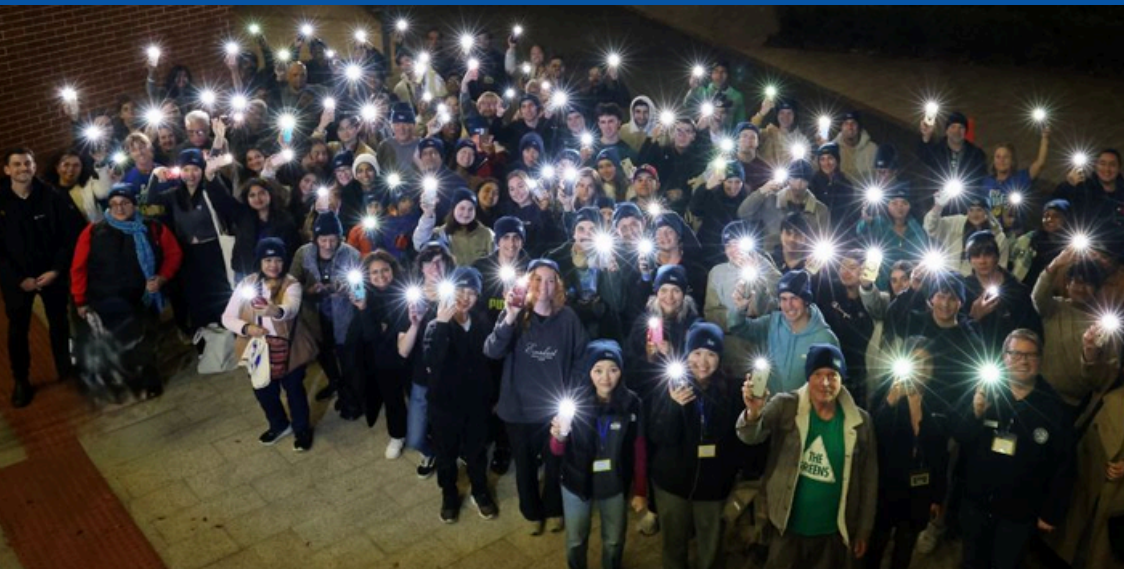
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2025 Greater Sydney Community Sleepout



Message from **Peter Houweling** NSW State Council President

I am very pleased to announce that Annette Johnstone has been elected to the position of Central Council President Broken Bay by due election process at the Broken Bay Central Council meeting held on Saturday 28 June 2025. Annette replaces Michelle Chahine who I thank for her dedicated and persistent work throughout her four-year term.

Annette has been a Vincentian since the 1990s and is currently a member of Our Lady of the Rosary Conference, Wyoming and Gosford Regional President. Annette has a strong background in community work, including hands-on case management and advocacy. She has supported vulnerable people and families, worked closely with service providers, and helped them navigate complex systems. She has taken part in advocacy with Members of Parliament, showing she can influence change and speak up for those who can't.

Her mix of grass roots experience and involvement in policy work makes her exceptionally well-equipped to contribute meaningfully to this role. Please join me in welcoming, supporting and praying for Annette as she continues to promote the good works of the Society in the Broken Bay area and on the NSW State Council.



Message from
Annette Johnstone
Broken Bay Central Council President

At the end of July, I was granted the privilege of being elected President of Broken Bay Central Council. I have long been inspired by The Society of St Vincent de Paul and its Members, so it is with joy and gratitude that I undertake this role and constantly pray that I may receive the blessing to operate with the quiet heart and humility of the Vincentian.

Fortunately for me, there was an early introduction to this role, as the following week was the NSW Council Meeting and the retreat at Mary Mackillop in North Sydney, so it was straight down to business, and I am very glad of it and of the welcome I received. Since then, it has been a busy time attending Central Council Meetings, State Council Meetings, and two Festival Masses—one at Manly and the other at Chatswood. It has been wonderful to welcome new Members, including a new Conference President for Willoughby, Dominic La Rosa.

Broken Bay region had its Meet and Greet morning with the CEO at the Gosford Vinnies Support Centre. Thank you to members who attended from conferences across Broken Bay. I really enjoy the opportunity to meet Members and Vincentians; they are the best company to keep.

A task force is being established to assist the Wyong Region while we build the Membership base. You can [read more](#) about this in the newsletter.

The Vinnies Support Centre Coordinators across the Metropolitan Region met in Gosford, and it was yet another privilege for me to join them in an afternoon session. These Staff Members are a gift to us; one can see that they operate in pursuit of fulfilling the Mission and Vision of the Society. In Broken Bay, the intention is a consistent model of service delivery so that those who seek our assistance can be assured of the same standard of compassion and commitment in serving their need regardless of which support Centre they attend.

The Christmas Season is fast approaching, and as you all become frantically busy over the next month and a half, I wish you all the blessings of the Season, a safe, happy and Holy Christmas and the very best in 2026.

Have Your Say – Vinnies Voice Survey 2025

Your feedback helps shape how we communicate and recognise the contributions of our Members.

This year's survey takes just 5 minutes and is completely anonymous.

Make sure your voice is heard by Tuesday, 11 Nov

CLICK HERE 

<https://survey.xref.com/survey/VinniesVoice2025>



Message from
Louis Hearnden
Metro Regional Director

As we approach the close of 2025, I want to acknowledge what a significant and rewarding year it has been across Broken Bay. Since stepping into the Regional Director role at the beginning of the year, I've had the privilege of working alongside you through a year shaped by dedication and continued service in the face of growing need.

This edition highlights the breadth of our Vincentian community from the success of the Greater Sydney Community Sleepout to conferences marking inspiring milestones, to schools deepening their commitment to faith in action.

Looking ahead, 2026 will see important investments in our region to strengthen local impact. We are preparing to upgrade the Woy Woy Vinnies Support Centre and advance planning to improve our Hornsby VSC, ensuring they better meet the needs of the communities they serve. We are also working toward expanding the Vinnies Vans service on the Central Coast bringing food, dignity and support to more people doing it tough.

Membership growth remains a priority for the year ahead, with a focus on sustaining and equipping conferences to carry out their work. Thank you to those who've already stepped up to support the newly formed Wyong Taskforce, which is responding to unmet needs through home visits while we work to re-establish a permanent conference in the area.

With the 2025 Christmas Appeal now underway, your role in meeting the cost-of-living crisis is more vital than ever. Every home visit, conversation, hamper, and referral is a powerful act of hope.

Thank you for all you've done this year to live out the mission with compassion and conviction. Let's finish 2025 together with purpose and carry that energy forward into a year of renewed service in 2026.



Congratulations



Woy Woy Vinnies Support Centre received 3rd place for the Greater Bank Community Funding 2025 October draw! Winning \$500 to use in the community



A message from

Leo Tucker

Executive Director of Mission and Spirituality



St Vincent de Paul Society
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Commemorating Blessed Frederic Ozanam

Dear All,

Today the St Vincent de Paul Society commemorates the passing and feast day of our co-founder, Antoine Frederic Ozanam, 172 years ago in Marseille. There is much to reflect upon within the life and legacy of Frederic Ozanam. Frederic's vision was for the revival of a Church of integrity, a Church inspired by Gospels rather than by corruption and politics. He called for a Church to hear the cry of the poor.



Born in Milan 23 April 1813 and baptised Antione Frederic Ozanam, he was one of 14 children but only one of 4 surviving to adulthood. Frederic moved to Lyon in 1815 where he live much of his childhood and schooling years, before moving to Paris to join the University of Paris in 1831.

He was a literary scholar, lawyer, journalist, author, university lecturer, and social justice advocate. Frederic and friends revived a university debating group known as the Conference of History, which discussed the impact of the Church through history. In many ways, it was a debating group on the virtues of the catholic faith. Through these reflections and discussions on faith he and his companions were moved and challenged to expressing this raw faith into actions of charity and of love. In this on the 23rd April 1833, Frederic's 20th birthday, the group then became the Conference of Charity, later known as the Society of St Vincent de Paul.

Frederic Ozanam later married Amelie Soulacroix 1841, the daughter of the rector of the University of Lyon, which was followed by the birth of his daughter Marie in 1845. Sadly, his naturally weak constitution fell prey to consumption, which he hoped to cure by visiting Italy, but on his return to France he died in Marseille on Thursday, September 8, 1853, at only the age of 40. He was buried in the crypt of the church of St. Joseph des Carmes at the Institut Catholique in Paris.

Frederic's legacy...

- Frederic was a man of faith. He understood the importance of his work within the guidance and nurturing of prayer and spiritual advice. One such advisor was Sr Rosalie Rendu, a Daughter of Charity working in the slums of Paris who nurtured Frederic's spiritual centre or spiritual love, as she expressed, a love that was practical and relational. She reminded Frederic often that charity was to "be kind and love, for love is your first gift to the poor."
- Frederic was a man of love. His love for God and Church was strengthened because of his relationships with those experiencing deep poverty, his confreres and his family.
- Frederic was a man of hope. He saw the importance of a legacy of justice and advocacy for the disadvantaged in society. He related by being a voice for them. Frederic was a champion for social justice especially towards the end of his life. His desire to raise controversial issues in the magazine 'The New Era' was not at all welcomed by many conservatives within the Church. However it was because of his relationships with the people he loved, the blindness of Government and Church and the continued oppression of the weak and vulnerable which moved him deeply to speak out. This response for justice and love permeates in all aspects of the writings of Frederic as he wrote; "Knowledge of the poor and needy is not gained by pouring over books or in discussions with politicians, but by visiting the slums where they live, sitting by the bedside of the dying, feeling the cold they feel and learning from their lips the causes of their woes."

Understanding the charisms of Frederic Ozanam is crucial in deepening our personal spirit. It will give us a profounder insight into the words of our mission and vision, as well as a deeper appreciation for our Society logo of the hands receiving, assisting and blessing.

May Frederic Ozanam continue to guide our Society in hearing and understanding the cry of poverty and faithfully serve in compassionate love.

St Vincent de Paul – Feast Day 27 September

The spirit of St Vincent de Paul is alive and well in 2025.

Growing up in a Catholic family in the 1960s, the St Vincent de Paul Society (Vinnies) was very much part of our world. My father was a Vinnies volunteer and my mother spent many years working at the Rendu Centre. We later moved to a Vincentian parish where we encountered the distinctive charism through the work of the priests, brothers and various ministries of the Daughters of Charity.

The St Vincent de Paul Society is a lay Catholic organisation founded in Paris by Frédéric Ozanam in 1833. Profoundly moved by the abject poverty of families living on the streets after the French Revolution, he gathered a small group of people to begin the work of ministering to the poor, modelling their mission on the patron saint of Christian charity, St Vincent de Paul (1581-1660).

“Deal with the most urgent needs. Organise charity so that it is more efficient...teach reading and writing, educate with the aim of giving each the means of self-support. Intervene with authorities to obtain reforms in structure... there is no charity without justice.” (St Vincent de Paul).

Vinnies has grown today into a global organisation with over 800,000 Members and 1,500,000 volunteers, assisting 30 million people each day. The Society works towards creating a more just and compassionate world by providing food, clothing, housing and access to support networks for people in the community who are marginalised or disadvantaged. Vinnies offers a “hand up” rather than a “hand out” and advocacy on behalf of those in need goes to the heart of what the St Vincent de Paul Society stands for.

While historical perspectives and contemporary data help to provide context for the work of the Society, the interactions between Members and volunteers with clients is where the Gospel message and the spirit of St Vincent de Paul himself are enlivened. Vinnies is about engaging with the personal stories of others, wherever and in whatever circumstances prevail. The slow and gentle work of God in the world today is never clearer than in the relational aspect of walking with another and getting to know their story. Jake’s is one such story...

[Click here](#) to read Jake’s story.

“May those... in the shadows be seen by those in the sun” | The Sisters of The Good Samaritan

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CHRISTMAS APPEAL 2025



Everyone deserves access to the essentials needed to live with dignity. Even in difficult times, people should feel secure knowing they can afford a home, put food on the table, pay their bills, and maintain their health. This is especially true at Christmas, when people should be able to enjoy the Festive season without stressing over unpaid bills, high rents, and the costs of providing a Christmas gift or meal for loved ones.

Australia's persistent cost of living pressures are far from over. The cycle of poverty and disadvantage still continues for some, with effects that are long term and intergenerational. At St Vincent de Paul Society NSW, we are seeing short term safety nets being regularly relied upon for ongoing relief. Many of the people we support are being trapped in a cycle of disadvantage and poverty from ongoing high costs of living, the housing crisis and food insecurity.

The 2025 Vinnies Christmas Appeal will focus on this cycle, so that we may stop its progression and provide assistance that makes a lasting impact and improvement in people's lives.

For a second year in a row, our Members have helped over 100,000 people across the state with immediate intervention, safe housing, alongside food, clothing and medical aid. We continue to help people throughout their journey of rebuilding with counselling, education, vocational and life skills training.

The Society is grateful to our dedicated Members for the important role they play in raising funds for the Christmas Appeal. Funds raised will directly support our core programs, providing vital assistance to people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, poverty, and cost of living pressures.

The Christmas Appeal launched on 1 November 2025. Materials to support your Christmas Appeal efforts, such as posters, donation envelopes and Conference booklets have been available since 13 October 2025.





**WE NEED
YOU!**

Wyong Taskforce

Calling All Vincentians – We Need Your Help in Wyong!

There is a growing level of unmet need in the northern areas of Wyong region at the same time as a decline in member numbers.

We are reaching out to all Members across the Broken Bay Central Council to join a temporary Vinnies Taskforce to undertake home visits to people in need who are currently unable to access support in person at Wyong Vinnies Support Centre.

Can you commit one day a fortnight to help out as a member of this Taskforce?

Role Description:

Title: Member, Wyong Regional Taskforce

Time: Contribution of 1 day per fortnight to undertake home visits

Cost: All mileage costs (including travel to and from Wyong) will be reimbursed

Lunch provided on the day you assist

Work: The schedule of home visits will be coordinated with you from Wyong VSC. The main areas of home visitation are around scenic Warnervale and Lake Munmorah

A small fortnightly commitment on your part will make all the difference for people who are struggling in this area – particularly single-parent and young families who are currently missing out. This is a temporary arrangement to meet a critical need. Any contribution you can make will be truly appreciated.

Please contact Jodie Davidson the Wyong Vinnies Support Centre Coordinator at Jodie.davidson@vinnies.org.au or Broken Bay President Annette Johnstone annette.johnstone@vinnies.org.au if you can contribute to this initiative.

Thanks for your consideration of this request,

Annette Johnstone, Broken Bay Central Council President



On a cold September evening, over 100 participants gathered at Western Sydney University for the Greater Sydney Community Sleepout, raising awareness and vital funds to support people experiencing homelessness. The event brought together Vinnies Members and volunteers, school students, and community Members who braved the chill to better understand the daily reality faced by thousands across NSW.

The night featured powerful stories from people with lived experience, inspiring speeches, and interactive activities like the “Walk in Their Shoes” Reflection Path and the Vinnies Information Stalls. Live music by the incredible Forbes Street Band added warmth to the night. While some participants stayed the night, others joined for the evening program, all united in their commitment to making a difference.

Thanks to the generosity of supporters, the Greater Sydney Community Sleepout has already raised about \$67,000. Special acknowledgement goes to the fundraising efforts of our Members, staff and volunteers. These funds will go directly towards Vinnies Conferences and programs across Sydney, Broken Bay and Greater Western Sydney, providing food, crisis accommodation, financial assistance, and pathways to stable housing.

Events like this remind us that homelessness is more than statistics; it’s about people, families, and communities. By standing together, we shine a light on the issue and take action towards creating a more compassionate and just society.

*A heartfelt thank you to everyone who participated, donated, or volunteered,
your impact is real and lasting!*

Photos from the night are available to view on the [MAVS Website](https://mavs.vinnies.org.au/articles/greater-sydney-community-sleepout-2025/)
<https://mavs.vinnies.org.au/articles/greater-sydney-community-sleepout-2025/>

Thank you to our local event sponsors:





It's Cold out There!

Normanhurst/Waitara Winter Appeal – The best ever!

We held our Winter Appeal on the weekend of Friday 27 to Sunday 29 July. We were given use of the basketball courts at the church; with the Vinnies truck parked there for the weekend. The wonderful students from St Leo's school, Wahroonga and Our Lady of the Rosary, Waitara came with donations for the appeal and loaded them into the truck. Throughout Saturday and Sunday, our Society Members were at the basketball courts to receive the donations from the very generous parishioners.

We are most grateful to Father Brendan Lee – Moderator of Hornsby Cathedral Parish – for his support. He made announcements during the weekend of the appeal to encourage the parishioners to support the works of St Vincent de Paul. Father Brendan allowed us to speak at all the Masses.

The Parishioners really enjoyed being part of the Winter appeal and the works of St Vincent de Paul. The Winter appeal was the best ever, with so many wonderful donations.

Thank you to all who gave their support.
Shirley Kelynack – Regional President, Hornsby

BUSKING FOR VINNIES



In August 2025, Busking for Vinnies brought the Vincentian spirit to life across Greater Western Sydney, with schools and Conferences working hand-in-hand to transform civic spaces into places of music, faith, and service. Performances featured Catholic Schools and Colleges from Katoomba across to Parramatta, supported by the Winston Hills and Springwood Conferences.

Want to get involved in 2026?

New locations are being explored! If your Conference would like to get involved, volunteer or learn more, please contact Roydon Ng at roydon.ng@vinnies.org.au.

Vinnies Secondary School Engagements and Vinnies Service Medallion



 Vinnies
Service Medallion

CHANGE STARTS HERE

Secondary students program information



St Vincent de Paul Society
NSW *good works*



TAKE THE FIRST STEPS TO CREATING CHANGE!

The Vinnies Service Medallion (VSM) recognises and celebrates the contributions of secondary students (Years 7–12) to community service, leadership, advocacy, and fundraising.

Gain real world skills and experience, make a tangible impact on your local community and receive formal recognition for completing each stage of the program to build your resume for university and the workplace!



RECOGNITION FOR YOUR GROWTH

Participating in the VSM will provide opportunities to develop your leadership and communications skills and provide real-world experiences in Social Justice and Community Engagement.

Bronze



Silver



Gold



WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

The VSM program is aimed at secondary students, ranging from Year 7 to Year 12. The program is inclusive and strives to be accessible to all interested students. Participate with your school group or join as an individual. Participation in the Vinnies Service Medallion is free of charge, and all secondary students are welcome.



CONTACT US

Are you a student, or a teacher/parent who knows students who would benefit from this program?

Scan the QR code or visit our
website here: [youthnsw.vinnies.org.au/
vinnies-service-medallion](http://youthnsw.vinnies.org.au/vinnies-service-medallion)



For more information regarding Vinnies Secondary School engagements and the Vinnies Service Medallion, please email: metroschools@vinnies.org.au

THANK
YOU!



Thank you for the Hamper

Here is a letter from Colin, a senior citizen and parishioner in the Northern Beaches region, to students who had prepared Vinnies hampers, including a note to those receiving the hamper.

Hello Josie*,

I am writing to thank you for the wonderful hamper that you and Rita* made. Thanks also to your parents and the school for encouraging you to make it. We are all very pleased with you – but so are God the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. They know you understand Jesus' command to "Love your neighbour". Your parents are also an important part of your neighbour.

There are a few things in the hamper that my dentist will freak out over – but I will eat them anyway. I loved your card – it is much more pretty than I could have made. Thank you again. You making the hamper tells me that you are a kind person. That is very important in life. God, your parents and your teachers are all very happy and pleased with you for that. So am I.

God is extremely clever. Long before He made the world He had already worked out how to help people get to Heaven. The Eucharist/Holy Communion bread or host, in the Mass is changed by God the Holy Spirit into Jesus. It still looks like bread, but is now Jesus himself. When a person receives the Eucharist they are taking Jesus into their body. In this life you cannot become closer to God and to Heaven than that. Jesus told us to love God and to love our neighbour. By preparing the hamper you have done both of those commands. Jesus, the Father and the Spirit will all be pleased with that. They all love you very much and are looking forward to receiving you in Heaven after a life of loving Him and your neighbours and receiving Jesus in communion every day if possible.

Again Josie, thank you for the wonderful hamper.

Colin [** names have been changed*]



**Celebrating our
Volunteers & Members
across Broken Bay**

National Volunteer Week 2025 was held from 19 to 25 May to celebrate the power of volunteering to bring people together with the theme "Connecting Communities". This week provided an opportunity to highlight the important role of volunteers in our community. Volunteering creates lasting relationships that enrich lives and build thriving and inclusive communities. Morning teas and lunches were held at our Vinnies Support Centres and Shops across Broken Bay.

We thank all of our Members and Volunteers who give so generously of their time to help individuals and families, especially in times of crisis and adversity. Volunteering is vital to the nation's wellbeing. Australia's communities and lifestyle are underpinned by your wonderful contributions.

Thank you!



Pymble conference milestone

Seventy-six years young!

On Sunday 30 March, many Members and Associates, both past and present, attended a celebration Mass and morning tea at Pymble Sacred Heart Church for the 76th Anniversary of the Aggregation of the Pymble St Vincent de Paul Society and 76 years of serving our community. We presented to the community a short talk on the founding and history of the St Vincent de Paul Society in 1833 in France and our current works.

Blessed Frédéric Ozanam and his university friends identified that people were experiencing tremendous political and social upheaval, changes in government, industrial unrest, economic uncertainty and unjust employment practices. They responded in practical ways to the poverty and hardship they saw in the lives of people around them. Today we continue to meet the same challenge.

Our Pymble Conference currently consists of over 20 members from all walks of life and age groups from early 20's to nearly 90 years of age, whilst the two Catholic primary schools have "mini Vinnies" to introduce children to community needs and strongly support our Winter Appeals and Christmas Hamper appeals.

Our Members and Associates' actions in the community include client visitations, visiting the homeless at Matthew Talbot Hostel in Sydney, manning food vans and breakfast vans in various Sydney locations, visiting the disadvantaged at Glebe, Vinnies representation on the Ku-ring-gai Affordable Housing Committee, establishing programs for lonely residents in two aged care facilities with music appreciation, bingo, coffee mornings, trivia, men's group, rosary group, and taking the Eucharist to residents at the aged care facilities. Pymble Conference supports 15 twins in the poorest communities in Asia.

We are thankful for the very active and generous support of our Parish Priest, Fr Ireneusz Czech, our parish and schools Sacred Heart and Our Lady of Perpetual Succour at Pymble and West Pymble.

To quote Mother Teresa of Kolkata... "Be kind and merciful. Let no one ever come to you without coming away better and happier – be the living example of God's kindness".

Carolynne Wawrzyniak – Pymble Conference President

Expressing our faith, celebrating our good works



Northern Beaches regional council held their annual Festival Mass at Manly on the 7th October. It was a great gathering of Members, old and new. We all gathered to express our faith, celebrate our good works and to share our stories. It was a fantastic occasion.

We commissioned two new Conference Presidents – Judy Kelly from Davidson and Donna Favalaro from Narrabeena. We welcomed two new Members and celebrated two Lifetime Member awards - for twenty years of dedicated service.



Congratulations to Lyn McNeil of Balgowlah Conference and Maureen Rutledge from Narrabeen Conference.

Thank you to our diocesan Central Council President Annette Johnston for travelling from the Central Coast to present these awards.

Thank you to the Manly Conference members for organising the beautiful Mass and a great supper afterwards.



A special thanks to Fr Sam French for presiding over the liturgy. He told us about his grandfather being a member and his grandmother being a “Vinnies widow” – which we all thought was very appropriate!

Fr Sam also gave a blessing to Tom and Margaret Colman (Members of Narrabeen Conference) for their 61st wedding anniversary. They were married in the same church.

It was a privilege to share the occasion with them.

Mick O’Farrell, Regional President Northern Beaches
Bruce Whittet, Conference President Manly



Vincentians among recipients at Broken Bay Awards Celebration

Three long-time Members of the Society of St Vincent de Paul were among 11 award recipients at the Broken Bay inaugural Awards Celebration, held on 30 May to recognise decades of dedicated service to the Catholic Church and the Diocese.

Bishop Anthony Randazzo invested John Donnelly OAM, Barry Finch OAM and Alan Henson OAM as Knights of the Order of St Gregory the Great. This is in recognition of their personal service to the Holy See and Catholic Church, as well as for the wonderful examples of service they have set in their communities. In addressing the gathering, Bishop Anthony Randazzo said the evening was “more than a ceremony”.

“The individuals here tonight are being recognised for living their Christian lives as luminous beacons of hope and service. They have allowed their faith to guide their actions and their actions to reveal their faith.

“It is fitting that we do this under the guidance of Mary, Star of the Sea – a title that has resonated so strongly with seafarers, missionaries, and the faithful across the ages.

“For us in the Diocese of Broken Bay, bordered by the sea and shaped by waterways, Mary under this title is more than a poetic image, she is a real and guiding presence.

“Mary is not only Star of the Sea, but in our Southern skies, we also look to the Southern Cross, that distinctive constellation that has guided generations navigating the vast oceans of this hemisphere.”

He said the award recipients can also be seen as stars, reflecting some of the divine light guiding everyone forward. “Whether through their service as priests, consecrated religious, or lay people; through ministry to the blind and disabled, as RCIA coordinators, Saint Vincent de Paul volunteers, catechists, altar servers; or assistants to three bishops; our recipients have given exemplary and selfless service in unnumerable ways to our local Church of Broken Bay.

“And just like the stars that shine brightly in the night sky, they inspire us, and we give thanks to God for them.”

(<https://www.bbcatholic.org.au/news/latest-news/five-centuries-of-service-recognised-in-the-diocese-of-broken-bay>)

Celebrating Community: Honouring Our Members



Seeking peace and happier relations

It's no coincidence that the generosity of our Members often extends beyond their immediate good works of the Society of St Vincent de Paul to other activities within Vinnies and in other community service activities in their local communities.

Bruce Whittet, Member of the Society for over 20 years, is President of Manly St Mary's & St Athanasius' Conference as well as a strong supporter of the dignity and rights of the people we assist through the Vinnies Broken Bay Social Justice Committee. Over the same period of time, Bruce's wife, Margaret has generously volunteered at the Vinnies Brookvale Shop.

Bruce and Margaret are catechists at Manly West Public School and have run their scripture classes each week – Bruce with 4th Grade and Margaret 2nd and 3rd Grades. Being a Navy Veteran, Bruce is regularly in attendance at the annual ANZAC pre-dawn ceremony at Balgowlah RSL. Bruce was in the Royal Australian Navy in its Medical Division from 1965 and retired a Lieutenant Commander in 1986.

On ANZAC day, earlier this year and the year before, Bruce led all who have been in attendance in this Prayer of Thanksgiving:

We thank You, O Heavenly Father, for the efforts being made by the nations of the world in seeking peace and happier relations with each other. We praise You for the spirit in men and women which made them scorn the way of safety and venture all for the common cause of Freedom and Right; for all great and noble acts known and unknown, which we believe by the mercy of God will bring about the final conquest of the forces of evil which threaten the peace and security of the world. AMEN

I am sure you will agree with Bruce when he says he considers this prayer to be very appropriate at this time in our troubled world.

Thank you, Bruce for all that you do in service to the community!

Child Protection Week was held on 7 - 13 September 2025



Vinnies NSW is demonstrating a strong commitment to being a Child Safe Organisation by actively working towards compliance with multiple sets of standards and relevant legislation.

Contact Vinnies Safeguarding
1800 4 SUPPORT

MAVS HUB
Safeguarding Children & Young People
[LINK TO WEBSITE](https://mavs.vinnies.org.au/resources/safeguarding-children-vulnerable-adults/safeguarding-children-young-people/)

<https://mavs.vinnies.org.au/resources/safeguarding-children-vulnerable-adults/safeguarding-children-young-people/>

Watch here: Geraldine Doogue and Robert Fitzgerald (former Commissioner) discuss 'What is a Child Safe Organisation' https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gJ8WDi_-BPU



Celebrating service to the most vulnerable members of the community

On Saturday 1 November, **Chatswood regional council** joined with parishioners of Our Lady of Dolours Parish to celebrate a Commissioning Mass for Vincentian Members. Central Council President Annette Johnstone spoke to the congregation about the establishment of the Society of St Vincent de Paul as a humble organisation of lay people serving sisters and brothers in need and creating a more just and compassionate society. She called forward a new President and new Members of the Society to be commissioned by Parish Priest Fr David Ranson.

Dominic La Rosa was commissioned as the new President of Willoughby St Thomas Conference. Byron Liu was commissioned a new member of Chatswood Our Lady of Dolours, James Godfrey for Forestville Our Lady of Good Counsel Conference, and Straford Rodrigues, Christopher D'Cruz and Madonna Ratnakumar for Pymble Sacred Heart Conference.

Barry Finch was celebrating his 80th birthday on this very day. Fr David called Barry before the altar and gave him a special blessing and commended him for his commitment to serve the most vulnerable members of the community over many years and for his support of fellow Vincentians as Chatswood Regional President.

Thanks to members of Chatswood Conference for organising this Commissioning and for providing refreshments to the parish community after Mass.



Happy Birthday Barry!





The Good Works Summit

It was the biggest gathering of Vincentians in decades!

Such an incredible experience seeing everyone come together in the spirit of service and collaboration. We were fortunate to hear from inspiring guest speakers, including Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP, Federal Minister for Social Services, and Yolanda Saiz, CEO of the St Vincent de Paul Society, along with thought-provoking panel discussions on the changing landscape of community support.

The workshops provided valuable opportunities to open conversations and share insights on: Strengthening local relationships to drive community impact, Expanding the scope of services in housing, health, addiction and disability, Celebrating regional success stories that continue to inspire.

Broken Bay CEO Meet and Greet

It was a great gathering of members, volunteers, and staff from across Broken Bay, all coming together to engage with CEO Yolanda Saiz and her leadership team. The morning provided an excellent opportunity for members to reconnect and exchange valuable insights.



Young Leaders of Hope



Over two days in late July, the Australian Catholic University (ACU) Strathfield campus became a vibrant gathering place of faith, compassion and leadership as students and teachers from across the Sydney, Parramatta and Broken Bay dioceses came together to grow in the mission of the St Vincent de Paul Society.

Wednesday 24 July, more than 220 primary school students from 28 schools attended the annual Mini Vinnies Gathering. The day invited students to reflect on how they can be leaders of hope, living out the Gospel call to love and serve others—especially those experiencing hardship. Through engaging workshops and reflections, students explored real-world issues including the cost of living, housing and homelessness, while learning about the work of Vinnies Support Centres, the Vinnies Van, and caring for God's creation through stewardship. Students were encouraged to respond with compassion and action through their Mini Vinnies groups. They discovered that even small acts of kindness, rooted in love and justice, can reflect the light of Christ in the world.

Thursday 25 July, the inaugural Vinnies Secondary Schools Gathering brought together 90 high school students and teachers to deepen their understanding of Catholic Social Teaching and how faith can inspire leadership and advocacy for the poor and marginalised. The day included inspiring talks, group activities, and moments of reflection that challenged students to think critically about social justice. They explored how to put faith into action and walk alongside those in need—just as Jesus did. The passion, energy, and spiritual maturity of the students was uplifting. Many shared their commitment to continuing the mission of Vinnies in their schools and parishes, acting as witnesses to God's love through service.

These two days were a powerful reminder that young people are not just the future of the Church—they are the present. Through their generosity, faith, and courage, they are already making Christ's presence known in the world. "It's truly inspiring to witness so many young people embrace the call to be leaders of hope," said Metro Vinnies Schools Engagement Team (Chris Nolan, Ketaki Wasnikar, Roydon Ng). "Their energy, compassion, and commitment to social justice reflect the very heart of our mission—to walk alongside those in need with love, dignity and faith. We look forward to continuing this journey with schools across the dioceses."

Looking ahead, the St Vincent de Paul Society is excited to continue nurturing these young leaders of faith. Planning is already underway for next year's gatherings—to be even more enriching, prayerful, and impactful for students answering the call to love and serve.



OUT AND ABOUT IN THE COMMUNITY

Collaboration for Community Impact

Hellison Ilogui (Hornsby VSC Coordinator), Shirley Kelynack (Hornsby Regional President) and Jack Barlow (Government Relations Advisor) had the opportunity to meet with James Wallace MP, our local Member of Parliament. Our conversation focused on the ongoing challenges of homelessness and how we can work together to strengthen support for those most in need. I greatly appreciate James Wallace's commitment to engaging with this issue and offering support.



At Vinnies Hornsby, we know that lasting change comes through partnerships – between community organisations, government, and individuals working together for the common good. I look forward to continuing these conversations and building on the momentum to ensure everyone has a safe and secure place to call home.

Hellison Ilogui, Hornsby Vinnies Support Centre Coordinator



Woy Woy Vinnies Support Centre

Connect Day

Helping alleviate the stresses of rising living costs in the local community. It was a great day connecting with the Woy Woy local community!

The Runner...



Running has taught me an important lesson: you can't keep going if you don't take care of yourself first. Working with disadvantaged communities reminds me of the same truth — to support others, we must also prioritise our own wellbeing. Mental health isn't a luxury; it's a foundation.

Just like in a race, it's okay to slow down, to breathe, and to ask for support along the way. Because when we are well, we can show up stronger for those who need us most. Let's keep breaking the stigma and remembering: taking care of your mind is as important as training your body - *Hellison*.

"Great to see Hellison taking care of his health. He enjoyed the run in the City to Surf – even though it was raining. A little stiff and sore next day – but he still came in for work and gave his best as always. Well done, Hellison!"

Shirley Kelynack – Regional President, Hornsby

Supporting the good works of our Vincentian Twins in Surabaya

I visited Surabaya, the second largest city in Indonesia and located in East Java, from 22 to 29 July this year. I was visiting in a private, self-funded capacity. I was visiting friends in Surabaya but also took this opportunity as the Twinning Officer of my local Chatswood Conference to visit SSV (Vinnies) Conferences in Surabaya to learn about the work they do. One of our twin conferences that I visited, St Yohanes Pemandi, is in Surabaya.

I was hosted during my visits by Selviana Kurniawati, the Twinning Coordinator for all of Indonesia who is based in Surabaya, and for much of the time also by Rike who is the Assist A Student Coordinator for all of Indonesia. I attended the weekly meeting of the Indonesian SSV National Council. They meet every week on a Wednesday evening to coordinate the activities of the almost 400 local SSV conferences in Indonesia. This is all done on a voluntary basis. I was able to discuss with them, especially Wirawan the Projects Coordinator for Indonesia, the need for all the information on the application forms for grants from Australia, which is to satisfy the accountability and outcome measures that are standard Australian practice. I think they found this information helpful.



I was taken to visit four local Conferences and I learnt quickly that the poverty levels in Indonesia are of a different dimension to that in Australia. There appeared to be no help for the poor from the government, so the role of SSV in Indonesia is vital.

The first one was Benoit Labre Conference. They had 32 clients in attendance for their twice monthly provision of food. They provide rice to their clients who are very poor as well as help with school expenses, clothes and medicines. Some of their clients are becak (rickshaw) drivers and people who are widowed and cannot support themselves or their families.

I was taken to St. Vincentius Conference which is a Catholic secondary school conference with 20 active student members and two teachers involved. They arrange visits to Muslim schools and Muslim student visit their school to aid inter-faith dialogue as Indonesia is a predominantly Muslim Country.

Twinning Continued

They visit the homes of elderly Catholic sisters and visit a neighbouring orphanage which I visited. It was sad to see so many young toddlers in this orphanage. They fundraise by selling prepared meals and cakes and are also involved in plastic re-cycling to raise money. They give rice, oil, sugar and second-hand clothes to becak drivers and other poor people. I visited the home of one of their clients who was a man in his early 50s who could not work because of severe ill-health and there were nine people (of three generations) living in his small house.

I next visited our twin conference, St Yohanes Pemandi, and met the president Pak Pik who is a 77-year-old man who has been the President of the conference for 20 years. It appeared most of the assistance provided was in the form of financial support to parents for their children to attend school. The parents I met were very grateful for the support that they receive. I went to the home of one of the families and the mother of three school-aged sons talked about how important the financial assistance was.

I visited the St Louise de Marillac Conference where they sell food twice per month on a Sunday to raise funds. They assist students with expenses for schooling and provide food and other basic needs for their poor clients. They have a special mission to 27 local becak drivers and their families who are very poor. Apart from providing food aid they act as a "bank" for the becak drivers where they keep their money until the end of Ramadan each year when the becak drivers collect it for their family. This is important as many of the becak drivers come to Surabaya from villages in the country and sleep in their becaks so this provides some security for the money they earn.



I attended the Surabaya Regional Council meeting which meets every three months. All 15 local conferences provide an activity report on who they are supporting and their finances. They must report each quarter to remain a twin conference and obtain financial aid. A Vincentian priest is the spiritual advisor to the group and attended the meeting and led a time of meditation.

I was asked to give a talk at all the conferences and meetings I attended. I was able to do so with my basic Bahasa Indonesia language skills which they appreciated as English is not widely spoken there except among educated people. They were all very interested in the work we in Vinnies do here and how we raise funds ourselves and are very grateful for the financial support we give to them. Overall, I was so impressed with the commitment and dedication of our fellow Vincentians in Indonesia. They are doing important work amongst the poor and marginalised in that country. Their work is vital as the needs there are so great and should continue to be supported by us here in Australia.

Patrick Morris – Twinning Officer, Chatswood Our Lady of Dolours Conference

MEMBER TRAINING SESSIONS

Join our upcoming online training sessions
from the comfort of your own home!



St Vincent de Paul Society
NSW
good works

These live sessions, hosted on Microsoft Teams by the Vinnies State Learning Team (Linda, Joanna, and Edna), will help you complete the required modules for members and volunteers to keep your membership up to date.

To participate, simply register for the session(s) you'd like to attend using the links below. Once registered, you'll receive the Teams meeting link.

For questions or support, please contact your Member & Community Engagement Coordinator: MetroMembers@vinnies.org.au **More information can also be found on the Vinnies website:** <https://mavs.vinnies.org.au/>

VINNIES ORIENTATION

Tuesday 18th November 10 -11.30am
Tuesday 16th December 3-4.30pm

Register Here: <https://vinniesnsw.snapforms.com.au/form/orientation-online-session-registration>

CODE OF CONDUCT

Wednesday 5th November 11am-12pm
Thursday 13th November 12-1pm
Monday 1st December 3-4pm

Register here: <https://vinniesnsw.snapforms.com.au/form/orientation-online-session-registration>

PRIVACY & CONFIDENTIALITY

Monday 10th November 10-11am
Thursday 20th November 3-4pm
Monday 8th December 11am-12pm

Register here: <https://vinniesnsw.snapforms.com.au/form/orientation-online-session-registration>

SAFETY INDUCTION

Tuesday 4th November 3-4pm
Wednesday 12th November 2-3pm
Wednesday 26th November 10-11am

Register here: <https://vinniesnsw.snapforms.com.au/form/orientation-online-session-registration>

ROSALIE RENDU FORUM 2025



Raising Our Voice – Speaking up for Social Justice

Around 100 members, volunteers, staff and friends of the Society joined the Rosalie Rendu Forum during Anti-Poverty Week on 16 October to discuss the importance of advocacy in making positive change for vulnerable members of our community. Moderating the event, Geraldine Doogue reflected on the current state of the world – with so much war and political turmoil obscuring the deepening injustices closer to home including poverty, homelessness and domestic violence. She drew on the expertise of four justice advocates who have engaged in different types of advocacy for and with the people they assist.

Speaking of supporting people with lived experience of homelessness, Charmaine Jones of StreetCare spoke of the commitment of people who are homeless wanting to prevent others going through the same experience. With support, she says, “They offer a perspective that differs from many decision makers within Government and it leads to better outcomes, more accountability and better service delivery.”

Vinnies Member Jo Karaolis spoke of organising the Ku-Ring-Gai housing group, advocating for social and affordable housing in a part of Sydney resisting development. Jo says, “The housing crisis has been with us for a very long time... If we’d been providing leadership during this time we could have led housing reform. Good government comes down to good communities that care for each other locally and on the broader stage.” Delia Donovan of Domestic Violence NSW spoke of political engagement to get much needed funding for services that are stretched beyond breaking point. Political engagement is about relationship building and bringing lived experience into the dialogue;

“We need to know when to go hard and when not to go hard, because we need to be able to stay in the room and remain pragmatic, but also to be bold and brave. It’s a really fine balancing act”.

Dharag Elder and educator, Aunty Thelmerie Rudd spoke of how having a voice is fundamental to the dignity of all. We need a place where all voices are heard. In the face of ignorance and instances of racism, Aunty Thelmerie asks; “How can we create a space where we can all sit together, we can all talk, we can all yarn? ... we need to look at issues and look for what we can advocate on for community and for kids in school.” Geraldine asked the panelists about key learnings and advice when engaging in different kinds of advocacy. Some of the wisdom shared included the following:

- Good advocacy with decision-makers is about building long-term relationships of equal partnership and is not primarily adversarial.
- Learn from and form respectful connections with the people who disagree with you.
- Engage with all sides of politics – not just the party in power.
- Approach peak organisations who can lend advocacy support and follow up on decision-maker transparency and accountability.
- Come to advocacy with suggested solutions, not just the problem.
- Good solutions often ensure a “win win” for all sides.
- Story telling is vital – people from the front line and people with lived experience are often the strongest advocates.

Thank you to Geraldine and our inspiring panelists Aunty Thelmerie, Delia, Jo and Charmaine. An audio recording of this Forum honoring the legacy of Sr Rosalie Rendu can be found here: <https://www.vinnies.org.au/nsw/articles/raising-our-voice-speaking-up-for-social-justice>