

# WAGGA WAGGA CENTRAL COUNCIL NEWSLETTER



St Vincent de Paul Society  
good works

August 2025

## A message from the Central Council President

Hello everyone and welcome to the WWCC Newsletter for August 25.

I wish to draw your attention to the upcoming events and special festivities planned for the remainder of the year. While attendance at all of these events is not expected, it's important that we prioritise and choose those that will be most beneficial to us as members and volunteers. Regional Get Togethers and Spirituality Reflection Days are of particular importance—details can be found in this newsletter.

Congratulations to Terry and Sandra, who are celebrating 10 years with Vinnies at Corowa. We also warmly welcome Mayram to St. Sebastian's in Wagga. And don't miss Leonie's insightful reflection on the impact of 'Youth'.

If you're passionate about social justice, we are currently seeking someone who is energetic, focused, and devoted to the cause. See the article herein for more information.

Anthony Foley  
Wagga Wagga Central Council  
President

*Enjoy reading all about Wagga Central Council Good Works!*



## Save the Date: Regional Get Togethers

2025 Regional Get Togethers are coming up!

Keep an eye on your email inbox for your invite with all the details for this year's Regional Get Togethers

- Wagga Wagga Region
  - Wagga Wagga - 13 Sept 2025
- Murrumbidgee Region
  - Leeton - 23 Oct 2025
- Albury Region
  - Albury - 25 Oct 2025
- South West Region
  - Finley - 3 Nov 2025

REGIONAL GET TOGETHERS

- Celebrate and share stories of success
- Explore our mission and how we grow together
- Enjoy lunch and connect with your fellow conference members
- Ask questions and get support from South Region staff
- Update your compliance checks and complete your training

### In this quarterly newsletter you can expect:

- Welcome
- Member Spotlights
- Pastoral care
- Regional stories
- First Nations Events Recap
- Social Justice
- Useful resources

### Vinnies staff contacts

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# Members Spotlight

## Sandra and Terry Drum Celebrate 10 Years with Corowa Vinnies

Sandra and Terry Drum recently celebrated 10 years as members of the Corowa Conference of Vinnies. In their early years with the conference Sandra and Terry took responsibility for processing the monthly accounts on "Accounts Friday" before they were mailed to Sydney for payment. This was in addition to their regular interviewing of clients on what are usually busy Fridays.

Most importantly, Sandra and Terry have long been heavily involved in the organisation and logistics of our Christmas Hamper Project. Typically, the Corowa Conference is responsible for packing about 90 hampers each year. For Sandra and Terry the work starts 6 months in advance of Christmas when they accumulate polystyrene boxes (for packing food hampers), and toys for the young children of our clients. Sandra takes a particular interest in matching the toys to the age, sex and needs of each of the young children. As the time for packing the hampers approaches, then Sandra and Terry get busy setting up the hall to receive food donations by food group.

Sandra and Terry are also heavily committed to their family who are widely scattered, and take more than a passing interest in the operations of the family farm. Which just reinforces the saying if you want something done, ask a busy person!



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## St. Sebastian's newest Youth Member, Mayram!

St. Sebastian's Youth Conference are proud to highlight one of their outstanding young adult members, Mayram, who has quickly become an invaluable part of the St. Sebastian's Youth Conference. From the moment she joined, Mayram experienced an incredibly smooth onboarding process and immediately embraced the mission and vision of St Vincent de Paul Society with a purpose.

Mayram has been actively involved in a range of initiatives from the moment she onboarded. She actively sought out the opportunity to help at the Vinnies shop, volunteered at the Vinnies Canteen at Football Wagga, supporting fundraising efforts for the Community Sleepout, and was a friendly, welcoming presence at the Youth Social Gathering. She is so excited to participate in the next Buddies Day and help create a fun and inclusive experience for all children involved.

Mayram embodies the core values of a Youth Member with her compassion, commitment, and community support. Her joy and energy shines bright, and her natural ability to connect with others has made her an instant fit within the Youth Conference. Leading by example, offering her time, talents, and heart to those who need it most.

St. Sebastian's are incredibly grateful to have Mayram as part of their Youth Conference and we all look forward to the continued impact she will bring within the Society.





# Mission, Spirituality & Pastoral Care

In September in Rome, Pope Leo XIV will canonise two very young saints – Blessed Carlo Acutis and Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati.

Carlo Acutis was a British-born Italian, who was only 15 when he died from leukaemia. He was considered, even by adult computer engineers, a genius in anything to do with computers. Carlo was devoted to the Eucharist from the age of 7, never missing an opportunity for daily Mass. He very successfully used the internet to draw young people to the Eucharist.

Pier Giorgio Frassati is very special to us in the Society.

Frassati was born in 1901 in Turin, Italy. Despite neither of his parents being religious, he grew up with a deep faith and a strong prayer life. From a young age, Pier Giorgio demonstrated faith in action, often giving away his possessions and significant amounts of money. At the age of 17, he joined the St Vincent de Paul Society.

Pier Giorgio embraced life. He was considered handsome and was adventurous and athletic. He was an avid hiker and mountain climber, as well as a lover of arts and music. He would organise outings in the mountains with his friends, which often served as opportunities for prayer and discussions about their faith on the way up or down from the summit. He was also known for his sense of humour and practical jokes.

In his beatification homily in 1990, Pope John Paul II said:

“At a superficial glance, Frassati's lifestyle, that of a modern young man who was full of life, does not present anything out of the ordinary. This, however, is the originality of his virtue, which invites us to reflect upon it and impels us to imitate it. In him faith and daily events are harmoniously fused, so that adherence to the Gospel is translated into loving care for the poor and the needy.”

Pier Giorgio embarked on studies to become an engineer. Unfortunately, before completing his university degree, he contracted polio (which he is believed to have caught from the sick people he was visiting). He passed away on 4th July 1925 at the age of 24. For his funeral, the streets of the city were lined with hundreds of mourners who were unknown to his family – the poor of Turin whom he had served for the past seven years.

Pier Giorgio Frassati is one of the Patrons of World Youth Day and also the worldwide Patron of Vincentian Youth. Our youth conference in the Lismore Central Council bears his name.

I love that these two young people highlight the magnificence that our youth can be. As the mother of two young adults, observing them and their friends in this world, as well as the big hearted and capable young Vincentians we have both working for the organisation, and as members who volunteer their time, I believe our future is in very good hands..

Leonie Duck

Mission, Spirituality and Pastoral Care Partner - South



## REMINDER

Don't forget to RSVP for the upcoming Regional Spirituality Days, focusing on unpacking Hope in our Christian and Vincentian contexts:

- Griffith, Tuesday August 26
- Albury, Wednesday August 27



# Good Works, Good News Story

Albury Regional President, Louise McManus, recently gave this address to parishioners:

“The St. Vincent de Paul Winter Appeal has begun and I would like to update you on our work in Albury. We give material support, advice and advocacy to local people in need.

In the last financial year our members provided \$95,000 of assistance on nearly 2,000 occasions. Over half of our clients were homeless or living in temporary accommodation. More than half spent over 30% of their income on rent; more than three quarters depended on unemployment or disability benefits. At the moment our fastest growing cost is emergency accommodation—we can afford to help only the most vulnerable people.

To illustrate how many are caught in poverty traps I will outline an unusual situation we dealt with recently.

A middle-aged tradesman I will call ‘Rick’ called us after he lost his income due to a back injury. He had to wait six months for surgery but his application for a disability pension was rejected by Centrelink; his appeal also failed. He sold everything he could spare to pay his rent, and asked us for help with his expenses. We provided food and petrol, and paid his medical bills and electricity account. But we also advised him to seek a review of the Centrelink decision from a higher agency. It was overturned a week later and Rick received his pension back paid to his first application. He was going without food as he was worried about the cost of his travel to the hospital in Wollongong. We advised him to seek an allowance from Services NSW to cover the cost. His landlady was intending to increase his rent by \$10 a week and threatened to evict him a week after his operation if he couldn’t pay it. We encouraged him to contact a tenancy advocates and he was allowed to stay on.

I’m pleased to say his operation was a success and he is applying for work. He came to our office to thank us for our support – with your prayers and donations we hope to continue this important work.”

## Social Justice



**Vinnies**  
good works

NSW SOCIAL JUSTICE  
**NETWORK**

### Wagga Central Council Social Justice Rep

Do you have a strong personal desire to promote social justice and learn more about advocacy and community organising?

Wagga Wagga Central Council is seeking a Social Justice Representative to be a spokesperson for the needs of our community members and sit on the state Social Justice Committee on behalf of the diocese.

If this is something you are interested in, please contact the staff team.

*“The order of society is based on two virtues: justice and charity. Charity is the Samaritan who pours oil on the wounds of the traveller who has been attacked. It is justice’s role to prevent the attack.”*

- Frederic Ozanam

### Modern Slavery Statement launch

The Society’s latest [Modern Slavery Statement](#) will be launched on August 14, 2025 as part of the Hidden in Plain Sight: Modern Slavery Panel.

Guest speakers on the panel include NSW SVDP State President, Peter Houweling; Vinnies North Coast Settlement Services Manager, Biba Honnet; Australian Catholic Anti-Slavery Network Executive Manager, Jenny Stanger; and Australian Catholic Anti-Slavery Network Lived Experience Advisor, Moe Turaga.

The online event will take place via Teams from 11am-11:45am via this link: [Hidden in Plain Sight: Modern Slavery](#) or contact the staff team.

For the latest updates on Social Justice, visit <https://socialjustice.vinnies.org.au/> or click [here](#) for more information



# Winter Warmers

## Leeton St Joseph's Conference

In April 2025, St Joseph's Conference Leeton submitted a grant application to the Leeton Shire Council requesting \$1,000 to purchase warm blankets for those in need. Due to rising energy costs, we believed that providing quality blankets would be an effective and practical way to help vulnerable members of our community stay warm throughout the colder months.

With the generous support and guidance of Ana Suarez from the Wagga Wagga office, our application was successful. As a result, we were able to acquire 35 blankets, which we have been steadily distributing to our clients in need during this winter season.

This initiative has allowed us to offer comfort and warmth to many individuals and families who would otherwise struggle to cope with the cold.

*Pictured: Quality warm blankets filling up a member's car and then the Conference's cupboard, ready to be distributed.*



## Edel Quinn Special Works Conference



*Pictured: Edel Quinn storeroom with non-perishable goods and sleeping bags that are handed out to those experiencing homelessness.*



Edel Quinn Special Works Conference has supported its namesake's Specialist Homelessness Service to make a real difference for people doing it tough and sleeping rough in Wagga.

Thanks to their efforts, they've secured thousands of dollars' worth of non-perishable food, sleeping bags, tents, gas stoves, and non-stick cookware sets to be distributed as part of the Edel Quinn case workers' assertive outreach and emergency client support.

These supplies are already going out to make a difference, offering warmth, nourishment, and a little bit of comfort to those who need it most, and providing not only immediate relief but also a sense of dignity and care.

It's a great reminder of how powerful kindness and practical help can be and highlights the Society's commitment to compassionate support for the most vulnerable members of our society.



# Winter Warmers

## North Albury St Clare's Conference

Sharing an incredible update in the Albury St Vincent De Paul Society space - with this act of kindness even being highlighted in the local paper!

We are beyond grateful to Xavier Catholic College for it's recent annual drive as part of the Vinnies the Winter Appeal.

The response from the school was nothing short of amazing. Thanks to the generosity of the students and the wider school community, we received over 150 blankets, 180 towels plus swags, dog beds, and other bedding essentials.

As you know, for those individuals and families facing homelessness or hardship and seeking assistance from our services and conferences, these items provide much-needed warmth during cold nights and will be shared across the conferences in the region, expanding the reach of our support to even more people in need.

Donations like these, especially from schools and young people, are a reminder of the power of community, and are especially vital to the charity's mission. It's inspiring to see young people getting involved and making such a tangible impact. Not only are much-needed resources provided, but the sense of community and empathy among the next generation is evident and is a perfect example of how young people can make a difference in the lives of others.

The generosity shown is proof of the difference we can all make when we come together. We are so proud to be part of such a caring community!



*Pictured: (above) Xavier students passing on their truckload of donations heading for local assistance and*

*(right) a scan of the Border Mail article featuring a photo of Xavier College students and North Albury St Clare's Presdedht Lyn Hamilton*



Xavier Catholic College students Tom Cremer, 17, Sarah Worthington, 18, and Angus Redfern, 17, and St Vincent De Paul representative Lyn Hamilton with a truck-load of goodwill to share. Picture by Phoebe Adams

### Hope blooms in the generosity of students

Chelsea Wilson

STUDENTS from Xavier Catholic College have shown this week that teenagers don't always deserve a bad wrap.

More than 150 blankets and 180 towels were donated to St Vincent De Paul by the students and staff at the Albury school as part of an annual winter appeal.

"There were 152 people sleeping outside in Albury last night and we wanted to put a face to those numbers," college director of faith formation and mission Heath Neville said. "We have beautiful kids here whose generosity has just gone above and beyond, and we want them to take that outside of our school."

President of St Clare's Vinnies conference in North Albury Lyn Hamilton said she was blown away by the generosity shown by the students, and wished more young people would get involved.

**We have beautiful kids here whose generosity has just gone above and beyond ...**

Heath Neville

"It gives you hope for the future," she said. "Our volunteers are increasing in age, we can't operate safely sometimes if we don't have the right amount of people. I'm one of the youngest and I'm 70 this year."

Student leaders Sarah Worthington and Angus Redfern love to prove that teenagers aren't all phone-obsessed narcissists.

"I feel like this is proving everyone wrong," Angus said.

Sarah agreed with the sentiment.

"I think that it shows there's definitely hope in our community especially the younger generation," Sarah said. "Albury's pretty tough and we do get a bad wrap, but it really just shows that there is hope and a chance good can arise from it."

The students well and truly exceeded their goal, handing over a truck-load of blankets, towels, clothes, sleeping bags and pet bedding to the Lavington Vinnies client centre.

Ms Hamilton said the large amount of donations would be distributed throughout Albury, Wodonga and surrounding areas of Corowa and Jerilderie.

Principal Nicole Morton said the annual collaboration with Vinnies was always a highlight of the year.

"I want to say how extremely proud I am of the Xavier Catholic College community and wider Albury community for prioritising the well-being of other people who are doing it tough this time of year," she said.



# 'Vantastic' Opportunity

## A new Vinnies Van for Wagga Wagga imminent

Vinnies Vans Services has served those experiencing homelessness for over 60 years throughout NSW. With 13 Vinnies Vans operating across the state, our outreach services support people facing challenges such as job loss, family breakdown, mental health issues, financial difficulty, and domestic violence. Vinnies Vans Services promote social inclusion by providing a safe, non-judgmental gathering place.

In an exciting development for the region, a new Vinnies Van Service will soon be established in Wagga Wagga with hopes that the new van will be delivered in Spring this year.

The Payce Foundation have funded the purchase and fit-out of a vehicle and significant financial support from the Hilton Hotel and local donors has been received for the ongoing van operational costs. This follows several years of fundraising efforts by our members and staff.

The Wagga Vinnies Van will have its operational base at the Edel Quinn Specialist Homelessness Service, with outreach services provided by volunteers and supported by a paid part-time coordinator. Van stops and runs will be determined in consultation with members and local community groups.

In May, Solange Frost, Regional Director and Carol Parkinson, Regional Administrator had the privilege of presenting to the Wollundry Rotary in Wagga about the Society's proposal to establish a Vinnies Van in the local area, and to outline growing needs in the community and the support provided by the Society NSW's members. We thank the Wollundry Rotary for their interest and look forward to working with them more closely to grow the Vinnies Van Service.

Stay tuned for further details about the launch of the new Vinnies Van in Wagga Wagga.

*Pictured: Wagga Wagga Regional Administrator, Carole Parkinson; Regional Director, South, Solange Frost; and Wollundry Rotary Member, John Egan*



## Coming Soon: New Visitation Guidelines

New Vincentian Visitation Guidelines, approved recently by the NSW SVDP State Council, will be introduced in the coming months.

Conference Visitation guidelines were last updated in 2021 and have been under review over the last 2 years, with three consultations conducted in May 2024, involving 35 members from 10 Central Councils sharing feedback, current good practices and challenges encountered while providing assistance.

The objective of the update is to provide a comprehensive Conference Visitation Guideline that offers a consistent framework and a repository of tools to standardise visitation practices across Conferences in NSW. The key objectives of the project are to:

- Consolidate the Vincentian Visitation Guideline and Toolkit, WeCare framework, and other relevant resources, into a single document.
- Establish a framework and repository of tools to implement benchmark visitation practices across NSW.
- Provide one point of reference that supports members, volunteers, and staff to provide quality services and referrals.

# Reconciliation Week

During National Reconciliation Week (May 27 – June 3), local Conferences in Wagga Wagga, Albury, and Narrandera came together over afternoon tea to reflect on this year's theme: "Bridging Now to Next" looking at our shared histories, cultures, and achievements and exploring how we can each contribute to achieving reconciliation in our communities and across the nation.

These gatherings created space for thoughtful conversations about the 2025 theme and its relevance to our daily work. Staff and community members explored how we can all become agents of change: bridging historical truths and current realities with a vision for a reconciled and inclusive tomorrow as well as how truth-telling, respect, and connection can shape a better future for First Nations peoples.

As part of the afternoon tea, participants engaged in a storytelling session featuring the children's book 'Our Country: Where History Happened' which highlights the deep cultural heritage and resilience of First Nations communities.

This was followed by a language-sharing experience, where attendees learned several Wiradjuri words that can be meaningfully woven into our communication and practice to show respect and help keep culture and identity alive in our day-to-day interactions.

National Reconciliation Week reminds us that reconciliation is not a one-week event but an ongoing journey. Let us continue to walk together, "Bridging Now to Next", with a commitment to unity, respect, and genuine partnership.



## NAIDOC Week

NAIDOC Week (6–13 July 2025) marks 50 years of celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, strength, and resilience.

This year's theme, "The Next Generation: Strength, Vision & Legacy," honoured past achievements and a bright future led by young voices.

Members were invited to attend local NAIDOC events across all the regions and St Vincent de Paul Society staff representatives attended events across Wiradjuri country including in Albury, Griffith and Wagga; taking part in learning, sharing, and celebrating the oldest living culture on earth.







## REMINDERS

### Dates of note:

August 4-11: Homelessness Week  
August 9: International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples  
August 12: International Youth Day  
August 29: Vinnies Community Sleepouts (Albury & Wagga)  
August 31: Social Justice Sunday  
September 7: Father's Day  
September 9: Blessed Frederic Ozanam Feast Day  
September 11: R U Ok? Day  
September 13: Wagga Wagga Regional Get Together  
September 21: International Day of Peace  
September 27: St Vincent de Paul Feast Day  
October 10: World Mental Health Day  
October 12-18: Anti-Poverty Week  
October 17: International Day for the Eradication of Slavery  
October 17: Wagga Wagga Charity Golf Day  
October 23: Murrumbidgee Regional Get Together  
October 25: Albury Regional Get Together  
November 3: South West Regional Get Together

### Free learning opportunity

Members may be interested in the following courses being offered online:

Black Dog Institute  
Topic: Recognise and Respond - Suicide Prevention for Everyday Life  
When: Anytime  
<https://mphn.org.au/mhs/bdi-recognise-and-respond>



## OCTOBER 3 WORLD SMILE DAY

*"Every time you smile at someone,  
it is an action of love,  
a gift to that person,  
a beautiful thing."*

– Mother Teresa.

### Virtual opportunities for Vinnies mandatory training

Facilitated via Zoom by NSW Vinnies Member & Volunteer Learning Coordinators, Linda and Joanna:

Topic: Code of Conduct

When: Friday August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2pm

Register via:

<https://vinniesnsw.snapforms.com.au/form/code-of-conduct-online-session-registration>

Topic: Safety

When: Friday August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 10am

Register via:

<https://vinniesnsw.snapforms.com.au/form/safety-online-session-registration>

Topic: Privacy and Confidentiality

When: Friday August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2pm

Register via:

<https://vinniesnsw.snapforms.com.au/form/privacy-and-confidentiality-online-session-registration>

Check out MAVS Events for more information

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

For any questions or assistance to do with training, contact Shannan | [shannan.carey@vinnies.org.au](mailto:shannan.carey@vinnies.org.au)

# Useful resources



## Support Program

The Society has partnered with Converge International to provide you with free, confidential coaching support for up to 4 sessions per issue to help you deal with the challenges, concerns or issues that may be affecting you.

Call 1300 687 327  
or visit [www.convergeinternational.com.au](http://www.convergeinternational.com.au)



## Safeguarding

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults  
**1800 478 776**

Have you encountered any concerns while assisting families with children or vulnerable adults?

Vinnies Safeguarding Team can offer additional support and information.



RIVERINA

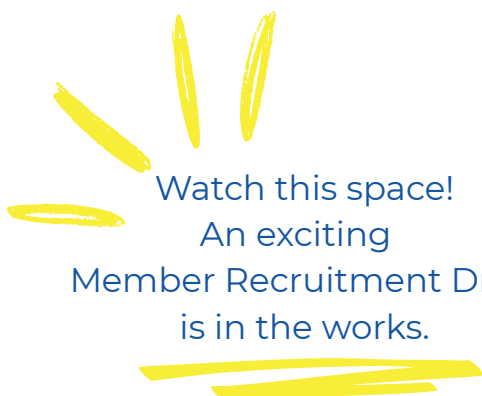
## Follow us on Facebook



Information on the Wagga Wagga Central Council area is being updated regularly on our Facebook page: 'Vinnies Riverina'.

If you have an event or good news story you'd like posted, please contact  
Shannan | [shannan.carey@vinnies.org.au](mailto:shannan.carey@vinnies.org.au)

## New Members



The St Vincent de Paul Society only exists through the action of our Members and Volunteers.

If you know of someone willing to give a hand up as a Member or Volunteer, encourage them to scan the QR or complete an application form to start their journey.