

# WAGGA WAGGA CENTRAL COUNCIL NEWSLETTER



St Vincent de Paul Society  
good works

## A message from the Central Council President

Well, it is now 2025 so happy New Year.

Many thanks to the members and staff who contributed to the Regional Get-togethers last November. They proved to be a great success, particularly for members new awareness of Vinnies services (Vinnies Assist, Safeguarding, Mission Assist support Programs, Twinning, NILS, Financial and MAVS).

I also wish to mention the generous donations received for the Vinnies Christmas Appeal and the sterling work members and volunteers put into the distribution of hampers, presents, vouchers and the like.

I wish to acknowledge the following organisations, Xavier High in Albury, Sacred Heart Primary School in North Albury and the Motorcycle Organisation in Wagga for the generous supply of Christmas gifts.

We have a busy schedule for 2025 including the following for discussion at our next Central Council Meeting on the 15th February 2025.

- Member capacity of conferences and Vinnies overall
- Conference member exchange program (learning from each other)
- Service recognition of members and volunteers
- Welfare and Support Guidelines, draft, (including home visits)
- Conference accommodation
- Social Justice program for 2025

Don't forget to keep an eye on the training programmed for 2025.

Bye for now.

Anthony Foley  
Wagga Wagga  
Central Council President



## Member Spotlight

PETER QUARMBY -  
NOMINATED FOR CITIZEN  
OF THE YEAR



Peter is well known for his outstanding contributions to the community both in his working career and since retirement. He attends many local events such as the march for violence against women that took place earlier this year.

Peter retired in 2019 following a 25-year career in the community services sector, working 20 of those years as the manager of the Edel Quinn Homelessness Shelter and 5 years as the manager of a local mental health service.

Throughout his employment, Peter went above and beyond to support the most vulnerable members of our community, putting in countless hours outside of what he was remunerated for to assist individuals secure housing and provide advocacy in times of great hardship.

Following retirement Peter has returned to volunteer with the Edel Quinn shelter, working in the kitchen to provide meals but also assisting with any events or activities provided to the participants of the service. Peter has also volunteered for CareVan for the last 6 years, assisting with the provision of meals to community members in need every Wednesday evening.

Peter embodies all that it means to be a positive member of his community. He has dedicated his time and energy to be a voice for those unable to speak for themselves, providing emotional support and advocacy to a participant of Edel Quinn that has been forced to live in this establishment for

10+ years due to immigration issues, meeting with him on regular basis to offer support and friendship when all of his family and friends live overseas.

February 2025

**In this quarterly  
newsletter  
you can expect:**

- Welcome and member spotlight
- Regional Get-Togethers
- Client support
- Social Justice
- Christmas appeal
- St Seb's conference
- Useful resources
- Pastoral care

## Vinnies staff contacts

Regional Director - South  
solange.frost@vinnies.org.au

Manager - South  
ana.suarez@vinnies.org.au

Youth & Schools  
lincoln.weir@vinnies.org.au

Operation Support  
margaret.vanzyl@vinnies.org.au

Community Outreach  
shannan.carey@vinnies.org.au

Client & Member Support  
lisa.whillans@vinnies.org.au  
mavs.support@vinnies.org.au  
cams.support@vinnies.org.au

IT  
servicedesk@vinnies.org.au

Finance  
bharat.narsey@vinnies.org.au

WWW.VINNIES.ORG.AU



VINNIES ASSIST 13 18 12

15 Peter Street, WAGGA WAGGA

svdpwagga@vinnies.org.au



# Regional Get Togethers

## Regional Get-Togethers Recap

The Regional Get-Togethers were held on the following dates:

- Wagga Wagga 12/11/24
- Albury 13/11/24
- Murrumbidgee 18/11/24
- South West 19/11/24

What an incredible four days across the regions! It was inspiring to see everyone come together to collaborate, network, and share ideas. Warmly welcoming Anthony Foley (Central Council President), Solange Frost (Regional Director), and introduction of the State and South teams.

Some member feedback from the Get Togethers included that it was a "Great day, very informative and thank you."

Key Highlights from the Presentations:

### Safeguarding

- Concerned about a young person or vulnerable adult?
- Contact the Safeguarding Team:
- ☎ 1800 4 SUPPORT (1800 478 776) (Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm)
- Or reach out to your Regional Director: 📞 0477 345 712
- For after-hours concerns, contact DCJ directly at ☎ 132 111.
- Please inform the Safeguarding Team as soon as possible.

### No Interest Loans (NILS)

Loan details: Up to \$2,000 for essential goods and services such as:

- Household items
- Car repairs and registration
- Medical and dental expenses
- Technology, furniture, and education
- Contact the NILS Team:
- ☎ 1800 484 664
- ✉ nils@vinnies.org.au

### Vinnies Assist

A central support system to connect members, volunteers, and those seeking help. Key functions include:

- Acting as a general inquiries' hub for Society connections.
- Offering intake and referral pathways for people needing assistance.
- Helping members and volunteers access Vinnies Services for client support.

Contact Vinnies Assist:

☎ 13 18 12

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the success of these events. Your commitment to collaboration and community makes a meaningful difference!

Planning and preparations have begun for our next series of events. If you have any ideas or suggestions, please don't hesitate to reach out to the team svdpwagga@vinnies.org.au



# Client support – A case study

## Empowering People We Assist Through Collaboration: A Case Study of Effective Support Services

St. Patrick's Conference was contacted by a Centrelink social worker regarding concerns for Sam's welfare. Following an initial home visit conducted by the conference, they reached out to Lisa, the Client and Member Support Officer to assist with addressing the complex nature of Sam's needs.

Living in a remote rural area, isolated from family and friends, Sam relied solely on his dog for companionship. His financial struggles were compounded by an inability to work due to significant injuries and multiple surgeries, leaving him dependent on Jobseeker payments. With further medical treatment out of reach due to cost, he faced mounting challenges, including overdue utility bills and difficulty affording daily living expenses.

Recognising the urgency of his situation, the conference provided immediate assistance. A food parcel and fuel were supplied to meet his most pressing needs. Lisa advocated on behalf of Sam to Centrelink, where he was supported in nominating an authorized representative. This enabled him to successfully apply for the Disability Support Pension (DSP), securing a more stable income. Additionally, Lisa helped Sam access concessional vehicle registration, allowing him to register his vehicle free of charge.

To ease the financial burden of his utility expenses, Lisa assisted Sam in completing an Energy Accounts Payment Assistance (EAPA) application, resulting in a \$500 credit to his electricity account. Healthcare advocacy also played a pivotal role, in securing a bulk-billed appointment with a medical specialist to address his urgent health concerns.

In addressing long-term challenges, Lisa worked with local services to establish referral pathways. The client was connected with Anglicare for financial counselling, securing an over-the-phone appointment within four weeks to address his vehicle loan issues. For emotional support, he was referred to MensLine, and the local parish extended an invitation to their Christmas Day celebration, fostering a sense of community connection.

Through this combined assistance, Sam's immediate needs were met, financial stability and medical support were secured, and connections with both professional and community networks were established. These interventions laid the foundation for a more hopeful and sustainable future.

Lisa Whillans, the Client and Member Support Officer, welcomes clients in a way that builds their confidence in themselves and the service, conducting assessments to identify the required range of supports, and coordinating referrals to both internal and external services.

She monitors the outcomes of these referrals, evaluates their effectiveness, and advocates on behalf of clients experiencing disadvantage to improve their circumstances.

Lisa works collaboratively Conferences and other service providers, ensuring tailored and effective assistance is delivered. She can be reached at 0466 570 691 or via email at [lisa.whillans@vinnies.org.au](mailto:lisa.whillans@vinnies.org.au).



## Social Justice

Clare Reeves has been nominated for the Social Justice Committee as the Wagga Wagga Regional representative in 2025.

Clare is a Wagga local who works in Indigenous Affairs and has a passion for advocacy in the community. She is looking forward to bringing a regional perspective to the State Committee and supporting her local conferences with initiatives this year.



**Vinnies**  
good works

NSW SOCIAL JUSTICE  
**NETWORK**

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

# A wrap up of Christmas 2024

“As I look forward to the reopening of Micah Hub for 2025 I reflect with gratitude the incredible generosity shown to our organisation in 2024.

2024 has been hard and we have been very busy doing what we can to assist those in our community who need a helping hand.

The year finished on a good note with Wagga Region supplying close to 400 Christmas hampers to Wagga, Tumbarumba, Junee and The Rock. Our community once again supported us with a variety of donations, Bike Riders of Wagga donated many toys and one of our generous benefactors supplied additional toys; all contributed to a wonderful Christmas for those we supplied with hampers.

During the year we once again started doing EAPA and have been very successful getting

We start 2025 by opening on 20th January and Backpacks will be available from Friday 24th January. The Marketplace run a campaign to collect backpacks and school supplies, and it would not be possible without their continuing help

The support shown to our Care Centre and Vinnies itself during 2024 is overwhelming at times.

We could not operate without the ongoing help from so many, it is impossible to name just a few. From those who give us their excess vegetables, milk, bread, eggs and Ozz Harvest who continuously bring food to our door; the business and service Clubs who support us year after year, we thank you.

We could not finish without thanking our volunteers who turn up week after week enabling us to open our doors and assist those in need. The volunteers are assisted on every level by the staff at Peter Street who make everything easy for us.”

Carole Parkinson  
Regional President - Wagga Wagga



“Support workers from our Conference members who put together hampers for Christmas to give to the needy at Christmas time.

School children from Marian College and St Patrick’s schools in Griffith made up hampers and then gave them to us to hand out to the needy in Griffith. We gave out 60 Hampers this year. We are very grateful to the parents of the school children they show a great heart to assist our need.

Thank you to everyone who participated to this venture.”

Yvonne Couper  
President - St Vincent de Paul Care and Support, Griffith



# St Sebs Youth Conference



St. Sebastian's Youth Conference held two Buddies Day activities these school holidays.

The first saw the Youth Conference members taking 25 excited children on a fun-filled adventure, to an action-packed Laser Tag session. The kids were split into teams and played three thrilling rounds, racing through the maze with laser blasters, all while taking short fruit breaks to recharge. They showed the Youth Conference how to play the game and play it safe, teaching them all the cool tricks and hiding spots.

After the games, everyone joined together for a delicious pizza lunch, sharing laughs and stories.

The second activity was the Cinema, where the children sat back and enjoyed a screening of Sonic the Hedgehog 3.

With a drink and popcorn in hand and eyes glued to the screen, the kids couldn't have been more thrilled by the high-speed action and fun. It was a day of joy, laughter, full bellies and unforgettable memories for everyone involved. The children are extremely excited for what the next activity may be!

The next school holidays will be packed with even more fun and excitement with a variety of thrilling activities being discussed within the St Sebastian Youth Conference.

## Mission, Spirituality & Pastoral Care

Happy New Year

Many of you will be aware that 2025 is a Jubilee Year and Pope Francis has chosen as its theme: HOPE, and also that the international motto for the St Vincent de Paul Society is "Serve in Hope" (Serviens in Spe). Much of what I have already read about the Year of Hope, seems to speak directly to those of us working for the aims of the Society!

In announcing the holy year [Bull of Indiction, 9 May 2024], Pope Francis said:

[1] "Everyone knows what it is to hope. In the heart of each person, hope dwells as the desire and expectation of good things to come, despite our not knowing what the future may bring. Even so, uncertainty about the future may at times give rise to conflicting feelings..... Often we come across people who are discouraged, pessimistic and cynical about the future..... For all of us, may the Jubilee be an opportunity to be renewed in hope."

"During the Holy Year, we are called to be tangible signs of hope for those of our brothers and sisters who experience hardships of any kind." [10]

Bishop Brian also highlighted this in his Christmas message:

"As pilgrims of hope, we can walk this path joyfully, knowing that Jesus walks with us. May the hope we find in Jesus help us to see the gifts we have been given and respond generously to those around us whose hope has been dimmed by life's difficulties. Our light of hope grows as we share it, so let us put our light "on a lampstand, so that those who enter may see the light"! (Lk 8:16b).

Francis closes [25] by saying: "Through our witness, may hope spread to all those who anxiously seek it. May the way we live our lives say to them: "Hope in the Lord! Hold firm, take heart!" (Ps 27:14)

A jubilee year is about forgiveness and reconciliation.

Let's pray as Francis did in opening the Holy Doors of St Peter's Basilica on Christmas Eve, that the Holy Spirit will soften hardened hearts so that "enemies may speak to each other again, adversaries may join hands and people seek to meet together." Amen.

Leonie Duck  
Mission and Formation.  
January 2025



## Blue Knot Foundation

Building a Trauma  
Informed Community

## Trauma training

Blue Knot Foundation is running a series of free online workshops for those who are helping people experiencing different types of trauma.

Further information is available on the Blue Knot Foundation website [www.blueknot.org.au/supporters/supporter-workshops/](https://www.blueknot.org.au/supporters/supporter-workshops/)

Upcoming Dates for the Trauma Supporter workshops  
(Details at: <https://blueknot.org.au/supporters/supporter-workshops/>)

22 Feb 2025, 10am to 4pm  
22 March 2025, 10am to 4pm  
24 May 2025, 10am to 4pm  
21 June 2025, 10am to 4pm



## Free training course

Members as well as employees may be interested in a free online course offered by De Paul University.

Titled Values Centred Leadership, the fully online 10-week course is run a few times a year. Applications for the April – June session need to be submitted by March 9th.

Many members have completed this course in previous years, as have the Mission and Formation Team. We recommend it for those of you who like to continue learning. The course draws on modern leadership frameworks as well as our Vincentian heritage and invites personal reflection.

# 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)

## New Members needed



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, retail volunteer or as part of the Vinnies Van team, please encourage them to contact [membership@vinnies.org.au](mailto:membership@vinnies.org.au) or scan the QR code above.

## 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.



## A few reminders:

- 7/2 Blessed Roselie Rendu Feast Day
- 10/2 Conference president mentoring session for interested mentors
- 14/2 Twinning information workshop
- 17/2 February Orientation & MAVS training Wagga Wagga
- 18/2 MAVS Training Albury
- 20/2 World Day of Social Justice
- 5/3 Ash Wednesday
- 21/03 Harmony Day
- 9-17/04 NSW Youth week
- 18/4 Good Friday
- 20/4 Easter Sunday
- Save the date for Vinnies Family Fun Day 26 April 2025 at the Wagga Wagga Showgrounds
- Fire and First aid training - TBA



RIVERINA

## Follow us on Facebook

Information on the Riverina area is being updated regularly on the Vinnies Riverina Facebook page.

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