



Vinnies
good works

SOCIAL JUSTICE
NETWORK

Welcome to the Social Justice Newsletter for October

New investment in DV and social housing

Vinnies NSW yesterday [welcomed the NSW Government's announcement](#) that it will invest hundreds of millions of dollars in accommodation for women and children escaping domestic violence.

Over four years, the \$484 million package will deliver 75 additional refuges as well as about 200 new homes. It also includes \$5.2 million for a trial providing dedicated support for accompanied children and young people at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

Vinnies NSW currently operates 11 domestic violence refuges. Having seen a significant increase in the number of people seeking help during the most recent lockdowns, we are pleased to see this investment feature as part of the Government's COVID-19 economic recovery package.

Over the weekend, the NSW Government also announced an additional [\\$183 million for social and affordable housing](#). The package includes \$50 million to accelerate the delivery of housing in Western Sydney, Wagga Wagga and Coffs Harbour; another \$50 million to deliver 290 new social housing homes in partnership with community housing providers; and \$40 million for new and upgraded Aboriginal housing. A week earlier, the NSW Opposition announced that, given the opportunity, it would deliver 'a big build in social housing'.

During Anti-Poverty Week, as the Society joined NCOSS, Country Women's Association, PCYC, Local Government NSW and many other organisations to call for more social housing investment, including for women and children escaping domestic violence, these announcements are encouraging.

Yet we know there are more than 50,000 applicants for social housing across NSW and that we need at least 5,000 new homes every year for the next decade just to keep pace with increased demand. And so we will continue in our work to build bi-partisan support for more social housing in NSW,

You can [read new research about the need for a Pink Hi-Vis Recovery – including significant investment in social housing – here](#). And you can help highlight the importance of investing in women's economic security, by [accessing the resources here](#).

Rosalie Rendu Forum - Last chance to register!

This Thursday evening, our annual [Rosalie Rendu Forum](#) will explore the presence of domestic and family violence in our communities, the impact of the pandemic, and how the NSW Government's recent announcement might change the landscape.

Join panellists Annabelle Daniel OAM, CEO of Women's Community Shelters; Christine Robinson, Coordinator of Wirringa Baiya Aboriginal Community Legal Centre; and Rosemary Kariuki, winner of the Local Hero 2021 Australian of the Year award, for a discussion about the relationships between poverty and domestic violence, and what can be done to break these complex connections.

As part of the event, lived experience advocate, Peita, will also share her own story and remarkable journey to recovery.

Facilitated by Padma Raman, CEO of Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety, the event is a timely opportunity to reflect on how we can better keep women, and their children, safe.

[Register here to attend this event](#) which will be livestreamed on October 21 from 6-7:30pm. You are also welcome to join us online for an informal discussion and networking opportunity immediately following the event. Email social.justice@vinnies.org.au for more information.



St Vincent de Paul Society NSW

ROSALIE RENDU FORUM 2021

 **Vinnies**
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 17 - 23 October 2021
anti-poverty week
act on poverty

Take action for more affordable housing

Over the last twelve months, the price of housing has continued to increase, locking more and more people out of buying a home and leading many more to experience housing stress.

While investment in social housing is critical to ensure the lowest income earners have a place to call home, NSW also needs significantly more *affordable* housing for low and median income earners.

Local councils have an important role to play in supporting the delivery of more affordable housing and, in the lead up to the local government elections in December, we have an opportunity to seek commitments from candidates to make this happen.

Over the weeks ahead, members of the Sydney Alliance and Newcastle Alliance, including the Society, are hosting a dozen local candidate forums to call for new affordable housing. The forums will take place online and will take place for residents of [Northern Beaches](#), [Newcastle](#), [Lane Cove](#), [Sutherland](#), [Cumberland](#), Campbelltown, [Hornsby](#), and [Parramatta](#). Please click on the links to register to attend. There may also be a forum in the Inner West - contact james@sheltersnsw.org.au if you are keen to help make this happen!

Mental Health and the pandemic

In announcing a [\\$130 million package to better meet mental health needs](#) as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the NSW Government described mental health as the "untold story" of the pandemic. We know this story is still being written. The social and emotional impacts of disasters are not always immediately clear - they can emerge weeks, months, and even years later. Yet already, the impacts have been profound.

[Mental Health Australia's recent research](#) found that 74% of healthcare professionals report negative mental health and well-being impacts during the pandemic, while 86% state that the pandemic has significantly increased the pressure and stress they experience in the workplace.

Similarly, a [National Survey on the Impact of COVID-19 on the Mental Health of Australian Residential Aged Care Residents and Staff](#) found that 41% of all surveyed residents reported loneliness and a third experienced anxiety (33%) during the pandemic, while more than a third of staff (36%) reported anxiety and 20% reported depression.

And outside these settings, several large surveys have shown - not surprisingly - a widespread increase in social disconnection and loneliness during lockdown. To learn more about national data on loneliness during the pandemic, COVID's impact on social connection,

and the potential long-term consequences, sign up for UNSW's [Loneliness beyond Repair?](#) webinar on November 9.

If you or someone you know needs help, this is available 24 hours a day. Call Lifeline on 13 11 14, or contact [one of the organisations listed here](#).



Have you experienced difficulties with a rent-to-buy scheme?

In many towns across NSW, there are local businesses or franchises that rent household appliances to people who are unable to afford to buy them outright.

Recently, Social Justice Representatives from our Lismore Central Council shared concerns about the financial impact of some of these consumer lease or rent-to-buy schemes on people already experiencing disadvantage.

In response, we are working to better understand the impact of these arrangements by collecting case studies from people experiencing difficulties with local rent-to-buy schemes.

We are also working to promote the availability of our No Interest Loans (NILs) program where eligible individuals and families on low incomes can borrow up to \$1,500 (or \$2,000 if you have experienced family violence) over 12-18 months to purchase essential goods and services, interest free.

To find out more about our NILs service, people are invited to call 1800 484 664 or email us at nils@vinnies.org.au. If you would like to share your recent experience of a rent-to-buy scheme, please email mark.ludbrooke@vinnies.org.au.



Social justice information night for young adults

Interested in getting more actively involved in Vinnies' social justice work? Curious about what a social justice representative might do? If you are aged between 18 and 35 and interested in learning more, come along to our information night next Tuesday at 7:30pm.

You'll have the opportunity to meet young people already leading this work, find out more about how we advocate for change together, meet potential comrades, and ask as many questions as you like. [Register here.](#)

World Day of the Poor - the challenge of mutual sharing

In his message for the [fifth World Day of the Poor](#) Pope Francis calls on all societies to adopt a new approach to poverty. Building bonds of mutual sharing will break down the barriers of exclusion, restore dignity, and strengthen the solidarity of communities.

Join us to learn more about this call, and how it resonates with the Vincentian approach. Guest Speaker, Bishop Vincent Long Van Nguyen DD OFM Conv will reflect on key theological and social teach themes embedded in the message, while Leo Tucker, our Executive Director, Mission and Spirituality, will reflect on the Pope's call for 'a different approach to poverty' and how this connects to the Society's vision and mission.

It will also be an opportunity to hear from Vinnies Members about a range of new initiatives responding to emerging forms of poverty in this era of the COVID pandemic. This event will take place at 7pm on Wednesday 17 November. You can [register here.](#)

Events

Rosalie Rendu Forum 2021

Thursday 21 October 2021

[Register here](#)

Global Race to Zero Summit:

A free online event hosted by the Smart Energy Council

20 and 21 October 2021

[Register here](#)

Vinnies Youth Social Justice Info Night

26 October

[Register here](#)

Story Telling from the Heart - Painting through Pain

28 October, 4:00-6:00pm

[Register here](#)

World Day of the Poor

[Register Here](#)

17 November 2021

NSW Domestic Violence Vigil

Thursday 25 November at 4pm

[Facebook live stream](#)

Is there a local social justice event or news item you'd like everyone to know about?

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