

Click [here](#) to view this email in your browser.



AUGUST 2023 • Edition 4

Welcome to the latest edition of Volunteering at Vinnies!

Welcome to the latest edition of our volunteer newsletter, *Volunteering at Vinnies*.

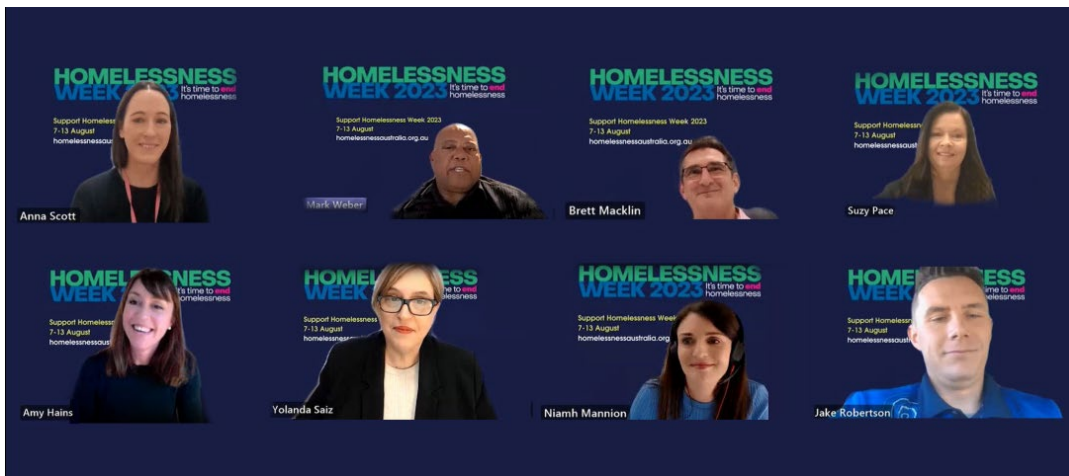
In this edition, we take a closer look at the current homelessness crisis and share ideas on how you can help with calling for housing justice. We also discuss the importance of supporting a First Nation's Voice in the Constitution as we move closer towards the Voice Referendum in October.

This month, we begin testing of our new Members and Volunteers system (MAVS) which includes a refresh of our current Members and Volunteers website and a brand new MAVS database ('MAVS Portal'). The new website and portal will improve the volunteer and member experience by making it easier to browse opportunities, locate resources, complete requisite training and more. We hope it encourages connection and community among our valued member and volunteer cohort, too.

Most significantly, in this edition we recognise a handful of volunteers who give so much to our organisation in order to improve the lives of others in their community. Thank you to Sunita, June, Andrea, Doug & Katie, and to all of you who continue to contribute so much to the Society. We are so grateful for your support.

If you would like to contribute to our quarterly newsletter, we would love to hear from you. Please contact the Volunteer & Associate Engagement Team at volunteers@vinnies.org.au.

We hope you enjoy this edition.



SPOTLIGHT ON: **Homelessness Week 2023**

The second week of August marked Homelessness Week 2023. This year's theme, *It's time to end homelessness*, called for action to address drivers of homelessness, including inadequate income support payments, a shortage of affordable housing, specialist services stretched to capacity, as well as people remaining in unsafe living conditions due to a lack of viable alternatives.

Vinnies' Homelessness and Housing services were the focus of a wonderful panel discussion featuring guest speaker Amy Hains, Acting CEO of Homelessness NSW, alongside managers of diverse homelessness services, Anna Scott from the NSW North Coast, Suzy Pace from the Macarthur services, Mark Weber from sustaining tenancies, Jake Robertson, First Nations Strategy and Outcomes and Brett Macklin, Director of Homelessness and Housing. Yolanda Saiz, our CEO, and Niamh Mannion, Executive Director of Vinnies Services, underlined the importance of the issue and occasion.

The undoubted highlight was hearing the lived experience of a current person we assist who is a domestic and family violence survivor. This was the first time her moving and inspiring story was told to a significant audience, though hopefully the first of many advocacy opportunities for an incredibly brave and articulate survivor. Her contributions to the event embodied the changing and diverse nature of homelessness.

Demand for assistance from St Vincent de Paul Society NSW's homelessness and housing services has increased over the past year as a result of the worsening cost of living and housing crises.

"Our homelessness and housing services assisted 9,024 people in the past financial year, increasing by 4.9% from 12 months earlier," said Yolanda Saiz.

"The Society's capacity to meet the soaring demand for assistance has concerningly been stretched with unassisted requests for support from our homelessness and housing services increasing by 81% to 2,690 over the past year.

"We have been able to secure stable accommodation for 53% of people supported by our Specialist Homelessness Services, 50% of clients at risk of homelessness were assisted to maintain housing, while 40% of people who were homeless prior to receiving support are now in stable housing."



[READ MORE](#)

WHAT'S NEW



**NSW Vinnies
Community Sleepout
launches for 2023**

[READ MORE](#)



**Clear Pathway to Voice
Referendum**

[READ MORE](#)



**Bushfire Appeal funds
provide long-term
support**

[READ MORE](#)

VOLUNTEER NEWS



Testing commences for new Member & Volunteer system

This month, a group of representatives from our staff, volunteer and member cohorts will commence testing of our upgraded Member & Volunteers (MAVS) website and MAVS Portal.

[READ MORE](#)

Celebrating National Student Volunteer Week: Meet Sunita Tamang

Celebrated annually in August, National Student Volunteer Week acknowledges and celebrates student volunteers. Stott's College student, Sunita Tamang, tells us why she chooses to volunteer with Vinnies.



[READ MORE](#)

Lifetime Service Award recipient, June Leroy

June Leroy recently celebrated two landmark anniversaries: her 90th birthday and 29



years of volunteer service at Vinnies Shop Brunswick Heads.

[READ MORE](#)

Volunteers as Leaders: Super Administrator Andrea mentors Blacktown staff & volunteers

When Andrea Fernando arrived in Australia from India in 1985, she secured employment at the State Rail Authority. Almost 40 years later, Andrea's using her extensive corporate administration experience to mentor others.



[READ MORE](#)

Meet Doug O'Reilly, Donation & Clothing Room Volunteer at Matthew Talbot Hostel

Retired teacher, Doug O'Reilly, first came across Matthew Talbot Hostel 50 years ago as a 20 year old. Read how Doug's volunteering experience brings him purpose alongside physical & spiritual wellbeing.



[READ MORE](#)

Marking significant days of inclusion

Vinnies NSW engages in celebratory and commemorative activities to mark dates that are significant to Australia's history, as well as days that demonstrate our ongoing commitment to fostering greater inclusion for the diverse communities we serve.



[READ MORE](#)



Pathways to employment: Katie's story

Katie Mosca volunteered at Wyong Vinnies Support Centre between April to July 2022. Here she shares how volunteering with Vinnies helped her secure a full time role with the Society.

[READ MORE](#)

Meet our staff: Mike Synnott, Volunteer Coordinator, Matthew Talbot Hostel

Earlier this year, the Member & Volunteer Survey results revealed that you wanted to know more about the work that we do at Vinnies NSW. In the third of our staff profile series, we meet Mike Synnott, Volunteer Coordinator at Matthew Talbot Hostel.



[READ MORE](#)



Creating our volunteer community: we welcome your newsletter contributions

Research shows us that feeling connected as part of a team leads to a greater sense of volunteer satisfaction. We would love to invite you to help strengthen our volunteer community by contributing to our newsletter.

[READ MORE](#)

St Vincent de Paul Society NSW ABN: 91 161 127 340
Click [here](#) to unsubscribe or to change your Subscription Preferences.