



**St Vincent de Paul Society**  
*good works*



# NEWSLETTER

**GREATER WESTERN SYDNEY  
CENTRAL COUNCIL**

**Metro Regional Director  
Ash Ambihaipahar**



As we approach the festive season, we enter one of our busiest times of the year. The Christmas Appeal is in full swing, with incredible support from local parishes, schools, and various community initiatives. This is a heartwarming time when our community unites to support those in need.

A special congratulations to our Members, Volunteers, Vinnies Services, Retail, Vans, and Metro MVEI staff for their efforts in hosting the highly successful Metro Vinnies Community Sleepout at Western Sydney University, Parramatta. The event raised over \$81,000, divided among the three Central Councils, with each receiving approximately \$27,000. A big thank you to Kate Conroy, Metro Manager for Member and Youth Engagement, and Deborah Dmoch, Metro Operations Support Officer, for their dedication in making this event a success. With over 140 registered attendees and 80 participants braving the cold, the event highlighted the community's solidarity with those in need.

Additionally, we've had valuable opportunities for Members to engage with Federal and State representatives, including Ed Husic (Chifley), Michelle Rowland (Greenway), Susan Templeman (Macquarie), and Trish Doyle (Blue Mountains). These interactions allowed Members to share the vital work they are doing and raise awareness of the challenges their communities face.

Lastly, we've introduced Vinnies Gift Cards to replace traditional family assistance vouchers. This change ensures more dignified and flexible support for individuals and families, reflecting our commitment to compassion and respect. For more information, visit the MAVS website.



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# IN THE SPOTLIGHT

## Inaugural Homeless Memorial Service

On the 21 June 2024, the longest night of the year, the winter solstice, the Diocese of Parramatta remembered the lives of some of the most marginalised people in our community at the inaugural Homeless Memorial Service.

Held on the steps of St Patrick's Cathedral, Parramatta, the gathering on Friday, June 21, recognised homeless people from across Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains who had passed away—some often without recognition, acknowledgement, or companionship. A similar event was held in Martin Place, Sydney. Our members and volunteers from GWS attended and helped serve coffee and tea from the Vinnies Van.

Story link: <https://catholicoutlook.org/diocese-hosts-inaugural-memorial-service-for-homeless-people/>



## Member's Out and About!



*Leon Ross & Tom Cook at Diocesan gathering*



*Conference members from the Katoomba region gathered to meet with Trish Doyle MP (Blue Mountains) and shared their vital work and the challenges faced by their local communities.*



## NEPEAN UPDATE

Members of the Nepean team were present at the Parramatta Diocesan Gathering, held in Penrith on Saturday 10th August. Vinnies was one of several organisations that participated in an expo stall. We had several attendees drop by for a chat during the day, and we took the opportunity to promote Vinnies Youth and the Community Sleepout.

*Members of the Nepean team meet once a month for a social walk, doing the famous Nepean Riverwalk. This month we had (L to R) Georg Eberl, Melissa Topp, Leon Ross, Jacob Fonseca and Fred the dog.*

*Anyone is welcome to join us for a casual walk and a chat.*

# CHRISTMAS APPEAL 2024



## 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. Everyone should be able to bring joy to their loved ones without the stress of unpaid bills, the cost of a Christmas gift, or the worry of providing a meal on Christmas Day.

Unfortunately, for so many people throughout our state this is the reality as we continue to endure an incredibly tough economic climate.

The theme of this year's Christmas Appeal is focusing on the devastating and unrelenting impacts of the ongoing cost-of-living crisis and the immediate, practical and emotional support the Society can provide to help people get back on their feet.

As households feel the continued brunt of cost-of-living pressures and have no expenses left to cut back on, our members and programs are responding to increasing demand. Close to 100,000 people have been supported across the state by our members over the last year. For many, they are living in a constant state of 'survival mode' and cannot envision a brighter future.

Fortunately, the Society can offer the support people need with food, clothing, household bills and more, along with connecting them with ongoing assistance and services. Crucially, our members give people in need hope for the future.

The Society thanks our dedicated Members for the important role they play in raising funds for the Christmas Appeal so we can continue to meet the rising need of the most vulnerable people in our community. **The Christmas Appeal will launch on 1 November 2024.** Materials to support your Christmas Appeal efforts, such as posters, donation envelopes and conference booklets should be available from 14 October 2024.

Funds raised through the Christmas Appeal will be used to fund our core programs including supporting people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, and also people struggling with poverty and cost-of-living pressures.



# SOCIETY INSIGHT FORUM



## Society Insight Forum for GWS members

The Society's Insight forum for the GWS Central Council was held on the 25th October 2024 at St Nicholas of Myra Parish in Penrith.

The forum was attended by 17 members including all 5 Regional Council Presidents and a board member from the State Council.

The panel included Sam Crosby, Executive Director, Membership, Volunteers and Early Intervention, Phil Coyte, Executive Director, Commercial Enterprise, Retail, and Fundraising, Ashvini Ambihaipahar, Regional Director, Operations Metropolitan and Leon Ross, Regional Council President, Nepean Region.

Members had an opportunity to listen to the management team about the progress of the Strategic Plan 2024-2028 and were able to ask questions and insights on the various initiatives.



Phil Coyte, Gary Pursehouse, Anne Stanfield, John Tweedie



Phil Coyte

1 FEBRUARY 2025

Save  
THE  
Date

## Greater Western Sydney Central Council Reflection Day

Further information and registration details to be announced shortly.

The 2025 Greater Western Sydney Spiritual Retreat will be held at the Edmund Rice Retreat and Conference Centre



# Greater Sydney Community Sleepout

**Friday 30<sup>th</sup> August**



We reached and exceeded our event targets for both fundraising and participant registrations, so a big thank you to everyone for your hard work in setting this event up to be a great success both on the night and in terms of raising awareness and funds for all our Central Councils across Metro.

## Thank you for spreading the word amongst your networks!

The fundraising target was \$52,000. And a whopping **\$81,392** was raised via participant sponsorship, donations and auction sales.

The Greater Sydney Community Sleepout attracted around 140 participants who attended in person or online, with about 80 who slept rough overnight. The Community Sleepout was again a great way to get friends, colleagues and community groups involved with Vinnies for just one night. By combining fundraising and awareness, together we can help prevent homelessness from happening in the first place for many people affected by disadvantage in our local communities across Broken Bay, Greater Sydney and Broken Bay Central Councils.

This intent is something we never lose sight of and it remains a focus every day.

We had a powerful and enjoyable program for the evening where many participants not only experienced what it is like to sleep out for a night, but also interacted with various Vinnies' programs and services. And all got to listen to the Vinnies Forbes St Band.

We would like to take a moment to acknowledge the participants, volunteers, members, speakers, sponsors and the Forbes Street Band for your generous support and contributions. Your support makes it possible for us to hold this important annual fundraising event.

Spare a moment to help spread the above successes across your networks and teams, of our Greater Sydney Community Sleepout.

**Plans are underway for the 2025 Community sleepout**, details will be announced in the early new year. For more information or feedback, contact Kate Conroy, the event coordinator at [kate.conroy@vinnies.org.au](mailto:kate.conroy@vinnies.org.au)



*Sleepout Panellists*



*Samoan Church Group.  
Western Sydney University  
influencers*



*Gilroy Catholic College,  
Castle Hill*



*Rapid Relief Team and Kate Conroy*



*Vinnies Members and Staff*

# HOLY FAMILY PRIMARY – WINTER SLEEPOUT EVENT

## *Celebrating faith and working together*

Our Holy Family Primary sleepout event was truly a celebration of faith and putting that faith into action in working together to help those in need. The theme for the event was “Cosy because we care” and students were encouraged to dress in their pyjamas or comfortable clothes. It was also the last day of term so a good day to go mufti.

Nearly half of all the students from years 1 to 6 participated in the event and were joined by their parents and carers as well as our parish priest, pastoral assistant and local state MP Edmond Atalla.



*Children at their snack pack activity station*

We celebrated our faith in a special liturgy led and performed by the students, with prayers, songs and liturgical movement. I then shared some of what we do as Vincentians. A simple summary is our logo and explaining the 3 hands. We are sharers of God's love and blessings. It's always fun seeing the children trying to put the hands together – they can't do it by themselves! The presentation concluded with a short video of the Vinnies Van service, showing outreach to the homeless and the issues creating homelessness.

We then shared a simple meal of a bread roll and a cup of soup, giving a small taste of what it's like to not have a lot and not having choices.



*Prayer space set up for the event in our hall*

We were then led to reflect on our experience and what we heard and learned and what it means for us and to let it make a difference in us and to lead us to action.

While there was no sleeping involved, it was a great way for the whole school community to come together and unite in supporting our broader community with faith in action.

The focus of the event was raising awareness of and supporting the homeless and those doing it tough. Our children prepared 150 snack packs for the Vinnies Van team and decorated them and included notes of support and encouragement. This is an amazing effort and was greatly appreciated by our Van team.

The spirit is alive and thriving in our school community. It was a wonderful blessing to be part of this community event and experience the spirit, energy, creativity, generosity and enthusiasm of our children, staff and families and especially our principal and faith in action coordinator.

It's a great example of how working together we can make connections and bring the love of God to the people we serve.

*Georg Eberl  
Holy Family Emerton Conference President*



# CONFERENCE NEWS

## TOONGABBIE CONFERENCE

Like many parts of Sydney, Toongabbie has experienced great change over the past 20 years. We have gone from being a sleepy outer Sydney suburb to being a hub of South Indian and Sri Lankan migrants. This has brought new growth to our parish and significant change to the community. As a centre of Tamil speakers, large numbers of Sri Lankan refugees chose to move here.

Throughout this time, and since, we have been inspired by the generosity of our parishioners. We have had a continuous supply of food staples through our "One in the Basket for Vinnies" programme. This has become a regular part of our Sunday Mass with parishioners encouraged to supply one item of food each week. With overflowing cupboards, we frequently can send excess food supplies to the Blacktown Hub and the Jesuit Refugee Service in Parramatta. A "Friends of Toongabbie Vinnies" Facebook group has also been set up within the parish and has been extremely supportive when we have needed specific items. Through this group, we have been able to source larger and specific items like lounges, televisions and lawnmowers. These initiatives have contributed to a great relationship between our Vinnies Conference and the Parish.

Our Conference with the help of the Parish School led by the Mini Vinnies group and the Parish can organise approximately 50 hampers at Christmas each year as well as presents for each child up to 16 years of age. The Parish Craft group assists with the purchase and wrapping of any additional presents needed.

Our other significant initiative is the preparation of Back-to-School packs for the Children from the families that received Hampers. Once again, we call on the Parish for donations and are always overwhelmed by the quantity of stationery we receive. Any excess is then distributed to a Local Primary School.

At the height of the "refugee crisis" we were doing 10-20 visits a week, mostly to provide emergency support for refugees. This changed dramatically with the offshore detention regime, as there were no new refugees. More recently, most of the people we were asked to help were asylum seekers who had had their claims rejected and were fighting in the courts. These people had no financial support and found life in Australia difficult, but still better than being returned to Sri Lanka.

Late last year we were approached by a Sri Lankan Refugee support group to see if we could locate any sewing machines to be used by refugees to earn a small living. We called on our parishioners and were overwhelmed by the response. We received several good working machines, and one parishioner even went out and bought a new one.

Overall, the Conference continues to adapt to the changing social dynamics within our area and where it can, be supportive of both Refugees and any individual or family that requires assistance.

*Paul Sinclair  
Toongabbie Conference*



# CONFERENCE NEWS



## Winter BBQ at Merrylands Housing brings together Conference members and young adult volunteers.

St Vincent de Paul Housing (formerly Amelie Housing) residents at Merrylands enjoyed a wonderful gathering during the July school holidays this year. The BBQ lunch with activities for the children was hosted by Conference members and young adult volunteers. Membership and Youth staff working collaboratively with Housing staff members enabled the success of the event.



*These photos give a sense of the fun, joy and community engagement that was present on the day.*



Parents and carers enjoyed being able to participate with their children during the winter school break and appreciated the special activities provided. Residents of all ages welcomed the opportunity to socialise with their neighbours and members, volunteers and staff. Adding to the enjoyment was a lovely sunny day and a fantastic BBQ with all the trimmings. The sausages were particularly popular.

This is one of several events that have been held at the Merrylands site in the past couple of years with Conference members from throughout the Cumberland region working with Earnest Henry, Member and Community Engagement Coordinator for Greater Western Sydney. Housing staff distribute flyers and display posters to enable all the residents to know about the event and go out of their way to encourage people to come along.

Thanks to everyone involved including St Vincent de Paul Housing staff, Alysha Wong-O'Connor, Metro Youth Engagement Officer who recruited the young adult volunteers, the Conference members and volunteers, Earnest Henry, and of course the residents young and old who joined in with the festivities.







*John Neylan presenting cake to Gabby Scanlon (Teacher, Our Lady of Mercy College, Parramatta) for 30 years of Busking for Vinnies. Gabby Scanlon was one of the original OLMC girls that started performing in Busking for Vinnies in 1990.*

## Busking for Vinnies Parramatta – 2024

Schools across Western Sydney have brought music to the streets of Parramatta as part of the annual 'Busking for Vinnies' initiative this August. 'Busking for Vinnies' has been a long-standing community outreach event, supported by Parramatta Council, held by the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW annually in Parramatta since the 1990s to raise awareness of the Society's services in the region.

Our Lady of Mercy College in Parramatta launched 'Busking for Vinnies' on Wednesday 21 August at Centenary Square. Parramatta Marist High School (Westmead), Mt Saint Benedict College (Pennant Hills), St Edmund's College (Wahroonga) and St John Paul II Catholic College (Schofields) also performed throughout August.

"It was delightful to have 'Busking for Vinnies' once again to highlight the musical talents of schools in the community and concurrently raising awareness of the Society's services," said Roydon Ng, St Vincent de Paul Society NSW Metropolitan Schools Engagement Officer.

It's wonderful to have Our Lady of Mercy College, Mt Saint Benedict College and St Edmund's College back for another year, as well as welcoming Parramatta Marist High School and St John Paul II Catholic College on board for the first time. It's also a great way for Vinnies to engage with the local community and showcase the services that are available for people to access in the area, including our van services and support centres.

St Vincent de Paul Society **NSW members supported close to 11,000 people across Greater Western Sydney over the past financial year.** Demand for support in the region increased by 24% from the previous year with close to half of the people assisted experiencing housing stress and more than a third requesting assistance for the first time.

The Metropolitan Schools Engagement Team thanks each of the schools for a series of wonderful musical performances and thanks Winston Hills Conference for providing members to engage with the public in discussing the assistance that is available.

**'Busking for Vinnies' raised \$6,643.70** in 2024 and took place at Centenary Square, Parramatta at Our Lady of Mercy College (Parramatta) – Wednesday 21st August, Parramatta Marist High School (Westmead) – Thursday 22nd August Mt St Benedict College (Pennant Hills) and St Edmund's College (Wahroonga) – Tuesday 27th August St John Paul II Catholic College (Schofields) – Thursday 29th August

*Roydon Ng, Metropolitan Schools Engagement Officer*



Centre: Donna Davis (Member for Parramatta)  
Left: John Neylan (Busking for Vinnies coordinator). Right: Roydon Ng



**WATCH HERE**



Roydon Ng with Vinnies Youth volunteers, David Brogden (Winston Hills Conference), and John Neylan





Houston group

## City to Surf- Team Vinnies is Off and Running

Meet some of the amazing people who have recently raised much-needed funds by lacing up their running shoes for Team Vinnies.

A big thank you to the team from Houston Group, a Surry Hills based strategic brand & design agency who represented Team Vinnies on Sunday, 28 July at the 2024 Real Insurance Sydney Harbour 5&10k Run. The run, a one lap loop, began in the historic Rocks district with the circuit hugging the Sydney Harbour foreshore taking in Cockle Bay, Darling Harbour, Barangaroo Reserve and finishing the near the Overseas Passenger Terminal, Circular Quay. By all accounts, the sports-loving bunch 'smashed' the 10k run and raised some all-important funds for Vinnies.

On Sunday, 11 August Rosie Drum gathered with 80,000+ other participants in Sydney's CBD to take part in the world's largest fun run, the City2Surf. Running about 14 kilometres from the city to Bondi Beach, Rosie had a goal to 'dream big' while flying the flag for Team Vinnies and raise as much money as possible by the time she crossed the finish line. As a long-time Vinnies enthusiast and member of Randwick Conference with a passion for running, Rosie took her City2Surf preparation seriously with regular training sessions which ultimately paid off as she describes, "I really enjoyed it! It was gruelling but a whole lot of fun." Crossing the finish line 10 minutes behind her sister (who runs marathons!) and surpassing her fundraising goals left Rosie feeling "pretty chuffed."

Like Rosie, Shemariah Gibbs-Williams also took part in Sydney's City2Surf on Sunday, 11 August for a reason close to her heart, having worked with Vinnies and "seen firsthand the tremendous care and hard work that goes into assisting those in need." Originally from the UK, this was Shem's first-time taking part in the iconic Sydney marathon and it didn't disappoint. With a game plan to "half-run and half-walk" the route it wasn't long before the atmosphere and high vibes of those around her along with a favourite podcast playing in her ears had Shemariah in the zone and finishing strong after crossing the finish line having run the whole way.

### Like to Learn More About Team Vinnies?

If you like exercise, regardless of your fitness level, and are considering taking part in one of the many events held in Sydney why not consider signing up for Team Vinnies and raise money for people doing it tough? To find our more information about Team Vinnies click here: <https://fundraise.vinniesnsw.org.au/join-team-vinnies/> or email: [events@vinnies.org.au](mailto:events@vinnies.org.au)

### Sally Otton

**Events and Community Fundraising Coordinator**



Shemariah Gibbs-Williams



Rosie Drum



# Buddies Day stories

The Buddies Day program has achieved significant success, thanks in large part to grant funding that supports children from families assisted by Vinnies. This program provides these children with valuable opportunities to challenge themselves, interact with their peers, benefit from positive role models, and enjoy a respite from any difficulties they may be facing at home.



**We offer two distinct types of Buddies Day Programs.** The first involves **educational outings**, such as visits to venues like the Reptile Park, where children engage in hands-on learning about native Australian fauna and flora. The second type of program involves **activities conducted at local high schools**. Here, high school students design and lead activities for the children, gaining experience in volunteer work. Activities have included cupcake decorating, tie-dyeing t-shirts, various arts and crafts, ball games, dance parties, treasure hunts, face painting, and more.

## Several success stories highlight the impact of the program.

For instance, Rachel (name changed for privacy) had recently relocated to the area after her family was displaced due to domestic violence. Over a six-month period in a Vinnies safe house, Rachel participated in five Buddies Day events. She remained highly engaged throughout, with her favourite part being the fun bags filled with toys and prizes. Upon moving to more stable housing, Rachel excitedly shared with her case worker, "I now have enough toys to put in my new room."

Another example is Joey (name changed for privacy), who joined the program four months ago. Initially, Joey was very quiet, shy, and reserved, staying close to his sister during his first Buddies Day and avoiding participation in activities. However, with the continued support of students and Vinnies volunteers, Joey gradually began to engage more. By his second Buddies Day, he started interacting independently with other children and volunteers. By the end of that day, he was so enthusiastic about the experience that he eagerly enquired about the next event for the following week. These success stories underscore the significance of the Buddies Day program and its positive impact on children at a crucial developmental stage.

The Buddies Day program plays a crucial role in enriching the lives of children from families supported by Vinnies, offering them invaluable opportunities for growth, social interaction, and joy during challenging times. The positive transformations observed in participants, such as increased confidence and engagement, highlight the program's profound impact.



# MiniVinnies



## 🎉 Mini Vinnies Gathering - 24 July 2024 🎉

What an incredible day! The Metro Schools Team organised a heartwarming and impactful Mini Vinnies Gathering, **bringing together 25 schools from the Sydney, Parramatta, and Broken Bay dioceses.** The theme, **"Being the Hands and Feet of Christ,"** resonated deeply as students participated in a series of workshops and activities designed to put their faith into action.

Throughout the day, students engaged in social justice workshops focusing on:

- **Homelessness:** Understanding the challenges faced by those without a home and exploring ways to provide support and dignity to our homeless neighbours.
- **Migrants/Refugees:** Learning about the experiences of migrants and refugees, and how we can create a welcoming and supportive community for everyone.
- **Environmental Stewardship:** Discussing the importance of caring for our common home and implementing sustainable practices to protect our planet.
- **Vinnies Van Services:** Discovering the vital role of Vinnies Vans in providing food, companionship, and essential services to those in need.

These workshops were not just about learning but about empowering our young leaders to turn their faith into action. By participating in these activities, students demonstrated remarkable compassion, understanding, and a commitment to making a tangible difference in their communities.

The theme "Being the Hands and Feet of Christ" came alive as students embodied the principles of love, service, and justice. They left with a deeper understanding of how they can contribute to a more just and compassionate world, truly living out their faith in meaningful ways.

Thank you to everyone who attended and contributed to this inspiring event! Your dedication and spirit are what make these gatherings so special. 🌟🙌 #MiniVinnies #FaithInAction #SocialJustice #Community #MetroSchoolsTeam

**See a recap of the Mini Vinnies Gathering 2024**

at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TzXmLkwq388>



St Patrick's Primary, Parramatta at Mini Vinnies Gathering 2024



Sacred Heart Primary, Villawood at Mini Vinnies Gathering 2024



Giving a hand up for Vinnies



# VINNIES YOUTH OUT AND ABOUT



What an amazing SleepOut run by the **ACU and Macquarie University Young Adult Conferences!** As well as sleeping outside for the night to raise funds, they also packed hampers, had a bonfire and did Vinnies trivia!! An incredible effort with them raising **\$3,000** so far!!



Great work by the **ACU Strathfield Young Adult Conference** for holding their community closet to promote sustainability!

Students were encouraged to donate their second hand clothes, and feel free to take anything from the stall. All remaining items were donated to their local Vinnies store 🥰 With all this going on they were still able to promote their Sleepout event happening next week and got 49 EOIs



A Big thank you to the **ACU Strathfield Young Adult Conference** for making packs to be handed out to the homeless community for **RU Okay day** last week. They wrote messages of hope while packing essentials 🥰

**BIG** round of applause to USYD, UTS and UND's young adult conferences for hosting their Sleepout last Friday 🙌🙌🙌 The groups raised a total of **\$4,323**, with donations still coming in!



Thank you so much to Notre Dame Darlinghurst Campus for inviting us to their National Student Volunteering week.

We got to meet so many great students interested in giving back.  
We got 49 new EOIs!



# VINNIES YOUTH OUT AND ABOUT continued...



Today at the Australian Health and Science Institute we discussed with new youth members how they can make the greatest impact through volunteering with Vinnies.

Can't wait to see what these guys do next!



Our ACU Strathfield Young Adult Conference had the Vinnies Van drop by on campus. The execs were promoting the good work that the Van provides as well as generating buzz for their sleepout event! Thank you Sandra Zivkovic for your support!



What a great day at UTS Semester 2 O-week stall! We got a 130 new EOIs and 60 new Instagram followers!



Follow Us  
[vinniesyouthnsw](https://www.instagram.com/vinniesyouthnsw)



# Metro Retail Volunteer Open Day

11 stores within Metropolitan Retail held a Volunteer Open Day from the 16th to the 20th of September. The Volunteer Open Day is an opportunity for us to connect with the local community and those who may be interested in volunteering with the Society.

- Connect with our retail team and volunteers and share a morning tea!
- Have a tour of our shop floor and our back of house operations
- Gain an understanding of the role of a Vinnies' volunteer
- And learn the importance of our volunteers in supporting the good work we do.

In the lead up, advertisements stated, that all were welcome for an engaging and interactive day, where those attending would:

Vinnies staff and volunteers were there to answer any questions and support with the onboarding process, for those interested in joining us. We hope to drive our volunteer numbers across Metro to support our Christmas peak trade.

Gemma Presley | Regional Manager, Retail Metropolitan



Our volunteer Nina takes pride in her visual merchandising displays



Castle Hill Store Manager  
Amanda



Nina has been volunteering at Vinnies for over 4 years and is excited to welcome new applicants at our open day

## Members' advocacy credited in NSW Government's historic social housing investment

At this year's CEO Sleep Out, the NSW Housing Minister credited grassroots advocacy by organisations such as the Society NSW for pressing the government to invest in housing. The NSW Government made a record investment in social housing of \$6.1 billion over four years in the 2024-25 state budget.

Of this funding, \$5.1 billion will be allocated to build or redevelop 8,400 social homes over four years. A further \$1 billion will repair and maintain 33,000 existing social homes. The Society NSW had called for a multi-billion investment in social homes in our 2024-25 Pre-Budget Submission and we welcomed the NSW Government's commitment as a positive step to addressing the housing crisis.

For years, the Society's members, volunteers and staff have engaged in sustained advocacy calling for more social homes. Through our Build Homes, Build Hope campaign, members collected over 15,000 petition signatures that were tabled in NSW Parliament and had well over 200 engagements with MPs. This evolved into our Housing Justice 2023 NSW election campaign and informed successive pre-budget submissions.



former Society NSW CEO Jack de Groot with Alex Greenwich MP and Social Justice Vice President Brooke Simmons

A huge thank you and congratulations to all of the members, volunteers and staff who have been part of this journey over many years. The social housing investment is a very positive outcome for people in housing need. While it will not accommodate everyone in need of a home, it is an excellent first step and is a testament to how working together, we can move mountains.

## Our recommendations for a more just and compassionate NSW - new Social Justice Statements

Imagine an Australia where people have affordable and healthy housing that feels like home. Where everyone can live safely within their own homes and be treated with respect in their relationships. Or where everyone can access the daily essentials they need - like nutritious food and affordable energy.

These are just some of the aspirations that the Society NSW's new Social Justice Statements set out. You can find them now on website. The Statements, approved by State Council, outline the Society's social policy positions. They were developed by the Policy and Advocacy Team in collaboration with the NSW Social Justice Committee following consultation with staff, services and the sector.

Find our NSW statements at <https://www.vinnies.org.au/nsw/advocacy/social-justice-statements>. National Council's statements are also available at: <https://www.vinnies.org.au/advocacy>. Contact [social.justice@vinnies.org.au](mailto:social.justice@vinnies.org.au) for more information.

Together the Social Justice Statements set out the Society NSW's recommendations in eight priority areas of homelessness, housing, renting, cost of living, domestic and family violence, drug and alcohol, climate justice and temporary protection visa. A First Nations Social Justice Statement is currently under consultation and development.

*So how can you help to promote our recommendations to create a more just and compassionate society?* We encourage all members, volunteers and staff to read and promote these Statements. In particular, you can help by advocating for the recommendations set out in the Statements with your local MP or local council member and discuss the key issue/s that your region, suburb or community faces.

### FIND OUR STATEMENTS VIA OUR WEBSITE

CLICK HERE



NSW > Advocacy > Social Justice Statements

Find Help

Get Involved

Shops

Advocacy



## Social Justice Statements

The St Vincent de Paul Society is concerned not only with alleviating need but also with identifying the unjust structures that cause it. We are compelled to advocate for a more just and compassionate society, and to speak out on the barriers that keep people trapped in a cycle of poverty and disadvantage.

The Statements are the Society's policy positions on priority issues.

For more information about Vinnies social justice advocacy or to get involved in our Social Justice Network, visit [socialjustice.vinnies.org.au](https://socialjustice.vinnies.org.au)





ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY NSW

# ROSALIE RENDU FORUM 2024



**Each Anti-Poverty Week, the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW holds the Rosalie Rendu Forum, a discussion bringing together a panel of distinguished women, named in recognition of Sister Rosalie Rendu's contribution to the Society, to offer insights into pressing social justice issues.**

The 2024 Rosalie Rendu Forum put the focus on rental reform by proposing the question, "is ending no grounds evictions the end of the story?"

We were delighted to have Trina Jones (NSW Rental Commissioner), Dr Jemima Mowbray (Tenants' Union of NSW), Dr Penelope Bowyer-Pont (Macquarie University) and Anna Scott (Vinnies Services) join us for an online discussion moderated by Solange Frost (Vinnies South Regional Director).

Issues raised during the evening included the experiences of people supported by the Society in navigating the rental market, the impact of the government's proposed reforms, examples of rent regulation from around the world, the need to improve the quality of rental housing and giving renters the confidence to exercise their rights.

The panel also fielded questions from close to 100 attendees watching online and at viewing events on topics such as fair limits for rent increases, offering tenants longer-term leases, reforms for boarding houses and the role of the NSW Rental Commissioner.

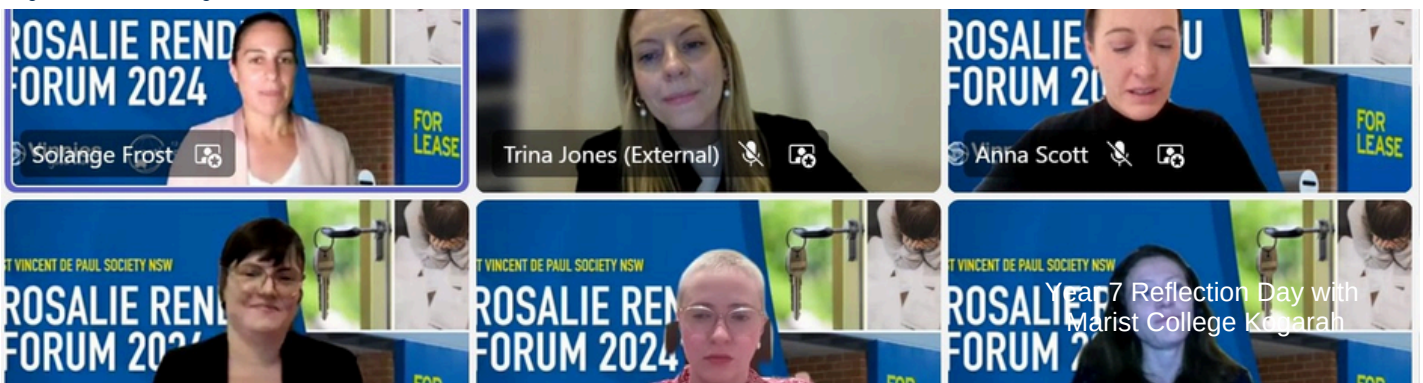
The evening concluded with each of the panelists offering hopes for the future:

"I personally would like to see a cap on rents that is controlled between tenancies, not resetting at the beginning of each new tenancy."

- Dr Penelope Bowyer-Pont

[Visit our website to read the full article.](#)

*by Rob Crosby, Vinnies NSW Communications Coordinator*





**1800 478 776**

**DID YOU KNOW.....**that the Vinnies Safeguarding Team can offer additional referral information and supports to people you assist, where there are children or vulnerable adults involved?

Safeguarding will help you meet your legislative obligations and help you to ensure the people you are assisting are receiving the best possible supports from many different organisations.

**If in doubt, give us a shout.**

**1800 478 776**

### **Vinnies members opening doors for a Mum and children**

Two caring St Vincent de Paul Society members completed a home visit to a Mum and her two children. The family of three were renting one room in a house filled with other renters – all strangers to the Mum and her children. Due to the children living in overcrowded conditions, the members phone Safeguarding with their concern. The members were happy for Safeguarding to call the Mum to discuss possible supports.

During the Mum's discussion with Safeguarding, it came out that she didn't want to engage with any housing services for help as she had thought that it meant she and her children would have to move to the outer suburbs of Sydney, disrupting the children's schooling and social networks. She thought her only option to remain living in her local area was to save harder to eventually afford a private rental whilst living in one room in a house of strangers.

Vinnies members continue to help with food and material supports, and the call to Safeguarding resulted in opening doors for the Mum to seek support from housing providers and find alternative accommodation in her local area.

**Thank you to our wonderful members!!**



# MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS (MAVS)

## How to create your Account

All Member and Volunteers are required to create an account when using our new MAVS Website for the first time. This is to ensure your account is secured and will be aligned to the existing details we currently have on file for you. You will only be required to do this once.

1. Please click on the following link: [Member and Volunteer Profile](#)
2. Click on 'Login' button located at the top right-hand corner (fig 1)
3. Click on 'Create an account' (fig 2)

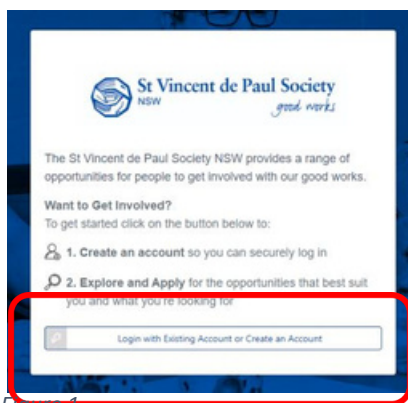


Figure 1

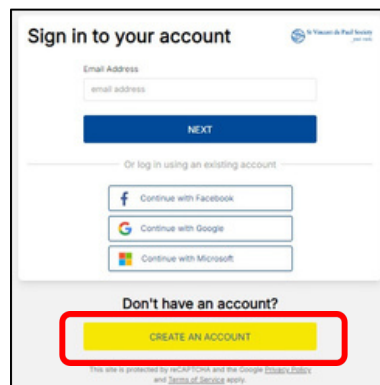


Figure 2

**Note:** For the next step, please use the email address you may have previously used for training.

4. Type your email into the 'Email Address' text box field and click on **Continue with Email** (fig 3). You will be sent a 6-digit code to this email address, which you will need to enter.
5. Create a password and click on **Create my account**. (fig 4)
6. Type your 'Mobile Number' in the mobile field. (fig 5) You will be sent a 6-digit code to this email address, which you will need to enter.

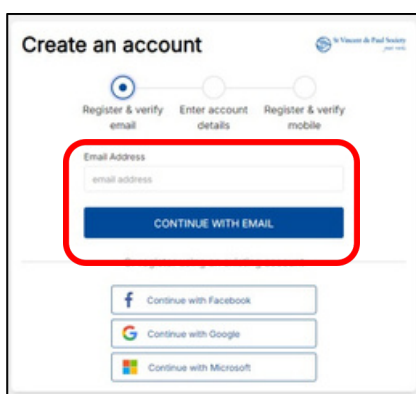


Figure 3

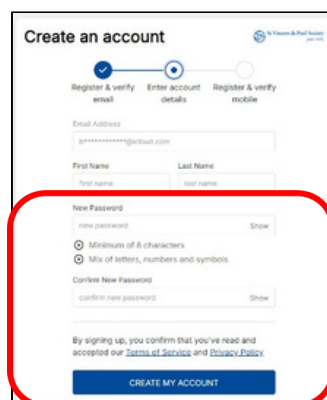


Figure 4

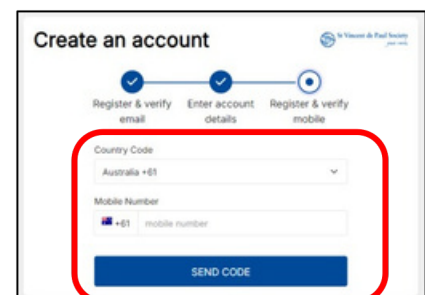


Figure 5

**Note:** If you miss the time for the verification code or it does not arrive in your phone, then click on "Resend Code" below the "Verification Code" text box

7. Click on 'Next' Button
8. Click on the link to read and then 'Accept' the End User Licence Agreement.

**Congratulations on successfully setting up your account!**

# MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS (MAVS) continued...

You should now be on your Profile page and have the menu on the left which includes the below options (fig 3):






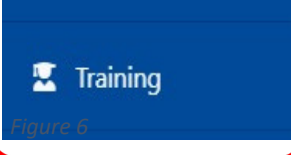
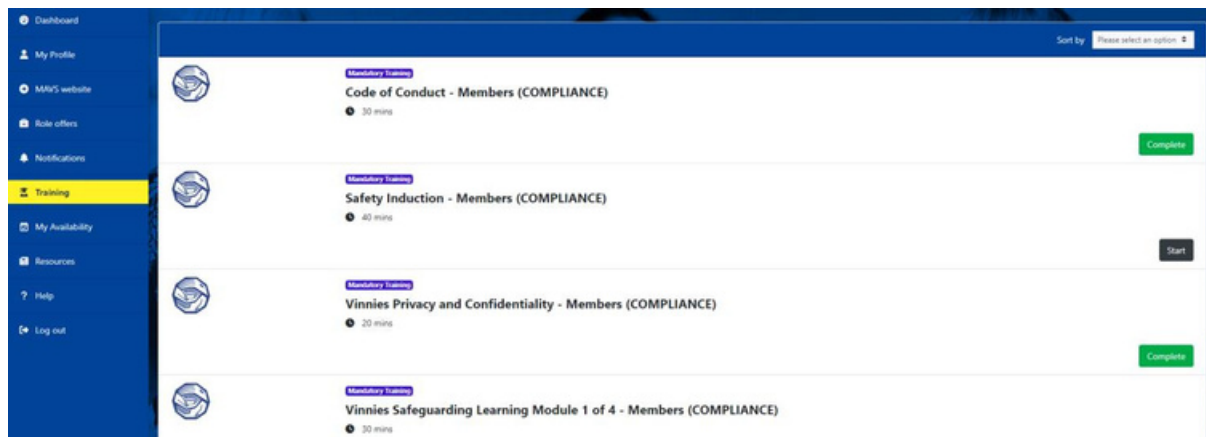
|   |  |
|---|--|
|  | <b>Dashboard:</b> you can view your active member and/or volunteer position/roles  |
|  | <b>My Profile:</b> you can access and update your update your personal information i.e. address and emergency contact details. |
|  | <b>MAVS Website:</b> a quick link back to the MAVS Website. You can access resources, news articles and Events                 |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  | <b>Training:</b> Access to complete Learning modules, including compliance learning.   |

Figure 6

View of the training page



If you are having difficulty creating your account or accessing your profile, please contact us at [mavs.support@vinnies.org.au](mailto:mavs.support@vinnies.org.au) for assistance or speak with your local regional office staff.