



GREATER WESTERN SYDNEY MEMBER NEWSLETTER



Greater Western Sydney Members Spiritual Reflection Day

Message from the acting Regional Director, Louis Hearnden



Dear Members, Volunteers and Staff,

Since stepping into the role of Acting Regional Director in February, I have been inspired by the dedication of our Members, Volunteers, and Staff across Greater Western Sydney. Thank you for the warm welcome. I look forward to continuing to support our shared Vincentian mission.

Since the last newsletter, we've seen strong community engagement across GWS. A key highlight is our youth engagement strategy, which saw over 1,000 expressions of interest at Western Sydney University's O-Week. Planning is also underway for the Mini Vinnies and Secondary School Gatherings in July, as well as preparations for this year's Winter Appeal, a vital campaign supporting those in need.

Advocacy remains a priority, with 50 members attending the Sydney Alliance Pre-Election Assembly alongside 900 community leaders. Locally, Conferences in Stanhope Gardens/Glenwood and Kellyville are hosting engagement events to grow our network.

In February, our Vinnies Support Centres in Blacktown, Harris Park, and Penrith assisted nearly 1,000 people, while new EAPA training will help more families manage energy costs. Vinnies Vans continue to provide critical support, assisting nearly 1,000 people last month, with a new Cumberland Council run now launched.

Thank you all for your dedication as members of the Society, it truly makes a difference.

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Safeguarding

For advice and information
contact Vinnies Safeguarding
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phone: **1800 4SUPPORT** (1800
478 776)



Reflection & Renewal in Greater Western Sydney

Greater Western Sydney Central Council members gathered in the greenery of Mulgoa on a beautifully sunny Saturday in early February to start the year with time to explore the 'Why' of being a member of the Society, connect and share with other members, and learn more about available services and resources. Leon Ross, Nepean Regional Council President, desired to "have members come together to start the year off with spirituality, reflect on the year ahead, enjoy fellowship, and generate energy and synergies," which came to fruition.

Mass and morning tea started the day, followed by a rich presentation by Corinne Lindsell and Leo Tucker of the Mission & Spirituality Team. 50 plus members were in attendance and appreciated the time to be together and the variety of input and discussion. The afternoon topics included social justice, safeguarding, MAVS, Youth, recruitment, and engagement with the Society's Housing residents.

Larry Hegarty, Hills Regional Council President and member of Our Lady of the Way Baulkham Hills found the reflections thoughtful, powerful and came away with simple and practical ideas about service. He appreciated the exercise of improving one's service by asking the Lord, "What do you want from me? What is in my personal cup that I bring to my service?" and reflecting on, "How do I improve the life of those I serve to enable them to flourish, to renew their hope?"

"If I can implement these ideas into my service, it may improve the lives of those I serve and make me a better Vincentian," Larry said. Many were inspired by the presentations, with one Conference President who was intending to stand down from the position, newly rejuvenated to continue their Conference work. "That to me is the hand of God at work," Larry said. "I came away from the Retreat rejuvenated and refreshed for the year ahead." The afternoon presentations were an opportunity to meet face-to-face with some of the Society's people previously only known over phone. "They were a chance to bounce ideas off and seek direction from them on issues on my radar for our Hills Region."

Georg Eberl, Holy Family Emerton Conference President deeply appreciated the chance to reflect on spirituality, mission and values - who we are and why we do what we do. "Our spiritual reflection on the scriptures challenges us to use our talents to live the Gospel as Jesus did through a spirit of radical inclusiveness, accompaniment and restoration," Georg said. "Our mission is to share the love of God and restore the dignity of those we help so they can flourish because everybody matters every day." "Let's keep that cup in our logo full of love as this is the most important thing we can bring." The afternoon presentations about our services and resources, alongside the networking across the Central Council and the Society, were also highly appreciated.

Kate Scholl, Member Engagement Officer
SVDP Society Housing Australia



RESOURCES FOR MEMBERS FROM THE DAY

**Member Engagment with
SVdP Housing Information**

**Safeguarding
Member Flyer 2025**

**Mission Strategy
Booklet**

Photos from the day can be found on the [Greater Western Sydney Central Council webpage](#)

CHRISTMAS APPEAL 2024



Christmas across Greater Western Sydney



CHRISTMAS GIFT WRAPPING AT WESTFIELD PARRAMATTA

The Conferences of St Michael's and Our Lady of Lourdes in Baulkham Hills Parish in The Hills Region undertook two sessions of gift wrapping at Westfield Parramatta leading up to Christmas. Despite the challenging and time-consuming safety requirements and documentation needed to satisfy our hosts, we ended up with a wonderful mix of members assisted by their offspring, parishioners, Vinnies Youth members and overseas visitors. Supported by a few "Westfield Christmas Elves", everyone was keen to put into practice their bow-making and gift-wrapping talents.

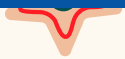
The enthusiasm of the participants was evident, with volunteers returning for the second session in addition to their allocated first session. It was even difficult to get a few wrappers to take a rest and make way for the other enthusiasts to demonstrate their talents.

Through a gold coin donation for each gift, the two sessions raised more than \$1,100 in funds, which have already partly gone to providing uniforms for children starting a new school. Other positive outcomes included the camaraderie between volunteers and members, their interaction with shoppers, and the sharing of stories, giving the public a real and different face of Vinnies personnel and volunteers.

We also had young volunteers mixed with our more mature members, and again sharing stories and experiences. The challenge for us now is to build on the engagement with those youth and get them involved on a more permanent basis with our Conferences and Vinnies Youth activities. We look forward to the challenge, and to seeing how all our participants have kept up their bow-making and gift wrapping skills for the end of this year.



Penola Catholic College- Photo from Catholic Schools Diocese of Parramatta



Vinnies
good works

Schools Rally Behind Vinnies Christmas Appeal 2024, Parramatta Diocese Raises Over \$103,755!

The spirit of giving was alive and well in 2024 as schools across the Parramatta Diocese and beyond came together to support the St Vincent de Paul Society's Christmas Appeal. With the cost-of-living crisis impacting countless families and homelessness on the rise, the generosity of students, staff, and school communities shone brightly. Schools in Parramatta Diocese alone raised an incredible \$103,755 worth of material donations, providing vital support to those in need during the festive season and beyond.

The Vinnies Christmas Appeal is a cornerstone of the Society's mission to assist individuals and families facing hardship. This year, schools not only contributed financially but also embraced a range of engagement opportunities to deepen their connection to the cause. Many students and staff supported Vinnies Vans, which provide meals and essentials to people experiencing homelessness, while others participated in initiatives like Busking for Vinnies and Youth Week activities. These events not only raised funds but also fostered a sense of empathy and community among young people.

The Mini Vinnies program also saw significant participation, with students gathering to learn about social justice and take practical steps to help others. These gatherings empowered young people to become advocates for change, embodying the values of compassion and service. High school students were also encouraged to take part in the *Vinnies Service Medallion*, a program that recognises their commitment to serving their communities through volunteering and social justice initiatives. The medallion is a wonderful way for students to make a tangible impact while developing leadership skills and a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by vulnerable populations.

Looking ahead, the St Vincent de Paul Society is excited to celebrate the 2025 Year of Jubilee, conferences and schools are encouraged to get involved in this milestone year, with opportunities for collaboration and engagement. For conferences interested in supporting Vinnies' schools engagement, Roydon Ng (roydon.ng@vinnies.org.au), Metro Schools Engagement Officer, is the primary contact for all interactions. Together, we can continue to make a difference in the lives of those who need it most.

Roydon Ng
Metro Schools Engagement Officer



Blue Mountains City Council and the community came together to celebrate the annual [Blue Mountains Seniors Week Recognition Awards](#) on Monday 24 March.

The awards were held as part of the Seniors Festival and acknowledged the contributions of 27 individuals and one organisation from across the Blue Mountains who assist in the wellbeing of our older residents.

A big congratulations to the Lawson Conference who won the organisational Award

Lawson Conference St Vincent De Paul

St Vincent De Paul formed in the Blue Mountains in 1938. They service the community through their charity shops, home visits and pop-up locations in the villages.

St Vincente De Paul Lawson Conference partnered with Mid Mountains Neighbourhood Centre in 2010, where they had a weekly drop in space that members of the community could see their volunteer service group privately for assistance.

During this time to date they have treated the community with care and respect even through COVID-19, they made services available with food deliveries to homes and weekly phone calls to reassure people they weren't on their own

We are so blessed to have them in our space and community, they are exceptional volunteers.

Nominated by
Pauline Staface, Belong Blue Mountains Neighbourhood Centre

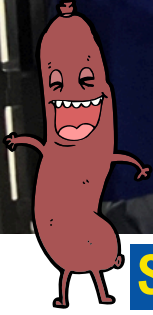
Organisation Award

Seniors Week Recognition Awards 35



above: L-R Rosana Taylor, Paul Gannon (Councillor and Deputy Mayor Romola Hollywood) and Jenny Gannon. This award is recognition of past and present members who have served the Blue Mountains Community since 1938.





Stanhope Gardens Conference Sausage Sizzle Fundraiser

St Vincent DePaul Stanhope Gardens Conference NSW recent "Sausage Sizzle" fundraiser, held at Rouse Hill Bunnings on January 19th, was remarkably successful. We managed to cook and sell over **550 sausages to enthusiastic customers**, and the tempting aroma of nearly **20 kg of hand-cut onions sizzling on the BBQ** tempted many passersby to stop and enjoy a delicious sausage sandwich.

A significant aspect of the event's success was the generosity of the "Gift of Bread" charity, which donated 40 loaves of bread from their Community Workshop in Tempe. This charity plays a crucial role in providing surplus bread free of charge to charities that support vulnerable individuals experiencing food insecurity. **The event was driven by the hard work and dedication of over 15 enthusiastic volunteers, whose tireless efforts led us to achieve a net profit of \$1,769.99**, which was a significant accomplishment. Our devoted St Vincent de Paul conference members, along with their friends and family, played an essential role in making this event enjoyable and memorable. Volunteers worked in shifts to ensure that every customer was served promptly and efficiently. They handled everything from setting up the BBQ, preparing the sausages, cutting the onions, managing the cash register, and, of course, cleaning up after the event. Their teamwork and enthusiasm were truly commendable. The sausages were cooked to perfection, and the hand-cut onions added an extra layer of flavour that customers could not resist. We received numerous compliments on the taste and quality of our food, which undoubtedly contributed to our high sales numbers.

The event also highlighted the strong sense of community among the participants and supporters. Many parishioners, friends, and family members came out to show their support, creating a warm and welcoming atmosphere. This sense of togetherness is what makes events like these so special and successful.

St Vincent DePaul Stanhope Garden Conference is already planning to host another Bunnings Sausage Sizzle on March 30th. The funds raised from these events will enable the organisation to continue making a positive impact in the local community, supporting less privileged individuals and families

By Roger Perera



Easter Reflection

Easter is a time of renewal, hope, and compassion, reminding us of the importance of kindness, generosity, and service to others. It calls people to reflect on themes of sacrifice, love, and community, inspiring many to reach out and support those in need.

In the spirit of Easter, we can reflect that the Society embodies these values through dedicated work in assisting those who are vulnerable and most rejected or marginalised. Easter reminds us that small acts of kindness can lead to transformation, not only in the lives of those we help but also in our own hearts.



This is a beautiful way the Society can reflect the true meaning of Easter through their commitment to social justice, compassion, and respect for all people. By providing food, clothing, housing support, and companionship to those experiencing hardship, Vinnies brings hope and dignity to countless individuals and families.

Our Members, employees and volunteers work tirelessly to ensure that no one feels forgotten or isolated, especially during significant times like Easter. This continues to remind us that celebrating Easter goes beyond tradition – it means living out values of love, charity, and service in everyday life.

Corinne Lindsell, Mission, Spirituality and Pastoral Care Partner - Metro

Support available for Members and Volunteers

We understand that sometimes challenging situations can arise. That's why we're highlighting the availability of our **Converge Support Program**. Converge offers **confidential support services to all our members and volunteers**. We encourage you to explore the information available to you on the MAVS Website. <https://mavs.vinnies.org.au/articles/support-available-for-members-and-volunteers/> Please log in to access all the details and resources, the services are offered free of charge to all members and volunteers of The Society.

As a member of the St Vincent de Paul Society (NSW) you can access support for multiple challenges or concerns. You can choose between face to face meetings, phone calls or online sessions through the Converge Support portal. All discussions with Converge clinicians are strictly confidential.

How to access the Converge Support Program

Call 1300 687 327, or

Visit the Online Portal (<https://convergeinternational.com.au/portal>) and login with Username = Converge; password = eap

Get help or support now. If you are struggling, we encourage you to:

Speak with a trusted colleague, friend or family member.

Speak with your Conference President, they are available to listen to your concerns and provide assistance.

If you do not feel comfortable talking to your supervisor, you can also talk to the Pastoral Support Team or Vinnies Membership Safety Partner, please reach out to your Vinnies Member Engagement Coordinator for contact details.

- Reach out to our Converge Support Program, call 1300 687 327
- Visit your GP and speak openly about what's worrying you.
- Use resources available from professional providers.

A Modern-Day Loaves and Fishes: Celebrating Marie's Selfless Generosity

In a world where social media often highlights self-promotion and materialism, individuals like Marie remind us of the true meaning of kindness, humility, and generosity. Every week, Marie dedicates her time and effort to collect clothing and special food items, including delicious sourdough loaves donated by South Dowling Street Bakery, to support those in need at the South Coogee Vinnies van stop – Bayside run.



Marie's selfless acts evoke the biblical story of the loaves and fishes (Matthew 14:13-21, Mark 6:30-44, Luke 9:10-17, John 6:1-14), where Jesus feeds a multitude of people with five loaves and two fishes and encourages the large gathering to share. This poignant reminder of compassion and generosity inspires us to reflect on the values we hold dear.

"Whatsoever you do unto the least of these, you do unto me." - Matthew 25:40

Marie's humility and willingness to serve others without seeking recognition are qualities that should be revered in our society. Unlike some social media influencers who prioritize fame, wealth, and self-promotion, Marie and individuals like her embody the essence of servant-heartedness.

"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." - Mahatma Gandhi

These quotes underscore the profound impact that selfless individuals like Marie have on our communities. By prioritising the needs of others, they demonstrate a deeper understanding of what truly brings happiness and fulfillment.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Marie and the South Dowling Street Bakery for their tireless efforts to support those in need. Your kindness is a beacon of hope, inspiring us to reevaluate our values and strive for a more compassionate society.

Let us celebrate and emulate individuals like Marie, who remind us that true greatness lies not in seeking fame or wealth but in serving others with humility and generosity. Let us all strive to be more like Marie – to start each day with gratitude and a willingness to serve others. Let us recognize and appreciate the quiet heroes among us, who selflessly make a difference in the lives of others.

Thank you, Marie, for being a shining light in our community. May your kindness and humility inspire us all to become better versions of ourselves.

Image above: Marie (middle) pictured amongst the vested Vinnies Van volunteers for the Bayside Vinnies van Sunday B Team

Since, sadly Marie passed away. She will be greatly missed – commemoration below

Joanne Riakos | Vinnies Van Services and Supply Centre Coordinator



Is your conference looking for a new Special Work?

Introducing the Vincentian Pastoral Care Program to pilot in Sydney

We need at least 2 conferences to support this special work to put forward 1-2 members who will be available during day times to offer a unique caring opportunity.

Our Pastoral Care Program is looking to be established at Woolloomooloo at the Ozanam Learning Centre and the Matthew Talbot Hostel. Extending our membership's care to those who receive support from our Vinnies Services. Members involved with the Vincentian Pastoral Care Program will be engaged as volunteers at these services with Vincentian badges indicating you are part of Pastoral Care and are available to give companionship, compassion and a listening ear.

A welcome session will be made available, and ongoing support and training available to support all members who are interested.

Frederic Ozanam had a desire to **embrace the world in a network of charity...** and said within this network that "Yours must be a work of love, of kindness, you must give your time, your talents, yourselves" We are inspired by our Founders words to add this pastoral approach to our services.

Conference Presidents: If you would like the Mission & Formation team to come to one of your meetings to give more details, please contact us.

All members: if you are interested in committing to this, please also contact us at Mission@vinnies.org.au

We look forward to hearing from you soon.



Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults

1800 4 SUPPORT – option 1

Members in Metro region provided over 100 notifications of concern to Safeguarding in 2024.

If you have concerns about the safety or wellbeing of children, young people or vulnerable adults, please notify Vinnies Safeguarding Team for additional supports.

Out and About in Greater Western Sydney



Halloween fun in Penrith

The residents and the children of our Social and Affordable Housing units in Penrith, particularly the children and young at heart, enjoyed Halloween fun on Sunday 27th October. The Youth team volunteers brought the party to Penrith and the children living in the units came in costume ready for fun. They played games, had Halloween craft activities, enjoyed some special treats, and of course, went trick-or-treating in the housing complex.

Residents had been given notice that the children would be coming so those willing to welcome the youngsters decorated their doors. Several residents donned costumes which added to the fun of the afternoon. A number of them had also decorated the hallways.

One of the volunteers dressed as Pesto the Penguin stood out among the crowd. Pesto the real penguin is officially the largest penguin chick SEA LIFE Melbourne has ever had and has captured hearts globally. Likewise, Harris (aka Pesto) at 6'3" brought lots of smiles and delight to everyone at this great event.

The St Vincent de Paul Housing residents value the efforts of the Youth team in holding this Buddies Day in Penrith. Halloween fun, engagement of young and old creates a greater sense of belonging and connection. Thank you too from the Housing staff to the young volunteers and Allie, their enthusiastic coordinator! It is deeply appreciated.



Delany College
Vinnies Vans Team
2024 (Photo from
Catholic Schools
Diocese of
Parramatta)

VINNIES YOUTH OUT AND ABOUT



Metro Youth Meet-up

What an incredible turn out to the Metro Youth meet up event!!

After having a record-breaking number of EOIs from O-week, over 4,700, all new EOIs were invited to come meet their Presidents and executive structure, as well as socialise with likeminded young people, all eager to get their hands 'dirty' and help out in their communities.

A big shout out to our Youth Presidents from Macquarie Uni, ACU, UNSW, UTS, University of Sydney and Notre Dame for all coming together to show the power of youth across Metro Region!

Alysha Wong-O'Connor | Youth Engagement Officer Metro



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

MEMBERS JOIN US ON THE VINNIES VANS



We are always looking for van volunteers, whether you or your Conference can commit to once a week, once a month, or even just a few times a year on our standby roster. There are many ways you can get involved! Volunteers can choose to participate in a Vinnies van run. You can also help by preparing and donating snack packs, toiletry packs, sandwiches, and other food items. If you can help out with any of the van activities, please complete the quick [Expression of Interest Form](#) or email us and we will get in touch with you.

Van Services Roster

Sydney, Bayside, Liverpool, Ryde,
Cumberland, Brekky Van
Parramatta: Greater Western Sydney
Broken Bay: Woy Woy

Sandwich Making Roster

Sydney | Bayside | Liverpool | Ryde | Greater
Western Sydney | Woy Woy

Woy Woy Van & Cumberland Van

Volunteers are needed to assist with the Woy Woy & Cumberland Vans Service on a night roster and sandwich roster.

Snack Pack/Toiletry Pack Making

School communities can donate items for snack packs and toiletry packs or completed packs to Vinnies Vans.

Donations for Vinnies Van Services can be dropped off by appointment to the Lewisham, Greystanes, Mount Pritchard, West Ryde or Woy Woy bases.

[Expression of Interest Form](#)

VINNIES VAN enquiries
sydneyvv@vinnies.org.au



(from L to R) Pupils with Alison Morley, (teacher), Carol Baker, (parent), Joanne Godsell and Russell F Smith, (President Katoomba Conference outside the Katoomba FAC.

ST CANICE'S STUDENTS VISIT KATOOMBA FAC

Pupils from St Canice's, Katoomba, who make up their FIAT (Faith In Action Team) visited the Katoomba Blackheath Family Assistance Centre recently. The visit was in recognition of the school's ongoing commitment to assisting the local Conference in reaching out to people in need in the Upper Blue Mountains.

Each year the school contributes items for our Winter and Christmas Appeals. But it is their efforts during Term 3 of the school year which can only be described as outstanding for a small school of some 100 plus students. Under the leadership of Principal, Mrs Miriam Meaney, teacher Joanne Godsell and parent Carol Baker, a dedicated group organises the children and families to donate a different food item each week for the duration of the ten-week term.

During this Term Three initiative, running now for two years, hundreds of items each of milk, biscuits, breakfast cereal, tinned food, etc, have been donated to the Mary Killop Conference to assist in making up food parcels for clients. The visit to the FAC was organised to thank the pupils and so that they might see where Conference members meet with clients, and the fruits of their generous efforts ready to be made up into hampers for these clients.



Parent and pupils assist Vinnies member, Elaine Manners pack the car with a week's donations.



St Canice's FIAT group seeing their donated items on shelves ready for hampers.

Vinnies Metro Schools: A Year of Service and Opportunity

The Vinnies Metro Schools Team is marking the start of a **Jubilee Year** filled with opportunities to live the gospel values of love, justice, and compassion. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the schools that supported the 2024 Vinnies Christmas Appeal.

Despite challenges posed by the cost of living, we were overwhelmed by the generosity shown, which brought much-needed support to individuals and families experiencing hardship during the festive season. We hope that our clients and conferences have also been blessed through the support of school communities.

In 2025, Vinnies invites schools to deepen their engagement in social justice activities and local conferences. **The Metro Schools Team is happy to meet with local Conferences to discuss how schools can engage with Vinnies' mission throughout the year.** Conferences are encouraged to prepare for the upcoming Winter Appeal and communicate any regional needs to Vinnies Support Centre coordinators.

Additionally, we seek the assistance of Conference members in answering the important question: "Why should a young person join Vinnies in their local area?" Conference members are invited to share their insights and experiences with students, helping them understand the profound impact they can have by contributing to their local communities through Vinnies.

We also encourage Conference members to be prepared to speak in schools during the Winter Appeal (School Sleepouts), sharing stories of local Vinnies works and inspiring students to get involved. By doing so, we hope to motivate young people to take action and join the mission of Vinnies.

The Vinnies Schools Team is excited to host the Mini Vinnies Gathering and Vinnies Secondary Schools Gathering in July at Australian Catholic University, Strathfield. These events offer students from primary and secondary schools the chance to explore Vinnies' work across Sydney, share ideas, and learn how they can contribute to the mission of the Society. Further details and registration information will be available soon, so be sure to keep an eye out for this exciting opportunity.

Additionally, Vinnies offers Social Justice Workshops for schools. These workshops cover important topics such as homelessness, poverty, human dignity, Catholic Social Teaching, migrants and refugees, and environmental stewardship. Schools can book these workshops for an engaging and informative experience that will inspire students to put their faith into action.

Primary schools

Are encouraged to start a Mini Vinnies group to engage younger students in social justice initiatives, helping them connect their faith with real-world issues through volunteering, advocacy, and fundraising.

High school students

The Vinnies Service Medallion (VSM) is a great way to deepen their involvement in social justice. The VSM program recognises students who engage in social justice work and provides a valuable platform to demonstrate their commitment, enhancing their employment and university prospects.

We look forward to continuing to work together in 2025 to support students in living their faith and making a positive impact on their communities.

View our Vinnies Metro Schools Team introductory video for 2025: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gb9Lr5F7j44.
For more information on these initiatives, contact your Schools Engagement Officer at metroschools@vinnies.org.au

WINTER APPEAL 2025



More and more people are at risk of losing a safe and secure place to call home. With housing stress on the rise, more people across NSW are facing mounting costs and the possibility of living from their car, couch surfing or living in tents for the first time.

Over 122,000 people are currently experiencing homelessness in Australia, including 35,000 people in NSW – the most of any state or territory. There's no one face of homelessness with people of all ages and backgrounds susceptible to going from stability to precarity in a short span of time. Homelessness could affect a neighbour, a colleague, a relative – it's never a choice, but sometimes it's the only option.

With increasing demand, homelessness services across NSW are struggling to meet need. That's why it is critical to prevent homelessness in the first place by providing early intervention supports and assistance. When people in NSW are referred to homelessness services before they lose their housing, they avoid homelessness 82.1% of the time.[1]

This year's Winter Appeal addresses homelessness, highlighting the factors that lead to homelessness and the support needed to recover and rebuild over the long-term. The Society works with people experiencing and at risk of homelessness every day, providing individual assistance with food, clothing, household bills, counselling, housing and early intervention support to prevent hardship from becoming chronic.

Funds raised through the Vinnies Winter Appeal will directly support our core programs, providing vital assistance to people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, poverty, and cost-of-living pressures.

The Society thanks our dedicated Members for the important role they play in raising funds for the Winter Appeal so we can continue to meet the rising need of the most vulnerable people in our community.

The Winter Appeal will launch on 1 May 2025.

Materials to support your Winter Appeal efforts, such as posters, donation envelopes and conference booklets, should be available from 17 April 2025.

1. Productivity Commission (2025) 'Chapter 19: Homelessness Services', Report on Government Services 2025.



GREATER SYDNEY VINNIES COMMUNITY SLEEPOUT 2025

There are many ways you can support the Greater Sydney Community Sleepout!

We are thrilled that all three Sydney Metropolitan Vinnies Central Councils will once again unite to hold this year's Greater Sydney Community Sleepout. **We are aiming to raise \$75,000** to fund programs and services across all three Central Councils to support people experiencing a range of challenging circumstances. Funds raised through this event will go directly to our Conferences and Support Centres to offer support to people experiencing disadvantage in our local communities.

We encourage our Vinnies Members from Broken Bay, Sydney and Greater Western Sydney Central Councils to join us and consider participating in this event. Together we can make a difference!

HOW CAN YOU BE INVOLVED?

SLEEPOUT & FUNDRAISE

We invite you to join us and sleep out to be held on Friday 29 August. It will not only help to raise much-needed funds but also to experience just a taste of what it is like to sleep rough and have to make tough decisions to get by. Register to participate in the Greater Sydney Community Sleepout via our [website](#). Our website contains a full range of event resources to put in your toolkit to help with your fundraising efforts.

VOLUNTEERS & SUPPORTERS

Help out with event volunteering for various duties and/or supporter opportunities in the lead-up to and at the event. Please keep an eye out for a call to volunteer closer to the event date.

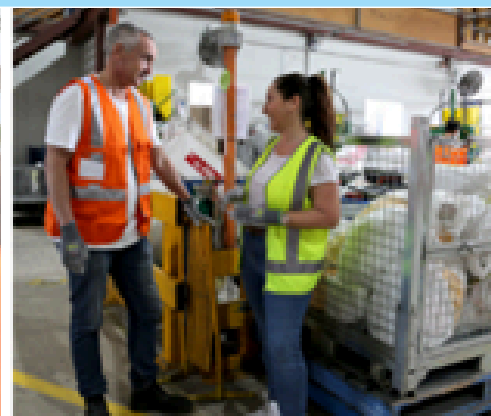
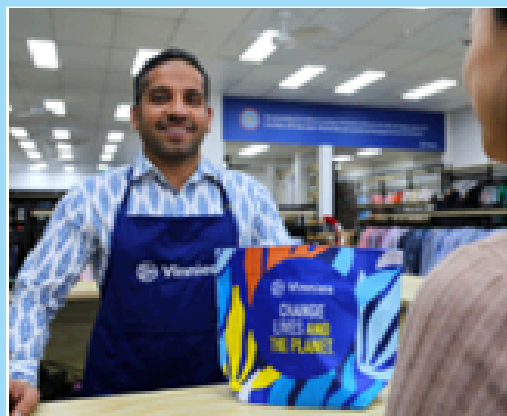
PROMOTE THE EVENT

To ensure we reach this year's fundraising goal, can you help us spread our reach? Share the [event link](#) among your local communities, parishes etc. We will have a 2025 event poster to share with you soon.

DONATE

Can't participate in the event? You may still give your support to help us reach our fundraising goal. Head over to the [Greater Sydney Community Sleepout 2025](#) fundraising page to donate.

For further information, visit the Greater Sydney Vinnies Community Sleepout Webpage or contact Kate Conroy the event coordinator at kate.conroy@vinnies.org.au.



Safety Matters

Your Safety Matters: Updates and resources

At the heart of our mission is a commitment to the safety and wellbeing of our members and volunteers. We recognise that your dedication and hard work are essential to the services we provide, and that your safety is paramount. We are committed to creating a safe, supportive and respectful workplace where everyone can thrive. Please familiarise yourself with the safety updates and resources below.

Safe Home Visitation and Outreach Policy

We are committed to delivering high-quality services and support in peoples' homes and community settings. Our updated Safe Home Visitation and Outreach Policy reflects current practice and ensures the safety of our members, volunteers, employees and the people we assist. It provides clear guidelines and procedures for conducting safe and responsible home visits and outreach activities. Where relevant, please discuss the content and its application with your Conference President.

Find the [policy here](#).

Work-related Violence Policy

We've introduced a new Work-Related Violence Policy to prevent and minimise the risk and impact of work-related aggression and violence when it does occur. The primary objective of the policy is to ensure the safety of our people, while acknowledging that our work with the people we assist must be trauma informed, and person centred.

[Access the policy here](#)

Support available for Members and Volunteers

We understand that sometimes challenging situations can arise. That's why we're highlighting the availability of our Converge Support Program. Converge offers confidential support services to all our members and volunteers. We encourage you to explore the information available to you on the [MAVS Website](#). Log in and find out more.

Safety Induction Module

Completing the Safety Induction Module on the MV Portal is a legislative requirement for all members and volunteers. This module provides essential information about workplace safety, risk management, and emergency procedures at Vinnies. If you haven't already completed the module, please take the time to do so as soon as possible via the [MV Portal](#).

Safety and Emergency Resources

We've been working to improve the safety and emergency resources on the MAVS website. The website now contains a dedicated section for all things safety and emergency.

Please take the time to explore these resources. Scan the QR code or [click this link](#) to log in to the website now. Contact your Conference President or Volunteer Manager with any questions or safety concerns.

Together, we can create a safe and respectful workplace for all.





Federal Election 2025 – The call for Social Justice

Thanks to all of our wonderful members, volunteers, staff and friends who joined the Vinnies delegation at the Sydney Alliance pre-election Assembly on Thursday 13 March. Our over 40 strong team were among more than 800 people who gathered together at Westmead. The Assembly was an important show of solidarity, calling for change to policies on housing supply, energy affordability and climate justice in the lead up to the Federal budget and election campaign.

The week before, the Hunter Community Alliance also held an Assembly in Newcastle. Twelve Vincentians joined a 650 strong turnout at that event to listen to life stories, and ask politicians about, stretched services, lack of housing, homelessness and the energy transition that doesn't leave people behind.

At the Sydney Assembly, participants also shared life stories highlighting impacts of the failure of successive governments to provide safe, energy efficient and affordable housing, deal with homelessness, and provide affordable energy. Key asks were put to the Minister for Climate Change and Energy Chris Bowen and Dr Andrew Charlton MP, member for Parramatta by community leaders. As Tom Gersbach, Chair of Vinnies NSW Social Justice Committee put to the Assembly, "We know the impact of poverty and cost of living pressures on the people we assist. We want to see more investment in social, affordable and energy-efficient housing."

Subsequent to the Assembly, the Federal budget contains no new commitments on these issues. So, as Australia enters the Federal election campaign, it's time to reach out to Federal MPs and candidates to let them know who we are, what we do, and what our communities need to meaningfully address poverty and housing insecurity in our local areas.



- Listen to our National President about why reducing poverty is so important.
- Urgently sign on to support the Election Statement on Raise the Rate - calling the Federal Government to substantially increase income support payments and reduce poverty.
- Write or seek a meeting with your local Federal MP or candidate - highlight our National Justice and Compassion Federal Election Statement 2025 .
- Contact us at social.justice@vinnies.org.au for more resources.

Peter Houweling

NSW State President, The Society of St Vincent de Paul

The St Vincent de Paul Society is a lay Catholic organisation that aspires to live the gospel message by serving Christ in the poor with love, respect, justice, hope and joy, and by working to shape a more just and compassionate society.

Dear Members of St Vincent de Paul NSW,

Thank you for your dedication and commitment to the Society. Your time and service are invaluable in carrying out our mission to support those in need.

You will have recently received an invitation to attend a session about the new Member and Volunteer System (MAVS).

This system has been designed to make it easier for you to stay connected, access important information, and update your details as needed.

MAVS will also provide essential guidance on the mandatory learning courses that all Society members are required to complete. The courses ensure we can continue our work safely and effectively protecting not only ourselves but also the many people we assist.

The courses cover:

Safeguarding - Code of Conduct, Privacy, Workplace Health & Safety

I strongly encourage you to take the time to attend the session closest to you. This is not only an opportunity to learn but also to connect socially with fellow members. Morning tea or lunch will be provided, and our staff will be available to assist you with navigating MAVS and completing the required training.

Kind regards

Peter Houweling

NSW State President- The Society of St Vincent de Paul

TRAINING SESSIONS TO BE HELD

- 5 MAY** Redfern Vinnies Support Centre: 317 Cleveland St, Redfern
- 7 MAY** Penrith Vinnies Support Centre: 7/308 High Street, Penrith
- 12 MAY** Wyong Vinnies Support Centre: 47 Howarth Street, Wyong
- 13 MAY** Gosford Vinnies Support Centre: 273-275 Mann Street, Gosford
- 14 MAY** Hornsby Vinnies Support Centre: 41 Jersey Street, Hornsby



Message from the Metro team

Metro Members are welcome and encouraged to attend any of these training sessions. In addition, each month, your Metro team Coordinator will continue to email a compliance report. This report will include: The expiry dates for each Member's

Police Check, Working With Children's Check (WWCC) and Safeguarding (Child Safe)

If any of these are not completed or up to date, it may result in the Member being marked as 'Inactive' meaning they will be unable to attend meetings, visitations or other Member activities.

Please reach out to the team if you have any questions.

The Member Community, and Engagement Team

Broken Bay: John Ferguson, Greater Western Sydney: Earnest Henry, Sydney: Paul Longobardi

✉ MetroMembers@vinnies.org.au

**For further information and to REGISTER for a session go to the MAVs website
<https://mavs.vinnies.org.au/events/>**



Has your Conference placed an order for the Vinnies Gift Cards?

Gift cards come in denominations of \$100, \$50, and \$30, and can be purchased in packs of 50 by Conferences.

From April 14, 2025, all retail purchases at Vinnies Retail Shops must be completed with Vinnies Gift Cards. If your Conference/VSC has not yet placed an order or has not yet activated the cards they have received, we encourage you to do so. Please also ensure that all family assistance vouchers (pink forms) are removed from circulation for Vinnies retail shop purchases except for emergency circumstances.

Everything you need to know

GIFTCARD RESOURCES AVAILABLE ON THE MAVs WEBSITE.

Retail Guide to Assist in Determining Appropriate Gift Card Value

Supply Centre Order Form

Gift Card Process Flow Chart

Conference/Hub Reference Sheet

You must be logged in firstly on the [MAVs website](#) with your Vinnies email to view the above resources in the [Member Area](#) on the website.

For placing Vinnies Gift Cards order and activation, please email the Supply Centre at supplycentre@vinnies.org.au

For other queries regarding the Vinnies Gift Cards, contact Ridwana Orchi member.programs@vinnies.org.au

LOG IN TO THE MEMBER AND VOLUNTEER HUB TO VIEW MEMBER RESOURCES



Once you've logged in click on the link to view the [Vinnies Giftcard Resources](https://mavs.vinnies.org.au/resources/providing-assistance/gift-cards/)
<https://mavs.vinnies.org.au/resources/providing-assistance/gift-cards/>