



St Vincent de Paul Society
good works

Newsletter

Broken Bay Central Council

St Vincent de Paul Society NSW

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AUGUST 2021

Broken Bay Central Council President - Michelle Chahine's Message



Dear Friends,

It is my honour and privilege to be the President of the Broken Bay Central Council for St Vincent de Paul Society NSW. My sincere thanks and gratitude go to all the Council members, who joined the Council this year and to those who are still serving in their current positions, and the wonderful support of our amazing staff, who continue to support the work of our members and Vinnies services day in and day out.

I would further like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank our former President John Donnelly for his outstanding effort and heartfelt commitment to the role of President and to the Society over the past four years. His invaluable support and leadership have been the cornerstone of the St Vincent de Paul Society here in Broken Bay.

And finally, thank you to all our members and volunteers, who have given invaluable support to the people we seek to serve. You have shown amazing resilience through the ongoing trying times of this pandemic and I hope to be able to show you the same support and care that you so willingly offer up every single day.

I look forward to working with each and every one of you and ask that you remember to always keep the key values of our society, commitment, compassion, respect, integrity, empathy, advocacy and courage at the forefront of all that we do during these difficult times. With these values we can continue to strengthen our sense of community, promote human dignity and our own personal integrity and strive for renewal while adapting to the current changing world conditions.

I wish you and your families good health and peace, and may God bless all that you do.

Regional Director Metropolitan - Gayl Purchase's Message

Again we find ourselves in lockdown providing much needed support to people vulnerable in our communities remotely.

Prior to lockdown in April and May we were able to support over 2914 people in Broken Bay seeking assistance which is a wonderful result. However, despite our limitations we have achieved so much in the last three months.

Members and volunteers have joined to commence operations at our newly named Vinnies Youth Community Centre (VYCC) in Brookvale. This centre will offer members and in particular our Vinnies youth leaders facilities to network and meet. This is completely a membership led initiative and there will be more information coming in the next few weeks with an invitation to the centre's opening, post lockdown.

As you would know our wonderful and indefatigable John Donnelly completed his tenure as Broken Bay Central Council President in June 2021. I have been so privileged to work closely with John for the last year and half of his presidency. His wisdom, generosity of spirit and kindness in guidance has been an incredible support to me both professionally and personally.

John you are truly a servant leader and true Vincentian. I know we will all join together to formally thank John but I couldn't miss the opportunity to express my deep gratitude to him and wish him all the very best as he steps back from this pivotal role.

Michelle Chahine was unanimously elected as our new Broken Bay Central Council President also in June 2021. Michelle brings with her a wealth of knowledge and passion. It will be my privilege to work with Michelle as she begins her tenure as President and I look forward to the projects we will undertake under her leadership.

Congratulations Michelle !!





NEWLY ELECTED BROKEN BAY CENTRAL COUNCIL PRESIDENT

THANK YOU TO JOHN DONNELLY AND CONGRATULATIONS TO MICHELLE CHAHINE !!



L-R: Gayl Purchase, John Donnelly, Michelle Chahine, Peter McNamara, Justin Walsh



Broken Bay Central Council Meeting congratulating Michelle Chahine

Central Coast Vinnies Community Sleepout 2021

The Central Coast Vinnies Community Sleepout is back in 2021! Last year, we adapted to a virtual event and raised over \$8,500 for the Vinnies Support Centres in Wyong, Gosford and Woy Woy.

Due to COVID-19, this year's Community Sleepout will also now be held virtually. Sleep out at home, in your car, back yard or on your verandah or couch. Join us online to help change lives in your community. As the pandemic continues to have an impact on many lives and communities, the need for assistance will be even greater. The Sleepout will take place on Friday 27 August, with proceeds once again supporting the local Vinnies Support Centres in Wyong, Gosford and Woy Woy.

Please help us spread the word or register at <https://my.fundraise.vinniesnsw.org.au/vinnies-community-sleepout-central-coast-region-2021>



STOP PRESS! Broken Bay Community Sleepout in the News

Interviewed by Holly Williams of NBN News, Gosford Regional President Annette Johnstone emphasised the importance of the Sleepout – with the number of people doing it tough increasing and with no end to the lockdown in sight. ***“People that have never sought the assistance of a charity before are coming forward and asking for help, and it’s really really courageous, it takes real courage to ask for help.”*** Calling on Central Coast residents to support Vinnies Community Sleepout, Annette says this is an opportunity not just to give but to also experience what it’s like to face homelessness. “That will give you a little bit of a taste of the kind of anxieties that people in that position go through every day.” And any impact of an extended lockdown won’t stop the Sleepout. Plan B is for the event to go ahead online like last year. “You can sleep on your verandah, you can sleep in your yard, you can sleep in your lounge room. Last year I slept in the car,” said Annette.

NBN Report: <https://www.nbnnews.com.au/2021/07/15/vinnies-sleep-out-hoped-to-help-our-most-vulnerable-in-lock-down/>

Important request to members

Members would have received a notice from your Regional Presidents, asking for your support in thinking about your community connections that may be able to provide sponsorship support of the event. We would love Vinnies Members and community members to sign up and join us on the night. Posters have been sent to Conferences you can share with your Parish and Community networks. We will once again hold a virtual sleepout this year. Please register for the Vinnies Broken Bay Community Sleepout, and help Vinnies to support those in need.



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VOLUNTEER EXPOS IN NORTHERN SYDNEY



Chatswood is great!!

The Lower North Shore Volunteer Expo 2021 was held at the Willoughby City Council's Dougherty Community Centre in Chatswood on Thursday 3 June. A Vinnies table was run by Barry Finch and John Heike from noon until 2pm. Vinnies was among 12 organisations represented at the Centre.

Despite the wintry weather, there was still a decent number of people attending. There was a lot of interest in Vinnies and there were quite a few potential volunteers among the people who came to our table. We handed out flyers for Social Justice, Membership and our Support Centres. Several Member/Volunteer application forms were also handed out.

Not a bad effort for a cold, wet and windy day!



L to R : Barry Finch and John Heike



L to R : Shirley Kelyack and Jodie Davidson

Hornsby is awesome!!!

A Volunteer Expo was hosted by the Hornsby Shire Council on Tuesday 8 June. It was a great success. The stall was manned by Alan Henson (Asquith), Karen DeSuza (Arcadia), Shirley and Jodie, from 10am till 1pm.

About 30 organisations were on display in 15 marquees in Hornsby Mall with many potential volunteers perusing for opportunities. Connections with other organisations were made, which will be hugely beneficial to those we assist. We estimate about 40 Volunteer and 50 Member application forms were distributed along with a multitude of flyers about Vinnies Support Centre's, Membership, Youth and Social Justice.

A busy and rewarding day!



Yamma Maliyaa (Hello)
(Cammeraygal)

NAIDOC WEEK- "Heal Country!"

Vinnies joined with others community celebrating NAIDOC Week (4-11 July) and renewing our support for the rich history and culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the oldest continuing cultures on the planet. The theme "Heal Country!", emphasises the importance of the lands, waters, sacred sites and cultural heritage of the First Nations peoples. One of the aims was to seek greater protections for sites of physical and ancient cultural heritage from exploitation, desecration, and destruction.

The beautiful NAIDOC artwork, "Care for Country", was designed by Gubbi Gubbi artist Maggie-Jean Douglas. Using this year's theme, it is a bright and vibrant artwork which explores how Country has cared for and healed First Nations people spiritually, physically, emotionally, socially and culturally.

By working with our Indigenous sisters and brothers to *Heal Country*, we share in the dignity of the First Peoples of this land and strengthen the solidarity of our national community.



Why is it important to all Australians to know our Aboriginal Heritage?

Aboriginal culture enriches the diversity of Australia's society, provides deep links into ancient history, and offers different views to living in this country and a wealth of stories.

It is important for all Australians to understand the essential features of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, including their special connection to the land and their

commitment to family and community. It is important that we can walk on this land together as friends and equals.

Aboriginal culture is holistic, defined by its connection to family, community and country. In Australia, the idea of "being on country" is central to the Aboriginal worldview.

It is important to have an awareness of the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures as cultural awareness shows respect for the culture with whom one is working, which can aid people working with these communities to build better relationships and be more effective in their work.

Visit the Cultural Competency Framework on MAVS

Our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) pledges to deliver reconciliation actions aimed at closing social and economic gaps in order to make a substantial difference in the lives of the people we engage, employ or assist. The RAP has three priority areas: Relationships, Respect, and Opportunities. To find out more about Vinnies' reconciliation efforts, including Cultural Protocols, the Prayer of Acknowledgement and other resources, visit: <https://mavs.vinnies.org.au/cultural-competency-framework/>

Get involved in the Metro RAP Committee

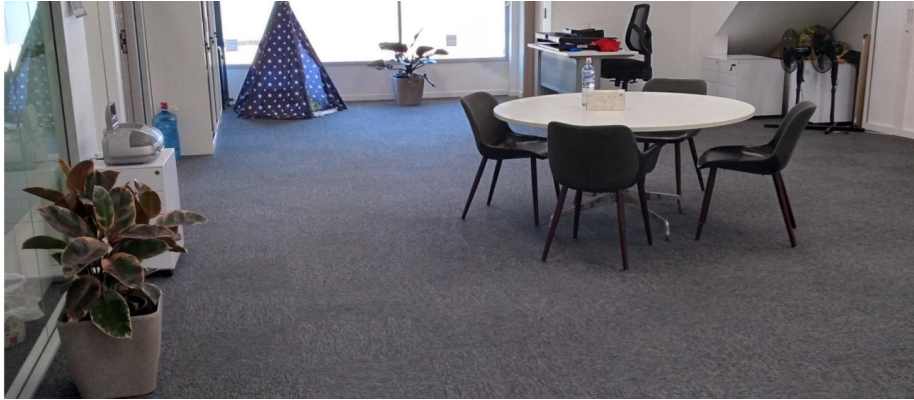
A Metro RAP committee has been established and held its first meeting. The Committee has confirmed a Terms of Reference and has already been active in the promotion of NAIDOC Week and meeting with Metro Retail about the roll-out of Acknowledgement of Country plaques in all stores.

The Committee has representatives from MVRO, Retail, Logistics, Disability and Inclusion, Housing and Homelessness Services, as well as Member representatives from Greater Western Sydney and Sydney.

But we still need a Member for Broken Bay. Are you interested in taking part in a Reconciliation Committee, representing Broken Bay members? To find out more and for expressions of interest, please contact: Janice.Stokes@vinnies.org.au



GOSFORD OFFICE RELOCATION COMPLETE



Last time we updated you on the Gosford VSC we were getting ready to move into our new downstairs office. I am very happy to advise that the move occurred in April this year and that we have settled in well. Our clients have given great feedback about how pleasant it is to come into an office that is as nice as ours. Both the clients and the conference members are extremely happy that the office is on the ground floor and that none of them have to climb stairs anymore.

We now have a purpose-built storeroom to house any donations which can range from pantry food to toiletries to blankets - all of which are in great demand. We also have a Financial Counselling using one of our offices that we can refer clients to. Our Regional President, Annette Johnstone, had been given the gift of \$500 in Bunnings vouchers from Barry Finch from the Broken Bay Diocesan Central Council to spend on our new premises. Annette and I had a great time shopping at Bunnings for plants and a furniture trolley.

Whilst we would like to be running programs in our new office for clients, this has been delayed until there is a better situation with COVID-19. We are also still awaiting WI-FI for our premises, which I am told will be at the end of July.

Lisa Dalton

Vinnies Support Centre Coordinator Gosford

Meet Caroline Casse

Please meet Caroline Casse, the Community Fundraising and Events Coordinator at Vinnies NSW. One of her roles is to assist conferences across NSW with some fundraising tools. Current fundraising tools available for use by all conferences are Commonwealth Bank Albert Terminals and Personalised Fundraising Pages on <https://fundraise.vinniesnsw.org.au/>

Some of you may have worked with Caroline when she organised the Albert Terminals for the 2021 Winter Appeal. If your conference is interested in using either of these tools for your 2021 Christmas Appeal, please don't hesitate to reach out to her on caroline.casse@vinnies.org.au.

Conversation Conference

Conversation Conference is a free service running out of Vinnies Chatswood Regional Council that aims to break down the language barriers in our community through conversations in a friendly environment. We encourage non-English speaking immigrants or people of any religion, age, gender or race to participate and gain confidence in conversational English to integrate in the Australian community.

Conversation Conference continues to operate via zoom on

Wednesdays and Thursdays from 6.30pm to 7.30pm and 6.30pm to 8pm respectively. The online presence enabled our new learners and mentors to join in the comfort of their homes without the need to travel. Conference members hold a regular quarterly cultural experience event to meet face-to-face and enjoy each other's company.

Please reach out if you wish to participate as a mentor or if you know anyone who would benefit from this community. You can e-mail Christian.Salandanan@vinnies.org.au to register your interest.



CHATSWOOD ARTARMON BUNNINGS BBQ

The BBQ Fund Raising event at Artarmon Bunnings was held on Saturday 12 June. Conversations Conference mentors Maria Paino, Christian Salandanan and founding member Reg Wong and their members, together with the other Conference members in the Chatswood region, assisted in the event and were able to raise \$1,800 for Vinnies. Funds raised will be used to support various programs to help those in need.

We thank all those who lent their time to serve and cook at the BBQ event. Please reach out if you wish to participate and lend a helping hand in future BBQ fund raising event.

You can e-mail Barry.Finch@vinnies.org.au to register your interest.



Chatswood Winter Appeal a great Success!



Chatswood Vinnies held our Winter Appeal in Chatswood Mall and the Chase on Saturday 26 June. Although it was a mid-winter's day, we were blessed with a sunny sky and the warm generosity of locals on their way to work, shopping and social gatherings. This was the last day before lockdown – so we felt doubly blessed to get the Appeal in before everything in Sydney shut shop!

As usual, the generosity of passers-by who came up to donate was humbling. Some people who were obviously in a rush to get to work still took the time to stop and contribute. Others stayed for a chat about the history and works of the Society. There were families showing their children – some as young as one or two – how important it is to make an offering to people in need.

One woman struggling with a walking frame approached slowly with a donation of one dollar and apologised that it didn't amount to much. Of course, every donation counts, and her generosity reminded us of the woman in the Gospel story of the widow's mite (Mark 12:42).

At the heart of the Winter Appeal are the women, men and families who are at risk of homelessness and sleeping rough, with all the associated risks – the harsh winter environment being just one of them.

A total of \$1,500 was raised for the Appeal on the day. Thanks to the members and volunteers who gave of their time so generously to make this a success!



Local Sydney Alliance Discussions

The Sydney Alliance is holding meetings with local candidates ahead of the September 2021 local elections. Vinnies members have been involved in Local Organising Teams through the Sydney Alliance to take action on issues important to their local areas. There are teams active across the greater Sydney area, and in the Broken Bay area this includes Hornsby, Kuring-Gai, Mosman and the Northern Beaches. Most of these actions will have a strong focus on affordable housing and most will be occurring in August. If the current lockdown interferes with face-to-face meetings with candidates, alternative online meetings may be arranged. For more information or if you'd like to join the action, go to: <https://www.sydneyalliance.org.au/local/>



CONFERENCE

Families and kids making a difference in Freshwater

A very big thank you for all the support that we get from St John the Baptist primary school in Freshwater.

Six of the girls held two fundraisers for Vinnies. Two sold cookies at the local shopping centre and four had a homemade lemonade stall. Between them they donated over \$170 which was a fantastic effort. The students names are Brielle Hazard, Annika Slavin, Millie Maher, Bronte Kennedy, Arabella Hohan and Matilda Johnston.

Through the school Mini Vinnies they have donated food for our winter appeal and also hampers at Christmas time. A very big thank you to Sharna (R.E. Coordinator) and all the teachers and parents for their wonderful support over the years.

We had a donation of money from a parishioner of Freshwater for our Conference for a special project. It was decided by our members to help with the education needs of children of the families we support.

We were able to give to the children six laptops and one Ipad and a voucher for art supplies for a special needs student. I would also like to thank Shaun from D Y Computers for his great support of the program.

Thanks that warm the heart....

The Conference was asked to assist a single mum with two boys. They had been homeless for a while after she lost her jobs because of COVID-19. Brookvale office helped with accommodation and Vinnies supplied furniture.

We supported with food vouchers etc. and gave her son in Year 10 a laptop to help with his studies.



This is the thank you card we received from her:

To the team at Vinnies and all donors,

Your contribution to the community cannot be measured simply by a thank you which I cannot give enough of.

The security my boys feel is the most personalised gift I have received. It's people like you that remind them their future is not tailored by the circumstances of their parents but by the generosity of their community and the opportunities they choose to take from it. As a mother I am so grateful such generosity exists, from the bottom of my heart and my family thank you.

This story is the reason we do what we do !!



*Painting by the young
women who received the arts supplies
vouchers from Freshwater Conference*





The Stranger in Our Midst

By Huang Zhe-Wei aka Reg Wong
Forestville Conference



When we Vincentians say our clients need a “leg up”, what exactly do we mean? To categorise them, we rely on terms such as *disadvantaged, marginalised, financially challenged, sick, unemployed for prolonged periods or unemployable because of some physical handicap or mental incapacity, homeless, victims of domestic violence* and a myriad of other reasons too many to mention here.

There are still others who “fall between the cracks” and completely escape our attention. We fail to notice them because they fail to conform to our definition of what makes up those who need the helping hand of Vincentians. Or even worse, because of our Austro-centricity, we reflexively turn a cultural blind eye to those who are unlike us because they are “foreigners”. Such a myopic view prevents us from recognising need where there is as much need as by those mentioned above. We simply become oblivious to them. So, who are those who escape our understanding of people with other than financial or physical needs?

Next to the US, Australia is the favourite destination of foreign students. From the ABS, in 2017, there were 799,371 international students here, of whom 39% were from China. In secondary schools were 25,762 foreign students, mainly under -18 minors who were predominantly from China. Because of their Confucian heritage people in the Mainland as well as those in the Chinese diasporas of the Orient (and elsewhere in the Occident) value and pursue education, not merely to “get a better job” but to escape the “curse of the

frog trapped in a well”. Isn’t this why in our prestige schools we see that at least 25% of the students are of Chinese extraction? What of these minors in secondary schools?

According to Dr KJ Lindner’s 2018 PhD thesis, “International students in the school sector are a particularly vulnerable group, due to their age and status as unaccompanied minors.” Cognizant of this group’s identified vulnerability, our immigration people are sufficiently empathetic to grant temporary visas to parents to accompany their children for the period of their secondary schooling in Australia. These “companion” parents are exclusively mothers as their husbands must remain behind in the homeland to earn the wherewithal to upkeep their children’s education and the associated costs of living here incurred not just by the students themselves but by their companion mothers. What is the plight of these companion mothers?

Firstly, there is the double-edged sword of separation of wives from their husbands - and of husbands from their wives - not just for the period of the academic year but for extended and undefined periods, as recently dictated by the mandatory COVID-19 lockdown. As companion mother Yuqing says, “I used to go home to Shanghai every year for my annual reunion with my husband who, for exactly the same reason, cannot visit me and our two daughters.” I have met both of these split-asunder couples. Although invariably displaying only poker faces, bearing their suffering with practised equanimity and accepting their pain as an inevitable cost of their children’s education, their underlying suffering cannot be masked. As I am ethnically one of them, and as a previous international student and a parent, I can see behind their inscrutable Oriental faces. I sense and feel their pain as if it’s my own.

Secondly, there is not only the threat but the reality that their children would remain behind in the country of their secondary and tertiary education. I am a prime example of this reality. As one of these companion mothers says, “These children become lost to their parents in China: this is the saddest outcome of studying abroad.”

Thirdly, once the children turn 18 and enter university, their companion mothers must return to China. The pain of separating from husbands is now compounded by separation from their children.

Fourthly, for the companion mothers, there is the alienation from friends and family. This pales into insignificance compared with the isolation syndrome of being a foreigner in a foreign land. Speaking in Mandarin, Yuqing says, “Loneliness is a big factor caused by the language barrier. At first I could neither read nor speak the local language. Consequently I only went to the local Chinese supermarket for daily necessities. Because I am unable to communicate effectively in the local language, whatever ‘friendship’ I form never rises above the superficial – and this adds to my loneliness.”

Finally, there is the cost burden involved in getting an overseas education. Besides the not inconsiderable outgoings for school fees, accommodation rentals, food and transport, there is the added burden of extra tuition to ensure entrance to a university. “This is a huge drain on the family finances,” says Yuqing.

Is there anything Vincentians can do? Yes, next time you see a lady foreigner heading for the Chinese supermarket, be aware she may very well be a companion mother who is lonely, without a genuine friend, lacking fluency in the local language, desperately needing a genuine friend just like you. Even in the perfect environment of Eden, God said, “It is not good for *man* to be alone.” God might have said the same for *woman*. As Rick Warren (Author of *The Purpose Driven Life*) writes, “We are all created for community, fashioned for fellowship, and formed for a family, and none of us can fulfil God’s purposes by ourselves.” So, what’s stopping any of us Vincentians from extending a hand of friendship to one of these stranger companion mothers? We have every reason to do so for St Pauls exhorts, “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares” (Hebrews 13:2) and “Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God” (Romans 15:7)



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Thinking Community Engagement...for a Post Lockdown Community

As we struggle with the social isolation of lockdown, it's not too soon to be thinking of our engagement with local communities once the lockdown is lifted. We need to do everything we can to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our communities – and that includes ensuring that Vinnies continues to have a strong presence for vulnerable people in our local areas.

Consider the following suggestions for your Conference

Parish information and recruitment weekends

If you would like to consider having a recruitment/information campaign at your local Parish, you can receive support and planning help from your Member and Community Engagement team. We can meet with Conference Members and your Parish Priest to discuss the benefits to everyone of having a Vinnies information weekend.

Notices can be provided for requested inclusion in Parish bulletins in the lead up to the Vinnies weekend, and on the weekend itself, suggested speaking notes can be provided to a Vinnies Member to speak at the Masses, a Vinnies table can be setup with flyers, information packs and membership application forms. Parishioners will have an opportunity to meet with Conference Members before and after Masses to ask questions and explore Vinnies as an opportunity for them to get involved.

If you'd like to discuss further, please contact John.Ferguson@vinnies.org.au.

Local Shopping Centre food drive

If you think your local shopping centre would be a great venue to have a Vinnies table for a weekend, please let us know. We can liaise with the shopping centre, and if permitted, setup a Vinnies table. We can provide various flyers about Vinnies and the work they do, and a list of items required by your Conferences and the local Vinnies Support Centre.

People look for simple ways to give back to the Community and having the chance to purchase a grocery item, and donate that to Vinnies, gives them that opportunity. For further info, contact John.Ferguson@vinnies.org.au.

Corporate engagement days – Coming soon!!

We will be asking businesses and corporations if they would like to spend their annual 'Volunteer Day' with Vinnies. This will provide an opportunity for Vinnies to connect with big business and Corporate Australia; to show the various ways Vinnies provides a hand-up to the Community; and to show ways they could get involved if they wished.

Conference Members will be asked to be involved by speaking with the Corporate employees about the work the Members do and answering questions. Stay tuned for more details or contact Janice.Stokes@vinnies.org.au for more information.

Conference Stock Request Form

Please note – a new Conference Stock Request Form has now replaced the Youth Resource Order Form and the NSW Conference and Council Supplies Order Form.

It will be updated regularly as some of the stock won't be available once it is sold out. It is available to download on MAVS under Operational Documents: <https://mavs.vinnies.org.au/conferences/conference-forms-and-guidelines/>

Please share this information with your Conferences.



YOUTH UPDATE

VINNIES YOUTH BUDDIES DAYS UPDATE

Vinnies Metro Youth were very excited to be running Buddies Days in Broken Bay Council during May and June. After a 12-month break due to COVID restrictions the Vinnies Buddies Day Volunteers were enjoying spending time with their Buddies. However, due to the new restrictions in greater Sydney, the Buddies Day program is again on hold.

Each Regional Council in the Broken Bay Council was allocated a Buddies Day date for Conferences and Vinnies Support Centre Staff to refer children onto the Buddies Day program during 2021. This will be redone and communicated to the Regional Presidents and VSC staff when the program restarts.

In May we ran a Buddies Day which the Hornsby Region participated in, at Tangara School for Girls in Cherrybrook. We also had a Buddies Day planned for late June for the Chatswood & Northern Beaches Regions to be held at the new Vinnies Youth & Community Centre by the Asquith Young Adult Conference. Unfortunately, due to COVID restrictions, it was postponed. A very big thank you to all the Conferences for your support and trust in the program and the volunteers.

Buddies Days is a Vinnies Youth Program, operating throughout NSW, which offers the families being supported by Conferences and Vinnies Support Centres another opportunity for support. The Buddies Day Program has been providing support to Broken Bay Conference for many years, and we cannot wait to see them up and running again. For those who are not familiar with the Buddies Day Program here is some background. Buddies Days are held for children of families supported by the St Vincent de Paul Society. It is a care and respite program that consists of a fun day of activities for children in primary school, to give them a break from any hardships they may be experiencing. Buddies Days are

held on a Saturday or a Sunday – a private bus collects the children and volunteers, all food for the day is provided and there is no cost.

Vinnies Buddies Days aim to...

Provide outreach to children of families, supported by Vinnies, who are doing it tough

- Provide activities that encourage children to develop new skills, enhance their self-confidence and broaden their friendship networks, most importantly while having fun!
- Provide a day of respite to parents or guardians
- Promote friendship, compassion, dignity and community
- Provide an opportunity for volunteers to actively assist in helping those less fortunate

If you would like more information about the Vinnies Buddies Day Program, please get in touch with Kate Conroy, Vinnies Metro Youth Engagement Officer
kate.conroy@vinnies.org.au



Vinnies Youth Training Opportunities



It has been very encouraging to see Vinnies Metro Youth & Young Adult members and volunteers taking up the opportunity to undergo new training opportunities with Vinnies. Youth conference members recently participated in a new child safe recruitment training hosted by Belinda-Jayne Davis, Vinnies NSW Safeguarding Co-ordinator. It is new training designed to equip our young adult members with the skills required to interview potential new young adult members on child related programs such as the Buddies Days. Young Adult members responded positively to the training, sharing that they appreciated the opportunity for further development in their volunteer role within the Society, and that they also gained valuable skills in ensuring our organisation is Child Safe.

We also continue to see lots of new youth volunteers participate in the Buddies Day Training, during June we ran a Buddies Day Training for youth members of the Asquith Young Adult Conference. We have many more training scheduled to be held

throughout the Broken Bay Central Council during August and September.



Young Adult Conference Spotlight

This issue we would like to highlight some of the Good Works being done by the **Asquith Youth Conference**.



Being a part of the St. Vincent de Paul Society means hard work, dedication and a strong passion for good works. This is exactly what is displayed from the members of the Asquith Youth Conference. Starting back in 2017 with just six members, most in the midst of the HSC, we started to learn more about the Society and how we can help those in need.

With fantastic support from Michelle Chahine and other members of the adult conference we managed to organise our first events and start making connections to other conferences. Since then, we have been active in the community for the last five years, organising fundraiser events, assisting at Sleepouts, running the local Vinnies Winter Appeal, hosting Buddies Days and communicating with the rest of the Vinnies State Youth Team to grow and become more efficient as a Society.

Every year we appoint a new Conference President, and every year they excel in a different expertise, allowing our conference to take on new projects and works, whilst also continuing the works set up by the president before them.

I am immensely proud of my team, even going to events in other areas to assist where needed, such as the working bees at the Vinnies Youth & Community Centre in Brookvale. Although the last two years have been hard, we've pulled through. Everyone is still in university or high school, but making time for the good works we provide - nothing makes me prouder. Everyone is committed to the work they do for different reasons, but most importantly, we know that what we are doing is changing the lives of so many people.

That's what makes Vinnies members. The hard work, the dedication and their strong passion for the good works.

Luke Antoun

Asquith Youth Conference Member and Broken Bay Youth Representative



Chatswood Youth Conference – making a difference

The Chatswood Vinnies Youth Conference has been involved with several initiatives aligned with our objective to make a difference in our community. Conference members have been involved in the major revamp of the Vinnies Youth and Community Centre (VYCC) in Brookvale undertaking such work alongside the Asquith youth conference and several other Vinnies members and volunteers. Engaging in this work has been rewarding to know that our efforts will ignite new potential for the space and for the great work of the St Vincent De Paul Society.

Our conference has also begun planning to become involved in more work locally such as nursing home visitation which is a growing need in the Chatswood region where over 40% of residents have no visitors. This has been amplified by lockdowns where many residents have been denied access to visits from family and friends due to the risks posed by the COVID-19 virus.

Members were also involved in the winter appeal fundraiser on the 26th of June in both Chatswood mall and Chatswood Chase. The fundraising efforts will support Vinnies efforts in alleviating homelessness- which is essential as we head into the winter months where many would otherwise not be shielded from the elements of nature.

Cailin Geraghty

Chatswood Youth Conference President

If you would like to know more about or connect with Vinnies Youth in your local area, please get in touch with Kate Conroy, Vinnies Metro Youth Engagement Officer kate.conroy@vinnies.org.au



IMPORTANT DATES IN SOCIAL JUSTICE CALENDAR

Social Justice Diary 2021– resources for Members

For suggested content to be added to your Parish bulletins, or to talk after Mass, and for ideas for your Conferences, please refer to the MAVS social justice page: <https://mavs.vinnies.org.au/social-justice/>]

COMING SOCIAL JUSTICE EVENTS

29 August – Social Justice Sunday. The Australian Catholic Bishops' Social Justice Sunday statement "Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor" recognises the sacredness of God's creation and our responsibility to care for the environment and for the poorest who have the least capacity to cope with the consequences of climate change. Through our annual Winter appeal and the Bushfire appeal Vinnies has helped to restore communities ravaged by environmental catastrophe. For more info visit: <https://socialjustice.catholic.org.au/2021/06/24/social-justice-statement-2021-22/>

26 September – Migrant & Refugee Sunday. Vinnies plays an important role in making our communities places where people seeking protection can rebuild their lives, care for their children, prosper and thrive. The "Refugees and People seeking Asylum Social Justice Statement" offers practical recommendations to Government to support people seeking protection and uphold their human rights. For more info, visit: <https://socialjustice.vinnies.org.au/issues/refugees-and-people-seeking-asylum/>

10 October – World Mental Health Day. Vinnies NSW works closely with those experiencing mental ill-health and has seen first-hand how homelessness, unemployment, and social isolation can impact on mental health and well-being. This year's theme

chosen by the World Federation for Mental Health is "Mental Health in an Unequal World", recognising that many people do not receive the treatment they deserve and are vulnerable to discrimination as the gap between the 'haves' and the 'have nots' grows wider.

17 – 23 October – Anti-Poverty Week. This campaign supports the Australian community to have an increased understanding of poverty and to take action collectively to end it. Since 2002, Anti-Poverty week has been held to coincide with the United Nations Day for the Eradication of Poverty. Vinnies have been active participants. Stay tuned for this year's Anti-Poverty week theme. For more info, visit: <https://antipovertyweek.org.au/>

14 November – World Day of the Poor

For this World Day of the Poor, Pope Francis has issued a message that responds to the gospel challenge, "The poor you will always have with you" (Mk 14:7). How can we respond to entrenched disadvantage and the many new forms of poverty we see emerging in the community? The Pope speaks of the inseparable link between Jesus, the poor and the proclamation of the Gospel. We are called to reach out and meet Christ in their sufferings and in the often-inhuman conditions in which the poor are forced to live. To access the message, visit:

<https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/poveri/documents/20210613-messaggio-v-giornatamondiale-poveri-2021.pdf> .

At Vinnies, we look for opportunities to alleviate the many forms of poverty: through our home visitations; the work on our Vinnies Vans and our Support Centres. Through our advocacy, Vinnies campaigns for people experiencing poverty in a multitude of ways. You can check out the campaigns and events of the Vinnies Social Justice Network at <https://socialjustice.vinnies.org.au>.

MEMBER AND VOLUNTEER WEBSITE

Have you seen the updated Member and Volunteer Support website?

This site exists to share resources, news, contacts, and events with our members and volunteers. We want to provide members and volunteers with the tools, information and resources that will assist you in your service.

<https://mavs.vinnies.org.au/home/>

We really want to know what you like and want in the Member and Volunteer online resources platform. Broken Bay Central Council has its own page: <https://mavs.vinnies.org.au/conferences/broken-bay-central-council/>

For requested updates, please email janice.stokes@vinnies.org.au

There are also lots of other updates happening on MAVS which you can check in on anytime here: <https://mavs.vinnies.org.au/mavs-latest-updates/>