



St Vincent de Paul Society
good works



NEWSLETTER

SYDNEY ARCHDIOCESE

Sydney Archdiocese Central Council President - John Walden's Message

Members, staff and volunteers, this is the last newsletter before the Christmas break, so I would like to take this opportunity to thank all concerned for their efforts over the year. This is especially so for the efforts that are made leading up to the Christmas break where demands for hampers and assistance are notably higher.

Changes to the Central Council

In all there are 5 changes to the Regional Presidents that have already occurred or will do so before mid-next year. Two have already been elected or appointed, being Rozelle (Cathie Edlington) and Liverpool (Michael Wright). Three are to be elected by mid-next year, being St George by November 2024, Macquarie in January 2025 and Sutherland by May next year. In addition, our long-serving Vice President, Social Justice (Michelle Fonti) is moving on after many years in this portfolio.

Thanks to all who have served in these positions over the years.

Initiatives

- Welfare and home visitation guidelines

This document has now been circulated throughout the membership and the Support Centre staff. Subject to any recommendations that may require further debate/consideration, they are expected to be operational by the end of the year. These guidelines will give members and Support Centre staff some clear indications as to the level and frequency of welfare assistance and the conducting of home visitations.

- Streamlining of the new member on-boarding processes

Meetings have been held with senior staff to try and streamline the at times cumbersome and time consuming on-boarding processes of prospective new members. Hopefully, there should be some progress made with this overall process by early next year.

Once again, a great thank you to members, staff and volunteers in assisting those who need our help over the course of the year.

November 2024

edition #2

IN THIS ISSUE

- [PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE](#)
- [REGIONAL DIRECTOR'S REPORT](#)
- [GOOD WORKS](#)
- [MEMBERS IN THE SPOTLIGHT](#)
- [CONFERENCE NEWS](#)
- [EVENTS](#)
- [WINTER APPEAL](#)
- [CHRISTMAS APPEAL](#)
- [COMMUNITY SLEEPOUT](#)
- [VINNIES CITY TO SURF TEAM](#)
- [RETAIL UPDATE](#)
- [VINNIES YOUTH](#)
- [BUDDIES DAY](#)
- [MINI VINNIES](#)
- [VINNIES SOCIAL JUSTICE](#)
- [SAFEGUARDING UPDATE](#)
- [MAVs CREATE AN ACCOUNT](#)



Happy 90th Birthday
Jennie!



Metro Regional Director - Ash Ambihaipahar

As we approach the Christmas season, one of our busiest times of the year, the Christmas Appeal is in full swing. Local parishes, schools, and other community initiatives are coming together to support those in need, showcasing the generosity and compassion of our community.



A special congratulations to our Members, Volunteers, Vinnies Services, Retail, Vans, and Metro Staff for the success of the Metro Vinnies Community Sleepout at Western Sydney University, Parramatta. The event raised over \$81,000, with each of the three Central Councils receiving approximately \$27,000 to support those in need. Special thanks 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 140 registered attendees and 80 participants spending the night in solidarity, it was a powerful reminder of the challenges faced by those experiencing homelessness.

The McKell Institute's new report, Immediate Aid, Measurable Impact: Examining the Effectiveness of Emergency Relief, highlights the significant impact of the Society's work in NSW. The report, based on a survey of 900 clients, reveals that 80.4% of clients had a positive experience with emergency relief, and 78.1% credited Vinnies with helping them achieve stability. The report, launched at our Hurstville Vinnies Support Centre, emphasises the vital role we play in preventing crises such as eviction and hunger. We were honoured to have Federal Minister Amanda Rishworth MP and Linda Burney MP join us for this important event.

We've also introduced Vinnies Gift Cards, replacing traditional assistance vouchers, providing families with more flexibility and dignity in meeting their needs. For more information, visit the MAVS website.

Conference News

Macquarie Regional Council – Conference Collaborations

Some years ago the NSW State Government closed the Ivanhoe Housing Commission Estate at North Ryde to build high rise apartments mostly for the private market. After a robust debate it was agreed there would be approximately 900 units for Community Housing. The first two high rise apartment blocks finished late last year and they contained 259 apartments for Community Housing and 120 for Affordable Housing.

In March, 2024, we suddenly started to receive many cases from these new clients, most of whom were formerly homeless. They had very few possessions apart from their clothes. It was not practical for the North Ryde Conference to cope with this big load of complex and needy cases. As such, we shared the caseload across four of our Conferences - Eastwood, Marsfield, North Ryde and Ryde.

We soon ran through the money we normally raise and the Region's ERF. David Murphy and Bhavika Patel, who managed the Metro Vinnies Support Centres (VSCs) were very supportive and assisted us with further funding. Auburn VSC were taking our calls at that time and did a great job.

Overall, there were over 100 new clients and many return calls to assist in a short space of time. A really good outcome and some fine teamwork for our dedicated Conference Members, Presidents, volunteers and staff!!

John Lumley
Macquarie Regional Council President



IN THE SPOTLIGHT



67 YEARS OF SERVICE!

North Ryde Conference Member, Peter McConnell Retired from Vinnies on 30 June, 2024.

Peter is 91 years old. He started volunteering with St Vincent de Paul Society in 1957 in Rockhampton, QLD, just a year after migrating from Ireland.

We thanked Peter for his decades of dedicated service and presented him with a Lifetime Service Certificate from the Society in our Conference meeting last week.

Peter handed over his Treasurer responsibilities to Alan Watkins, who is one of our new members from our recruitment drive last year. Alan has both accounting and IT management experience, and has quickly adjusted to the role in the few weeks of handover.

2 other North Ryde Conference Members have also been presented with Lifetime Service Awards, Bob Holland remaining active since 1965 and John Turner, active 1970-2021

May God continue to bless us all,
Lorenzo Escalante - President, North Ryde Conference.



Peter McConnell



Robert Holland



John Taylor



HAPPY 90th BIRTHDAY TO JENNIE

Jennie Gentry has been a valued member of Vinnies for many years, beginning with the Balgowlah Conference in 2007. After relocating to the Northern Suburbs, Jennie joined the North Sydney Our Lady of the Way Conference, where she supports the community through home visitations and by volunteering at the Crows Nest Support Centre. Jennie's contributions include helping with client interviews, pantry upkeep, administrative duties and welcoming all who attend the Centre.

We recently celebrated Jennie's 90th birthday. During the celebration, Jennie shared her advice for a long and happy life: staying connected with friends, being social, meditating, eating whatever you like and walking everywhere taking in the beauty of your surroundings!

We are incredibly grateful for Jennie's commitment to Vinnies and loved celebrating this special milestone with her.



Marsfield Conference News

Thank you!

On 13 September, three of our members attended the assembly of St. Anthony's Primary School Marsfield where the school community presented donations of blankets, clothes and food parcels for the Vinnies Winter Appeal.

\$2,000 worth of food items alone were donated. All items were brought to the West Ryde VSC for distribution to clients in the Macquarie Region. Besides the donated items, the students presented their own artwork, with personal messages attached to recipients. And Elosie O'Connell, Support Centre Coordinator arranged for the work to be displayed in the reception area of the office at West Ryde – see photo.

St. Anthony's is a small Primary School and the response by all was truly magnificent. A big thanks to Ms. Therese Egan, Religious Education Coordinator, and especially all the students for showing real Christian love in action for all doing it tough in our society of today.



Members Rob Gough, Kevin Lyons and Vince Peterson with St. Anthony's students



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.



Women's Winter Care Packs

Amy and Sally from North Sydney Conference made Women's Winter Care Packs for clients across the Northern Suburbs Regional Council with items donated from Loreto Kirribilli.



Bunnings BBQ -Great Local Exposure for Vinnies

Thank you for your fantastic efforts Saturday, 7 September at Kingsgrove Bunnings. Sorry I didn't capture photos of all our helpers, but everyone's contribution was greatly appreciated in making the day a wonderful success.

Best regards, Bernie Deady
(President, Kingsgrove Lady of Fatima Conference)



Donations from Holy Family Parish in Menai

The donations for our Sutherland Regional Council Winter Appeal were lovingly gathered by parishioners for delivery to the Sutherland Support Centre for use in our food hampers.



Michael (Left, Helensburgh Conference) collected the meals from Patrick from Govinda Valley Retreat Centre

Conferences Benefit from Donations to Sutherland Vinnies Support Centre

Sutherland Regional Centre was happy to benefit from the generosity of the Govinda Valley Retreat Centre. The Centre is located in Otford, at the foot of the Royal National Park and provides facilities for groups to host retreats while immersing themselves in the natural surrounds.

Govinda Valley Centre is generous to local charities including St Vincent de Paul and the Salvation Army. In June they donated over 100 meals to our Sutherland Centre.

Donations from St John Bosco Primary School in Engadine

The Sutherland Vinnies Support Centre received a huge amount of non-perishable foods for use in our food hampers, plus Winter woollies and toiletries. We are so grateful.



Warm hearts at NORTH FACE creating warmth to people we assist

The Sutherland VSC was fortunate to receive a very generous donation of puffer jackets from NORTH FACE.

They didn't want the items to be sold, but rather go to those who really need a warm jacket this Winter. We have put the jackets in our waiting room for the people we assist to select and take.

We are very grateful to North Face for their incredible generosity.

For over 50 years, North Face has delivered outdoor clothing, hiking clothes and camping equipment. Crafted to endure the toughest conditions, they are also perfect for urban adventures near and far.



Greater Sydney Community Sleepout

Friday 30th 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



Sleepout Panellists



*Samoan Church Group.
Western Sydney University
influencers*



*Gilroy Catholic College,
Castle Hill*



Rapid Relief Team and Kate Conroy



Vinnies Members and Staff

Sydney Archdiocese and Greater Western Sydney Central Council's retreat 6 & 7 July – St Joseph's Baulkham Hills



Member attendees with Metro Region Director, Ash (on left)

The two Central Councils combined to hold a retreat as detailed above. The interchange between members was very productive. It was interesting to see how differently our Vincentian Mission is conducted across the Central Councils. They ranged between the homeless in the inner city with the high-rise blocks of units to rural areas in the Blue Mountains to the working poor.

The agenda saw the following topics presented and discussed, with some revealing outcomes.

They included discussions around the proposed welfare and home visitation guidelines and developments with Youth and how they can be assimilated into the adult Conferences. The Spiritual sessions looked at how we meet those that we assist (seeing Christ in the poor – the Mary and Martha story), discernment in our interactions with those people and how do we say no to requests where we have limited resources.

We attended a deeply moving Mass on the Saturday night celebrated by Bishop Terry Brady in the chapel on-site, which was also attended by the Josephite nuns who live in the complex. All attendees came away from the retreat feeling spiritually refreshed and stimulated with the Vincentian spirit.

There are several photographs along with this article showing the participants and some of the presenters.



*Address by John Walden
Sydney Archdiocese Central Council President*



*Vikram Petrie
Greater Western
Sydney Central
Council President*



*Marissa Papaspiros
SACC Youth
Representative*



*Tom Story Sydney
Regional Council
President & attendees*

Sutherland Region Members Gathering Revive and Renew - an R&R day!

Vinnies' members in the Sutherland Regional Council came together on the 20th April at St Catherine Laboure Primary School Hall to reconnect with each other and to revive and renew our spirit.



Panel presentations and Q & A

VINNIES SUPPORT CENTRE BANKSTOWN

RECONNECT DAY



EVERYONE IS INVITED!

When: Wednesday 6 November 2024 **Time:** 10:00am – 2:00pm

Where: 2A East Terrace, Bankstown NSW 2200

Vinnies would like to provide **“A Hand Up”** to anyone in our local community who needs food, toiletries, toys and more.

Light Refreshments will be served from 12 noon to 1.00 pm.

ALL WELCOME!

For more information, please contact:

Phone: 02 9796 1176 or Email: bankstownvsc@vinnies.org.au

Metro Retail Volunteer Open Day

11 stores within Metropolitan Retail held a Volunteer Open Day from 16th to the 20th 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.

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

- 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.

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



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



Our West Ryde Team

Northern Sydney Homelessness Forum

June, 2024: The Northern Sydney Homelessness Forum at the Vinnies Crows Nest Centre was a resounding success, bringing together a full house of staff from various agencies—including aged care, mental health, youth services, disability, housing, and local council representatives—to address homelessness in Northern Sydney. **Members from each Conference in the Northern Suburbs also attended to show their support.**

Dominique Rowe, CEO of Homelessness NSW, delivered a powerful keynote on the state of homelessness in New South Wales and encouraged continued collaboration between agencies. The forum featured interactive activities that fostered collaboration and problem-solving among participants, culminating in a lively "Pitch It to the PM" session where each table presented solutions to a mock Prime Minister. Regional President Peter Marshall's pitch was particularly animated!

Agencies committed to concrete actions regarding homelessness and agreed to work together to create a comprehensive resource outlining services for both agencies and those in need. Plans were also made for another forum in 2024, inviting other agencies to sponsor and host the event.

Our rigorous preparation paid off, with positive attendee feedback and the joy of meeting long-time contacts in person. The event was catered by the Darcy Street Project, a Social Enterprise determined to break the cycle of homelessness, unemployment and social exclusion by using an education, coffee and food culture as a vehicle for social impact.

The atmosphere was inspiring, with many meaningful discussions had throughout the day. As a key organiser representing Vinnies, along with St George Community Housing and North Sydney Council, I felt proud and accomplished to host such a passionate and hardworking group of frontline staff. Bring on the next one!

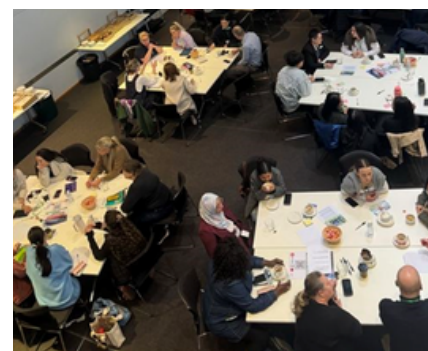
*Lauren Leahy- Northern Suburbs Vinnies Support Centre (Crows Nest)
Coordinator*



Peter Fitzmaurice and Andrew Morgan
North Sydney Conference Members
Peter Marshall - Regional President Northern Suburbs
Peter and Nanette O'Carroll - North Sydney Conference Members



Lauren Leahy, Crows Nest VSC, Claudia Chow - St George Community Housing, Denise Ward - Crows Nest Community Centre, Dominique Rowe - Homelessness NSW, George Carrick, North Sydney Council



State MP working with locals - Kingsgrove/ Bankstown Regional Council

Kylie Wilkinson, State MP for East Hills, hosted an event at the Revesby Community Centre on Friday, 30 August.

Vinnies was invited. The Cost of Living Hub was attended by local Vinnies' Members and brought together government services and community organisations to provide advice and information to help the community with the cost of living. These events had proven very helpful in other electorates.

The pop-up hub was about community consultations, direction and strategies to address local cost of living issues. The forum was successful in listening to citizens' concerns, discuss potential solutions and connect them with services directly.



From the left – Members Maureen Higgs (Revesby), Cheryl Beaver (Revesby) and Leone Wallace (Panania)

Vinnies Workshops at St Patrick's College Strathfield's Justice & Advocacy Forum

On the 20th of August, St Patrick's College Strathfield held their annual Justice & Advocacy Forum for Year 10 students. The theme for the day was – "Don't Be a Bystander – Never See a Need Without Doing Something About It." The day started with the introductory sessions on the meaning of advocacy and pathways for action, following which the students chose to attend two social justice workshops run by seven non-profit organisations including St Vincent de Paul Society. The day concluded with a panel and a prayer service.

Ket from Vinnies ran two social justice workshops on the day on the topic – **"Don't be a bystander: Advocate to Make Housing More Affordable."** The workshop content first delved into the meaning of a bystander and its implications on wider society, in contrast to being an advocate, and then highlighted the good works of Vinnies in the advocacy space regarding fairer housing, especially the recommendations for expanding and repairing social housing. Using interactive games with the participants, the workshops illustrated the severe lack of secure and affordable rental housing for people on low incomes in NSW. The students were then encouraged to join their local housing forum with their families and communities to learn more about housing issues in their locality and attend trainings to formulate their asks to the local candidates before the local government elections on the 14th of September.

The Vinnies' workshops were a success, with the participants inspired to use their voices to advocate as well as build relationships with their local council and people in their local area who are working to change the system in the long run, such that the housing market becomes more just and equitable for all.

RU OK? ANY DAY - Vinnies Vans event held in Bankstown

There were around 48 women and 25 children. They enjoyed a great meal (thanks Josie for organising), cakes, coffee, tea, water and soft drinks. We also took some toiletry packs and best of all some toys for the kids.

They were all so happy. There were approximately 38 referrals but best of all there was so much interest in what we do and our name is out there now.

Great news is we are doing something similar in Georgette's area, being Auburn/Liberty Plains Regional Council. Details to be announce soon.

Thank you again for the VSC support



Wonder women (LtoR)
Georgette Francis, Joanne
Riakos and Siri Phonsanga



Joanne with Feda from
Muslim Women's Association



Our beautiful women
and the families.

<https://www.ruok.org.au/>



Sutherland Regional Council Festival Mass

On a cold and wet night on the Feast Day of St Vincent de Paul, our Conference of Engadine was host to the Festival Mass for the Sutherland Region. The celebration was held at the Salesian Church of St John Bosco.

This was attended by Members from all the Conferences in our Regional Council. We were blessed to have such a beautiful ceremony with inspiring musicians, our celebrating priest, Fr Frank, four concelebrating priests from the region, acolyte and young alter server.

Also participating in the liturgy were three Mini Vinnies representing from St John Bosco Primary School. The ceremony was followed by a well-attended light supper in our Parish Centre.

Fran Postill, Engadine Conference President



Welcome by Fran Postill,
Engadine Conference President

Pat Cudmore, Sutherland Shire Regional Council President,
Address and introducing the Award recipients



Commissioning of new Menai
Conference President,
Chrissie Guglielmini

Lifetime Achievement Award



*Member recipients or
representatives*

Pat Mahoney – Miranda;
Frank Tierney on behalf of
Jim Gothard- Gynea; Rob
Van Den Nouwelant – Menai;
Keith Corbet – Menai;
Jennifer Kratz on behalf of
Barbara Scofield -Oyster Bay;
Terry O'Hara - Oyster Bay;
Fran Postill -on behalf of
Imelda O'Neill, John O'Neill,
John Fitzgerald, Norma
Chytra- Cronulla.

Festival Mass and Meeting for the Sydney and Southeast Sydney Regional Councils

A combined Festival Mass and meeting was held on September 29, 2024. It was hosted by Glebe Conference at the St James Church, Forest Lodge and celebrated by Fr. Paul Smithers, PP of Sydney City South.

Over 60 members attended. Highlights from this powerful and joyful occasion included the commissioning ceremonies for six new Conference members across the Sydney Regional Council from the Cathedral, Glebe and Redfern Conferences – Greg Cassidy, Carmen Gravatt, Stephen Darmody, Tegan and Rod Morrison, and Anne Mulligan and commissioning for two new Conference Presidents (Michael Burns, Redfern Conference and Narelle Story, Glebe Conference). There was also a renewal of commitment by all members. Fr. Paul spoke of the Vincentian values and asked all members to reflect on “why we do the work of the Society”. He was assisted by the fabulous St James Choir.

John Walden, Central Council President, Sydney, led the Festival meeting discussions which canvassed the achievements over the last year and the challenges ahead for the two regions. A well-attended supper that followed was put together by the staff at the Redfern Support Centre.

Thanks to all who contributed to make this such a truly memorable event.

Tom Story, Regional President Sydney



Fr. Paul Smithers, Ladan Ghavamizadeh, Donna Boyd, Tom Story, Anna Alessi, Taylor Morrell



Pagewood Conference Members: Glenn Hill, Santiago Tiago and Kate O'Regan (President) with John Walden (Maroubra Junction and Central Council President)

*Praise from a neighbouring
Regional President, Maureen Robinson:
"Just a brief note to congratulate you all on organising such a
beautiful Festival Mass last Friday. You should all be very proud
of how well it went and how spiritual and meaningful it was"*



Glebe members: Alf Said, Anne Mulligan, Narelle Story, Eric Hensley, Robyn Culbert, Olivia Moore



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

Sally Otton

Events and Community Fundraising Coordinator



Shemariah Gibbs-Williams



Rosie Drum

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 the 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.vinniesyouthnsw.org.au)

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

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.



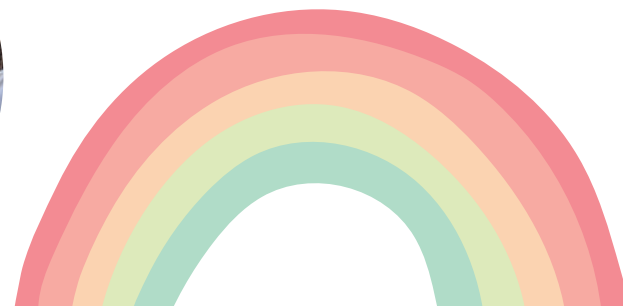
We offer two distinct types of Buddies Day Programs. The first involves **educational outings**, such as visits to venues like the Reptile Park, where children engage in hands-on learning about native Australian fauna and flora. The second type of program involves **activities conducted at local high 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.



Winter Appeals across the Sydney Archdiocese Schools

It has been a busy Winter Appeal time for the Schools Engagement team (and my first since starting with the Society last December).

Primary and secondary schools across the Archdiocese have demonstrated incredible generosity this year, despite the rising cost of living and the risk of donor fatigue. Schools continue to see the importance of the work of Vinnies in the community, and throughout the Appeal I had the chance to speak at many schools about the impact the donations from schools have on those who receive them. Many schools also took up the chance to host a sleepout event this year, raising awareness of homelessness and further linking to their fundraising efforts.

A common request from schools this year came from Year 3 teachers seeking to connect Vinnies with their Religious Education curriculum. These visits provided an opportunity to show how the Society continues the work of Jesus in the world today and how through the work of Conferences and Vinnies services, we see the face of Christ in those we serve.

There have also been many schools keen to be of service this year and see the value of giving their time to support Vinnies. Fostering relationships between schools and the Society has seen teacher and parent groups assist regional Support Centres, programs and Vans for one-off opportunities as well as joining ongoing volunteer rosters.

Winter Appeal also offered the chance for me to speak to hundreds of secondary students as part of the Sydney Catholic Schools 10:10 program. Over two nights, students' perceptions of homelessness were challenged and they were presented with an overview of how Vinnies is supporting refugees and people seeking asylum.

In July I also had the chance to meet with the secondary Religious Education Coordinators to share with them how their schools can continue to support our mission, starting with their local Conference. I look forward to seeing this bear fruit in the future.

by Chris Nolan

Metro Schools Engagement Officer



School Sleepout event at Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Primary School Fairfield



Taking the Vinnies Van to St Catherine Laboure Catholic Primary School Gympie



Combined Year 6 Mission Day with St Kevin's Catholic Primary School Eastwood, St Therese Catholic Primary School Denistone and St Michael's Catholic Primary School Meadowbank



Year 7 Reflection Day with Marist College Kogarah



□ Parent helpers and staff after collecting trolley loads of donated goods from St Therese's Catholic Primary School community, and which were bound for St Vinnies Bankstown.

School community digs deep to ease hardship in Winter Appeal

AFTER sending a wish list of needed items home with each student at St Therese's Catholic Primary School in Lakemba, the children and their families have dug deep to come up with several carloads of donations delivered earlier this month to St Vinnies Bankstown.

Parent Palu Fine helped to rally the troops after hearing that the charity store was having to turn away families suffering hardship.

"Students from Kindergarten to Year 6, brought

in a range of items including hygiene products like toothpaste, soap and deodorant, non-perishables like noodles, cans of tuna, tinned fruit and vegetables, tea, sugar, coffee, biscuits, pasta sauce, Milo, long-life milk, shampoo and even socks while the staff donated blankets and feminine hygiene products," she said.

"It was so touching and it just shows how our little school has such a big heart and if our kindergarteners can do it, I invite others in the community to also do-

nate any items they can spare to St Vinnies."

School Principal Mr Kelley Conlan said the 2024 Vinnies Winter Appeal focused on the working homeless, an emerging group of people who were encountering housing hardship and disadvantage despite being in employment.

"These families need our love and kindness," he said.

"Thank you to all of our families who supported our school initiative to assist the good works of the St Vincent de Paul Society."



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.

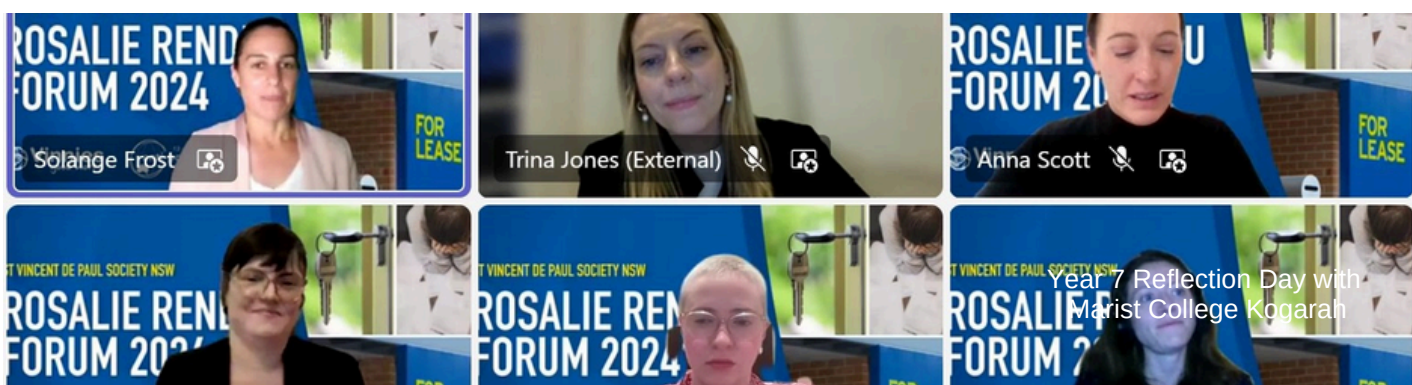
The evening concluded with each of the panelists offering hopes for the future:

"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



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.

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 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 for more information.

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





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)

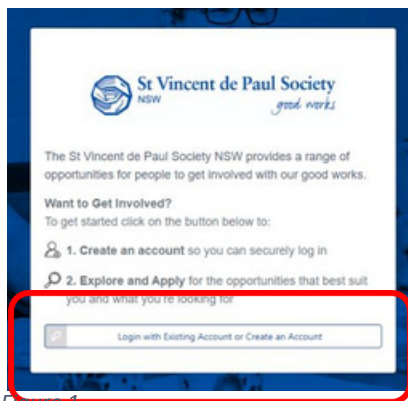


Figure 1

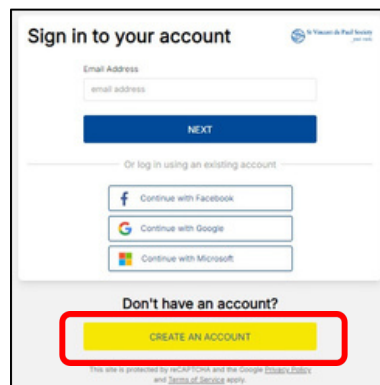


Figure 2

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.

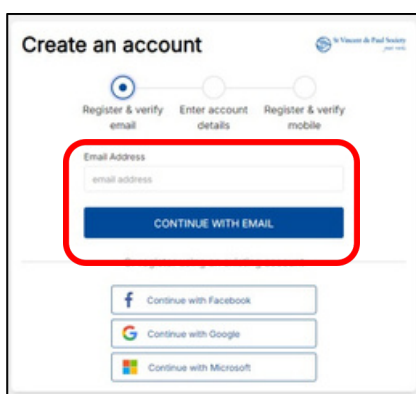


Figure 3

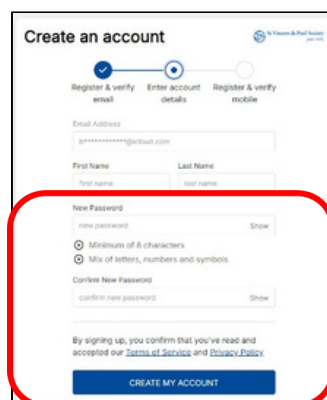


Figure 4

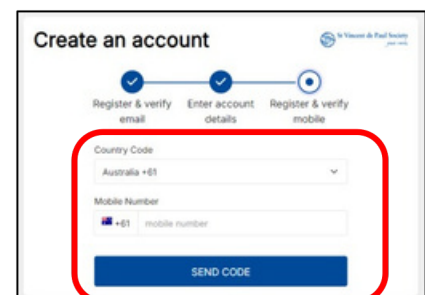


Figure 5

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):



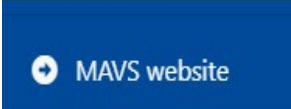


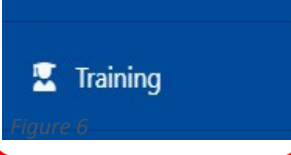
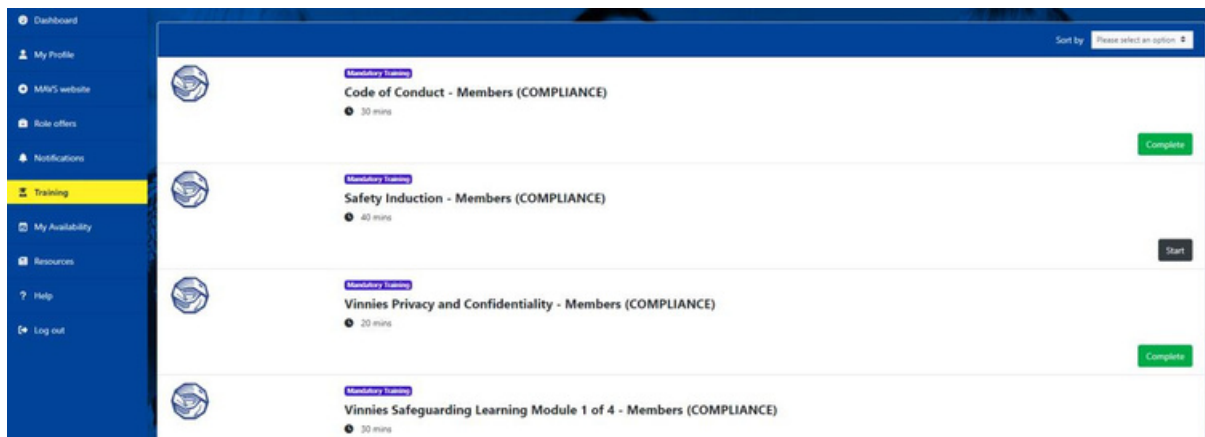
| | |
|---|--|
|  | Dashboard: you can view your active member and/or volunteer position/roles |
|  | My Profile: you can access and update your personal information i.e. address and emergency contact details. |
|  | MAVS Website: a quick link back to the MAVS Website. You can access resources, news articles and Events |
|  | |
|  | |
|  | Training: 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 for assistance or speak with your local regional office staff.