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Vinnies to launch Social Justice Statement in lead up to NSW State election

As it launches its Social Justice Statements, the St Vincent de Paul Society is asking both sides of politics in the lead in to the NSW State election to focus on social justice issues impacting ordinary people across NSW.

The Society will launch its Social Justice Statements from 16-20 February across NSW, shining the spotlight on housing affordability, rising energy costs and wider cost of living pressures and asylum seekers and refugees.

Across the State, Society members will help launch the Statements in their local communities, taking advocacy to the grass roots. Each day our 5,000 members visit almost 600 people in their homes and in hospitals, prisons, nursing homes and detention centres. This places the Society in a unique position to understand the difficulties that people are facing in homes across NSW.

The launches will see the St Vincent de Paul Society urge all political parties to outline their policies to the people of NSW as well as support the key recommendations included in the Statements. Some of the key recommendations being made in the Statement include: increasing the availability of social and affordable housing in NSW by establishing an Affordable Housing Fund to incentivise construction of new social and affordable housing; improving the NSW energy concessions scheme; and moving all children remaining in detention to community arrangements. A full list of recommendations is available in the Statement.

In the Sydney Archdiocese Central Council the Society is concerned about the impacts of housing affordability and the issue of homelessness in its community. In the past year the Sydney Archdiocese Central Council provided over \$3.1 million worth of assistance to people experiencing disadvantage in the local community in the way of rent assistance, food vouchers, electricity costs and other expenses.

St Vincent de Paul Society Sydney Archdiocese Social Justice Representative Michael Murrie says, "What we are hearing on the ground is very sobering; people are telling us very clearly that they are struggling to keep their heads above water. As people struggle to pay their bills, put food on the table and pay their rent, we need to ensure that we use our grassroots network to keep people from falling deeper into despair."

"We take this opportunity, as we launch our Social Justice Statements, to call on our local representatives as well as all political parties in NSW to hear what ordinary people are telling them and put these issues firmly on the agenda for the March election."

Interviews available.

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