Denim...everyone owns and wears it – it even brings out the rebel in some!

This wardrobe staple was a key feature in Vinnies Shops from mid-August through to mid-September.

During Denim Month our shops built a denim display and embraced all things denim...and they did to great effect!

Held on Friday 4 September Denim Day saw our shops teams have some fun...dressing the shop in denim as well as themselves.

Featured above are the team from Port Melbourne channelling their inner bikie. Our Vinnies Bayswater team pictured top right opted for a wild-wild-west theme. Vinnies Cranbourne also put denim on show, creating a large denim patchwork soccer ball.

A big thank you to all Vinnies Shops, their staff and volunteers. Your enthusiasm and creativity in promoting Vinnies and denim has been truly inspiring.

Stay tuned for more Vinnies spring-inspired creativity.
Dear Friends

The St Vincent de Paul Society nationally marked Anti-Poverty Week 2015 with the launch of the report ‘Sick with worry: stories from the frontline of inequality’. The report includes 14 recommendations for urgent action by the Federal Government to help enable people to achieve their dreams of a life without poverty.

The report comprises more than 20 stories from people located around Australia who are assisted by the St Vincent de Paul Society. The stigma faced by those living in poverty, the inherent insecurity that homelessness and housing stress entails and the disproportionate impact of poverty on women were key themes.

The Society’s national CEO, Dr John Falzon, said: “Our task is to transform these personal stories on injustice into a powerful, effective struggle for a society in which people are not blamed because economic structures lock them out or, in some cases, lock them up; one in which people are not told that they would not be poor if only they chose to be a little more productive.

“Even while being excluded by a range of structural causes which push them to the edge, what people most want is to participate in and contribute to society.”

Key recommendations from the report include:

- We call on the Federal Government to commit to a National Jobs Plan alongside comprehensive plans for housing and health.
- For all government services to be properly funded, including those for survivors of domestic violence so they can stay in their homes, free community GPs, indigenous and rural health, primary and secondary education and all other social services.
- To make income support adequate, and non-stigmatising, by increasing Newstart by at least $50 per week immediately and indexing all payments to wages instead of CPI, scrapping Compulsory Income Management, increasing rent assistance and putting parents on Parenting Payments.

A copy of the full report is available online:

I encourage you to read the report for a better appreciation of the life challenges faced by disadvantaged people in our community who regularly turn to the St Vincent de Paul Society for assistance. Thank you

Michael Liddy
State President
On Thursday 10 September 2015, the Social Justice & Advocacy Committee held the Social Justice & the Conference workshop to assist conference members with social justice issues occurring in their areas.

The workshop was well attended with over 30 conference members from conferences and regions across Victoria.

Keynote speaker was Dr Kathy Landvogt, Head of Women’s Research, Advocacy and Policy Centre at Good Shepherd, Australia and New Zealand. Kathy spoke about Good Shepherd’s values and missions and provided ideas from their practices around advocacy for us to consider.

The workshop included activities such as asking conference members to consider what characteristics are required for the role of Social Justice within conferences and also to outline what the representative taking on this role needs. The forum also discussed the results of a survey distributed to all conferences earlier in the year, putting the results in context of the day-to-day experiences of conference members. The survey results clearly identified that a lack of inadequate income, combined with the costs of daily life as the biggest issues seen by most conferences.

A highlight of the forum introduced an example of one region’s experience of advocacy in order to work out appropriate ways in which to assist people in their area. Southern Central Council’s Des McCarthy presented options on the best ways to work locally and partner with local politicians by sharing Society experiences. Des encouraged conferences to develop relationships with local politicians and draw their attention to key issues occurring in their local area. Des highlighted that the experiences of Society members and what they see are unique and as such we are able to be their voice on diverse issues.

It is hoped that this introduction to advocate on behalf of the people we assist will be followed up at conference level in the near future.

Margaret Gearon Chair
Social Justice & Advocacy Committee

Vincentian Leaders

In its third year, A Call to Serve has again honoured six outstanding exemplars of what it is to be a true Vincentian.

From Leongatha, Mario Croatto, Ferntree Gully, Elsie Johnson, Drouin, Isabel and John Mclean, Ormond Syd Tutton and perhaps hard to nail down a destination Br Doug Walsh, the reach and impact of their influence has been staggering.

Vincentians tend in the main, to be by nature, humble and modest characters. Their motivation is never glory. Their achievements are however quite remarkable and worthy of acknowledgement which is why this annual event is such a fitting tribute.

This year for the first time, the achievements and motivations of these six honoured Vincentians were not only documented in the written form; they were also captured on video. Highlights from each Vincentian’s story captured poignantly the essence of each honoured Vincentian. There was a great deal of nodding of heads and laughter as attributes known so well by Vincentian brothers and sisters were laid bare on the screen. Syd Tutton’s unique way of operating and incredible networking, Elsie’s single mindedness that has achieved so much with the Education Scholarship Fund, the Mcleans’ extraordinary achievements with refugees when they had never even met a refugee before agreeing to take on this important committee work; Mario’s humility in acknowledging the role of others in his success and opening up to the challenge of not judging and the importance of coming together in prayer; Br Doug’s willingness to go wherever he was called to be. The Society is blessed to call its own, such an inspiring group of people. They do the Society in Victoria proud and we hope that these videos and stories (available on Hands@work) will serve to inspire current and future generations. They are valuable resources that can be used for a range of training, induction and promotional purposes.

A wonderful celebration was held at Gerard Ward House on Wednesday 23 September 2015 with over 100 guests and past honour Vincentians mingling with this year’s acknowledged six.

Vincentians don’t expect accolades but it does us all good to stop and reflect every so often on what this modest bunch of men and women have achieved for Victorians who are struggling, who are isolated and lonely and who benefit from the love and support of the St Vincent de Paul Society in Victoria.

Blessed Frederic Ozanam would be delighted to know his legacy lives on in remarkable ways.

Anne Touhey Project Writer | A Call to Serve
And the winner of the first annual Centre for Multicultural Youth MY Education Award for “Outstanding Metropolitan Out-of-School-Hours Learning Support Program” is the St Vincent de Paul Society’s Dandenong Tutoring Program … And the runner up for the “Outstanding Metropolitan Tutor Award” is Maggie Braganza, volunteer of 5 years with the Dandenong Tutoring Program.

The Centre for Multicultural Youth is a Victorian not-for-profit organisation which aims to ensure that people from migrant and refugee backgrounds have every opportunity to succeed in Australia.

The MY Education awards were developed by Centre for Multicultural Youth to recognise excellence and showcase the contributions made by learning support programs in promoting the success of refugee and migrant young people. There are over 250 programs in the out-of-school-hours education support sector, which is supported by over 1,800 volunteers. There were four categories of MY Education awards, with representation from programs across Victoria. The awards were presented by The Hon James Merlino, Minister for Education at a ceremony on Tuesday 8 September 2015.

The Dandenong Tutoring Program drew the panel’s attention for being a community-based program servicing a variety of schools, cultural groups and age groups. The program reaches children from 51 different schools in the Greater Dandenong and Casey areas, assisting families from over 22 different cultural backgrounds who are aged from eight years old, up to 20 year olds. It is this celebration of community and diversity, as well as the focus on social and academic support and success that has been acknowledged.

We have always known our program to be successful. Our achievements are so clearly reflected on the happy young faces that greet us at the program each week, in the gratitude of the parents and families, in the growth that we see in social and academic confidence, in the voice that our students find to speak up in class and amongst their peers, in the growing numbers and the volunteers who give of their time and talent year after year. Of course, a sector award is also a great affirmation, and a sign of the quality of our work in education support!

Congratulations to the whole Dandenong Tutoring Program and wider Vincentian community, including all our supporters and advocates who recognise the great importance of education in impacting disadvantage and enabling opportunities for the people we have the privilege of assisting.

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The St Vincent de Paul Society’s Annual General Meeting was held on Saturday 24 October 2015. This year the Society has provided:

- $10.7 million of direct material assistance through our conferences
- 254,390 soup van meals
- 131,623 conference visits
- $1.7 million in material aid to people in need through our Vinnies Shops and a further $12.7 million was made available to conferences.

We thank you all for another amazing year of service to people in need.

Children at Bentleigh Kindergarten were happy to get involved with this year’s Winter Appeal and were keen to help Vinnies to rebuild lives.

“It has been good for us to consider the needs of others. It feels good to help.” said a Bentleigh Kindergarten representative.
On Thursday 3 September 2015, the St Vincent de Paul Society’s Soup Van Program was presented with two new vehicles by the XLI Club.

The XLI Club is a membership organisation comprising business people, public service personnel, Australian Federal Police, Victoria Police, members of the Police Association Committee and sports people associated with the police.

Members of the XLI Club, led by its President Ray Thompson, raised funds for the purchase of these vehicles as part of a community fundraising initiative conducted over the past nine months.

The fit out of the new soup van, which will be used for hot and cold food distribution as part of the Footscray soup van operations, was generously donated by Tasty Trucks.

The XLI Club Soup Van Fundraising project was initiated in early 2015 as a result of Br Doug Walsh and the late Tony Warren’s involvement and relationships with the XLI Club.

The vehicle signage included a dedication to Tony. Tony’s extended family were present on 3 September when the keys to the vehicles were officially handed over to the Society.

Did you know...Each year our six soup van services, with the assistance of 1,338 volunteers, distribute over 250,000 meals.
WHAT'S NEW...

September signals the start of spring and Vinnies Shops are promoting the start of some warmer weather with new spring/summer point of sale. The new look marketing materials showcase how to mix and match great buys from Vinnies with existing items in your wardrobe, to create a unique and fashionable look!

We are also getting into the fun and frivolity of Spring Racing and stores have been busy building displays to promote the great range of affordable frocks, headwear and accessories available at Vinnies. We are showcasing our best store displays on Facebook and encouraging our Facebook community to vote for their favourite store.

Social media is becoming a key component of our retail marketing mix and throughout October we will run a series of Facebook ads, designed to drive awareness and foot traffic to stores.

With a focus on ladies fashion, we are also testing some discounts and will assess uptake and redemption levels to determine if category-based sales initiatives will become a permanent fixture in the stores marketing mix.

say hello to summer!

race ready

just add water!

relaxed summer style

a splash of colour

FROM THE ARCHIVE

A Forgotten Great of the Society

A recent request from the granddaughter of Thomas Geraghty for information about his involvement with the Society has brought to light a forgotten ‘great’ of the fledgling Society in Victoria.

An Irishman, Thomas was a foundation member of the Clifton Hill Conference in 1912 and later became president. From 1914 he was appointed General Secretary of the Metropolitan Central Council of Melbourne (State Council), a position he held until his death in 1934, aged 66.

Thomas was also a joint author of a significant history of the Society in Victoria, published just prior to his death, which provides valuable information on all 76 conferences existing at that time.

An obituary at the time noted that “Among the zealous and self-sacrificing members of the St Vincent de Paul Society, there was no one better known; no one more enthusiastic in championing its claims and doing unostentatiously its great work than the late Mr Geraghty…In him the poor had ever a faithful friend”.

The 1935 State Council report stated that the Council had sustained a great loss by his death. “His conscientious and whole-hearted labours for our beloved Society will long be remembered by the members”. Archbishop Mannix attended his funeral not as Archbishop but as a close friend.

Kevin Slattery
Archivist
St Vincent de Paul Society

Calendar Dates

- **Social Justice in the City**
  Last Wednesday of the month, February to November, 12-1pm at St Francis' Pastoral Centre, Melbourne
  25 November 2015 - Marg Hayes Coordinator Catholic HIV/AIDS Ministry, CatholicCare

- **Christmas Appeal**
  2 November 2015 - 29 February 2016

- **Thanksgiving Mass**
  Tuesday 10 November 2015

- **Christmas Office Closure**
  Wednesday 23 December 2015 - Friday 1 January 2016

Office reopens: Monday 4 January 2016

IT'S ALL HAPPENING...

**Chelsea Heights** has now been open for over a month. With soaring windows, loads of natural light and its bespoke picture wall, the store is fast proving a hit with locals.

Unfortunately the opening of Chelsea Heights coincided with the closure of our **Edithvale** store. The good news is that many of the shoppers and volunteers have transitioned across the new store.

We are also working on a major refurbishment in our Malvern store and planning for a brand new store in Northcote. Updates on these two stores will appear in the upcoming additions of **Societynews**!