

MEDIA RELEASE**21 April 2016****Food: it's a basic human right**

The St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria has united with others to investigate the true scale of food insecurity in Australia. The verdict: too many Australians are quietly going hungry.

The Council to Homeless Persons (CHP) launched a special edition of [Parity Magazine](#) today, 'Beyond Emergency Food: Responding to food insecurity and homelessness'.

The publication features four feature articles compiled by the St Vincent de Paul Society (the Society) which help to highlight how thousands of Australians are relying on frontline food services delivered by charities.

St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria's Acting CEO and VincentCare CEO, Mr John Blewonski, said the Vinnies Soup Van service and VincentCare's Ozanam Community Centre and Ozanam House are examples of programs that provide vital nutrition and an avenue for social connection too.

"The St Vincent de Paul Society and VincentCare are dedicated to supporting the 1 in 10 Australians who are living in poverty and providing a meal is one of the most tangible ways we can assist with responding to immediate hunger and to support social inclusion," said Mr Blewonski.

"We provide around 1300 meals to people in need every day in Victoria and food vouchers too, which is a sign of serious strain on Victorian households. Many people simply can't afford to feed themselves and their families."

The prices of everyday essentials such as health services, education, utilities, transport and housing have climbed significantly in recent years, which means new faces are now accessing food services delivered by charities.

St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria Membership and Development General Manager, Ms Livia Carusi, said the Society's food services are not just helping vulnerable groups such as people experiencing homelessness.

"Our Soup Van service has been operating for over 40 years and during that time we've seen a major change in the kind of people we assist. We started off feeding older men on the streets, today, we offer a response to families, single women, the aged, children and working people who simply can't afford to meet their food costs," said Ms Carusi.

"We know there are thousands of others who are going hungry in silence and it is vital that we acknowledge the full scope of the issue of food insecurity so we can continue to evolve our services and respond to people in need."

The special edition of Parity shares the stories of two Vinnies Soup Van clients and the longest serving Soup Van volunteer, Frank Mullins, who has been serving marginalised members of the community their dinner every Thursday for 40-years.

"We have thousands of people relying on our organisation and our volunteers to provide food, which is a basic human right," said Ms Carusi.

"We are proud to have contributed to this publication and to document the true experiences of food insecurity in Australia."

- ENDS -



HOW YOU CAN HELP:

- Make a donation to the St Vincent de Paul Society by visiting www.vinnies.org.au/donate
- Shop all year round at Vinnies shops. All proceeds are spent locally to help improve the lives of people in your community, which includes issuing food vouchers and meals to families in need.
- Reduce food wastage in your home: plan, store and prepare food to make it go further.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES:

St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria Marketing & Communications Manager,
Haley Price | haley.price@svdp-vic.org.au | 0448 386 917 | 03 9895 5884