

Frontline

ISSUE 49
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A NEWSLETTER FOR SUPPORTERS OF THE
ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY SUPPORT SERVICES

 St Vincent de Paul Society NSW
Support Services *good works*

Erik's
story

OPEN HOUSE
VINCENTIAN HOUSE
DICK SMITH
MESSAGES OF HOPE
MATTHEW TALBOT 50 YEARS

VINNIES
RENEWS
REBUILDS
RESTORES

Dear Friends



Thank you for your ongoing commitment and generous financial support for the work we do every day to reduce homelessness in NSW.

This edition of Frontline is the first since our Christmas Appeal so I'd like to express my deep gratitude for your donations. With your

contributions we are able to help in so many ways people experiencing the disadvantage that so often leads to homelessness.

We, and the people we assist in NSW, are forever grateful for your financial support.

In this edition of Frontline, I'm sure you'll enjoy reading the extraordinary range of support we provide to people experiencing disadvantage.

The Matthew Talbot Hostel celebrated its fiftieth anniversary last year and Vinnies marked the special occasion in October. We hosted a tour of The Talbot and Ozanam Learning Centre for our generous donors and distinguished guests, many of whom had never visited before.

For almost 50 years, Edel Quinn in Wagga Wagga has been providing crisis accommodation and support for men experiencing homelessness through a residential program and outreach support program. Now the service has opened its doors to women.

Frontline's cover story is about Erik and the exceptional medical and housing support he has received over the years through the Matthew Talbot Hostel. Erik now lives in his own apartment, enjoying the relief of a hip replacement and a life free from homelessness and pain.

There is an inspiring story from Vincentian House, our crisis accommodation service in inner-city Sydney for families and single women. You'll learn about the Kids Giving Back program in which thirteen children and teenagers packed 'back to school' packs which they delivered to Vincentian House, so that the children living there could get set for the new school year.

We will also be shining the spotlight on Dick Smith, a long-time friend and supporter of Vinnies.

I can never thank you enough for your extraordinary support and I know that, together, we will continue to break the cycle of homelessness and shape a more inclusive, compassionate society.

Beverley Kerr

President

St Vincent de Paul Society NSW Support Services

Thank you for your support

Thanks to your support last Christmas we were able to restore hope and rebuild the lives of people experiencing disadvantage across NSW.

Your kindness has meant that we are able to carry out our work assisting men, women and children by breaking the cycle of homelessness. Your generous contributions continue to have an impact by providing basic amenities, renewing programs and supporting people on their journey back to leading independent lives.



\$80 pays for one week's worth of essential groceries for a family experiencing disadvantage.



\$200 provides one week's crisis accommodation for a woman and child escaping domestic and family violence.



\$1000 could prevent a family from being evicted from their home.



'Frontline' is produced by Fundraising and Communications, St Vincent de Paul Society NSW.

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Because we respect the privacy of the people we assist, names in this newsletter may have been changed, stories summarised and pictorial models used.

For more information about the St Vincent de Paul Society, telephone: 02 9568 0262 or visit: vinnies.org.au

Correspondence can be sent to publications@vinnies.org.au

Follow us on:





One of the outdoor areas at Edel Quinn



The dining room



Senior Support Worker Rachel Arthur
(Laura Hardwick/Fairfax Syndication)



The new kitchen facilities

Open House

MEN EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS IN THE WAGGA WAGGA REGION HAVE BEEN RECEIVING CRISIS ACCOMMODATION AND SUPPORT FOR ALMOST 50 YEARS FROM EDEL QUINN THROUGH A RESIDENTIAL AND OUTREACH SUPPORT PROGRAM.

Now the service has opened its doors to women in a move that Senior Support Worker Rachel Arthur says reflects “the community dynamic”.

“Society is co-ed and opening our service to women reflects the community dynamic,” Rachel says. “It’s important that we try to be as accessible as possible to all people in our community.”

Edel Quinn caters for men and women who are over 18, at risk of homelessness and eligible for case management. The service provides 16 self-contained rooms with a bed, desk, wardrobe and ensuite bathroom, enabling people to feel safe in their own space.

Edel Quinn provides breakfast and dinner five days a week and lunch on weekends. Micah House, a local homelessness support service, serves lunch to Edel

Quinn residents for the rest of the week.

“The opportunity for all of the people we assist to socialise together has been great. Men are welcoming to women and women are welcoming to men. Supportive relationships are developing which perfectly represents our community,” Rachel says.

Residents can utilise the crisis accommodation services for three months but timeframes are dependent on personal circumstances.

“We work with our residents and other services to find stable accommodation and link people to the community supports they need. Our case workers also make home visits to people at risk of homelessness and provide one-on-one counselling,” says Rachel.

Rachel makes a point of paying tribute to the incredible support team saying they are crucial to the exceptionally high quality of care.

Thanks to your generous support, we can provide crisis accommodation to both women and men in the Wagga Wagga region.



Brick by brick

REBUILDING A HOUSE CAN TAKE MONTHS OR SOMETIMES EVEN YEARS TO COMPLETE.

For Danish-born Erik, who first arrived in Australia over 50 years ago, his career as a bricklayer often drew parallels with his endeavours to rebuild his own life.

For many immigrants, the daily challenges of trying to be accepted in their new home can impact on their health, wellbeing and opportunities.

Erik has had his ups and downs during his time in Australia but three years ago his circumstances changed dramatically and he had to turn to Vinnies for help. His health was failing and he was no longer able to work, so when the Kings Cross building he was living in was sold and rents doubled, he couldn't afford to stay. Soon, he found himself homeless.

Erik had known about the Matthew Talbot Hostel (MTH) for years before his own crisis. For someone who had always prided himself on working and paying his own way, turning to someone else was difficult.

In addition to being given a warm and welcoming place to stay, Erik was also given access to health services which eventually resulted in a hip replacement and a prostate operation while he was staying there.

Erik says his recovery was made that much easier by the kindness he was shown by his caseworker and other Vinnies staff.

With the help of MTH, Erik moved into his own one bedroom NSW Housing unit but knows he couldn't have done it alone.

"I probably still would have been here. If I didn't get the Housing Commission I'd still be here," Erik says.

He still maintains contact with his caseworker at the MTH. His other hip is causing pain and his caseworker makes medical appointments for him at the Hostel's clinic whenever he needs.

"I live five minutes from here so it's convenient for me to come down here," Erik says.

Erik says he will be forever grateful for the way he was treated at the hostel.

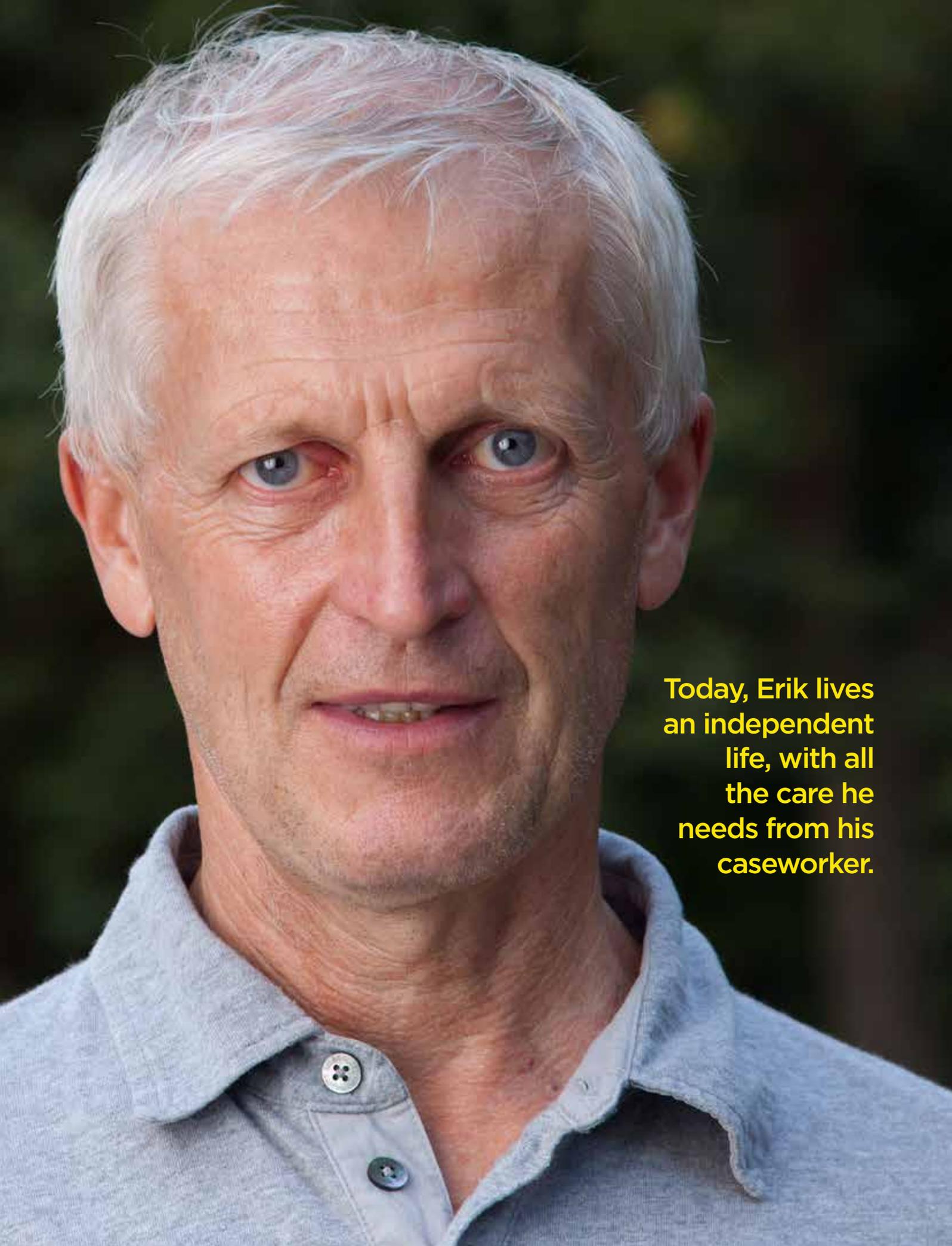
"My life has changed dramatically from the day I arrived homeless and in pain."

Matthew Talbot Hostel caseworker Julian says the Hostel provides more than just a safe place to stay. Men like Erik are assisted by their caseworkers who negotiate the system on their behalf, helping them transition through difficult times. Today, Erik lives an independent life, with all the care he needs from his caseworker.

Erik knows that his life has been rebuilt, a little bit like those houses he worked on for so many years. Brick by brick.

It is your support that enables Vinnies to deliver housing and medical services to people like Erik - his new life is due to your generosity.

**VINNIES
REBUILDS**



Today, Erik lives an independent life, with all the care he needs from his caseworker.



Back to school, one and all

VINCENTIAN HOUSE IS A CRISIS ACCOMMODATION SERVICE FOR FAMILIES AND SINGLE WOMEN WHO ARE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS.

The service provides a safe and supportive environment with the aim of enabling residents to move into their own long-term accommodation, with improved wellbeing and greater connection to their community.

Poverty, poor relationships, drug, alcohol and mental health issues and the shortage of affordable housing are some of the factors that can set off a chain of events that result in a family having no place to live.

Vinnies provides life skills, education and training to assist people in making better decisions and taking control of their lives.

Over the years we have built strong partnerships with other services to run these programs and enrich the lives of the people who turn to us for help.

A charity we work with regularly is Kids Giving Back. They decided that they would give a hand up to Vincentian House children for the start of the new school year by donating 'back to school' packs. Thirteen children and teenagers went through hundreds of school supplies and assembled smart-looking packs which they delivered to us, so that our children could confidently go to school with brand new gear.

Ruth Tofler-Riesel, Co-Director, Kids Giving Back, said: "Our kids and families are happy to help in any way they can - the backpack packing day was fantastic; while it's

Vincientian kids who will benefit from getting the packs, those kids volunteering got so much out of helping."

Miles, 14, commented: "I really felt I was making a difference, getting kids off to a good start with all their supplies to enable them to learn properly."

It was back to school for the parents, too. At Vincentian House we run a Day Services Program to give families the skills they need to break the cycle of poverty and disadvantage in which they may feel trapped. We have found that high levels of stress are associated with money matters and that there is a real need for financial literacy.

So we ran a workshop 'In Charge of My Money' facilitated by a Financial Literacy Educator from Wesley Mission. It was sponsored by Genworth, one of our corporate partners.

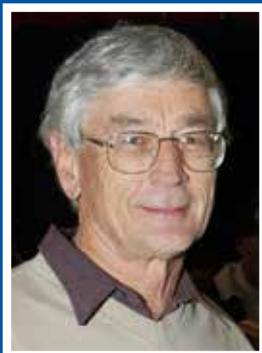
Everyone was given a money box and calculator, as well as worksheets, and was shown how to be more in control of spending and debt, and how to budget and save.

The feedback was very positive and gratifying because it demonstrates how important building skills and resilience is as part of their journey to finding long-term solutions to poverty and homelessness.

"Thank you. I'm hoping this changes my families' life as I learn to budget, goal-set, save and be more sensible with my families' money, and therefore our future. I'm much more hopeful."



Dick Smith's generous support



A huge thank you to the Dick & Pip Smith Foundation for its generous donation of \$50,000 to Vinnies.

Dick Smith says, "I was inspired by a recent story about a man who gave back to the charity that once assisted him. He stated, 'Vinnies helped me once and it's time to give something back.'"

"I believe the St Vincent de Paul Society does wonderful work for lots of different people throughout Australia. Their ability to 'go where the need is' is commendable and well worth supporting."

On behalf of the Society, we would like to thank Dick and Pip for their ongoing commitment to helping people experiencing disadvantage.

Please contact Cherie Mckenna (02) 8622 0387 or Cherie.Mckenna@vinnies.org.au for more information about donating a gift.

TELL YOUR STORIES

We would love to hear why you love Vinnies.

Please email publications@vinnies.org.au to share your stories.

Messages of hope

THANKS FOR SENDING US YOUR INSPIRING MESSAGES OF HOPE. YOUR SUPPORT CONTINUES TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO PEOPLE EXPERIENCING DISADVANTAGE.

Keep up the splendid work you are doing and providing services to the special people in our society.

Never lose hope, because all you have to do is remember there is always someone who cares about you and wants to help you. You are important to us.

To all at the Matthew Talbot Hostel. I have been where you have been, more than once and in other places and long ago. When you come out of the other side, I like to think we are much more improved and the compassion shown by our saviours is infectious.

Your dedication and selfless service to those in need is inspiring. It encourages me to believe in the good works of Vinnies that makes a difference in people's lives. Thank you for the witness you are.



Sally Cantwell, Clinical Nurse Specialist,
Lady Cosgrove, Sir Peter Cosgrove and
Alan Chudleigh, Clinical Nurse Specialist.

Matthew Talbot Hostel says thank you for 50 years

Over the past 50 years, the Matthew Talbot Hostel (MTH) Woolloomooloo site has become synonymous with providing crisis support and accommodation in breaking the cycle of disadvantage and homelessness.

Last October Vinnies friends and supporters from all walks of life were invited to celebrate this auspicious anniversary.

With a view of the Sydney city skyline, the rooftop of the MTH was filled with our generous donors, distinguished guests and corporate partner Hilton Hotels for a memorable afternoon.

A special mention was made to Patron of St Vincent de Paul Society Support Services, former Governor

General Sir William Deane AC KBE QC, for his dedicated commitment to the Matthew Talbot Hostel and men and women experiencing homelessness.

In February His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Retd) Governor-General Of Australia and his wife Lady Cosgrove made a surprise visit to MTH to chat to the people we assist, volunteers and staff.

We would like to thank you for your support which has enabled the Matthew Talbot Hostel and Ozanam Learning Centre to continue their provision of much-needed homelessness services in Sydney.

**VINNIES
RENEWS
REBUILDS
RESTORES**

WITH YOUR HELP WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Supporter No. _____

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I would like to make a regular donation of \$ _____ per month

OR I would like to increase my regular donation by \$ _____ per month

OR I would like to make a single gift of \$ _____ (donations over \$2 are tax deductible)

Please debit the amount indicated to my credit card: MasterCard Visa Amex Diners

Card Number _____

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OR I would prefer to donate by **Direct Debit**, please send me the Direct Debit Form.

If you wish to pay by **cheque** (marked 'non-negotiable') or **money order**, please make payable to 'St Vincent de Paul Society NSW Support Services'

All communications are treated in the strictest confidence. The St Vincent de Paul Society NSW Support Services follows the Australian Privacy Principles and keeps donor information private. If you do not wish your details to be used for future fundraising activities please tick this box.

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To make a regular or single donation, simply complete your details and post to:

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NSW Support Services
PO Box 259
Petersham NSW 2049

Tel: (02) 9568 0262

Fax: (02) 9564 6044

Email: vinnies@vinnies.org.au

Internet: vinnies.org.au

Donation hotline: 13 18 12

ABN: 91 161 127 340

**ON BEHALF OF OVER 400,000
PEOPLE WHO WERE ASSISTED
BY VINNIES LAST YEAR...
THANK YOU.**

