



MEDIA RELEASE

EMBARGOED

25 August 2016

The art of humanity

The St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria (the Society) will this evening launch the inaugural Just Art Exhibition, which is an annual art competition that makes advocacy accessible to all people, of all ages, through creative representation of a contemporary social justice issue.

The theme for 2016 is *Asylum Seekers – Stories of Humanity*, which has attracted over 260 works from primary students, secondary students and open age entrants from across the state. The works have canvassed challenging, emotive and diverse views of people seeking asylum and the stories at the centre of this complex issue.

The St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria CEO, Ms Sue Cattermole, said the exhibition is designed to stimulate greater community conversation and understanding about the plight of people seeking asylum and refugees in Australia, while providing a platform for creative expression too.

“Art has, for centuries, challenged our perceptions of life, politics, ethics and culture – which is why Just Art is such an important forum for facilitating conversations about people seeking asylum and refugees in Australia,” said Ms Cattermole.

“Just Art entrants were challenged to explore this issue in its many shades, in context with the Society’s values of compassion, respect, empathy and courage. The entries were primarily from primary and secondary students, and the quality and depth of thought in each piece has truly impressed and at times even silenced our judges. It has been extremely moving for the whole team.”

The Just Art Exhibition will be launched at The Stables in North Melbourne tonight, where competition finalists will be joined by their family and friends to congratulate the winners of 15 prizes. The exhibition is open to members of the public from Friday 26/08/16 10:00am-8:00pm, and Saturday 27/08/16 through to Tuesday 30/08/16 from 10:00am-5:00pm. Entry is free.

St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria Youth & Education Manager, Michelle Pereira, said the exhibition is thought-provoking, entertaining and definitely worth a look for anyone interested to expand their understanding of the experiences of people seeking asylum in Australia.

“The medium categories include media, visual, performing arts and creative writing, so it is certainly a diverse exhibition and one that our team has taken great care to display and bring to life. We encourage members of the public to visit this Friday through to Tuesday and to appreciate the lens that Victoria’s youth have brought to this important issue,” said Ms Pereira.

Education and advocacy is at the heart of the exhibition, so visitors are encouraged to participate in active conversations about the works and to share their views on social media too via #VinniesJustArt.

“The role of social justice in education is key in the development of tomorrow’s leaders. The St Vincent de Paul Society was started by a 20-year-old student in 1833, Frederic Ozanam, who was impassioned to take action to support people in need. This is very much the same sentiment that has inspired Just Art.”



St Vincent de Paul Society
VICTORIA
good works

Just.Art@svdp-vic.org.au



VinniesYouthVic



The St Vincent de Paul Society advocates that the Australian Government:

- Promote access to resources which will help the Australian community better understand the true circumstances and human rights of people seeking asylum
- Focus on the positive social, cultural and economic, contributions subsequently made by people who have been granted asylum in Australia

In Victoria, the Society supports this national advocacy platform through the work of a Social Justice and Advocacy Committee; Refugee, Asylum Seeker and Migrant Committee; local works and welfare support; and dedicated education support programs.

“On behalf of the St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria I would like to personally thank all the entrants and schools that have supported the Just Art competition in its first year,” said Ms Pereira

“All people have a right to live in peace and free from danger, and we hope the Just Art exhibition will amplify this important message within the community.”

- ENDS -

MEDIA ENQUIRIES:

St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria Marketing & Communications Manager
Haley Price | haley.price@svdp-vic.org.au | 0448 386 917 | 03 9895 5923

LAUNCH EVENT:

The media is invited to attend the Just Art launch and awards night. This will include an opportunity to meet with short-listed and winning artists, and to join the conversation about asylum seeker, refugee and migrant issues in Australia. Please note this is an invitation-only event.

WHEN: Thursday 25 August, 7:00 – 8:30pm
WHERE: The Stables, Cnr Wreckyn & Courtney Streets, North Melbourne.
PARKING: Paid off-street parking. Tram routes 19, 55 or 59.
RSVP: **Haley Price | haley.price@svdp-vic.org.au | 0448 386 917 | 03 9895 5923**

PUBLIC EXHIBITION:

Members of the public are encouraged to view the Just Art Exhibition, which is open to the public on **Friday 26/08/16 10:00am-8:00pm** and **Saturday 27/08/16 through to Tuesday 30/08/16 from 10:00am-5:00pm**. Entry is free. Please note groups of 20+ people will need to email the Just Art support team at just.art@svdp-vic.org.au to arrange a group booking.

About Just Art:

Just Art is an annual art competition that makes advocacy accessible to all people, of all ages, through creative representation of a contemporary social justice issue. It was first launched in 2016 by the Youth & Education team at the St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria. Medium categories include Media, Visual, Performing Arts and Creative Writing. Entry is available to primary school age, secondary school age, and open age individuals who reside in Victoria. To find out more visit vinnies.org.au/justart

About the St Vincent de Paul Society:

The St Vincent de Paul Society and its wide network of members and volunteers provide practical frontline support, advocacy and friendship for the most vulnerable members of our community. Key services include home visitation; youth programs; soup vans; assistance for asylum seekers and refugees; compeer programs for people experiencing mental illness; education and tutoring; and a range of accommodation and social services through VincentCare. The St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia has more than 40,000 volunteers. Internationally, the Society operates in 149 countries and has over 950,000 volunteers. To find out more visit vinnies.org.au