

MEDIA RELEASE
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Volunteering: the heart of Australian communities

The St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria (Vinnies) is celebrating the spirit of volunteerism on Australia Day today, as a reminder of the selfless acts of kindness that rest at the heart of Australian communities, big and small, all year round.

St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria CEO, Ms Sue Cattermole, noted that Australia Day is a chance to reflect on what's truly great about living in Australia and being Australian, and the way we give of ourselves and our time is a big part of this.

"Australia Day illuminates the many facets and richness of the Australian way of life; we hear stories of heartache, bravery, entrepreneurship, compassion, innovation, and advocacy – just to name a few. Each of the people recognised on the Australia Day Honours List and as part of local Australia Day celebrations, can be so proud of the depth of character they are contributing to our country," said Ms Cattermole.

Two St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria volunteers were recognised on the Australia Day Honours list in 2017, which is a testament to their very significant personal contribution to supporting a fair, democratic and compassionate way of life in Australia.

"The St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria has over 12,000 volunteers across the state who work tirelessly to provide a hand up to people in need. They rarely seek recognition for their work, but feel a real sense of duty to support their fellow Australians. That is worth celebrating on Australia Day," said Ms Cattermole.

"I am so proud that volunteers from our organisation have been honoured on Australia Day and I say confidently, that there are thousands more in our ranks and other charities too, who deserve our recognition and gratitude. On behalf of all Australians, today I say thank you."

If you would like to learn more about volunteering for the St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria and opportunities available in your local area, please visit www.vinnies.org.au, email volunteer@svdp-vic.org.au or phone 1300 736 933.

2017 Australia Day Honours List: St Vincent de Paul Society

Medal (OAM) in the General Division: Mr Ken WILSON. PO Box 1102, Sandringham Vic 3191. *For service to people who are homeless, and to the community.* Mr Wilson has volunteered on the Fitzroy and Collingwood Vinnies Soup Vans for over 30-years and has made an outstanding contribution to recording its treasured history through written works.

Medal (OAM) in the General Division: Mr John Gerrard O'LOUGHLIN. 3/55 Goomalibee Street, Benalla Vic 3672. *For service to the community through church and social welfare groups.* Mr O'Loughlin has served as a member of the St Vincent de Paul Society Benalla Conference for over 40-years as President, Secretary, Treasurer and/or Committee Member.

Local Recognition: St Vincent de Paul Society

Local Australia Day Committee Recognition: St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria conference members in Rochester Victoria have been recognised for their contribution to the local community and today will received two awards:

Community Event Group of the Year (the St Vincent de Paul Society conference) and *Certificate of Recognition* (awarded to Rochester Conference President, Gavin Houlihan). Both of these awards are linked to the Dairy Farmers Day Out initiative hosted on 9 October 2016.

[Other Honourees who have made a valuable contribution to the St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria](#)

Companion (AC) in the General Division: Her Excellency the Honourable Linda Marion DESSAU AM. 1 Government House Drive, Melbourne Vic 3004. *For eminent service to the people of Victoria through leadership roles in the judiciary, to the advancement of economic ties and business relationships, and as a supporter of charitable, sporting and arts organisations.* The Hon. Linda Dessau is the Patron of the St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria and has generously given of her time to serve people experiencing hardship and homelessness on the Vinnies Soup Vans, and to participate in the Vinnies CEO Sleepout event.

Medal (OAM) in the General Division: Mr Vedran DRAKULIC. 18 College Street, Williamstown Vic 3016. *For service to the community through a range of charitable organisations.* Mr Drakulic was the highest fundraiser at the 2016 Vinnies CEO Sleepout event and is a consistent supporter of the works of the St Vincent de Paul Society.

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[Interviews with St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria Australia Day honourees are available upon request. The full 2017 Australia Day Honours List may be accessed \[HERE\]\(#\).](#)

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; the Vinnies Soup Van program; assistance for asylum seekers and refugees; compeer programs for people experiencing mental illness; education and tutoring; and professional accommodation and health services through VincentCare. The St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia has more than 60,000 members and volunteers. Internationally, the Society operates in 149 countries and has over 950,000 members. To find out more visit www.vinnies.org.au.