

MEDIA RELEASE

28 March 2017

Vinnies is here for YOU

The St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria (Vinnies) is opening a **new Vinnies Shop today at 132-134 Powlett Street Kilmore**, which will help to respond to demand for material aid and financial support in the region.

Vinnies has over 12,000 volunteers across the state, many of whom spend time with people face to face in their homes to provide a hand up and material aid in times of need. Their work is supported by donations of material aid and revenue generated through Vinnies Shops.

St Vincent de Paul Society CEO, Ms Sue Cattermole, said demand for welfare support in Kilmore has prompted Vinnies to open a new shop.

“In the last 12 months our Vinnies volunteers have conducted over 198 home visits to people who have called on us for help in the Kilmore region. Over 273 of people assisted were adults and 374 were children, and they received over \$33,000 worth of financial and material aid,” said Ms Cattermole.

“These numbers are a reminder that people are struggling to make ends meet, often behind closed doors, so we encourage the community to support our Vinnies volunteers in their efforts to help. The best way to start, is by shopping at our new Vinnies Shop in Kilmore, because revenue generated locally, is used to support the Kilmore community.”

The St Vincent de Paul Society has identified that much of the need in Kilmore is linked to residents’ dependence on fixed incomes such as pensions or unemployment benefits and families escaping domestic violence.

“We know that over 725,000 Victorians are living below the poverty line and the financial squeeze is felt particularly hard in smaller communities like Kilmore. We want the local community to know that we, Vinnies, are here to help,” said Ms Cattermole.

The first Vinnies Shop in Victoria opened its doors in Ascot Vale in 1926 and there are now over 100 shops across the state, which remain largely run by volunteers. St Vincent de Paul Society Merchandise Manager, Liz Randle, said volunteers are the backbone of Vinnies Shops.

“We have been overwhelmed by the response to our recent call for Vinnies Shops volunteers in Kilmore and so far we have 45 new recruits, ready to roll up their sleeves and give back to their community. We are honoured that so many people are willing to donate their time to support us,” said Ms Liz Randle.

The new shop will open its doors for a traditional Blessing Ceremony this morning with dignitaries from across the region, including St Vincent de Paul Society CEO, Ms Sue Cattermole; St Vincent de Paul Western Central Council President, Ms Wendy Buchanan; St Patrick’s Catholic Church Kilmore, Fr Grant O’Neill; State Member for Northern Victoria, Ms Jaclyn Symes; Mitchell Shire Mayor, Cr Rhonda Sanderson and Aboriginal Elder (Wurundjeri) Ian Hunter.

“Blessing our Vinnies Shops is an important part of welcoming our Shops into the community as a support hub which is run by locals, for locals. We are so pleased to welcome these dignitaries along today,” said Ms Randle.

The new Vinnies Shop will offer a great range of pre-loved goods including homewares, toys, clothing, shoes and more.

“We’re encouraging everyone to pop in for a look. We’re also hosting a promotion for shoppers for the first two days of trade, which will include giving away two \$10 gift cards every hour as part of a raffle,” said Ms Randle.

The Vinnies Shop at 132-134 Powlett Street Kilmore, will open its doors on Tuesday 28 March at 12:00pm. Normal trading hours are 9:00am-5:00pm Monday to Saturday. Community donations are also accepted instore during these hours.

Visit www.vinnies.org.au/shops for more information about Vinnies Shops. Share your finds online and hashtag #FoundItAtVinnies and #VinniesKilmore.

- ENDS -

CONTACT: For further information or resources to assist with your story, please contact:

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

INVITATION: The media is invited to attend the Blessing Ceremony at the new Vinnies Shop:

When: 10:00am – 11:00am, Friday 28 March 2017.

Where: Vinnies Shop, 132-134 Powlett Street, Kilmore.

Photo: Vinnies volunteers and other dignitaries will be available for a photo.

RSVP: Retail Marketing Coordinator, **Stephanie Neil** | Stephanie.neil@svdp-vic.org.au | 0418 167 869

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; Vinnies Shops; youth programs; soup vans; 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.