



Media Release

2 March 2018

VINNIES ACHIEVES MILESTONE IN JOURNEY TO END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The St Vincent de Paul Society SA (Vinnies) is excited to announce it has attained White Ribbon accreditation, a milestone achievement in Vinnies' journey to help end domestic violence.

For over 130 years, Vinnies in South Australia has assisted people who have suffered from domestic violence, responding sensitively and respectfully with assistance that recognises its devastating impacts.

These insights helped to shape Vinnies' decision to open a 20 room Vinnies Women's Crisis Centre in suburban Adelaide last year and its decision to make a stand against domestic violence, whether it occurs in the community or amongst its own workforce of over 3,500 staff and volunteers.

David Wark, Chief Executive Officer of Vinnies SA and a White Ribbon Ambassador, said "One woman is killed every week in Australia as a result of intimate partner violence and domestic violence is the leading cause of homelessness."

"When you also consider that one third of women in Australia are affected by domestic violence in some way during their lifetime, it became clear to us that in addition to the people we assist, we also needed to look at our own organisation."

As part of the accreditation process, Vinnies SA's staff, volunteers and members have been trained to recognise the various forms of domestic violence and to clearly understand the behaviours that shape a safe and respectful workplace. Policies and systems have been adapted or developed to support women or men impacted by domestic violence.

Mr Wark said violence against women is everyone's issue. "We are arming our people with the knowledge and tools to recognise disrespectful behaviour in the workplace, together with support if they themselves are impacted. With White Ribbon accreditation, we can now be confident that our policies and systems are best practice."

White Ribbon is an international organisation focused on ending domestic violence against women.

"Our community, not just in Australia but across the globe, is at a pivotal point on much needed cultural change. We encourage others to join us in the campaign to end domestic and family violence." Mr Wark said.

Vinnies will celebrate its White Ribbon achievement today with a lunch ceremony attended by staff and supporters.

-ENDS-

For more information or interviews with David Wark please contact Megan Andrews on [8112 8700](tel:81128700), 0419 940 721 or email mandrews@svdpsa.org.au

Notes to the Editor –

Violence against women:

- Nearly 6,000 people in South Australia do not have a safe place to call home. Around 20% of these are children under the age of 12.
- 17% of homeless Australians are aged over 55. Of these, 36% are women.
- One in three women have experienced physical and/or sexual abuse perpetrated by someone known to them.
- On average, one woman is killed each week in Australia as a result of intimate partner violence.
- One in four children are exposed to domestic violence, which is a recognised form of child abuse.
- Domestic and family violence is the biggest cause of homelessness of women.
- Intimate partner violence is the leading contributor to death, disability and ill health in Australian women (15-44).
- Violence against women is estimated to cost the Australian economy \$21.7 billion pa.

People impacted by domestic or family violence can call the 1800RESPECT helpline (1800 737 732), open 24 hours

Vinnies assistance for South Australians experiencing hardship includes:

- A home visit program assisting around 60,000 people each year with food, clothing, furniture and emergency funds.
- 10 Fred's Van meal services providing over 40,000 (free) meals across the State each year.
- A Migrant and Refugee Centre assisting new arrivals to SA.
- Financial and specialist counselling services.
- Vinnies youth program supporting disadvantaged children through "Buddy Days" outings.
- A 47 bed Vinnies Men's Crisis Centre at Whitmore Square.
- A 20 room Vinnies Women's Crisis Centre, accessible through government and agency services.

South Australians in need can contact Vinnies between 9am and 1pm weekdays on 1300 729 202.
