



Media Release

6 November 2018

Help Vinnies make it a Christmas filled with joy

The St Vincent de Paul Society (Vinnies) has launched its annual Christmas Appeal and is asking the community to think of people who - without their support - won't be celebrating Christmas this year due to issues such as housing insecurity, homelessness and the ongoing battle with increasing living costs.

The 2016 Census revealed that more than 6,224 people in South Australia are homeless, with a staggering 23% of that figure being children aged under 18. Coupled with this, according to a recent report by the Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS), 1 in 8 adults and more than 1 in 6 children in Australia are currently living below the poverty line.

Last year in SA, money raised during the Vinnies Christmas Appeal raised went towards funding a range of initiatives that offer hope to people living in poverty or experiencing crisis, including domestic violence. As Vinnies receives little government funding, the organisation relies on the generosity of donors to help those who need it most.

St Vincent de Paul SA CEO David Wark said that people are genuinely shocked when they learn of the true picture of poverty and homelessness in Australia, with families featuring prominently amongst those living in poverty and affected by homelessness or housing insecurity.

"Many families are living very close to the edge, already struggling to make ends meet due to cost of living expenses including skyrocketing energy prices and mortgage stress. Factor in the increasing casualisation of the workforce, and unexpected unemployment or illness that can lead to families becoming homeless with little to no warning," Mr Wark said.

Each year, Vinnies in SA assists around 60,000 people through its unique home visitation service, where volunteers visit people in their own homes or at interview locations throughout the State.

According to Wark: "This service offers the opportunity for our volunteers to get to know the people who need help and gain a better understanding of what would truly make a difference to their lives, whether that's providing food, clothing, furniture or emergency payments to ensure they keep their heads above water. Sometimes all people need is someone to listen without judgment."

Vinnies' home visitation service also distributes Christmas food hampers and toys so that people in need are able to experience the joy of giving and receiving, or of sharing a meal with family and friends – something many of us take for granted.

To make a donation to the Vinnies Christmas Appeal 2018 visit vinnies.org.au or call 13 18 12.

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For interviews with David Wark, CEO St Vincent de Paul Society SA please contact Jo Dinnison, Communications Officer on (08) 8112 8730 or 0419 940 721 jdinnison@svdpsa.org.au

Overleaf: Notes for editors:

Vinnies in SA:

South Australians in need can contact Vinnies on its assistance line 1300 729 202.

Vinnies assistance for South Australians experiencing hardship includes:

- A home visit program assisting around 60,000 people each year with food, clothing, furniture & emergency funds
 - 10 Fred's Vans providing over 40,000 meals across the State
 - A Migrant and Refugee Centre assisting new arrivals to SA
 - Financial and specialist counselling services
 - Vinnies youth programming supporting children living with disadvantage through regular "Buddy Days" outings
 - A 47 bed Vinnies Men's Crisis Centre
 - A 20 room Vinnies Women's Crisis Centre
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