



MEDIA RELEASE

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Vinnies launches Christmas Appeal - A Christmas without joy is no Christmas at all

More than 1,100 people in need in Cairns and Far North Queensland were given hope and a more joyful Christmas last year by Vinnies volunteers.

Yet a Christmas without joy is what far too many people are facing this December.

A Christmas without family, after fleeing from domestic violence. A Christmas without comfort and peace of mind, after bills have mounted up. Or a Christmas without a roof over your head, after losing your home.

Launching the 2018 Vinnies Christmas Appeal, St Vincent de Paul Society QLD President Dennis Innes said: "This year, more people than ever will experience homelessness over Christmas. There's over 116,000 people across Australia either sleeping on the streets, in temporary or inadequate dwellings, or in halfway-solutions like boarding houses or crisis accommodation.

"A Christmas without a home is no Christmas at all. But it doesn't need to be that way. Your generosity can help bring joy and comfort to people this Christmas. Because your donations will mean the chance of a better future."

Vinnies QLD CEO Peter Maher added: "Inequality and disadvantage are getting worse in our country. The latest government figures show that at least one in ten people pay more than 30 per cent of their income on rent, meaning they don't have a lot left over for food and bills, let alone Christmas gifts and celebrations."

"Independent research also suggests that the rising cost of housing has pushed more than half a million people below the poverty line compared to a few years ago. That includes 200,000 children in need of your help.

"Last Christmas our Far North Queensland region provided more than 1,120 people with assistance, more than 500 of those people in need were children under the age of 16.

“This Christmas, let’s think of those people without the money to afford a home; or those pushed to the edge by the daily cost of living, let alone the price of gifts under the tree. Let’s not leave them without a new year to look forward to.”

Your gift could change lives. Through your support, many of these individuals and families will be able to have the Christmas they deserve: a Christmas without fear and anxiety, but instead hope and joy. Donations to the [Vinnies Christmas Appeal](http://vinnies.org.au) can be made at vinnies.org.au, phoning 13 18 12, or at any Vinnies Shop.

Vinnies Far North Queensland region includes Cairns, Atherton, Babinda, Edmonton, Georgetown, Innisfail, Mareeba, Port Douglas, Ravenshoe and Tully.

ENDS.

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