



# MEDIA RELEASE

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## **Vinnies marks 125 years helping Queenslanders in need**

St Vincent de Paul Society Queensland (Vinnies) is celebrating 125 years supporting Queenslanders this month – with organisation’s origins starting in Red Hill, Brisbane.

The first Vinnies Conference (group of volunteer members helping others) was established when church-goers at St Brigid’s Church Red Hill gathered on 18 February 1894 to respond to the needs of people still recovering from the great flood that inundated Brisbane in 1893.

“Vinnies was formed in 1894 after the Great Brisbane Flood to help with the devastation facing the community - and we’re still here supporting Queenslanders facing disasters - flood, fire or drought,” Vinnies Queensland State President Dennis Innes said.

“We are an organisation run by volunteers and it’s these volunteers on the ground right now helping the people of North Queensland as we have for the last 125 years.

“During the Brisbane floods and Cyclone Yasi in 2011 we distributed more than \$31 million in flood relief to Queensland communities and this is because Vinnies is the trusted charity people turn to during disasters.”

The establishment of Vinnies in Queensland came 40 years after the first Australian Conference was formed in Victoria in 1854, and 61 years after the Society itself was founded in France in 1833.

Through 125 years of helping people in need, Vinnies has grown to 270 locations and 147 Vinnies shops in towns and cities across Queensland.

Mr Innes said it is the charity’s 9000-plus members and volunteers who are key to helping thousands of struggling Queenslanders each year.

“We assisted more than 331,500 Queenslanders last financial year and gave more than \$231 million in service and support to families and individuals in need,” he said.

“We couldn’t achieve this without our dedicated members and volunteers who give freely of their time, making a difference in the lives of disadvantaged Queenslanders.

“Our vision is to give a hand up, not just a hand out to as many people who need our help as possible, always respecting their dignity and encouraging them to take control of their own destiny.”

Richard Robinson, President of the now St Brigid’s Red Hill and Rosalie Sacred Heart Conference, said he was honoured to carry on the legacy of those first Vinnies volunteer members in Queensland – some of who visited the struggling members of the community, handing out money for food and clothing.

“Times may have changed but our work helping people in need in this part of Brisbane hasn’t, we’re still here 125 years later when those who are doing it tough are in need of our help,” he said.

“We’re proud that we can continue to provide assistance to people in need just as those Vincentians (Vinnies volunteer members) did all those years ago.”

This year the Vinnies CEO Sleepout Queensland event which raises funds for Vinnies Homelessness programs and services will also celebrate its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary on June 20 at the iconic Brisbane Powerhouse.

Vinnies will mark the 125 years with a number of events beginning with a special church service and historic display at St Brigid’s on Sunday 17 February at 10am and a morning tea and formal presentation from 11.15am.

The service will be attended by Vinnies State President Dennis Innes, Vinnies QLD CEO Peter Maher, Federal Member for Brisbane Trevor Evans MP and Member for Ashgrove Kate Jones MP.

**ENDS.**

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St Vincent de Paul Society  
QUEENSLAND  
*good works*



Queen Street: The first Vinnies Conference in Queensland was established in 1894 as a response to the Great Brisbane Flood of 1893.