

SPRING 2019

# VINNIES

celebrating the  
spirit of giving

# MOMENTS

Special

FOOD AND  
FRIENDSHIP

Inside:

FOOD AND FRIENDSHIP  
IS A LIFELINE



St Vincent de Paul Society  
VICTORIA  
*good works*

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# A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

**Access to good, nutritious food should be a basic human right, yet for a growing number of Australians living in poverty, meals are often missed as they try to make ends meet.**

Our dedicated volunteers report that they see more and more people going hungry as they struggle to keep up with the high cost of living. After paying for the basics such as accommodation, utilities and medicine, there is barely enough left for food.

For almost 775,000 Victorians, the weekly budget just doesn't stretch far enough to include things like clothes, transport, and more worryingly, food. This is exactly what happened to Lisa who is featured in this issue of *Vinnies Moments*.

Lisa's story is also a reflection of the findings of a recent survey of nearly 500 people on Newstart and Youth Allowance by the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) that reported 84% of people went without meals.

I am thankful to say that with your help, Vinnies was able to help ease the burden for some of those people who are going without. In 2018-19, Vinnies distributed \$8,249,505 worth of food vouchers and food purchases to people in need. This is almost 50 percent of the total expenditure on assistance to Victorians doing it tough.

Food insecurity is also something we see and respond to every night across our eight soup van operations in Melbourne and regional Victoria. Often, the meals we provide through our Vinnies Soup Vans may be the only food that many of the people who access this crucial service will eat all day.

But Vinnies does more than just provide food. Thanks to the wonderful support of the community who contribute funds, and the dedication of our selfless volunteers, Vinnies is able to continue to help disadvantaged Victorians have someone to reach out to in times of crisis.



*Sue Cattermole*  
Sue Cattermole



## LEADING WITH COMPASSION

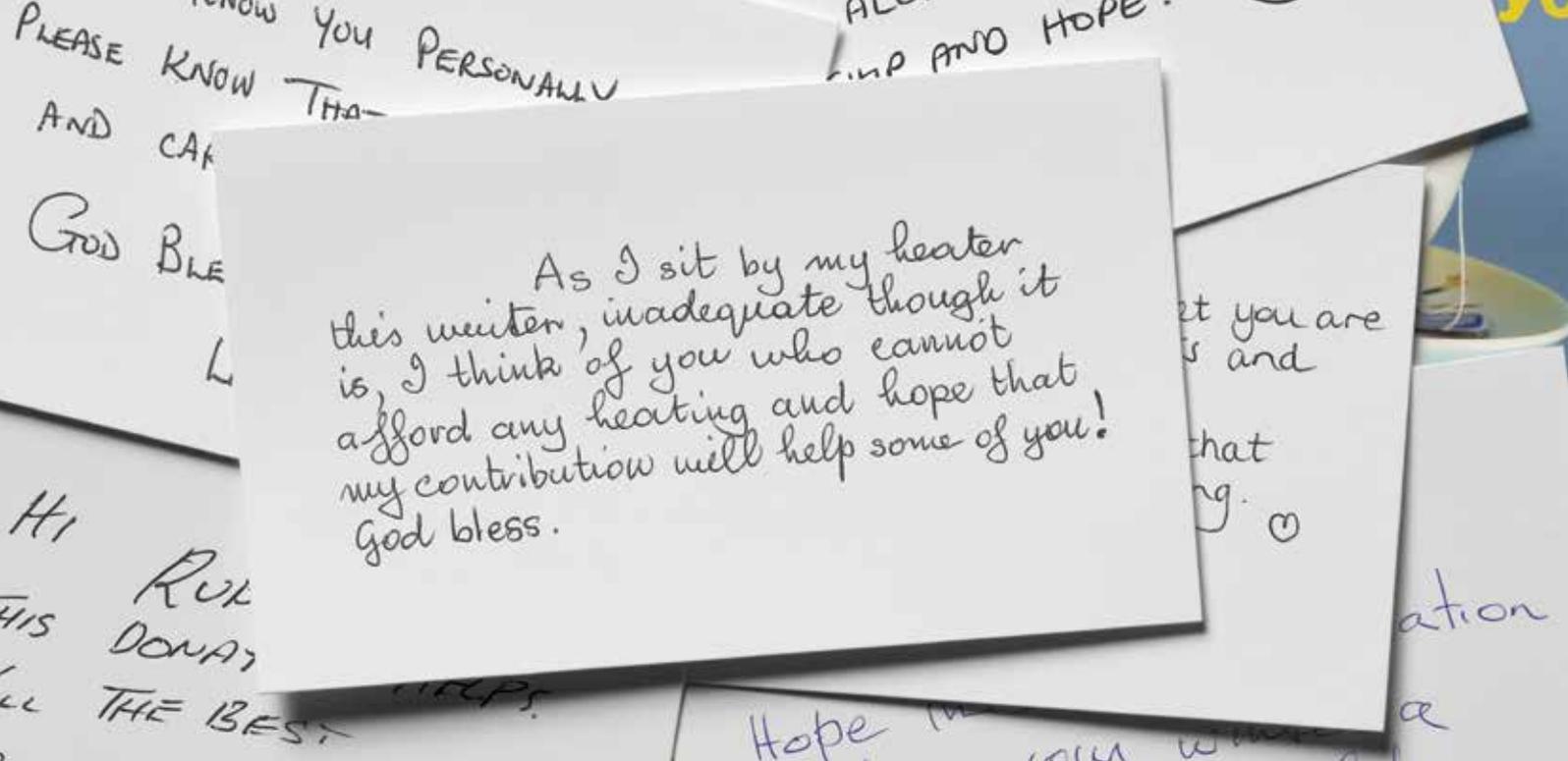
**This year marked the 10-year anniversary for the Vinnies CEO Sleepout in Melbourne which was held on 20 June in the iconic South Melbourne Market rooftop carpark.**

One week later in Geelong, local CEOs and executives slept out at GMHBA Stadium (Kardinia Park) to also raise awareness and much-needed funds for Vinnies Victoria.

Our theme **#LeadingWithCompassion** had a resounding impact, helping to raise more than \$1.58 million towards our good works – our highest fundraising result yet.

Thank you to all the CEOs, business and community leaders who participated in the event. You are helping thousands of vulnerable Victorians with your support.





The winter appeal messages of support for people experiencing hardship in our community.

# WINTER WAS A LITTLE LESS LONELY

**Our recent Winter Appeal shared the story of 73-year-old Ruby. She lived day-to-day on a meagre pension and her poverty made her feel isolated and lonely. She was struggling to make ends meet when she came to Vinnies for help.**

Dedicated Vinnies volunteers visited Ruby and assisted with the basic living essentials, including food. But more than that, they gave Ruby the kindness and support she really needed.

And so did our wonderful supporters. Not only did our recent Winter Appeal raise vital funds to help thousands of people like Ruby, we also received hundreds of messages of support.

Thank you to everyone who showed their compassion and donated to the Winter Appeal and sent back words of encouragement and love to the people we assist.

## FROM THE ARCHIVES

**On the 17 September 1989, the Footscray Soup Van hit the streets of Footscray, Maidstone, Newport and Williamstown for the first time.**

Volunteers served food and provided friendship to people who were experiencing or were at risk of experiencing homelessness in Melbourne's west.

Thirty years later, the Footscray Soup Van volunteers, or 'Vannies' as they are affectionately known, continue to provide practical assistance such as a meal, blankets, toiletries, snacks and hot beverages.

But most importantly, the 'Vannies' provide kindness and friendship to people when they need it most.



The Footscray Soup Van visits Whitten Oval in Footscray, six nights a week.



# FOOD AND FRIENDSHIP IS A LIFELINE

**For many of the people Vinnies assists, buying food comes last on their list of household costs. After paying rent, it is usually then utility bills, medicines, school costs and food for their children, before finally turning attention to themselves. But often the money has long run out by then, and people call Vinnies for help.**

Vinnies volunteers first visited 48-year-old Lisa in her Geelong home. It was clear that Lisa was struggling to pay her rent and bills on Newstart and was not being left with enough money to buy food for herself or her two pets.

Up until five years ago, Lisa was working as a security guard but the company she worked for went into administration. At the same time, her mother became ill with cancer so Lisa took on the role of full-time carer.

When her mother died a year later, Lisa was transferred from a carers' pension to a Newstart allowance,

which was approximately \$200 less a fortnight. On a carers' pension Lisa could meet her basic living costs, but on Newstart she couldn't.

Suddenly, Lisa was forced to live on only \$40 a day. Lisa is one of the many thousands of Australians who struggle to make ends meet as living costs continue to rise, but the level of Newstart has not increased in real terms in 25 years.

For Lisa, her payments do not go far and she is grateful for the assistance

she gets from Vinnies. Lisa explains:

"The minute my fortnightly payment arrives it goes on paying the rent, then the most overdue bill."

"After I pay what I can of the bills, I am usually left with around \$20 to get through two weeks, which is why Vinnies' food vouchers are a lifeline."

Helping people with food makes up almost half of Vinnie's total expenditure on assistance. Every day we help people like Lisa with life's essentials. Often the lack of food is the tip of the iceberg and people are struggling to make ends meet elsewhere.

And for people who need assistance with food, they know that when it comes with words of encouragement and support, it can go a long way.





Lisa with one of her 'best mates', her dog Tooheys. Pic courtesy Chris Hopkins.

## A FRIDGE FULL OF KINDNESS

After sharing Lisa's story in a Guardian news article, Lisa's fridge was soon filled to the brim with food and love after one kind supporter donated a weekly online shop. This inspired an outpouring of generosity in our Facebook community too.

"Great work Vinnies! I am about to make another donation to your great cause/work! 😊"

Melissa on Facebook



Generous supporters filled Lisa's fridge.



## More than 88%

of callers to the Vinnies Central Welfare Assistance Call Centre ask for food<sup>1</sup>

## More than one third

of Australians receiving the Full Age Pension are living below the poverty line<sup>2</sup>



## One in five

Australian children go hungry on any given day<sup>3</sup>

## Almost half

of the funds used for Vinnies good works is spent on providing food and food vouchers<sup>4</sup>



1 Vinnies Central Welfare Assistance Call Centre Box Hill  
2 www.yourlifechoices.com.au/news/calls-to-fix-pension-poverty  
3 Rumbling Tummies Report by Foodbank  
4 St Vincent de Paul Victoria, Philanthropy Report 2017-2018



From left: Vinnies Soup Van team member Charlotte, Lord Mayor, Sally Capp and Vinnies Victoria's CEO Sue Cattermole prepare for a night on the Vinnies Soup Van.

# LORD MAYOR CHAMPIONS SOUP VANS

During Homelessness Week in August this year, the good work of the Vinnies Soup Vans was illuminated with a special visit from Melbourne's Lord Mayor, Sally Capp, who emphasised the importance the service provides to the community.

After four hours on the Soup Van, the Lord Mayor admitted she was "frozen to the bone" and could not begin to imagine what it's like for the many Victorians sleeping rough every night.

She says: "The Vannies and generous Vinnies supporters provide an invaluable service in our community. Not only are they serving food and connecting people to essential services, they provide hope to some of the state's most vulnerable people."

## A SPECIAL WAY TO GIVE

For the past 23 years, John McCarthy OAM has been offering the hand of friendship to those in need as a volunteer member of the St Vincent de Paul Society. He has also chosen to continue his legacy of kindness by including a gift to the Society in his Will.

John sees volunteering as honouring the Society's foundational attributes of kindness and respect. He believes that meeting people in their own home and offering compassion, support and assistance with life's essentials is the key to a lasting recovery.

John says that his time with the St Vincent de Paul Society has been an incredible experience and wants to continue to help people when they need it most for a long time to come.

"I help in whatever way I can," says John, "My decision to include a gift in my Will was an easy one because I am grateful for the work Vinnies does and the work I can do for others."



Norlane Conference Member, John McCarthy OAM.

For a caring and confidential conversation about how you can remember the St Vincent de Paul Society in your Will, please contact Sharon Wangman on 03 9895 5821 or email [bequest@svdp-vic.org.au](mailto:bequest@svdp-vic.org.au).



# THE VINNIES SHOPS VIP TREATMENT

We know our Vinnies shoppers are curious, dedicated and loyal. In short, they all are VIPs. But this year, Vinnies made it official and introduced the new Vinnies VIP Card for frequent visitors to our Vinnies Shops.

Vinnies VIP Cards reward loyal, regular customers with one point for every dollar spent, and when you reach 200 points you are granted a \$10 discount on your next purchase at any Vinnies Shop.

Our creative shop teams have come up with all sorts of fun and fantastic ways to promote this initiative. They know that every dollar raised in our Vinnies Shops goes directly back into the local community and helps every day families doing it tough.

If you would like the VIP treatment, visit your local Vinnies Shop.



The team at the Burnt Bridge shop happily promoting the Vinnies VIP Card.



## ANZ HEED CALL FOR HELP

The winter's recent arctic blast led to an overwhelming demand from the people we serve on the streets for sleeping bags to help keep them warm and dry.

Our Vinnies storage was in short supply so we reached out to the team at ANZ for assistance. Responding immediately to our SOS, the ANZ team organised a sleeping bag drive at their office headquarters in Melbourne's Docklands.

By week's end, the donation bin was nearly groaning with more than 30 near-new sleeping bags. Soup Van volunteers quickly collected and distributed the donation to our friends on the street, ensuring that sleeping bags were in the hands of people in need when they needed it most.

Fitzroy Soup Van President, Shaun Bourke told us he is extremely grateful for the generous support of the community:

"Many people who come to us for food also ask for other things that will help them get through the night. It's only natural that in winter, people need sleeping bags, so these will make a big difference. Thank you."



# KINDNESS KNOWS NO AGE

Above: Mini Vinnies, Gisborne's St Brigid Primary School students collected food and winter essentials for families in need.

**Some of the youngest members of Vinnies extended their hand in help, by offering food.**

A group of students from St Brigid's Primary School in Gisborne ran their

local 'Winter Appeal' in a display of compassion and support for people who are doing it tough. Together they collected a huge 587 items of food, as well as hand-knitted blankets and scarves, which will be given to people in need in Melbourne's outer west.

Thank you to the school's Social Justice Coordinator, Mel Daly, Mini Vinnies Coordinator, Lola Rowe and the inspiring group of young change-makers who have helped Vinnies assist people experiencing poverty and homelessness.

## COMMUNITY RAISES VITAL FUNDS

**Vinnies Boronia Conference in conjunction with the Boronia Eastern Access Community Health (EACH) held a Vinnies Community Sleepout in early July this year.**

Participants were given a unique insight into the complexities of homelessness and poverty by hearing from a speaker who bravely spoke of his experience of many years living on the streets. Many participants themselves then chose to sleep outside to try and gain a small understanding of what it is like for the many Victorians who have to do so night after night.

The event was a great success raising just over \$5,000 for Vinnie's Berwick Soup Van service. A big thank to Vinnies Boronia Conference and EACH Boronia for raising vital funds and awareness through their Community Sleepout.



Vinnies Soup Van provide food and friendship.



**DONATE TODAY**  
**VISIT [vinnies.org.au](http://vinnies.org.au)**  
**OR PHONE 13 18 12**



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 VICTORIA  
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