



## MEDIA RELEASE

13 December, 2019

### **Above and beyond to help his community – Vinnies own bushfire hero**

IN Yeppoon, Vinnies volunteer member Rick Williams is working for a desperate community that still doesn't like asking for help despite an ongoing battle with bushfires and drought.

Williams said much of his work as a Vincentian (Volunteer member) at present has been helping stoic locals re-connect vital services required to return their lives to some sense of normalcy.

"Most of the money we are giving is going to get power and water back on. Even if a home survived, the water tanks have melted, the pumps are destroyed, the electricity's down," he said.

Mr Williams said the bushfires that raged through the area in recent weeks have cost far more than official figures reveal and it's these forgotten Australians he is actively seeking to assist.

"Many people were living in sheds that had been converted to liveable quality but because they were still technically sheds they couldn't be insured," he said.

"We're just driving around, visiting properties, finding more people to help every day.

"People lost their vehicles, they don't have a phone, so we go and find them because they really don't like asking for help.

"Sometimes when we arrive they need to talk so badly all we can do is listen for as much time as they need. Some days that means we get to one property."

Mr Williams said those in need of Vinnies help are coming from all age groups and demographics in the local community.

"I met one lady, well into her 80s, who lost everything except her house, and she was desperately worried about her 1500 head of cattle," he said.

"We were able to help her with \$900 for hay.

"We had a young bloke come into the shop and he'd lost everything to bushfire except his truck and his dog and all he'd accept was one set of clothes.

"We almost had to beg him to accept more but he just wouldn't.

"But he did come back and ask if we had any dog food. Vinnies will help anyone with a need like that."

Mr Williams plans to keep up his visits for at least another year, work he couldn't do without the support of a generous and caring public.

“We have to just keep being there,” he said.

“Disasters don’t just go away. We’re making sure people know we’re not going away. We’ll be there, no matter how long it takes.

“We’ll give out about 55 Christmas hampers and we’re giving vouchers and we’re just going to keep going.”

You can donate to help Vinnies members like Mr Williams help Queenslanders affected by drought and bushfire via the Always There – Vinnies QLD Disasters Appeal online at: <https://donate.vinnies.org.au/appeals-qld/vinnies-disaster-appeal-qld>

Vinnies has distributed more than \$76,000 since October to Queensland families and individuals impacted by ongoing drought and bushfires in the Sunshine State.

**ENDS.**

Media contact: Vinnies Queensland Communications Officer Joshua Paterson.  
Phone: 0408 675 567 | Email: [joshua.paterson@svdpqld.org.au](mailto:joshua.paterson@svdpqld.org.au)

Attached photo is of Vinnies Yeppoon Conference (group of volunteer members) President Rick Williams in front of a dwelling in the Yeppoon area destroyed by bushfire.