



Media Release

12 November 2020

TOY RUN TO GO AHEAD DESPITE COVID RESTRICTIONS

Organisers of the Motorcycle Riders Association SA (MRASA) Toy Run are gearing up to bring joy to children on **Sunday 13 December**, despite the challenges of COVID.

There will not be a mass ride departing Victoria Park, or a family day at the traditional end point in Callington, but riders are still encouraged to hit the road in smaller groups and drop toys off at one of three locations so that Vinnies can distribute them to children and families in need for Christmas.

Drop off points are at Victoria Park in the Adelaide CBD between 8am and 12pm; and at Anytime Fitness Victor Harbor and Vinnies Mount Barker between 9am and 12pm.

The Toy Run has traditionally been responsible for supplying 70% of the toys that are distributed by Vinnies, primarily through the organisation's unique Vinnies Assistance Visit program that provides food, clothing and emergency funds to around 60,000 people each year throughout metropolitan and regional South Australia.

"Most of the images we see around Christmas time depict happy families, and sadly this is not the reality for many people. The toys that children receive courtesy of the Toy Run are just one way we can let them know that people care," said Louise Miller Frost, CEO of Vinnies SA.

"We know that 2020 has been a difficult year for everyone, so it is heartening to see the Toy Run going ahead after so many events have been cancelled. We are calling on members of the Motorcycle Riders Association, and indeed the general public, to get behind the Toy Run on 13 December to help put a smile on the faces of children who may otherwise miss out."

Miller Frost also noted that the impacts of COVID would make this Christmas particularly difficult for many families.

"If families are already struggling and finding it difficult just to put food on the table, buying Christmas gifts can be a stretch too far. Working in partnership with the MRASA means we can take some of the stress away from parents and they can get on with enjoying the day."

Toys are also distributed at the Vinnies Women's Crisis Centre and Fred's Van meal services. The Vinnies Women's Crisis Centre has been home to more than 2,500 women and children since opening in late 2017 with many of the women and children seeking refuge due to domestic violence. Fred's Van has seen an increasing number of people accessing the service since COVID, including families.

More information on the Toy Run including details for the three drop off points is available at: www.vinnies.org.au/ToyRunSA

- ENDS -

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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 & emergency funds
- 10 Fred's Vans services providing over 40,000 meals across the state
- A Migrant & Refugee Centre assisting new arrivals to SA, particularly asylum seekers
- Financial counselling services
- Vinnies Youth program supporting children living with disadvantage through regular "Buddy Days" outings
- A 44 bed Vinnies Men's Crisis Centre
- A 20 room Vinnies Women's Crisis Centre
- Disaster relief when the need arises – eg Bushfire, drought

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