

17 November 2021

Vinnies launches much-needed Christmas Appeal after COVID payments end and unemployment hits 5.2%

The St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria (Vinnies Victoria) today launches its Christmas Appeal, highlighting that many families will be left behind this Christmas as economic recovery from the pandemic lags and the government's crisis payments end.

While life as we knew it gradually begins to return, thousands of people will struggle to feel positive about the future unless they receive vital further support from Vinnies. "I wish I could say it's going to be a hopeful Christmas for everyone this year, after the ending of the lockdowns," says Sue Cattermole, CEO of Vinnies Victoria.

"But the reality is it won't, and the need is significant because vulnerable households now have additional pressures this Christmas due to the impact of the lockdowns.

"For people who lost their jobs as a result of the pandemic who have been relying on the now discontinued government payments, their immediate outlook is dim."

As latest ABS unemployment figures hit 5.2%, we expect that calls for assistance will begin to rise again. At last count, 1 in 8 Australians* – and 1 in 6 children – are living in poverty. And that was before the pandemic began.

"Scores of families and individuals are coming to us every day in urgent need of help. Many could never have imagined the pressures they're facing, and they're worried they won't be able to feed their families, let alone keep a roof over their heads. These are desperate and painful times for many," says Ms Cattermole.

Our [appeal this year features the story of a couple, Heidi and Nikolas**](#), who were expecting a baby when Vinnies first met them living in a tent. Within hours, Vinnies had relocated them to temporary accommodation in a motel, and then into a three-bedroom house within weeks, where they welcomed home their baby Jake after his birth.

Vinnies Victoria was there to help out another expectant mum too recently, named Natasha, after her partner's business was hit by the lockdowns. With the couple expecting another child, Vinnies stepped in to provide a pram, cot, bouncer, high chair, baby bath, clothes, nursing bag, nappies and Vinnies vouchers. "If Vinnies wasn't around, I don't know what you would do, or who you could turn to," says Natasha. You can read their [story HERE](#).

"The rise in unemployment figures suggest that it will be some time before the economy recovers," says Ms Cattermole. "The fact that this is happening just before Christmas, when demand for our services typically goes up anyway, means the 'festive season' will be stressful for many families."

Vinnies Victoria volunteers and services have kept working throughout the pandemic, providing assistance to people in need. Our Soup Van services served 550,000 meals last year – more than double the year previously. The public's support is vital so that Vinnies Victoria can keep supplying food, clothes, accommodation, case work for homelessness and domestic violence, and more.

"It has been an incredibly difficult time for everyone, but I encourage people who can to donate generously to our Christmas Appeal this year," says Ms Cattermole.

To support the Vinnies Christmas Appeal go to donate.vinnies.org.au/christmas-appeal or call 13 18 12.



For any further inquiries about this story, please contact our media office via the details below.

**According to the 2020 Poverty in Australia Overview produced by ACOSS and UNSW.*

***Names have been changed to protect privacy.*

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ABOUT THE ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY:

The St Vincent de Paul Society and its wide network of members and volunteers provide practical frontline support, advocacy and friendship for the most vulnerable members of our community. Key services include home visitation; Vinnies Shops; youth programs; soup vans; assistance for asylum seekers and refugees; education and tutoring; and professional accommodation and health services through VincentCare. The St Vincent de Paul Society in Victoria has more than 12,000 members and volunteers, and more than 60,000 across Australia. Internationally, the Society operates in 149 countries and more than 950,000 members. To find out more visit www.vinnies.org.au.