



2018–2019
PHILANTHROPY REPORT



St Vincent de Paul Society
VICTORIA
good works

OUR IMPACT

ACROSS VICTORIA, THE ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY'S 12,000+ VOLUNTEERS ARE BUILDING COMPASSIONATE COMMUNITIES. THEY PROVIDE PRACTICAL ASSISTANCE TO HELP MAKE ENDS MEET BY PUTTING FOOD ON TABLES, HEATING HOMES IN WINTER, EDUCATING YOUNG MINDS, LISTENING IN TIMES OF CRISIS AND MUCH, MUCH MORE.



\$18,375,806

VALUE OF MATERIAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY CONFERENCES & VINNIES SHOPS



135,576

NUMBER OF HOME VISITS BY CONFERENCE MEMBERS



211,750

NUMBER OF MEALS PROVIDED BY VINNIES SOUP VANS



67,096

NUMBER OF CALLS RECEIVED AT THE BOX HILL CALL CENTRE



7,373

NUMBER OF HOURS PROVIDED FOR STUDENT TUTORING

OUR MISSION

The St Vincent de Paul Society is a lay Catholic organisation that aspires to live the gospel message by serving Christ in the poor with love, respect, justice, hope and joy, and by working to shape a more just and compassionate society.

OUR VISION

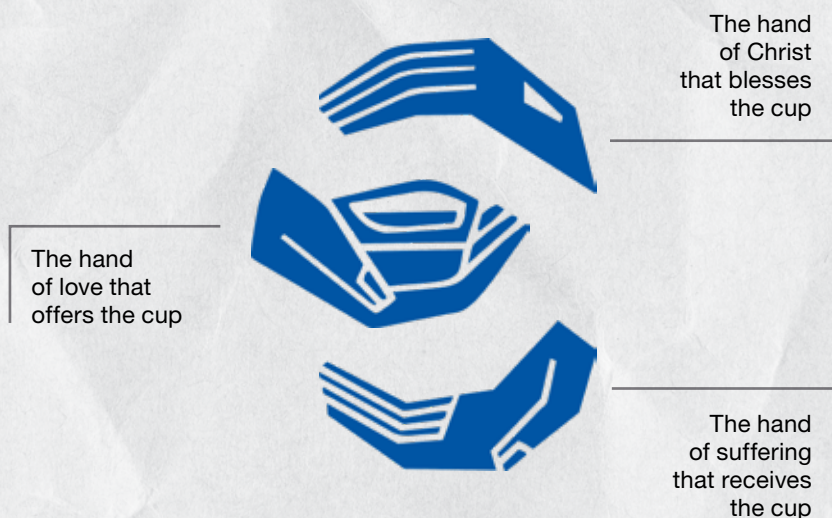
The St Vincent de Paul Society aspires to be recognised as a caring Catholic charity offering a 'hand up' to people in need.

We do this by respecting their dignity, sharing our hope and encouraging them to take control of their own destiny.

OUR VALUES

- Commitment
- Compassion
- Respect
- Integrity
- Empathy
- Advocacy
- Courage

OUR HANDS AT WORK



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The St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria's Philanthropy Report editorial team would like to thank the vast community of writers and photographers who have contributed to capturing our year in review.

Front cover image courtesy of iStockphoto.com

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A portrait of Frederic Ozanam, a man with a full beard and long hair, wearing a dark suit and a white shirt with a dark cravat. The text '165 YEARS OF SERVICE' is overlaid on the top left of the image in large, bold, orange letters.

165 YEARS OF SERVICE

**“LET US DO
WITHOUT
HESITATION
WHATEVER
GOOD LIES AT
OUR HANDS.”**

**BLESSED FREDERIC
OZANAM, ST VINCENT DE
PAUL SOCIETY FOUNDER**

In Paris 1833 Frederic Ozanam, a 20-year-old student, was challenged to ‘show us your works’ and do something to assist the poor who were struggling to survive day to day.

Frederic and his colleagues took up the challenge and provided practical assistance to people who were struggling to survive, as a result, the St Vincent de Paul Society was born on 23 April 1833.

His vision became a worldwide movement and, 21 years later on 5 March 1854, the St Vincent de Paul Society was established in Melbourne, Australia, by Fr Gerald Ward who, like Frederic, also witnessed a changing community due to the discovery of gold in central Victoria.

Today, through a wide network of members and volunteers the Society’s work continues to provide practical frontline support, advocacy and friendship to the most vulnerable members of our community.

For more than 165 years, the St Vincent de Paul Society has focused on serving people in need by meeting them face to face and personally working through their issues to provide the best possible assistance. In Victoria we have more than 12,000 members and volunteers providing assistance to people whose daily struggles can include providing food on the table, paying essential utilities, ensuring their children remain at school and obtain an education. Each person needing assistance is provided with care and compassion.

Our key services include:

- Home visitation;
- Vinnies Shops;
- Youth programs;
- Vinnies Soup Vans;
- Education and tutoring;
- Assistance for migrants and refugees; and
- Homelessness services through VincentCare Victoria.

We are extremely grateful to the network of members and volunteers who are the backbone of our organisation. To find out more visit vinnies.org.au.

THE ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY VICTORIA IS AN ORGANISATION COMPRISING A NETWORK OF VOLUNTEERS THROUGHOUT THE STATE WHOSE KEY FOCUS IS HELPING TO ALLEVIATE AND MOVE PEOPLE OUT OF DISADVANTAGED CIRCUMSTANCES. WE DO THIS THROUGH OUR CORE WORK AROUND COST OF LIVING, EDUCATION, FOOD INSECURITY AND HOMELESSNESS. THESE CORE SERVICES ARE SUPPORTED FINANCIALLY BY OUR SOCIAL ENTERPRISE, VINNIES SHOPS.



- \$6.8M** ● Cost of Living
- \$1.2M** ● Education
- \$8.2M** ● Food Insecurity
- \$2.2M** ● Homelessness

\$6.8M COST OF LIVING

The Society's programs focus on alleviating and lifting people out of adverse circumstances. Through various means our members provide support and assistance to people in need as well as advocating on their behalf. Our programs include: emergency expenses, respite holiday homes and specialist service referrals.

\$1.2M EDUCATION

The Society has always identified education as a key pathway out of poverty. Our programs provide essential support with tutoring and reading, while our members assist with education expenses as well as various activities for students experiencing disadvantage.

\$8.2M FOOD INSECURITY

The Society's programs for the prevention of food insecurity provide essential meals, food vouchers and parcels to vulnerable people. Our programs include: eight soup van services that provide meals and friendship to people experiencing homelessness as well as food aid through our core work of home visitation.

\$2.2M HOMELESSNESS

The Society's homelessness programs focus on preventing vulnerable people from becoming homeless and supporting them on their journey out of homelessness. Our programs include: assistance with accommodation costs, a rental assistance program to promote self-sufficiency and a no interest loans scheme to assist with the purchase of essential household goods.

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

A key part of the Society's work is our Vinnies Shops, one of the largest and oldest social enterprises in Australia. Our shops generate income to fund the Society's programs, but also play an essential role in our community by recycling pre-loved goods, building communities through volunteering and providing individuals with support, training and skill development. Our shops provide an overarching support system to all the services we provide.

PEOPLE ARE AT THE HEART OF EVERYTHING WE DO

Our good works in the community includes:

CONFERENCES



Vinnies has local groups across Victoria, known as conferences, which provide assistance and support to people in need.

In response to incoming calls for assistance, our conference members visit people in their homes, or through a local assistance centre, to listen, assess and provide personalised assistance according to their specific needs. Our members provide a range of assistance including: food, vouchers, clothing, furniture, budget support, back to school expenses – no act of charity is foreign to us.

VINNIES SHOPS



Vinnies Shops are located across Victoria and are one of the state's oldest and most respected social enterprises.

Our shops provide a major source of income for our local welfare programs, and are supported by an extensive network of volunteers and material donations from the community. The shops give new life to pre-loved goods; stock a range of new, affordable products for low-income shoppers; and provide a direct source of material aid for people experiencing hardship.

YOUTH & EDUCATION



Vinnies is committed to assisting young people with their educational needs, empowering them to develop skills and reach their full potential.

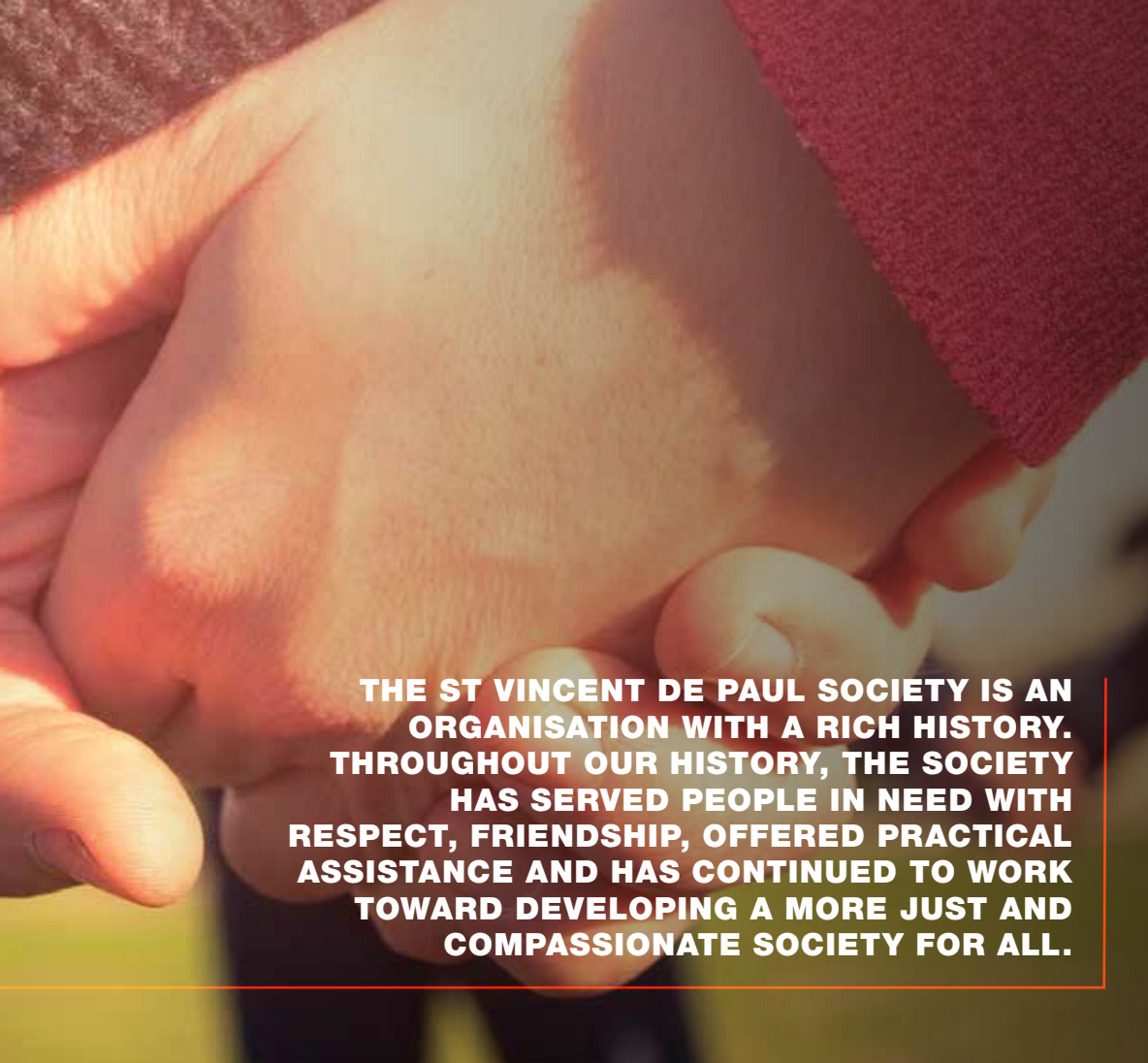
Vinnies offer volunteer-run tutoring programs, reading clubs, breakfast programs and tertiary entrance support programs. These programs are tailored to the needs of local communities and members provide financial assistance where necessary to alleviate the burden of back to school expenses. Kids Camps and Kids Days Out, run by our Youth Conferences, also create a welcoming environment for kids in need of support, respite and fun.

VINNIES SOUP VANS



Vinnies Soup Vans operate at eight locations in metropolitan and regional Victoria. In 1975 the first soup van service was established by dedicated university students and has been operating ever since.

The soup van service is run almost exclusively by volunteers, delivering meals, friendship and support to people experiencing poverty and homelessness. Shared meals create an environment for regular, face-to-face conversations, which can help people experiencing crisis to survive, recover and ultimately regain their independence.



THE ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY IS AN ORGANISATION WITH A RICH HISTORY. THROUGHOUT OUR HISTORY, THE SOCIETY HAS SERVED PEOPLE IN NEED WITH RESPECT, FRIENDSHIP, OFFERED PRACTICAL ASSISTANCE AND HAS CONTINUED TO WORK TOWARD DEVELOPING A MORE JUST AND COMPASSIONATE SOCIETY FOR ALL.

VOLUNTEERS

TOTAL
12,143

3,816

Members

895

Associate Members

40

Call Centre

140

Education/Tutoring

1,658

Soup Vans

5,462

Vinnies Shops

132

Special Works

CALL CENTRES



Vinnies has several call centres providing people with access to assistance and support. Our Box Hill Call Centre receives more than 280 calls a day from people experiencing hardship.

A generous group of volunteers give their time to listen, record and pass requests on to local volunteers (conference members) who visit and provide welfare assistance as required.

Call centre volunteers are an important first point of contact to Vinnies and regularly provide a caring ear when people are experiencing crisis.

SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT



Vinnies has a rich history of engaging with young people to build values-based leadership skills, facilitate fundraising, lead advocacy, run volunteer programs and much more.

Vinnies encourage young people to live their faith through action using the 'see' (education and awareness), 'think' (formation and reflection) and 'do' (community service and fundraising) model.

Good works are facilitated through the Mini Vinnies program for primary school students and College Conferences for secondary school students.

COMMITTEES THAT CARE



Vinnies' volunteer-led structure allows for a variety of cause-specific committees to respond to areas of need.

Examples include the Overseas Development Committee, which supports people in developing countries; the Social Justice & Advocacy Committee, which facilitates research, advocacy and supports new settlers. The Emergency Response Liaison Committee also coordinates an important, locally led response to natural disasters.

ENTITIES



251

Conferences



17

Youth Conferences



7

Assistance Centres



108

Vinnies Shops



8

Soup Van Services



6

Tutoring Programs & Reading Clubs

CONFERENCES AT WORK 2018-2019

**LAST FINANCIAL YEAR THE
ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY
PROVIDED ASSISTANCE AND
SUPPORT TO 326,394 PEOPLE
ACROSS VICTORIA.**

Our members and volunteers are at the heart of what we do. They are happy to share what they have (food, clothing, shelter, advice and friendship) and assist people to get back on their feet but, more importantly, they empower people to decide where their future direction lies and work hand in hand with them to realise it.



EASTERN CENTRAL COUNCIL

\$2,642,863 Assistance provided by conferences

46,200 Adults & children assisted



NORTHERN CENTRAL COUNCIL

\$1,747,576 Assistance provided by conferences

24,717 Adults & children assisted



SOUTHERN CENTRAL COUNCIL

\$3,418,920 Assistance provided by conferences

59,550 Adults & children assisted



WESTERN CENTRAL COUNCIL

\$3,550,570 Assistance provided by conferences

55,072 Adults & children assisted



GIPPSLAND CENTRAL COUNCIL

\$1,502,746 Assistance provided by conferences

28,215 Adults & children assisted



NORTH EASTERN CENTRAL COUNCIL

\$2,916,516 Assistance provided by conferences

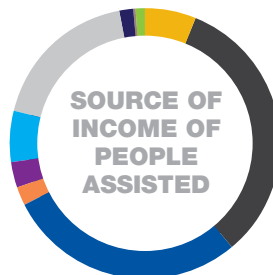
63,646 Adults & children assisted



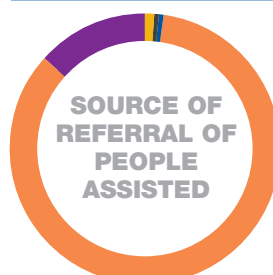
NORTH WESTERN CENTRAL COUNCIL

\$1,806,799 Assistance provided by conferences

48,994 Adults & children assisted



- 6.15% ● Age pension
- 32.77% ● Disability support
- 28.65% ● Newstart Allowance
- 2.35% ● No income
- 3.04% ● Other government
- 6.05% ● Other/not determined
- 18.06% ● Parenting payment
- 1.70% ● Salary & wages
- 0.15% ● WorkCover
- 1.08% ● Youth Allowance



- 1.31% ● Church or similar
- 0.37% ● Government department
- 0.56% ● Non-government agencies
- 84.60% ● Previous caller
- 13.16% ● Self-referred/friend

BEING A VOLUNTEER

CONTINUES TO DRIVE ME



Kevin McMahon with student Ritesh, at the Heidelberg West Reading Club.

In my 12+ years of volunteering for the St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria, I can recall many stories of sadness and joy that have stayed with me, but my 11 years with the Heidelberg West Reading Club have been perhaps some of my most fulfilling.

Of course, this may have something to do with the fact that in a former life I was a secondary school teacher. I'm also a parent of now grown-up children and a grandparent, too, so you can say that I've had a bit of experience. Night-time stories have always been a big event in our house – and still are.

I am also an avid reader and passionately believe that reading is the key to not only learning, but to understanding ourselves and each other better, so I believe that it's essential to help children to learn to read and appreciate reading.

Unfortunately, not all children have parents who are able or have the time to read with them, so it makes a lot of sense to me that we are so proactive in the educational space.

In addition to our Heidelberg West Reading Club, which provides reading and learning opportunities for grade 1 to grade 6 students, we also have the Maidstone Reading Club and two tutoring programs, Noble Park and Dandenong, the latter of which is featured in this *Philanthropic Report*. I know first-hand the value of this program, having driven student volunteers to participate in a similar program in St Albans.

Apart from a love of reading, our volunteers need to be committed in order to build trusting relationships with the children and offer them a good support network so their education can thrive. Through building relationships with role models who have life experience, I have seen the benefit to these children in terms of their increased self-confidence.

I've also seen former students returning to the program as volunteers themselves and passing on their knowledge and experiences. That in itself says a lot about the programs.

What amazes me is that I and the other volunteers get as much – if not more – out of the experience as the kids do. It is absolutely wonderful seeing a child's skills improve, seeing their self-worth grow and mastering the intricacies of our Australian English!

Knowing that you have played a very small part in unlocking a child's understanding and, just maybe, also opened the door a little to a life they never imagined for themselves is the most incredible feeling there is.

We are also proud of our commitment to the Assist a Student program, which helps to fund students in developing countries with continued access to education.

For me, it goes beyond simply having something to do in retirement – my work with Vinnies gives me a profound purpose and for that I am ever grateful.

Kevin McMahon
State President

I HAVE NEVER CONSIDERED MYSELF A CRUSADER

Since joining the St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria, affectionately known as Vinnies, three years ago, something has shifted in me.

A few months ago as I was rushing around worrying about the list of things I needed to do before work, I ducked into the supermarket to buy a few things for lunch.

Sitting near the doors was a gentleman I had seen a few times around my suburb. You could call this man 'a bit of a character' – I often see him in doorways of my local shops and in front of Coles.

What else was clear is that he scares people a little bit, he often talks to himself and customers choose to avoid him or look the other way so that they don't catch his eye.

Despite – or in spite of – the fact that I was running late, I stopped and asked him how he was.

"I haven't had a drink for 15 years," he told me. "It's not true what they say, you know. We don't live on the streets because of choice; we live out on the streets because we have no choice."

For the next five minutes, he engaged me with his observations on the world. Life had clearly been hard for him, but he had no bitterness and, at the end of our conversation, we shook hands and wished each other well. By the time I was sitting back in my car, I couldn't help smiling. I felt blessed by the experience and the encounter had made my day.

Before joining the Society, I probably wouldn't have always taken the time out to just chat. I certainly wouldn't have understood just how much I could get back from such an encounter.

The people who do understand this – implicitly – are our 12,000+ members and volunteers.

Every day, be it in our Vinnies Shops, on our Vinnies Soup Vans, on the other end of the line at one of our busy call centres or in people's homes – which is about so much more than providing food hampers or assistance with paying the utilities or the rent – our volunteers understand the value of human connection.

They knock on doors bringing hope and understanding. Our volunteers always go that extra step in providing time and care to people doing it tough. The quantum of our work has increased year on year, with 135,576 home visits and 211,750 meals provided last year. However, underneath the statistics our daily experience is of people young and old finding it harder to survive, and often compounded by feelings of loneliness.

Each day our members and volunteers carry out their own crusades to help people fight the injustices they face. We have done so for 165 years and the fight continues.

In effect, our volunteers are simply living out the words of our founder Blessed Frederic Ozanam who said: "Yours must be a work of love, of kindness, you must give your time, your talents, yourselves."

More than 165 years later, it's this grassroots kindness that is helping to build communities in which validation and healing are possible.

This is a crusade by any definition, and one that I'm happy – no, honoured – to be a part of.

Sue Cattermole
Chief Executive Officer



Melbourne's Lord Mayor, Sally Capp, joins Sue Cattermole and soup van administrator Charlotte Georgiou.

RESPONDING WITHOUT JUDGEMENT

The St Vincent de Paul Society's Cost of Living programs focus on alleviating and lifting people out of adverse circumstances.

Through various means our members and volunteers provide support and assistance to people in need as well as advocating on their behalf.

Our programs include: home visitation, emergency expenses, respite holiday homes and specialist service referrals.

In Victoria, more than 775,000 people are struggling to afford and maintain a decent living standard.

That's almost 800,000 people in our community – this could be an elderly neighbour, the young man stacking shelves in the supermarket or the child sitting next to our own child in class – living below the poverty line.

Our programs and services focus on alleviating and lifting people out of adverse circumstances, thanks to a team of 4,700+ conference members and volunteers across Victoria, including our 40 Box Hill Call Centre volunteers who field more than 280 calls per day from the frontline.

Our members and volunteers see and respond to crises in people's homes.

Last financial year, we provided assistance to 326,394 people (including 142,862 children) and delivered more than \$18.4 million worth of material assistance – ensuring that the rent was paid, the lights stayed on and there was heating during winter.

Our volunteers also ensured that people had fuel in the car to get to work, take kids to school or be able to get to their hospital appointments.

They provided precious weekends away for families weighed down by the daily

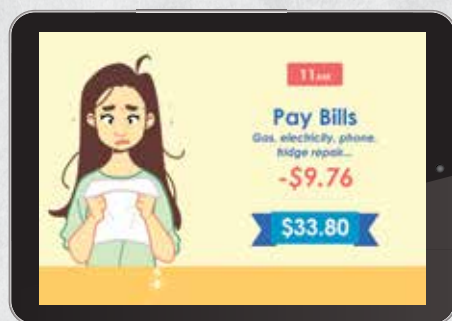
pressures of trying to keep the wolf from the door, and safe accommodation for women and children who are in the grip of family violence and paralysed by fear.

Vinnies volunteers know that keeping a roof over a person's head is an important step, but it is just the first step. They are not only called on to provide assistance with the basics, but are driven by the 'love thy neighbour' sentiment that was central to the values of our founder Blessed Frederic Ozanam.

Cumulative pressure on household budgets translates to very real and desperate calls for help from people on the frontline – and thankfully, with the support of Vinnies' donors – volunteers are there to listen and to ease the burden.

Our volunteers are driven to understand the causes of disadvantage and to advocate for long-term change. They believe in fostering attitudes of respect and empathy for people doing it tough and advocating for people's rights in a country like Australia to not only hope for – but to anticipate – a decent standard of living.

Each year, our volunteers quietly provide a hand up and they give from the heart. Our programs are wide ranging and helping to heal communities with little acts of kindness deeply valued by the people who need it most.



VINNIES JOINS CALLS TO #RAISETHERATE

In 2019, the St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria and auditor Deloitte Australia crunched the numbers and found that Victoria's economy would be lifted by \$773 million in the first year alone if the single rate of Newstart and related payments were increased by \$75 per week. Regional Victoria would see substantial benefits along with greater Melbourne.¹



In our Victorian impact briefing, we urged the government to:

- Increase the single rates of Newstart, Youth Allowance and related payments of \$75 per week to reduce poverty and inequality across Australia.
- Index payments to wages as well as consumer price index to ensure they maintain pace with community living standards.
- Increase Commonwealth rent assistance to \$20 per week for a single person on Newstart.


Together, these measures would lift people out of poverty by helping them afford food and housing, reduce homelessness and severe financial hardship. These reforms would improve people's wellbeing, security and health. Making Newstart work would benefit entire communities.

1 Deloitte Access Economics (2018), p. 49

ASSISTANCE BREAKDOWN 2018-2019



\$2,282,962


Welfare and material aid


\$2,249,155

Household goods


\$882,949

Utilities


\$301,978

Medical

BOX HILL CALL CENTRE

TOTAL CALLS PER YEAR

 **67,096**

Note: One call may contain multiple items requested.

41,342 calls

Food

10,150 calls

Clothing

5,615 calls

Furniture

4,666 calls

Financial

6,895 calls

Other



'IT'S A CYCLE OF EXTREME POVERTY'

**HOW DO YOU LIVE ON \$40 A DAY?
NEWSTART RECIPIENT LISA CARBERRY
SAYS THE ANSWER IS SIMPLE.
YOU DON'T.**

BY LISA CARBERRY

Vinnies Victoria joined with the Australian Council of Social Service to kick off its *Raise the Rate* campaign in a bid to increase the level of Newstart payments for the first time in 25 years.

No-one should be expected to live on \$40 a day in modern Australia. We all know that the cost of living today is high and many working people are struggling to get by, but for those of us barely surviving on Newstart, it is everyday necessities, such as rent, gas, electricity and food that we simply cannot afford.

The minute my fortnightly payment arrives it goes on paying the rent and the utility bill that has been longest in the red or debt repayments.

I keep my bills all rotating so that I don't lose the roof over my head or get the lights cut off. After I pay those bills, I am usually left with around \$20 to get through two weeks, which is why Vinnies' food and fuel vouchers are a lifeline. Vinnies has also helped with my rent at times.

The story of why I am in this position now is sad, but one that is common and could happen to anyone.

Up until five years ago, I was working as a security guard and before that I was a teacher.

However, in 2014, the company I worked for went into administration, and my mother became ill with cancer so I moved into her rental flat in Geelong and became her full-time carer.

When she died a year later, I was transferred from a carer payment and allowance back on to Newstart, which worked out to approximately \$300 less a fortnight than what I had been receiving. On a carer payment I could meet my expenses with a degree of comfort, however, returning to Newstart I couldn't. I wasn't able to keep up the rent on my mother's flat and, although the landlord was understanding, when I consistently fell behind, I was eventually served with a notice to vacate, leaving me homeless.

For two years, I was either couch surfing at a friend's place or living in my car.

I lived in my car, a sedan, sleeping on the backseat, for 12 months, and used to park in 24-hour service stations at night so that I felt safer and had access to facilities, such as a toilet and shower. I had my cat and dog with me the whole time because finding affordable rental accommodation that allows you to keep pets is very difficult. My animals are my family, essential to my mental health and wellbeing, and I wouldn't have gotten through these experiences without them.

I am currently dealing with a long-term illness, and this is a really tough time in my life, with no other financial resources to draw upon except my Newstart payment. I know I will eventually overcome this and hopefully return to work.

A low level of Newstart means that the government is not helping people like me to maintain their dignity as they make their way through hardship. It doesn't provide for a standard of living adequate

for health and wellbeing, including food, clothing, housing, medical care and other necessary services. Rather, through an inadequate level of Newstart the government chooses to demonise us, make us feel lesser than others, and keep us in a cycle of extreme poverty.

I am grateful and amazed by the community's generous response after reading my story in the *Guardian Australia*.

A number of people got in touch to send gifts of support, including one lady who ordered me an online grocery shop that filled my previously empty fridge to the brim. Another person provided a supermarket gift card so I could go shopping of my own choosing.

So the Vinnies' spirit of good works is alive and well in people's hearts out there, but welfare payments need to be at a level that doesn't make the situation for people who are struggling worse than it is already.



FOOD SHOULD NEVER BE A LUXURY

The St Vincent de Paul Society's programs for the prevention of food insecurity provide essential meals, food vouchers and food parcels to vulnerable people.

Our programs include: eight soup van operations that provide meals and friendship to people experiencing homelessness as well as food aid through our core work of home visitation.

Food insecurity isn't just something experienced by people living on – or below – the poverty line.

A Monash University study showed there were also episodes of, or ongoing, food insecurity among low to middle-income households where the median income was around \$73,000.

Over the past three years Vinnies has provided food assistance – in the form of food vouchers and food parcels – that has made up almost half of the value of assistance provided by our members and volunteers.

Through regular home visits, our members and volunteers uncover stories of struggle and they endeavour to remind the individuals and families they visit that food is something that should be available – freely and without judgement.

Our bread runs supplement the regular food hamper drop-offs, and our nutritious school breakfast clubs provide vital meals so that growing minds have the nourishment they need for learning.

Food insecurity is something our Vinnies Soup Van volunteers – 'Vannies' – see and respond to every night across our eight soup van operations in Melbourne and regional Victoria.

Over the last financial year, our Vannies have provided 211,750 meals (with an average of 835 meals across our eight operations per night), and assisted around 900 people a night.

Our Vannies are often the first point of contact for people who are hungry and, like all our volunteers, they also provide so much more than just food. They provide friendship and a hand up when people need it most.

We also simply couldn't feed as many people as we do without the ongoing generosity of our donors and corporate partners – such as Tasty Fresh Food Co., SecondBite and FareShare – businesses that share our belief that no Victorian adult or child should ever go hungry.

VINNIES SOUP VAN SERVICES (PER YEAR)

Soup Van	Established	Years of operation	Meals provided	Assists* provided	People assisted per night	Volunteers	Operating nights per week
Berwick	2 September 2009	10	9,364	10	63	174	3 nights per week
Collingwood	6 December 1998	21	34,119	280	118	284	6 nights per week
Endeavour Hills	31 October 2013	6	5,656	2,978	89	74	2 nights per week
Fitzroy	26 June 1975	44	88,503	11,818	275	589	7 nights per week
Footscray	17 September 1989	30	62,121	7,544	191	256	7 nights per week
Moe	27 November 1997	22	4,133	5	60	21	2 nights per week
Rosebud	1 July 2017	2	2,188	79	49	20	1 nights per week
Traralgon	14 August 2018	1	5,666	162	79	26	2 nights per week
			211,750	22,876	924	1,444	

* Assists provided refers to items such as blankets, toiletries, beanies, socks, scarves and swags that are given to assist people who are experiencing homelessness.



ASSISTANCE BREAKDOWN 2018–2019



\$6,759,900

Value of food vouchers



\$1,489,605

Value of food purchases



211,750

Soup van meals provided



22,876

Assists provided
(items such as blankets, toiletries, beanies,
socks, scarves and swags)



2,532

Conference bread runs



18,945

Volunteer shifts completed



68,323

Volunteer hours provided



924

People assisted per night

'VINNIES FOCUSES ON HUMAN DIGNITY'

**GOING OUT ON THE VINNIES
SOUP VAN AT THE TENDER
AGE OF 16 OPENED MARY
EVANGELISTA'S EYES.**

**NOW AT 18, MARY IS
PRESIDENT OF ONE OF THE
BUSY SOUP VAN OPERATIONS.**

BY MARY EVANGELISTA

When I was 16 a teacher asked if I wanted to take part in the Soup Van Street Retreat volunteer program and I thought, 'Why not?' So I went out one night on the Berwick Soup Van run and it was such a huge eye-opener that I have never wanted to stop.

I went to St Francis Xavier College, where most of the students are pretty privileged, so we're lucky. Our fridges are stocked, we have heaters in our homes, we don't want for much.

It was a revelation to see people just a few kilometres away who were living in completely different circumstances.

Since then, I have volunteered twice a month, every month and when I was approached to take on the presidency earlier this year, I was excited to say yes.

I manage about 120 volunteers, approximately 60 of those are regulars. I handle most of the administration. I'm really lucky to have a food manager, roster coordinator and finance officer, so I focus on looking after the volunteers.

I also make sure the van runs smoothly, looking over any maintenance issues and I do a lot of talks with the youth engagement team at schools.

This year I also started university, studying biomedicine at Monash. The presidency, university and doing my part-time job has taught me to really organise my time. I think I got my job in food service partly because of my experience with Vinnies. At the interview, they asked me how I treat people and I said it would be the same as I treat people on the soup van – with respect and as if they were your friend.

As well as giving back to the community, the Berwick Soup Van has given me so much – relationships with people I would never have had otherwise and knowledge I would not be able to get from anywhere else.

It has given me important life skills, such as being able to find relatable things to talk about with people who are not in the same boat as me. It is also great for other people my age who are scared to enter into a leadership role like the presidency to see someone who is doing it and hopefully inspires them to do it too.

The more time I spend on the van, the more relationships I have built with other volunteers and the people we serve. The Berwick Soup Van goes out every Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday nights. We serve up to 90 people on a busy night, but it is usually around 60. I like to keep up with how the people we serve are doing and they like to know how I'm doing at university. It is heartwarming to know that they care about my day too, which is a lot less stressful than theirs I imagine.

Last year St Francis Xavier College ran its first Christmas party for our soup van. We were able to give gifts to the kids and provide a nice meal, a roast with vegies. It gave the volunteers and the people we serve the opportunity to share Christmas dinner with each other as friends. What makes me proud to volunteer for Vinnies is the people and the focus on human dignity, and giving people a hand up rather than a hand out. That's a great way to approach social justice issues.

Every third Tuesday and Thursday, school students come out – just like I did when I first started on the soup van. Seeing how much energy and enthusiasm they put into it is a highlight. I tell new volunteers to keep an open mind because you never know what you will experience on the soup van. It is great when new volunteers say they have learned so much and will definitely be back.

I will stick with the soup van for a long time because of the friendships I have made. If people around the world were more appreciative of the communities they have and would volunteer to support them, I feel the world would be a better place.

A TASTY AND VITAL PARTNERSHIP

Tasty Fresh Food Co. runs a national lunch truck service selling hot food and sandwiches to employees at remote work sites.

More than 20 years ago, Tasty Fresh and Vinnies formed a partnership where any excess food was to be donated to Vinnies. So passionate was the company about the impact that it could make, that Tasty Fresh then also began to produce excess food each day to ensure that our soup vans had a healthy amount of food available with a choice to boot.

Today Tasty Fresh Food Co. provides over \$1 million worth of food to the Vinnies Soup Vans, which enable the vans to continue to feed more than 900 people each night and, at our Vinnies CEO Sleepout in Melbourne, Tasty Fresh Food Co. was named the winner of the inaugural Vinnies Good Business Award.

"Our volunteers spend considerable time preparing food 365 days a year, and donations from the Tasty Fresh Food Co. make their job much quicker and easier. We are immensely appreciative of their generous support over so many years," said Danusia Kaska, St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria Soup Van Operations Manager.



Tasty Fresh's Karen Periera accepts the inaugural Good Business Award at the Vinnies CEO Sleepout.

BUILDING A FUTURE TOGETHER

The St Vincent de Paul Society's homelessness programs focus on preventing vulnerable people from becoming homeless and supporting them on their journey out of homelessness and to regain independence.

Our programs include: assistance with accommodation costs, a rental assistance program to promote self-sufficiency and a no interest loans scheme to assist with household goods.

Since 2006, homelessness in Victoria has risen by 43 percent – a staggering statistic.

While the issue has become more visible on our streets with seemingly more and more vulnerable people looking for refuge in unsafe places, Vinnies Victoria is equally concerned about the rising number of our state's hidden homeless.

This includes people who are in insecure accommodation like rooming or boarding houses, sleeping in cars and couch surfing. People can give the impression that they are living a 'normal' life but in actual fact they may not be.

Of the almost 25,000 people currently experiencing homelessness, many are couch surfing, living in overcrowded accommodation or some sort of transitional arrangement, meaning that they don't have secure housing.

This is due, in part, to rental increases across not only metropolitan Melbourne, but all regional areas, with the Rental Affordability Index reporting that every suburb in Melbourne, Geelong or Bendigo is "extremely unaffordable" for people on Newstart. This means they would have to pay at least 60 percent of their income on rent and, in some areas, more than 100 percent.

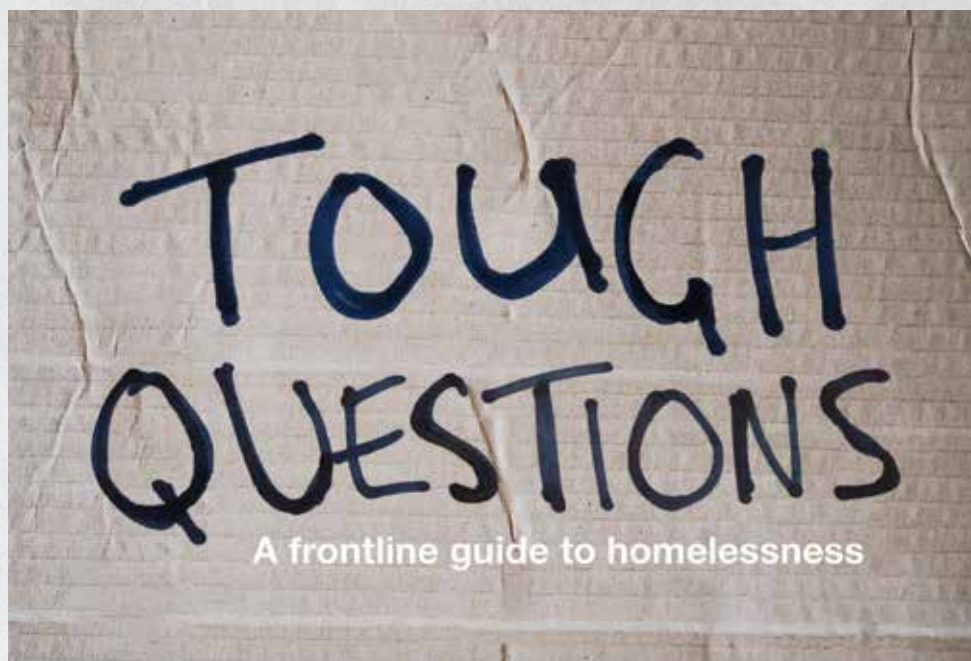
Add to that a "shortfall of 102,800 social housing properties to meet current need", according to the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, it's not difficult to conclude that Victoria is in the midst of a housing crisis.

Our network of local groups – known as conferences – serve almost every suburb and regional centre. Our volunteers, who are residents of the area, are well positioned to understand local issues and to provide a range of critical assistance that underpins and supports people experiencing homelessness – or people at risk of homelessness.

There is no single solution. One agency or sector alone is not going to fix this. So we believe in tackling homelessness with an integrated strategy – having the government, corporate, community and welfare sectors working together.

Vinnies Victoria has joined other states in a 30-year national strategy developed through consultation with federal, state and territory governments, developers, financiers and not-for-profit and for-profit providers – a significant step towards increasing the stock of social and affordable housing in Australia.

In Victoria, Vinnies is also working closely with a number of Vinnies CEO Sleepout participants on housing initiatives and projects. We applaud these CEOs and business and community leaders who have listened, walked with us and taken up our challenge to help build a brighter future through medium and long-term safe, secure and affordable housing for low-income Victorians.



TOUGH QUESTIONS

Vinnies Victoria recently launched an initiative designed to raise awareness on topics that matter to us very much – homelessness and poverty.

Tough Questions: A frontline guide to homelessness was the first in our series of informative guides launched on our social media platforms. This series – which we invited people to download from our website – is designed to look at:

- What homelessness really means;
- Who it impacts; and
- What we can do to help.

As part of this initiative, we also invited our members, volunteers and employees to use the guide and start a conversation within their own circles. Greater understanding only comes by asking our own 'tough questions' and not being afraid to openly discuss these difficult topics as a community.

To download your own copy please go to: vinnies.org.au/toughquestions.



ASSISTANCE BREAKDOWN 2018–2019



\$2,172,816

Accommodation/
transport



\$2,282,962

Welfare and
material aid

WHAT CAUSES HOMELESSNESS?



40%

Lack of affordable
housing



35%

Escaping family
violence



11%

Money/income issues



5%

Relationship/
family breakdowns



2%

Mental/physical illness
and/or addiction



7%

Other

Source: chp.org.au/homelessness



**'IT TOOK
ME THREE
MONTHS
TO LOOK
AT MY
FACE'**

**HAVING DIED FOUR TIMES
ALREADY, DOUG HERRINGTON
SAYS THAT HE DOESN'T TAKE
A MINUTE FOR GRANTED.
STILL, HOMELESSNESS IS
NEVER FAR FROM HIS MIND.**

BY DOUG HERRINGTON

In 2011, I didn't have anywhere to live after a series of significant life events, culminating in a bad relationship breakdown, so I moved in with a friend in Ipswich, Queensland. Two months later, the house burned down with me inside. I got third-degree burns to 50 percent of my body. If you get burns to more than 25 percent, you're in a lot of trouble.

I was in a coma for three months and in hospital for nearly 18. I couldn't move my arms for that time, they were frozen in place and I couldn't walk. I have multiple health problems now as a result. Being homeless wasn't the reason I got burned, but part of the reason I got burned was because I was in a homeless situation. It was a contributing factor.

After hospital, I was in a burn suit. I didn't want to see anyone; it took me three months to look at my face. A Vinnies volunteer brought meals to my flat because I did not want to go out. She brought her 12-year-old son with her too, who treated me like 'Doug the person', not 'Doug the burns survivor', and that was the first small step on the road to acceptance.

Ipswich wasn't the first time I was homeless. Dad threw me out when I was 15 and I ended up at Vinnies in St Kilda where they helped find me housing and gave me food vouchers.

Since the fire, I have struggled to get by because I have not been able to work. I am trying to live on \$140 a week after paying rent. Then there is my medication, utility bills, phone and food – in that order – which is why Vinnies helps me now with vouchers when needed, otherwise I wouldn't eat some nights.

The funny thing is that my first connection to Vinnies was through my mum who volunteered at a shop and delivered meals in Belfast nearly 50 years ago. So Vinnies has always been there.



Doug speaking at Geelong's 2019 Vinnies CEO Sleepout.

I relocated from Queensland to Melbourne last year to be closer to my family. People can end up homeless because it is extremely hard to access services sometimes, especially if you have difficulties.

Substance abuse and homelessness are symptoms of mental health issues, and everyone on this planet has issues to varying degrees. Most of us can function okay, but if you have a life crisis, that is when things can just seem to fall apart.

It has taken a long time to get back on track, but I am now in the position where I have a flat and am looking for work.

I spoke at both Vinnies CEO Sleepouts in Melbourne and Geelong this year, and it was a really positive experience that has helped me develop new confidence in the role I want to take into the future – as a community worker and motivational speaker.

The fire consumed a lot more than my flesh. For a time, it consumed my spirit as well. It's been a long road to recovery – and sometimes it is two steps forward, one step back, but that still means you're going forward. I have a good, solid skill set and regard my mind and strength of spirit as my greatest assets.

When I got out of prison I developed a program targeting people exiting the justice system to gain and sustain employment, so I was in a good place and had gotten my life back on track, then the fire happened. Once you have had a couple of cracks at death, you realise just how precious life is. I will never take anything for granted, every minute I have now with my grandchildren and the fact that I am alive, is a miracle.

TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE





THIS YEAR'S VINNIES CEO SLEEPOUT IN MELBOURNE WAS A YEAR OF FIRSTS – IT WAS OUR 10TH ANNIVERSARY AND THE BIGGEST EVENT EVER.

We also hosted our second Sleepout in Geelong, which was buoyed by the inspiring commitment and passion of a group of local CEOs and community leaders who care deeply about their community.

Close to 300 CEOs in all bedded down on pieces of cardboard to help raise funds for our homeless programs – raising the record amount of \$1,581,980.

Temperatures dropped to six degrees and gave the participants a small taste of what vulnerable Victorians are facing every night.

“This is my way of walking the talk and helping out where I can,” said Gandel Philanthropy CEO and the Melbourne event’s highest fundraiser, Vedran Drakulic OAM. “Homelessness is not something that’s going away. In fact, it’s getting worse.”

By focusing on Victoria’s key change-makers and influencers, Vinnies CEO Sleepout is a unique event and captured our theme, *Leading with compassion*. People who took part are committed to fighting homelessness and have a powerful ability to spread the word to their employees and through their extensive business networks and public profiles.

Vinnies was honoured to have a number of inspiring speakers – who know what it means to live on the margins in a wealthy country like ours – share their stories at the events. They included Doug Herrington, who held the Melbourne audience enthralled with his story of resilience and incredible strength of character after surviving a house fire in Queensland where he had been ‘couch surfing’ during a period of homelessness.

Another speaker, Berry McSherry, was a familiar face among the CEOs, having attended every one of Melbourne’s 10 CEO Sleepout events – along with fellow participant, Compu-Stor CEO Jeremy Manford. However, Berry is a former CEO with a difference – she illustrated that homelessness can happen to anyone by recounting the challenging circumstances she faced after dealing with bankruptcy and losing her home.

The CEOs were treated to a simple meal from our soup van volunteers – who were also on hand to share their experiences of being out on the road night after night providing meals to people on the streets.

Vinnies Victoria CEO Sue Cattermole said: “As well as being one of our key annual fundraising and awareness events, the amazing thing about the Vinnies CEO Sleepout is that a number of participants have gone on to create practical business solutions to tackle homelessness and poverty, such as transitional housing, pop-up shelters and free financial planning workshops for vulnerable women. That is the power of the CEO Sleepout and this year, they were both inspiring, if chilly, nights again.”

Thank you to the South Melbourne Market, which proudly supported Melbourne’s Vinnies CEO Sleepout as venue sponsor.

Huge thanks to everyone who slept out, donated funds and/or gave their time to support this important campaign.

SAVE THE DATE:
THURSDAY 18 JUNE 2020

Join us for the 2020 Vinnies CEO Sleepout in Melbourne.

Register now: ceosleepout.org.au

'I JUST WANT TO DO MORE'

IN 2017 CHRIS CHRISTOFI, FOUNDER AND CEO OF REVENTON GROUP, PARTICIPATED IN HIS FIRST VINNIES CEO SLEEPOUT. NOW HE'S ON BOARD TO DO MUCH MORE.

BY CHRIS CHRISTOFI

Ever since I can remember, I've enjoyed helping people and trying to make the world a better place. Nowadays, as the head of my own company, I feel a deep sense of responsibility to assist and give back. It's all about creating good energy and making the world better.

When I pass someone on the street my first thought – and I'm serious – is "That could be me sitting there". Sometimes the only thing separating you and me from someone sleeping rough is a set of circumstances.

I have a ritual that I've been doing for many years now – I will always acknowledge anyone I pass on the street. It doesn't cost anything to see someone. Really see them. It just starts with a smile.

Every Christmas I encourage my kids to write a bunch of Christmas cards with a personal message. We buy some food and come alongside anyone on the street. We sit down and talk to them and just spend some time, learning a bit more about their story. The kids get to see why it's important not to take things for granted; things like having a roof over your head, being able to go to a good school or even just having food on the table.

The reason why I decided to partner with Vinnies is that the organisation is 97 percent volunteer-run, which is incredible, really. The other reason is that so much of the money raised goes back into Vinnies services, rather than getting swallowed up in admin costs.

At my first Vinnies CEO Sleepout in 2017, I saw just how passionate everyone was and that it's all about the charity and the giving side, and that's why I wanted to be part of it – and will continue to be part of it. I think Vinnies embodies what being a charity is all about.

I've already signed up for 2020. In 2017, we raised \$60,000. This year, we've raised \$80,000 and next year we're aiming for \$100,000.

I was honoured to be a CEO Sleepout ambassador this year, and can't wait to do more with Vinnies.

The idea for our next project came to me while I was out grocery shopping with my family. I'm currently scouting for a block of land, where I'll build a home and auction it off with all proceeds going to Vinnies. We're calling it 'Brick by Brick' because nothing symbolises what Vinnies does more than a home.

I just want to see more and more done to alleviate poverty and homelessness each year, and want to see more people helping. I want to see a bigger impact.

Get behind Vinnies. Let's squash this homelessness all across Victoria, together we can achieve more. As Ford Motor Company founder Henry Ford said: "Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success."

'PROVIDING AN AVENUE FOR KIDS TO DO SOMETHING THEY LOVE'

The Vinnies CEO Sleepout opened my eyes to how many children in and around Geelong were homeless. This really touched my heart, and I decided that I had to go out there and use my network for a good cause that would hopefully make a difference.

I got a lot out of my experience at the Vinnies CEO Sleepout and I was fortunate to become 2018's highest fundraiser in Geelong, raising more than \$18,000 – but I really wanted the partnership with Vinnies to continue afterwards.

So I spoke to Vinnies about what we could do with some of the money raised by the event and we discussed putting it back into sporting activities within the Geelong region because sport has the capacity to build kids up and get them to reconnect socially.



The joint pilot initiative – Connect with Kids – sees Bell Park Sports Club working with a number of families that Vinnies visits in and around Geelong.

The program is all about providing an avenue for kids to do something they love. It doesn't have to be football – it can be anything. If we can get kids engaged in whatever club or sport they like and give them a sense of belonging, I think that is our success.

Rose Pirrottina
President, Bell Park Sports Club

Pictured above: Rose Pirrottina with fellow CEO Sleepout ambassador, Samantha Krajina.

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

The St Vincent de Paul Society has always identified education as a key pathway out of poverty.

Our Education programs offer essential support to students and families with education expenses as well as tutoring programs, reading clubs, kids camps, kids days out and sporting programs to assist students experiencing disadvantage.

One in six Australian children and young people living in poverty fall behind in their studies because their parents can't afford the basic things they need.

Sadly, the findings of the *Poverty in Australia, 2018* report don't come as a surprise to our Vinnies volunteers who, all too often, see more and more families in distress every year as they try to balance everyday expenses along with back-to-school needs.

Over the last financial year, our volunteers provided \$1,173,150 worth of assistance for items such as uniforms, shoes, books, stationery, school fees, camps, excursions, IT and more.

As any parent will tell you, there are plenty of school costs outside the classroom, too, such as sports, music, swimming lessons, school photos and, for older students, graduations and formal dinners.

Any one of these extra-curricular activities put additional strain on an already stretched weekly budget, a strain our volunteers see and respond to without hesitation.

Our investment in the next generation goes beyond just providing financial assistance. Our Vinnies tutoring programs and reading clubs are dotted across Melbourne and spring up where the need for educational support is greatest, because we know that children who aren't supported are more likely to drop out of school.

Our tutoring programs are designed to help build essential skills that allow students to solve problems, develop skills and encourage greater interaction with their classmates. The programs also provide free access to iPads and the internet as well as to committed tutors.

These elements help a child stay in school and make it a more enjoyable experience for them – volunteers tell us that the tutoring programs are an important part of developing social skills and the independence they need both inside, and outside, the classroom.

Vinnies Victoria proudly wears its commitment to education on its sleeve. After all, an investment in education is an investment in Victoria's future.



Casey Young Vinnies leaders.



Alexis at the Family Day Out with Casey Young Vinnies leader, Nicola.

A HEART FOR LEARNING

As ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle once said: “Education of the mind without education of the heart is no education at all”, and our youth-orientated volunteer groups – Youth Conferences – are driven to create positive change by identifying advocacy projects within local communities.

Earlier this year, through consultation with other regional conference groups, members of Diamond Valley Young Vinnies were becoming increasingly concerned about the growing reports of refugee and asylum seeker issues consistently falling through the cracks and in urgent need of assistance.













The group decided to take matters into their own hands and staged a trivia night. They successfully raised nearly \$3,000 towards Vinnies services and programs that help refugees and asylum seekers settle into their new lives.

Casey Young Vinnies, based in the Berwick area, organised a Family Day Out at Easter to get to know people in the local community and what issues they were facing.

Vinnies members shared dozens of Easter eggs with the parents and children, and through their informal one-on-one conversations were able to discover a variety of ways in which they could provide practical support and assistance. For example, two children from one family didn't have laptops that were needed for their schoolwork. Casey Young Vinnies jumped in and were able to provide both kids with the technology required to keep up with their classmates.

Our Youth Conferences are always hungry for change and are constantly on the lookout for new opportunities – including expanding their works to include Vinnies Soup Vans, Home Visitations and other areas, such as the local call centre in Cranbourne. Our young people are definitely leading the way with confidence, purpose and plenty of heart.

ASSISTANCE BREAKDOWN 2018–2019

	\$104,604 Uniform & shoes
	\$95,651 Books & stationery
	\$77,466 School fees
	\$13,647 Extra-curricular fees
	\$54,561 Camps
	\$12,169 Excursions
	\$62,865 IT
	\$2,556 Travel expenses
	\$12,851 Assistance in lieu
	\$29,269 Sundry
	\$20,187 Bursary
	\$68,808 Scholarships

'I LOVE HELPING CHILDREN TO LEARN'



CONFERENCE MEMBER VICKI CURTAIN HAS PUT HER SKILLS AS A TEACHER TO GOOD USE AND SHE LOVES IT.

BY VICKI CURTAIN

For three years I've been a member of Beaumaris-Black Rock Conference, but I'm a teacher and it was during the school holidays last year that I read about the Dandenong Tutoring Program being run on a Saturday morning. I thought it would be perfect to get involved with because I could use my skills from conference work, but I also love helping kids learn. It seemed like a good fit.

This program is a model that works. What is unique is that attendance depends on word-of-mouth in the community so we never know week to week who will come.

We always make sure that we can assist whoever arrives, at whatever skill level they need. It's great that we can cater to individual needs.

Although the program attracts a number of teachers, most of the tutors have different skill sets but we all get good preparation in a professional training day at the end of each term.

As far as the kids go, the program is open to everyone. Children from disadvantaged families are our target audience but they don't have to be. Most tend to be from non-English-speaking backgrounds. Our manager is good at looking at the best fit for the kids and moving them along so they can progress.

The secret to good learning is always about building relationships with the child and about ensuring you always have something prepared for them to do.

They start off saying, "I can't do this", but you gently encourage them and then you see them grow and develop in confidence. It's wonderful.

Husna is a child who had struggled in the classroom but when you get her in a one to one session, she's really responsive.

At the end of last term, we had a beach lifesaver come in to talk about what they do and the equipment they use. At the end of their visit, I encouraged Husna to write about it – she wrote a page and a half. That was something Husna would not ordinarily do and she was so proud of herself.

I recently saw Husna reading to Sophie, the dog. She is really gaining in confidence through reading. Seeing the difference that the program makes in children's lives, especially the seeds of change in the younger kids, really is the biggest buzz.

'IT HAS BEEN AN ALL-ROUND POSITIVE EXPERIENCE FOR THE STUDENTS AND ME'

I have witnessed a lot of students who have come in with low confidence end up flourishing with the work we do. To keep those feel-good stories going is what keeps me coming to this program.

One student I have been working with has come a long way. Sana was very disengaged when she started the program. I had an idea to encourage her to write a report about a visitor who comes to the Dandenong Tutoring Program, which is a therapy dog called Sophie. I wanted her to write about Sophie to give her a story to own, something to be proud of and something to give her confidence. Initially it was a challenge but I kept encouraging her and she responded really well.

It has been an all-round positive experience for the students and me. Personally, I feel so connected to the community and seeing the positive difference in the students is wonderful.

Daniel Gonsalves
Dandenong Tutoring Program



Pictured above: Daniel Gonsalves and Sana.

A VOLUNTEER COMMUNITY

A key part of the St Vincent de Paul Society's work involves one of the largest and oldest social enterprises in Australia, our Vinnies Shops.

Our 108 shops, warehouse, call centres and logistics generate income to fund the Society's programs, but also play an essential role in our community by recycling pre-loved goods, building communities through volunteering and providing individuals with support, training, skill development and jobs.

Our shops provide an overarching support system to all the services we provide.

Everybody knows and loves Vinnies Shops. From fashion editors to vintage lovers, environmentalists and bargain hunters, Vinnies Shops provide something for everyone. The Society's social enterprise arm has had another busy year of retail activity and things may only be set to improve. New York business academic Scott Galloway recently predicted that global sales of used clothing will be "a bigger business within nine years than fast fashion".

Overall sales for 2018–2019 of \$47,522,599, was up by six percent on last year. It was driven by shop upgrades and familiar 'Vinnies own' lines that continue to sell well.

Media attention on social justice issues around poverty in Australia and the impact of overconsumption on the environment have all played to the strengths of Vinnies Shops. Not only are Vinnies Shops helping to stop thousands of tonnes of clothes, 10,000 mattresses and other household items going into landfill, the proceeds from repurposing goods and reselling them supports the vital work of the organisation.

Every generous material donation and sale supports vulnerable local people to access the basics – food, utilities, education, medicine and more. The shops support other recycling initiatives too – such as partnering with local manufacturers to refurbish and sell recycled mattresses.

As anyone who has a connection to Vinnies knows, our volunteers are the lifeblood of Vinnies Shops. Without them, the Society could not support people in need at the level we do. Retaining

volunteers is a lynchpin of the retail team's focus and the results of recent surveys speak for themselves – 92 percent of volunteers say they would recommend Vinnies as a place to volunteer and 97 percent say they feel valued by Vinnies.

The retail team achieve this remarkable result through recognition of service milestones and by developing a network of dedicated and sensitive shop managers who treat their volunteers with respect and appreciation while delivering a top retail service with a purpose.

Vinnies Shops also provide a valuable work experience role for individuals looking to develop retail skills and build confidence to gain paid work. Volunteering in our shops has led to a number of our volunteers finding paid work elsewhere or even within the organisation.

The first Vinnies Shop opened its doors in Melbourne in 1926, and the shops have become a quintessential part of Victoria's volunteer economy since, often referenced in traditional and social media today as the go-to gold standard brand in op-shopping.

Thanks to funds raised through the shops and its fundraising programs, Vinnies relies on less than one percent government funding – which is a remarkable social enterprise model.

As always, thanks to the incredible and invaluable network of our volunteers, employees and supporters whose belief and dedication are the foundation stones of Vinnies Shops.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE



WELFARE AID

\$2,282,962

The value of product (clothing, furniture and household items) given away by Vinnies Shops for welfare purposes during this financial year, up by 39 percent on the last financial year.



INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

\$47,522,599

Vinnies Shops income

\$29,054,814

Vinnies Shops expenditure

\$18,467,785

Funds available for distribution



Rebecca Ruffin, manager at Vinnies Coburg.

VINNIES VIP CARDS REAP REWARDS

This year saw the introduction of the incredibly popular Vinnies VIP cards. Holders of the reward card collect points for every dollar spent in our shops and receive a \$10 voucher when they have spent \$200.

After being introduced in June 2019, they were immediately taken up by our loyal customers in the tens of thousands. The VIP cards have become an important way of connecting and communicating with our supporters.

‘VINNIES GAVE ME WHAT I NEEDED FOR MY JOB’

**IT WASN'T JUST A NEW
CAREER AND CONFIDENCE
THAT LEXIE BROMLEY
FOUND AT VINNIES – SHE
ALSO FOUND A NEW FAMILY.**

BY LEXIE BROMLEY

I started volunteering at Vinnies Sale as part of the Work for the Dole Scheme, but at the end of the compulsory six months, I didn't want to leave.

I was thrown into the deep end straight away. After I completed my paperwork and police check, I went into the shop to talk to the manager, Kim, about when I should start. She said, "Now" – and asked me to stay until the end of the day. Kim normally left at 3.00pm, so the day coordinator showed me the end-of-day duties. The next day, there was no day coordinator, so Kim stayed until the shop closed – and I had to show her the end-of-day duties.

Within a few weeks of me starting the day coordinator left, so I took over the role, which meant I got keys to the shop and safe, and suddenly had a lot of responsibility.

Before volunteering at Vinnies, I had finished my beauty therapy training, but had never had a job. I realised I wouldn't be able to work in the beauty industry because I have a painful issue with my foot and can't stand all day. At Vinnies I could sit and do paperwork or work out the back, so there was more flexibility and understanding from management.

I loved working with the other volunteers, who became like a big bunch of step-grandmothers. I had also bonded with the customers, so I stayed on volunteering for five years.

The manager's job came up at Vinnies Sale and although I didn't get it, I learned a lot from the experience. A little while later, the manager's job at Vinnies Morwell was advertised, so I took another chance and this time I was successful. I have been manager here for 3½ years now.

The main difference is the pressure to focus on budgets, as well as being in charge of the volunteers. They all do so much for each other. Recently one volunteer's husband passed away and everyone gathered to support her.

To be a good Vinnies Shop manager, you need to be able to get on with 1,001 different personalities – from the customers and volunteers – everyone is so different.

A highlight for me was getting our new racks organised. Vinnies Morwell was the place in Gippsland where old fittings came to die, so getting a shop refurbishment lifted everyone's spirits. Having new stands and fresh presentations make the volunteers are so proud.

Volunteering gives you skills you can't learn out of a textbook when it comes to retail and customer service, and you don't know where it's going to lead. It is a great experience for socialisation and I would recommend volunteering to everyone.

It's like Christmas here some days when donations arrive. You never know what you'll find, good or bad, it's always a surprise. The majority of my clothes come from Vinnies – I like to support my own shop and local community. It's nice to know what all the customers like too, so you can recommend new stock to them.

Volunteering gave me all the skills I needed for my job. I love working at Vinnies for the confidence and everything it has given me, but also for the knowledge that it's all going to help Victorians who are doing it tough. That motivates everyone who works here.

'I AM PRIVILEGED TO WORK WITH SUCH WONDERFUL VOLUNTEERS'

I am privileged to work with some wonderful volunteers at Vinnies Croydon, but none has dedicated as many years in service as the irrepressible 82-year-old Keith Clarke, who has been dedicating his time to Vinnies since he was a 47-year-old youngster – 35 years in other words.

Around 50 volunteers turned out to salute their well-loved and respected community icon with a special morning tea in early 2019.

Keith was full-time manager at the Main Street shop up until five years ago. He still volunteers six days a week, but on a (only slightly) more part-time basis.



I am proud to work with Keith. He is the face of Vinnies in Croydon. He knows everyone and everybody loves him. Keith has worked tirelessly for Vinnies and has never wavered in his dedication. He will do anything to help.

Keith says that he never imagined he would be volunteering for so long, but he enjoyed it so much that the time just slipped by. I'll look forward to working with Keith for many more years to come.

Sandra Crute
Manager, Vinnies Croydon

Pictured above: Sandra Crute with Keith Clarke.

A VOICE FOR THE VOICELESS

Families left in cold

Food, heating sacrificed as energy bills soar

KAREN COLLIER

VICTORIANS are turning heaters or going without to cope with winter bill blowouts.

...ief grant if they were entitled. ...ten, contact your energy ... if you are having

Extra slug for energy

Customers to foot bill for upgrades

MATT JOHNSTON

The AEMO, which also manages back...

AEMO said extra costs were in accordance with national electricity rules and the causes included state tax increases, a charge for Victoria to use other states' networks.

Savvy customers save up to \$1000 on power plans

SA because no longer are ori-

lectricity and gas prices annually since 2012, in a bid to ease the crippling pressure of utility bills on low-income families. It is

was only because I told them I was thinking of going elsewhere that they came to the party and offered an extra

Petrol in bush

Rural towns do it tough

KAREN COLLIER
CONSUMER REPORTER

COUNTRY drivers are paying up to \$160 a year more on average to fill their petrol tanks than city motorists.

Mansfield, in Victoria's high country, had Victoria's most expensive petrol last year, Herald Sun analysis of price data from the nation's consumer watchdog reveals.

Yarrawonga, Ararat, Hornsby and Corryong were the most expensive.

field. When filling a 50-litre tank weekly, that equates to an extra \$7.80 to \$158.60 a year.

A handful of towns -- Shepparton, Morwell, Bairnsdale

the same rate Victorian were an average than Melbourne is by an average 75c per

VICTORIAN homes and businesses will cough up an extra \$87 million through their energy bills next year as the system used to deliver power

Savings wiped in balance

Shop around for energy savings

Elliot Williams

CANBERRANS are losing as much as \$500 a year by failing to actively seek out a better deal on electricity and gas prices, a recent energy report shows.

The St Vincent de Paul Society's annual report on energy prices shows rises in energy costs for the territory have slowed down dramatically.

a welcome relief for Canberrans after two years.

Greater diversity of suppliers in the market had helped to keep the increases smaller in the past year, he said.

Mr Dufty said the key message was to be active when it came to seeking a better deal from energy companies, which would result

OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS, GAVIN DUFTY AND HIS TEAM HAVE HIT THE HEADLINES HIGHLIGHTING THE ACUTE IMPACT OF HIGH ENERGY BILLS ON STRUGGLING HOUSEHOLDS.

For more than a decade Vinnies Victoria's Policy & Research unit headed up by Gavin Dufty has been undertaking detailed research into a number of issues impacting households with a particular focus on energy costs across Australia.

Our research and advocacy continues to complement and underpin the day to day practical support provided by our members and volunteers to the people who need help.

Our work is designed to ensure appropriate structural change occurs to meet the ever-changing needs and challenges faced by households; not only giving a voice to the voiceless but also changing their lives for the better.

Essential energy costs are a particular challenge to people struggling to make ends meet. At times it means making hard choices like paying the electricity or sending their child to school without the proper uniform or equipment.

We regularly provide reports with strategic recommendations and insights, publicly available tools and, most recently, online interactive maps so the community can explore price changes, analyse costs and make informed decisions.

Through our work with people who are the most vulnerable in our community, Vinnies is able to bring its unique learnings and solid research to any conversation with leaders.

It has been our privilege to share the stories, experiences and research undertaken to those who don't have our unique insight such as government ministers, senior public servants, industry, business and community bodies.

These organisations are acutely aware of the impact of high energy prices and other challenges faced by families, in particular those who are struggling. These parties have been both challenged and receptive to our insights, findings and recommendations.

This, of course, doesn't negate all the struggles, but keeping essential energy services within the reach of the most vulnerable is paramount.

Our hope is always to ensure that the people we assist obtain the best from the systems in place.

Working with our volunteers and community at large is essential in ensuring that they are aware and able to provide information on the most recent energy changes and assistance services available.

We will continue to do our research and advocacy to identify issues, develop practical solutions and influence all institutions who have a responsibility to deliver essential energy services that meet the needs of vulnerable people in our community.



'WE LOVE HELPING OTHERS'

Shirley in Call Centre.



Helen and family at Vinnies Kilsyth.

Laura participating in the National Immersion Program.



VOLUNTEERS SHARE THEIR STORIES OF FAMILY, FAITH AND FINDING A REAL PURPOSE.

‘NOW IT IS A BIG FAMILY AFFAIR’

I never asked my family to join me working at Vinnies, they just got enthusiastic because I was. It must have been that I was so excited about opening a new shop at Kilsyth that they caught the bug.

I began volunteering at Vinnies Bayswater eight years ago but transferred to Kilsyth in 2017. Now it is a big family affair, with three generations of us volunteering at Vinnies Kilsyth, ranging in age from 72 – that’s me – to my granddaughter Bianca, 15. My granddaughter, Jade, who at 10, isn’t allowed to volunteer yet, is also a regular visitor.

My daughter Mel was the first to sign up because she had just been made redundant and could see that opening the shop was a big job. A truck would pull up and out would come what seemed like 45 racks of trousers, skirts and shirts, and we had to go through them. Mel is now Sunday duty manager and volunteers during the week. It was her husband Brad who next signed up and he goes in on his days off from his job as a firefighter.

Mel and Brad’s children started spending time at the shop and now Samuel, 16, works on the cash register on Saturdays and Bianca volunteers after school. Brad says the kids are motivated by the fact that all the profits go to helping people in need. It’s also good work experience.

My passion is books. I have stacked thousands of them at Vinnies over the years. I like chatting to customers about novels and sharing recommendations. Another volunteer, my friend Linda, and I are known as the ‘book chooks’.

Vinnies has become a big part of our family fabric. I wanted to do something to contribute to the community, and now my children and grandchildren want to do the same. It is heart-warming to see how that can spread to other people.

BY HELEN GLEESON

‘I HAVE BEEN ENRICHED AND ENLIGHTENED’

Over the past six years, I have been volunteering once a week, answering calls at the Box Hill Call Centre. The call centre operates five days a week and is staffed almost entirely by volunteers.

We usually have about six people on duty answering about 280 calls each day. Most calls are for food relief, household items, furniture, assistance with bills, petrol, rent or prescription medication. Sometimes though people just want to talk or ask for advice.

After six years, what have I learned? I have learned to be non-judgemental because I do not fully understand the circumstances of our callers. People inadvertently may make mistakes, harming themselves and their families. All I can do is to recognise their suffering and offer whatever assistance I can.

I have learned to stand up against a consumer culture that affects others and the environment. I have learned to be just, and use only my own fair share of the world’s resources – never, never to waste food. There are millions of hungry people on this planet.

I have grown to be more appreciative of my good fortune, to be grateful for my education, my upbringing, my family and my faith. I thank God for his generosity, and I have learned not to take my good fortune for granted.

Most importantly, I have learned to educate myself on the issues affecting our callers, to protest and demonstrate what I believe in and act – to speak out for those who have no voice to defend their rights.

By giving some of my time, I have been enriched and enlightened through my work with the St Vincent de Paul Society. Perhaps you can volunteer your time and talents for a worthwhile cause, too.

BY SHIRLEY YAU

‘LIFE IS THE IMPACT YOU HAVE ON OTHERS’

I grew up in a family heavily involved with Vinnies, so as soon as I turned 18, I joined our local Linton Conference.

Initially, I joined the Aquinas Young Vinnies as an event coordinator and now I am the president. Aquinas Young Vinnies runs Kids Camps and Kids Day Outs, and I have been fortunate enough to participate in Roadshows, Kids Camps, Vinnies CEO Sleepout, Footsteps of Frederic and even the 2019 National Immersion Program to Nganmarriyanga.

What attracts me to the St Vincent de Paul Society so much is that it values empowering people and giving them hope – sometimes that’s the biggest gift of all. The appeal of being a part of my Young Vinnies group is how much we work with kids.

Kids are one of the most vulnerable groups in our communities and all their experiences are already shaping them, which is why it’s crucial they have the support they need. We are all busy people, but you’ll make time for the things you value and the experiences I have volunteering with Vinnies are invaluable.

My parents always told me that if you are fortunate enough to be in a situation where you can give, then that’s what you do.

I think the biggest positive influence you can have in life is the impact you have on others. If in the short period I’m with the kids on our programs, I can help them feel supported, cared for and worthy (while they’re having fun!), then I think I have accomplished what I aimed to do. What I get out of Vinnies is that sense of purpose, but also the chance to interact with some of the best people I have ever met.

I love working with Vinnies because the volunteers make up a community of caring, dedicated and like-minded people who always want to help people lead better and more fulfilling lives.

BY LAURA BRUTY



'MUM SAVED EVERY DOLLAR FOR OUR EDUCATION'

VINNIES WAS THERE IN THE 1960s WHEN SANDRA BUCOVAZ'S SINGLE MOTHER NEEDED THEM MOST - SO IT WAS NEVER A QUESTION OF NOT PAYING IT FORWARD.

BY SANDRA BUCOVAZ

As one of six siblings growing up in a single-parent family in the 1960s I can vividly recall the ‘hand up’ we received from Vinnies because it helped empower my mum, Pauline to make a better life for us.

Violence had ripped apart our family, and Mum had fled with only us in tow. She was just 35 and the six of us were aged between six months to 10 years. When public housing became available, we moved into an empty house and that’s when Vinnies entered our lives, providing us with furniture, as well as clothing, including a ‘decent pair’ of shoes each, and food.

“The Vinnies volunteers were so kind and they did whatever they could to help on a regular basis,” Mum once told me.

Mum says she particularly remembers the moral support and respect she received as she slowly started building a stable new life for us all.

In those early years, Mum cleaned houses to put food on the table. As an independent woman, one of the first things she bought was a bicycle so she could get herself to work, while dinking my baby brother on the back.

She later worked in the local parish office, giving back to the parish, school and local community and helping lead others through her courage and faith in God.

Mum saved every dollar putting it towards our education, which led us into successful careers in dentistry, neuropsychology, accountancy, social work, journalism and commercial property development.

What’s more, she taught us about humility and social justice. She was determined that we knew we had a responsibility for making a positive difference to the lives of others, as well as towards the environment. Mum had us recycling and repurposing well before this became trendy.

Mum passed away earlier this year, but she knew that others facing disadvantage could turn their lives around and, perhaps, pay it forward to organisations like Vinnies by “giving whatever you can in muscle, as well as money”.

As an adult I can proudly tick a couple of her boxes, working in the not-for-profit sector and recently acknowledging Vinnies with a bequest in my Will.



LEGACIES COME IN MANY FORMS

“Thank you,” were the first words that come to mind, followed closely by “remarkable”, when I first met Joyce McGrath OAM.

The esteemed Victorian artist had made a living gift of more than 100 of her own artworks, as well as a large collection of valuable art books to the St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria.

Joyce’s unique collection was auctioned in March, with proceeds going to help people doing it tough in Victoria.



Joyce told me: “I wanted to help Vinnies, this is one way I could do that and see the difference it can make while I was alive.”

Joyce’s works have been shown in many galleries and are widely represented at the Melbourne Grammar School, Royal Children’s Hospital, Mildura Arts Centre and Monash University, while also displayed at the Victorian Artist Society. Joyce was also commissioned to paint many portraits, including four of orthopaedic surgeons for the Royal Children’s Hospital.

On viewing Joyce’s wonderful collection, no one can deny the passion, inspiration and skill that infuses her works, encompassing portraits, landscapes and contemporary art.

The Society is very grateful to be Joyce’s charity of choice and to know that her works will continue bringing a new legacy of joy to those that view them.

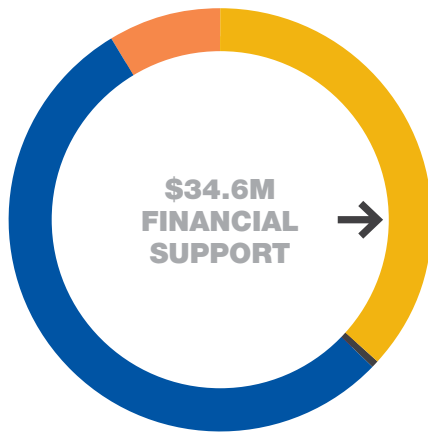


Sharon Wangman
Gift in Will Manager
St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria

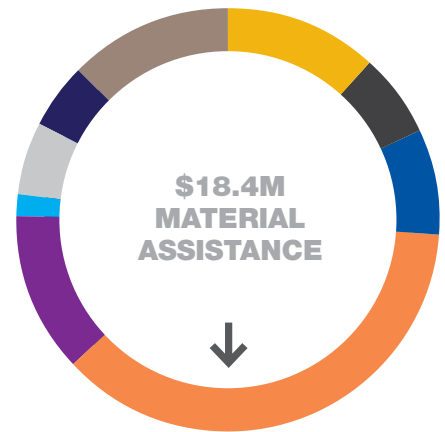
Pictured above: Joyce McGrath and one of her donated portraits.

HOW WE HELPED

VINNIES SPENT MORE THAN \$30.8 MILLION DELIVERING PROGRAMS AND ASSISTANCE TO PEOPLE EXPERIENCING DISADVANTAGE THIS FINANCIAL YEAR.

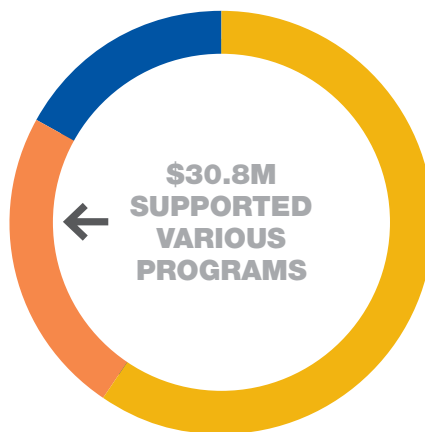


- \$12,723,711 Fundraising
- \$257,522 Government grants
- \$18,694,479 Retail sales
- \$2,953,348 Other



- \$2,172,816 Accommodation/Transport
- \$1,173,150 Education
- \$1,489,605 Food purchases
- \$6,759,900 Food vouchers
- \$2,249,155 Household goods
- \$301,978 Medical
- \$1,063,291 Other assistance
- \$882,949 Utilities
- \$2,282,962 Welfare and material aid

- \$18,375,805 Material assistance
- \$7,300,148 Member and volunteer support
- \$5,177,751 Service programs



THANK YOU



THE ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY VICTORIA IS GRATEFUL FOR THE GENEROUS SUPPORT RECEIVED FROM THE COMMUNITY.

Thank you to all the individual supporters, groups, schools, businesses, trusts and estates who have generously donated their skills, gifts-in-kind and critical funds towards our work over the past year.

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THE ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY RELIES ON SUPPORT FROM INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS AND BUSINESSES WHO ARE COMMITTED TO BUILDING COMPASSIONATE COMMUNITIES.



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03 9895 5800 | info@svdp-vic.org.au

www.vinnies.org.au



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Credit card donations can be made by visiting our website or calling the donation hotline.

www.vinnies.org.au

03 9895 5959

donation@svdp-vic.org.au



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Become an Everyday Kindness partner by giving a regular monthly gift to help to support Vinnies good works, 365 days a year.

www.vinnies.org.au/everydaykindness

03 9895 5959



MAKE A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

Vinnies assists thousands of people thanks to the generosity of people who remember us in their Will.

03 9895 5821

bequest@svdp-vic.org.au



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Your business can become involved with Vinnies by introducing Workplace Giving, participate in the Vinnies CEO, Corporate and/or Community Sleepouts; and explore tailored ways to give.

03 9895 5872

corporate@svdp-vic.org.au



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Donations of quality clothing, furniture and household goods can be made to any Vinnies Shop.

1800 621 349

material.donations@svdp-vic.org.au



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Interested in volunteering your time to support a Vinnies program? Get in touch.

1300 736 933

volunteer@svdp-vic.org.au

All donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible.