



St Vincent de Paul Society  
*good works*

SUMMER 2016  
ISSUE NO. 78

# Vision

PAYING TRIBUTE TO  
**CHARLES  
O'NEILL**  
**ENGINEER  
OF CHARITY**

**LILY FARDELL'S LEGACY**  
**MATTHEW TALBOT HOSTEL**  
**SPARKING NEW HOPE**  
**PROSPER'S STORY**  
**CAI'S STORY**  
**THE WOMEN'S LOFT**



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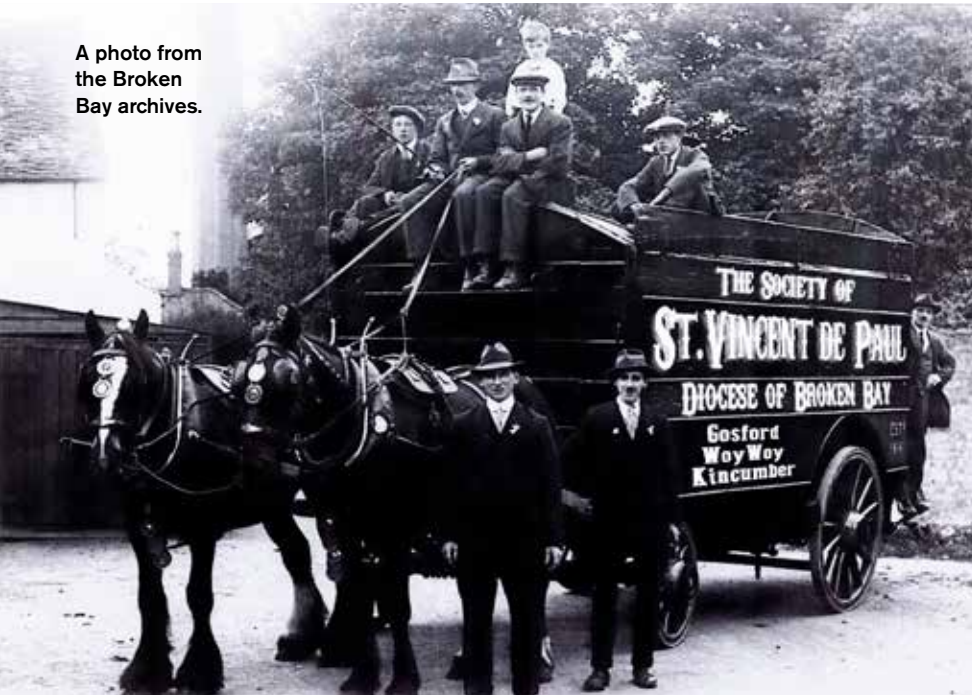
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A photo from the Broken Bay archives.

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**We'd love to hear what the Society is doing in your area. Send us an email, or call with an idea for a story or news piece:** [dominique.pendleton@vinnies.org.au](mailto:dominique.pendleton@vinnies.org.au) or 02 9568 0278.

**Please DO NOT send original photographs.**



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear Friends,

It is with great pleasure that I have the opportunity to present the 2015/2016 Spring Summer edition of Vision, a publication in which we share the stories of our Society and those of the people we assist.

It is also an opportunity to introduce myself to the readers of Vision. I was elected State President of the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW on the 9th December 2015 to replace outgoing State President Ray Reynolds, whose term as president had come to an end. We all owe a great depth of gratitude to Ray who stepped in to guide the Society through some significant changes over the past four years and we continue to be guided by the Strategic Plan developed during Ray's term as President. You can read more about the State Election and Ray Reynolds' farewell on page 15.

For my part, I have been a Society member for 12 years and have stepped down from the position of Central Council President for Wollongong to take up my new role as State President. I have previously filled the positions of Conference Secretary, Conference President and Regional President. For the past three years, as a member of State Council, I have served on the Board Governance Committee and the Board

Special Works Committee. I am currently a member of the West Wollongong St Therese Conference and I am looking forward to the next four years of my new role as State President.

In this edition of Vision you will experience the power of storytelling and its ability to capture, compel and provide insight into the important work and achievements of the Society. There are powerful accounts of the change we deliver through many of our services such as the Matthew Talbot Hostel, Spark and Sydney Night Patrol.

In 2014/2015, Society members undertook more than 199,842 visits to people in their homes, hospitals, prisons and nursing homes. This act of providing face to face assistance is in the very DNA of the St Vincent de Paul Society and has been for over 175 years.

I would like to welcome this New Year by celebrating the support and selflessness each of you share and by reaffirming my own commitment to the tremendous work of the Society.

Yours sincerely

Denis Walsh  
State President, St Vincent de Paul Society NSW

## CEO'S MESSAGE



Dear Friends,

Welcome to the latest edition of Vision. I welcome 2016 with such pride in the exceptional work and achievements of the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW. I honour each and every one of the 26,203 members and volunteers in over

414 communities. Every day you make a lasting impact on the 400,000 people experiencing disadvantage in NSW.

As we ring in a new year let us reflect on how the St Vincent de Paul Society was founded on four core values of Respect, Compassionate Services, Simplicity and Advocacy for People in Need.

"Advocacy for People in Need" was a high priority for Lily Fardell, a Newcastle woman whose final wishes in 2015 were that her \$4.3 million estate be passed entirely to our Society. Lily gave this tremendous gift in order that we may better serve homeless children and their families in the Hunter Valley. It is the single largest

donation we have ever received and we are honoured to carry out Lily's final wishes.

I would also like to note a fitting tribute to one of our founding fathers, Captain Charles Gordon O'Neill who was celebrated in November at the official opening of Charles O'Neill Memorial Walk at Rookwood Cemetery. Charles O'Neill Walk provides a quiet contemplative place to pray and learn more about an extraordinary man who did so much for the people of Sydney in the late 19th century. You can read more about the legacy of Charles O'Neill on pages 16-18.

A new year brings resolutions and reflections and so let us be resolved to continue working together toward the common goal of serving those who experience disadvantage.

Dianne Lucas, Acting Chief Executive Officer,  
St Vincent de Paul Society NSW



## LILY FARDELL LEAVES \$4.3M FORTUNE TO VINNIES NSW

**Newcastle's 'Fair Lady of The Hill' Lily Fardell has left an extraordinary bequest of \$4.3 million to the Hunter's homeless children and their families.**

Lily's charity and generosity were well-known throughout her life and her final gift is the largest single donation ever made to St Vincent de Paul Society NSW.

"Lily Fardell's legacy will be remembered by people living in the Hunter area for generations to come," says State President Denis Walsh. "As one of the largest providers of homeless services in New South Wales, we can't even begin to express our gratitude to Lily Fardell and her family. Every child and family that we house, feed and help in the future will be Lily's legacy."

## CARDIFF CONFERENCE'S 80TH ANNIVERSARY

Members of the Cardiff Conference have celebrated their 80th anniversary during a Sunday Parish Mass at St Kevin's Church, Cardiff.



Aggregated in 1935, the Conference has a strong sense of camaraderie among its members who proudly assist those experiencing disadvantage. The Cardiff Conference carries out around 60 assistance calls and 25 social calls each month.

The 80th anniversary celebration was a fantastic community event with ample reflection on the valuable contribution that the St Vincent de Paul Society has on local communities.

## LISMORE HOSTS CONFERENCE PRESIDENTS' FORUM



Lismore Central Council hosted its third Leadership Forum in October addressing the theme 'Strengthening Our Service' in Grafton.

Conference Presidents, leaders and members shared their collective wisdom and experience as they discussed the challenges in attracting new members as well as ecumenical membership and leadership.

Special thanks to keynote speaker, Deacon Gary Stone, who shared stories of his experience as Chaplain to the Australian Federal Police.

Vice President of Youth, Jarrod Jacobson and Executive Officer, Michael Timbrell also shared the new strategic direction to realign Youth programs and Conferences.

The fourth Conference Presidents' Forum will be held in October 2016.



## MUMBAI TWINNING

Sacred Heart Conference Broken Hill has received a touching letter and photo from their sister organisation – an aged care facility – in Mumbai which accommodates 36 men and women and has been in operation since 1977.

Sacred Heart Conference donates \$800 a year toward the running of the Mumbai facility.

The letter reads: "We sincerely thank the Sacred Heart Conference of Broken Hill for their generous contribution and the Almighty Lord may shower his blessings on its members for caring for the forsaken elders of the Home."

# A LEGACY OF KINDNESS

**After more than 60 years, the kindness given to the Schubert family by charitable groups will never be forgotten.**

The late Denis Charles Schubert never forgot the help and support his mother Julia Schubert received from St Vincent De Paul Society NSW and Taree Lions Club.

Throughout his life Denis strongly valued being able to give back to people in need, and he has bequeathed \$5000 to each charity.

Denis left a touching hand written letter personally addressed to the Society expressing his appreciation.

Denis's nephew Geoffrey Northam remembered his late grandfather and grandmother doing everything they could to make ends meet. After Denis' father Albert was killed in a logging accident, Julia Schubert became a widow with four children under the age of seven.

The St Vincent de Paul Society delivered food packages in their time of need while the Lions provided the family with yard maintenance and other support.

"Both my uncle and grandmother loved to garden," said Geoffrey.

"Unfortunately I didn't inherit the green thumb but both my uncle Denis and grandmother Julia loved to grow vegetables and give back to the community."

St Vincent de Paul Society NSW would like to acknowledge this act of kindness and generosity from Denis Schubert and his family.

In August, the money was presented by Denis's nephew Geoffrey to the President of St Mary's Conference Taree, Herbert Ploder and Ellen Carter from St Vincent de Paul Society NSW.



## A LIFE OF DEDICATED SERVICE

**At 90 years old, Bill Fitzgerald, is celebrating 77 years' service with the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW and remains undaunted by any challenges in improving services.**

In May, a St Vincent de Paul Mass and luncheon was held to celebrate 85 years of Vincentian Mission within Kandos and Bill was presented with a Lifetime Member Service badge by Bathurst Central Council President Bob Lulham. Bob congratulated Bill on behalf of the former NSW Society State President Ray Reynolds and all Members of the Society.

During his 77 years with the Society, Bill has worked tirelessly to assist people with the best possible quality of services. On behalf of all members of Bathurst Central Council and the Society we would like to say thank you to Bill and we consider it an honour to have worked with Bill as a proactive member of the Society.



## NEWS FROM BATHURST WELLINGTON CENTRE

On behalf of all members of Bathurst Central Council and the Society, we would like to say thank you to three long standing volunteers: Rene Hannelly, Vera George and Beryl Hughes.

These devoted ladies have been volunteering for nearly 80 years and will be sadly missed by all at Wellington Centre.



L to R - Vera George, Beryl Hughes & Rene Hannelly



## LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP AWARDS ARMIDALE



**Lifetime Membership Don Hewitt – Armidale**  
(In photo with Ray Reynolds)



**Lifetime Membership Brian Baldwin - Sacred Heart Conference in Inverell**  
(In photo with Diocesan President Rosemary Fisher)



**Lifetime Membership Colleen Nash – Moree**  
(in photo with Diocesan President Rosemary Fisher and Executive Officer Norma Abey)

### NORTH EASTERN REGION

Wally Rovera has given 50 years of service in Tenterfield

### NAMOI BARWON REGION

Frank Robinson 40 years Gunnedah; Pam Dowd 35 years Wee Waa; Pat Clancy 32 years Moree; Margaret Guest 30 years Narrabri; Gloria Reading 27 years Gunnedah; Iris Ryan 25 years Wee Waa; Patricia Thompson 22 years Wee Waa; Ruth Goldthorpe Gunnedah; Gwen Boland; George Boland; Mark Humphries; Moree; Dora Oudenryn; Yvonne O'Brien Wee Waa.

### TAMWORTH REGION

40 years –John Wallace, Sheila McNamara and Elizabeth Cherniayiff.

35 years – Janette Brown.

30 to 35 years-- Marie Trinder, Elaine Markham and Rosemary Fisher.

20 to 25 years—John Murrie, Peggy Mallise and Yvonne Neal.

20 to 25 years –Sue Cherniayiff, Helen Bennett, Judy Milne, Robyn Southam, Jenny Deeks, Pam Franks, Margaret Klepzig, Patricia Wake, Marie Hayes and Debra Parr.



**Service Recipients Tamworth**

## PORTLAND VINNIES JOINS SPRING FAIR

The St Vincent de Paul Conference and Centre at Portland in the Central West of NSW recently participated in the Annual Portland Spring Fair Parade, with a float prepared by the Members and Volunteers. The entry received wide applause from the community

and all involved. Congratulations to the generous Members and Volunteers who helped make this possible and spread the word on the good work done by the Society in Portland.



## CONFERENCE VISITATION TOOLKIT UPDATE

Since August 2015 the State Support Office has been distributing Conference Visitation toolkits throughout NSW. This new resource provides practical tools that better prepare members for supporting those who seek our help.

Over 300 members have attended 'Toolkit Conversations' which have been held in various locations across the state. One participant described it as "a most stimulating, interactive, and enjoyable session about a wonderful resource."

If you have any questions about the Toolkit project or would like to hold a Conversations session in your Region, please contact Kate Scholl, 9568 0209 or [kate.scholl@vinnies.org.au](mailto:kate.scholl@vinnies.org.au).

## LISMORE WELCOMES NEW CENTRAL COUNCIL PRESIDENT



**When Yvonne Wynen and her family turned to the St Vincent de Paul for assistance some years ago, she never expected that she would one day become President at the Lismore Central Council.**

"I am extremely humbled to be asked to take on the role of President," says Yvonne. "The opportunity to give something back in such a significant way is really quite special."

Yvonne has been connected to the Society over many years, both in Ireland and here in New South Wales.

On behalf of the Society we would like to congratulate Yvonne and we look forward to working together with her and Lismore Central Council.

## ST VINCENT DE PAUL CELEBRATES 85 YEARS IN KANDOS

85 years of Vincentian mission was celebrated by the Kandos Conference last May at St Dominic's Catholic Church. The large congregation was made up of parishioners, centre volunteers, retired members of the Kandos conference, invited guests from the Evans Region and Bathurst Central Council.

During his homily, Father Tony Hennessy reflected on the history of the Kandos Conference and the importance of the services provided by the conference and centre. He emphasised the increasing need for these services across all towns in NSW.



L - R Conference President Carol Morrissey, longest serving volunteer Louise McPherson and Centre President

## WYONG CELEBRATION

**There was a celebration in the Wyong Regional Office in October for the 90th birthday of Len O'Shea.**

Len started work at the Newtown Centre as a truck driver in September 1954 and shortly after joined the St Patrick's Conference at Sutherland. After moving up to the Central Coast in 1988, Len volunteered at the Toukley Centre and became President of the St Mary's Toukley Conference in 1995.

In 1997 he helped start the Howarth Street Centre at Wyong. Len retired in 2001 but couldn't stay away and joined the call centre in 2006 where he is still serving today.



# HOME TRUTHS

**At BBQs and parties across the country house prices tend to be a common topic of conversation. How much you paid, what your property is worth and what the house around the corner just went for.**

We marvel at the high clearance rates at auctions. There is no doubt that Australians have a love affair with property and hotly pursue “the great Australian dream”.

We constantly hear from experts and pundits that the housing market, particularly in Sydney, is booming. Suburbs across the city are recording million dollar plus price tags and the average house price in Sydney is now \$1,000,000. The commentary consistently focuses on the benefits of rising house prices. Any whiff of reduction in house prices is seen as a national tragedy to be avoided at all costs.

We need a shift in thinking in relation to house prices. Every time we hear that the average price of property has increased, we should think of those first time home buyers struggling to secure a home and the many families desperately trying to keep up with their rent.

At least this would recognise that an increase in house prices only benefits some. The story that we are hearing at the grassroots level is sobering. With over 5,000 members in 420 communities across New South Wales, the St Vincent de Paul Society is visiting almost 600 people in crisis every day. And they are clearly telling us that housing affordability is pushing many of them into housing stress. Here at the St Vincent de Paul Society we are seeing an increase in the number of people who are first time homeless.

Take for example, Susan, a 29 year old woman with four children who was escaping domestic violence in a regional town in NSW. Despite her efforts and submitting 48 applications, she was unable to find an affordable rental property leading to months of uncertainty and further trauma.

Or there is Jo, a 53 year old woman in Northern NSW who has a serious mental illness and after being hospitalised for five months had nowhere to go and no support network to turn to. She applied for 51 rental properties before she was successful in finding a property.

These people and many thousands like them are locked in a daily struggle to keep a roof over their head in what can be a brutal rental market. Is this really what we want from our housing market? It is clear to us at the Society that the status quo is not acceptable and we need to take action to improve affordability.


The Society is pleased that the NSW Government released a formal plan in January addressing the shortage of affordable housing. The plan includes the transfer of the management of some public housing stock to community housing providers. Research shows community housing providers manage these properties more efficiently and effectively. They are also better at creating communities where people can thrive rather than be trapped in the cycle of intergenerational disadvantage.

In addition, we believe that tax reform around property ownership is crucial. It's not about expending more money but using existing tax revenue associated with the housing market differently. Each year taxpayers spend \$6 billion on providing negative gearing and capital gains tax concessions which simply encourage speculation in the housing market and drive up house prices. Tax reform could look at limiting negative gearing and capital gains tax concessions to investments in the supply of new affordable housing.

It should be of grave concern to all of us that so many Australians are either struggling to keep their tenancy or are forced to rely on friends, family, charities or, sadly, the streets for refuge. It is urgent that we address the burgeoning gap between supply and demand for social and affordable housing.







Every time we hear that the average price of property has increased, we should think of those first time home buyers struggling to secure a home and the many families desperately trying to keep up with their rent.

# PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

**As he looks back on his life and notches up his 53rd birthday, Mike reflects honestly on the years of wandering the streets in pursuit of something simple that can take some people a lifetime to attain – happiness.**

Living with chronic mental illness, Mike found himself battling to find help in the darkest years of his life.

“You never think you’re going to be homeless,” explains Mike.

“The first thing you think is: I failed, and how did I end up here?”

Shortly after his release from prison, Mike struggled to secure a permanent living situation, often feeling judged and misunderstood. With nowhere to turn, he began sleeping rough, an eye-opening experience that saw him end up at the Matthew Talbot Hostel (MTH).

Mike was surprised to find that the MTH was judgement-free. For the first time in his life, Mike was able to access support to become empowered enough to deal with his demons face on. He was able to set realistic goals that for years had seemed unattainable.

“When you are on the street you feel like people are judging you all the time by looking at you, whereas here (MTH) it’s like a refuge,” says Mike.

One of the biggest challenges Mike faced on the street and during his time in prison was the lack of mental health support. Mike struggled with mental illness for several years, and after visiting MTH he was finally diagnosed with various mental health disorders and provided with appropriate treatment.

Just like other men and women experiencing homelessness, Mike found it a comfort to connect with the staff and services at MTH and the Ozanam Learning Centre.

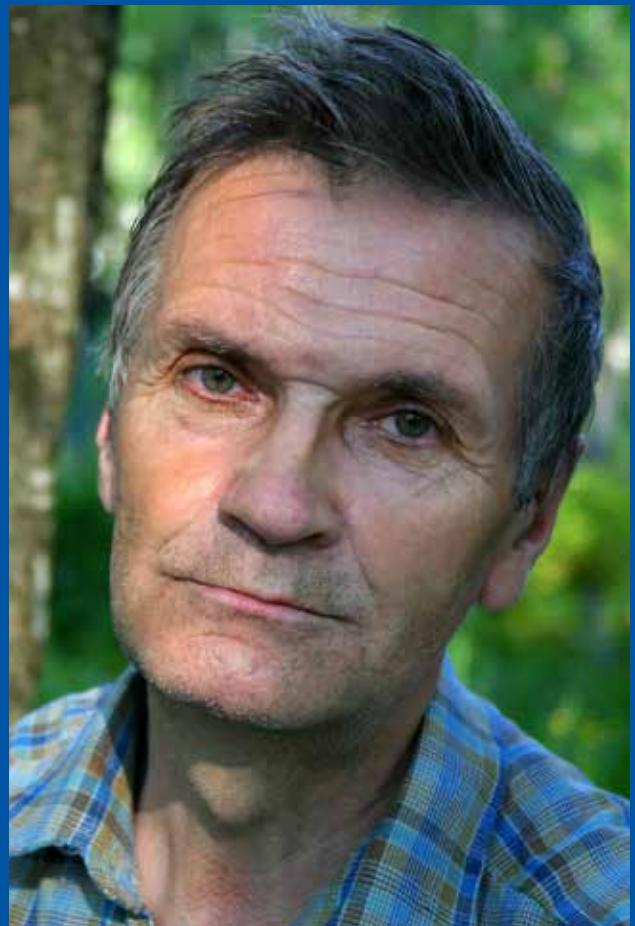
Mike describes how finding housing after being placed on parole becomes a fight against other people’s judgement.

“I learnt a hard lesson: the fiercely competitive rental market bears no sympathy for those trying to get their life back on track,” he says.

As he continues to receive support from the MTH, Mike’s main focus is finding a safe home to call his own.

“I hope the next place I find will be my forever home,” he says.

For Mike, happiness is creating a safe haven free from judgement.







# SPARKING NEW HOPE THROUGH EDUCATION

**Imagine starting a new life where even talking to your peers becomes a fearful and unnerving experience.**

For many children of refugee families adjusting to new surroundings and learning a second language is an uphill challenge. SPARK is a community-led program which aims to support the settlement of newly arrived families and children, creating opportunities for them to engage in their local communities.

SPARK provides a welcoming environment to support refugee children and families to grow and feel included in their new communities. The program reaches around 300 newly arrived students each week through its Bright Sparks Learning Clubs.

The likelihood for many of these children arriving in Australia is that they will be placed into a classroom environment with limited support. When a child is learning English as a second language without the support of their parents, the struggle to learn and participate can be devastating.

Reema participated in the SPARK program. She was often frustrated when trying to understand her school work.

This frustration trickled down to her self-esteem, ultimately resulting in a lack of confidence and negative feelings about school.

Since being assisted by SPARK, the attitude change in Reema has been remarkable. Before engaging with the program, Reema approached her classes with trepidation. Now she is enthusiastic to see her volunteer tutor to tell her about what she is learning in class.

Wardi doesn't talk about his journey from Somalia to Australia but the effects of his experience continue to impact on his wellbeing and ability to settle into his new school community.

His resilience was tested and he experienced many ups and downs. At one stage Wardi pulled out of his SPARK sessions but, testament to his character, he returned to SPARK and has become more involved and positive in his attitude to learning.

SPARK volunteer David says: "To see a child prosper in their education and self-development is a privilege."

# ROSEMEADOW SENIORS GROUP WINS PARLIAMENTARY RECOGNITION



L-R - Margaret Kennedy, Heather Kerr, Beth Connor, Myrna McIntyre, Hilda Roberts, Vicki Puffett, Lee Rabuatoka, Greg Warren MP, Kamal Chamma, Martin Peebles, Tom Puffett, Jeanette Waine, Pauline Upton, Ella Hogan (Animation Project, St Vincent de Paul Society NSW), Robert Waine, Christina Fellows

Greg Warren Member for Campbelltown, presented the Rosemeadow Seniors Group with a NSW Parliamentary recognition certificate for their service to the Rosemeadow community. It is significant recognition for the work done by this group of seniors who live in social housing, who work together to improve their community. As Mr Warren says, "If every community had a group like this they would have a lot less problems."

## ANIMATION PROJECT BUILDS RESILIENCE IN CAMPBELLTOWN



Launch of the Animation Training Resource Kit at Campbelltown Civic Centre

A training resource kit was launched earlier this year for the Animation Project, Wollongong Central Council's social justice program for social housing residents in Campbelltown. The kit, which is aimed at students and practitioners in community action and development, includes two publications: 'Respect and Resilience', the story of the Animation project and 'Being Real in Community Work', a community development training kit in the Animation tradition.

The Animation Project was established in 1998 to empower social housing residents and to engage them in decisions that affect their lives.

## MATTHEW TALBOT CLINIC

Matthew Talbot Primary Health Clinic, located within the Matthew Talbot Hostel, has achieved a significant milestone attaining accreditation with the Royal Australian College General Practitioners (RACGP) as a General Practice. For the Society this marks its very first General Practice in NSW and recognition of the level excellence attained in homeless, nursing and medical care accomplished by the Clinic.

This recognition comes at a poignant time as the Hostel celebrates its 50th anniversary. This is a wonderful milestone in the life of the Clinic as it establishes itself as a centre of excellence in the provision of specialist health services for homeless men.





# LISMORE INVESTS IN SOLAR POWER



Investing in solar at Lismore Central Council with Michael Timbrell, Lismore Executive Officer and Lex Johnston, Assets & WHS Coordinator for Lismore.

**The Lismore Central Council has invested in a new solar energy system in a bid to reduce its carbon footprint as well as save on energy and operating costs. By investing in solar, Lismore will contribute to a cleaner and healthier environment.**

“Electricity is our second largest cost after waste expenses and our building in Lismore – which includes a retail shop as well as our head office – has had the largest power usage across the Lismore Diocese,” says Michael Timbrell, Lismore Central Council Executive Officer.

“By investing in solar, we have the ability to reduce our operating costs considerably and in turn, this vital money can instead go towards helping people experiencing severe disadvantage in the local community.”



## HOLIDAY HAVENS

Tom McGee Memorial  
Holiday Flats, Gerroa NSW

As the summer holidays continue, Vinnies Wollongong Central Council is providing a retreat for people to escape for some rest and relaxation. Priority is given to Conference member referrals across NSW. Conference members, volunteers and staff can also book a holiday for themselves at varying rates.

The Mollymook and Gerroa holiday flats are within walking distance of the beach, so guests can rejuvenate with the ocean breeze and sand at their footsteps.

Guests can stay up to two weeks and families have priority during the school holidays. Please book through the Booking Officer, St Vincent de Paul Society (Ulladulla) on phone (02) 4455 5666, 10am-3pm Monday to Friday.

## VINNIES MAITLAND NEWCASTLE CENTRAL COUNCIL RELOCATES

**Vinnies Maitland Newcastle has relocated to a new office on Hunter Street, Newcastle West.**



L-R: Peter Leonard England, Belinda McDaid, Toni Johnson, Sarah Adams, Brooke Davies, Michelle Kot, Denise Lucas, Ellen Tyler, Maree Reece, Narelle Carter, Mark Keys, Karen Sills-Davis.



## COLLABORATION AT ITS BEST

**The Upper Hunter Ability and Early Links team has been working with the community to raise vital funds for a Linker whose story will touch many.**

A gentleman with a paraplegic disability had a vision to utilise the local swimming pool in Muswellbrook. Recently relocating from Queensland, he had found tremendous benefit taking the time out to enjoy the water at his local pool, which helped his physical and mental health.

The Ability & Early Links team started to work with Muswellbrook Council to fulfil his dream. Ability Links met with community organisations, schools and health professionals who formed a working group to raise vital funds to purchase a universal hoist, water chair lift and height adjustable changing bed for adequate disability support.

**We would like to congratulate the tremendous work in fundraising efforts by the Upper Hunter Ability and Early Links team. Linkers organised a fun-filled charity bowls day at the Muswellbrook RSL Club and raised \$7,500.**

## PAINT THE LAKE REaD



A great initiative by one of our Lake Macquarie Ability Linkers, has been recognised by Lake Macquarie City Council and a number of community groups. "Paint The Lake REaD" encourages everyone to read, talk, sing, yarn and rhyme with children from birth, so that they are ready for reading and writing at school.

The organising committee received the blessing of local Aboriginal Elders to use their totem as the mascot. Ability Links has contributed via networking, planning and funding for the mascot and start up packs for the Council.

## SPARK NAMED FINALIST FOR BEST VOLUNTEER TEAM

Congratulations Spark on being named the 2015 Finalist for the best Volunteer Team (Inner West). We thank you for your commitment and support with Spark and the volunteers.

# HUNTER HOMELESS CONNECT DAY

**After Vinnies Mayfield collected enough donations to reach the ceiling, the Hunter Homeless Connect Day 2015 last August turned out to be the best yet.**

Governor of NSW, The Honourable David Hurley, spoke of how wonderful it was that there was no air of stigma and said one man described it as being "about love for people who usually get ignored".

Special thanks go to Judi Stokes, Vinnies Area President for Vineyards/Lower Hunter, Cathy Hearn, Vinnies Centre President at Mayfield Centre and the volunteers from Kurri Kurri and Mayfield Centres for their hard work.





## YOUNG MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES KICKING GOALS IN LISMORE



**A new football skills program for young migrants and former refugees who are now based in Lismore is kicking goals in the local community.**

The Vinnies Football Skills Program – a joint initiative between North Coast Settlement Service (NCSS) and the Southern Cross Football Centre – has been fully subscribed attracting 25 enthusiastic participants to take part in the 10-week program.

“The Lismore region is experiencing a steadily growing migrant and former refugee population from African countries including the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, Uganda and Sudan,” says Leandro Mendes, Outreach Support Worker at NCSS.

“Sport is a great way to engage and integrate those newly arrived to Australia but young people often face barriers when trying to participate in team sports due to a perceived lack of skill.

“The Vinnies Football Skills Program aims to engage these young people helping them to realise talents, recognise strengths, develop new skills, improve health and wellbeing, form new friendships, and increase self-esteem and confidence.

“The program has created a bridge between the migrant and former refugee communities and the local mainstream community,” says Leandro.



## CHANGE AT THE TOP

**After four years as President of The St Vincent de Paul Society NSW, Ray Reynolds completed his term in December 2015 and was replaced by Denis Walsh, President of the Wollongong Central Council.**

For Mr Reynolds, the highlights of his term include the development and implementation of a new strategic plan, improvements to governance, financial and operational processes and the rebuilding of an innovative and positive culture amongst members, staff and volunteers.

He said what makes him most proud is that every day the Society makes a profound difference in the lives of men, women and children across towns and cities in NSW.

“Of course all of this work is the result of good governance and I would like to thank my fellow members of the NSW State Council for their commitment, professionalism and support over my term,” he said.

Mr Reynolds joined the Society over 60 years ago and is a member of the Revesby Conference.

New President Denis Walsh joined the Society 12 years ago and has been a Conference Secretary, Conference President and Regional President. Denis is a member of the West Wollongong St Therese Conference and is currently a member of the Governance Committee.

Mr Walsh has a background in the insurance and superannuation industry and was an Associate of the Insurance Institute of Australia.

Mr Walsh says that he is excited and humbled to be given the blessing of leading the Society in NSW. Mr Walsh's priorities include working towards the goals and objectives as outlined in the 2013-2018 Strategic Plan and building even closer relationships between members, staff and volunteers.



# FITTING TRIBUTE TO CHARLES O'NEILL



**The life of the Society's NSW founder, Captain Charles Gordon O'Neill, was celebrated in November at the official opening of Charles O'Neill Memorial Walk at Rookwood Cemetery.**

Made possible by the generosity of Catholic Cemeteries and Crematoria, Charles O'Neill Walk is positioned close to Charles' final resting place. It provides a quiet contemplative place to pray and learn more about an extraordinary man who did so much for the people of Sydney in the late 19th century.

Following Mass and a Blessing by Bishop Terry Brady, Society members, partners and supporters gathered for a light lunch and a special presentation by Steven Utick, author of *Captain Charles, Engineer of Charity*, and Constance, a former client of the St Vincent de Paul Society.

The opening of the Charles O'Neill Walk follows even more exciting news in the cause for Canonisation of Charles O'Neill. Archbishop Anthony Fisher has accepted the cause and an official committee has been formed to progress it.

To finish the year with a strong Charles O'Neill flavour, in December the Society hosted its Annual Celebration Mass at St Patrick's Churchill, the home of the first St Vincent de Paul Society Conference. The Church features a stained glass window that was a gift from Charles O'Neill in recognition of the work of Blessed Frederic Ozanam. The artwork is the oldest tribute to Frederic Ozanam in the world.

Outgoing President of the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW, Ray Reynolds, said "Charles O'Neill was a brilliant young visionary who was torn between professional ambition and a desire to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ to serve the poor.

Charles sought a more authentic Christian model of charity that was unobtrusive, non-judgemental and respected the dignity of the poor. It is this vision we have proudly carried forward to this day."





Mass was held before the Opening.



Bishop Brady blesses the Walk.



Catholic Cemeteries & Crematoria, Peter O'Meara, Ray Reynolds (former State Council President) and the Hon Leo McLeay, Chairman of the Catholic Cemeteries and Crematoria Board.



Charles O'Neill's gift to St Patricks Churchill to recognise Frederic Ozanam. It is the oldest stained glass acknowledgement of Frederic in the world.



Charles O'Neill memorial.

# PRAYER FOR THE CANONISATION OF CHARLES GORDON O'NEILL

Lord,

Charles Gordon O'Neill was your faithful witness of the Gospel in giving profound compassionate service to those experiencing great hardship.

You inspired him to alleviate poverty and injustice and endowed him with untiring generosity in the service of all in need.

He envisioned a network of charity encircling this country and instilling Blessed Frederic Ozanam's spirit of love, humility and courage.

His prophetic social vision for struggling people reflects his heroic virtues of charity, prayer and love of the Eucharist.

We thank you Lord, for those many gifts and we ask, if it is your will, that the holiness of your faithful servant Charles soon be recognised by your Church.

We pray especially for

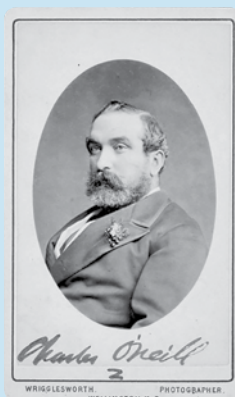
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(name or special petition)

through the intercession of  
Charles Gordon O'Neill

We make this prayer through  
Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**Amen.**



*With Ecclesiastical approval  
Archbishop of Sydney 2015*





Prosper's arrival



Prosper and his family visit Sr Jacinta

## PROSPER: TO BE SUCCESSFUL OR FORTUNATE

**Prosper arrived in Australia on a student visa in June 2011 from Burundi with the intention of completing a course in water harvesting and small scale irrigation at the University of New England in Armidale.**

Leaving behind his pregnant wife, three young children and a nephew who he had taken into his care, Prosper grieved for his family and feared for their safety.

Prosper was unable to return home due to political unrest and the possibility of being arrested or murdered. Despite turbulent times Prosper decided to move to Sydney in the hope of applying for a protection visa as an asylum seeker.

His ultimate goal was to secure a safe, permanent home and be reunited with his family.

With the assistance of the Asylum Seekers Centre and the St Vincent de Paul Society's Eastern Suburbs Migrant and Refugees Committee, Prosper found sanctuary in Sydney. Later with the support of Red Cross, Jesuit Refugee Service and Refugee Support services he was granted asylum seeker status.

Excited, but still feeling alone and unsure of what the future held, Prosper started work as a kitchen hand and cleaner, remaining focused on his goal. Although he saved as much money as possible, Prosper found it extremely difficult being so far away from his family.

Eventually, Prosper was successful with obtaining a permanent part-time job as a hospital orderly at St Vincent's Hospital in Sydney. This is where he met Sr Jacinta from the Sisters of Charity. Now with a regular income, Prosper was eventually able to move into a

boarding house where he continued to staunchly save.

But by the end of 2014, Prosper grew disheartened because even though he had been saving constantly, he still did not have enough money to pay for his family to travel to Australia. He decided to reach out to a few friends and to charities like Vinnies for help.

The call for assistance was positively received and Prosper was able to start planning. He was unsuccessful securing a rental property and with only days before his family arrived and the realisation he could not have his family stay at the boarding house, he grew desperate and anxious once more.

Prosper decided to speak to Sr Jacinta at St Vincent's Hospital. Sr Jacinta contacted Vinnies and was put in touch with a Vinnies Client Support Officer who was able to arrange emergency short-term temporary accommodation for Prosper and his family when they arrived.

With a Society Caseworker now assigned to assist the family, Prosper continues his work at the Hospital; his children are attending school, and Prosper's wife Sandrine is learning English. The future for Prosper and his family is looking promising.

Commenting on his experience Prosper says: "I am touched by the compassionate heart and the great work of St Vincent de Paul Society, Australian charities and families; it is beyond belief."

Prosper has kindly shared photos of his family's arrival to Australia to show the difference the Society has made to his family's life.

## GENWORTH HOSTS ANTI-POVERTY DRIVE AND SUPPORTS VINCENTIAN HOUSE

To promote Anti-Poverty Week in October, Genworth engaged their staff and community by hosting an anti-poverty drive at their office. Genworth implemented a number of activities to raise awareness about the challenges facing people experiencing homelessness.



Genworth and Vinnies raise awareness of homelessness during Anti-Poverty Week

Genworth will continue their life-changing support of the Vincentian House, Keeping Kids Engaged in Education program (KEEP) in 2016. In October, Genworth sponsored a Wesley Mission Money Management Workshop to provide parents living at Vincentian House with money management skills to help make financially informed decisions.

We'd like to thank to our friends at Genworth for their ongoing commitment to Vinnies and the people we help.



Martin Ashton (Genworth), Lynne Flynn (Wesley Mission), and Clair Steenson and Melissa Downes (both from Genworth).



Sumo Salad CEO Luke Baylis and Chairman Mark Maloney at the Vinnies CEO Sleepout 2015.

## SUMO SALAD AND VINNIES #HEATUPTHESTREET

The Winter Appeal provided Sumo Salad customers with the opportunity to donate a gold coin with their purchases which raised over \$20,000 for Vinnies.

In addition Sumo Salad sponsored the food provision and volunteered on Sydney Night Patrol in Martin Place and the Victorian Tasty Trucks Van Service feeding over 600 people who access the Van's service. Sumo Salad CEO Luke Baylis and Chairman Mark Maloney also fundraised and participated in the Vinnies CEO Sleepout 2015. As a result of their work with Vinnies in 2015 Sumo Salads won the QSR Corporate Social Responsibility award for the #HeatUpTheStreet campaign. Thanks to Sumo Salad for your ongoing support we look forward to making the #HeatUpTheStreet campaign even more successful in 2016.





## ABERGELDIE HELPS DRIVE VINNIES NIGHT PATROL



Abergeldie, an engineering company based in Regents Park, has continued its long standing support of the Parramatta Central Council Night Patrol Van for seven years. Mick Boyle, Executive Chairman of Abergeldie, has also participated in the Vinnies CEO Sleepout since 2004 and, combined with Abergeldie's support of the Vinnies Van, Mick has raised in excess of \$414,000 for the Society.

**A huge thank you to the generous Abergeldie staff who volunteer their time on the van each month.**

## SPARE CHANGE RESTORED HOPE AT CHRISTMAS

Lagardere Travel Retail raised funds via collection boxes through their Newslink newsagent outlets and Relay Book stores in their domestic and international retail stores around Australia to support the Vinnies Christmas Appeal 2015.

**Thank you to our friends at LS Travel, who continue to support people experiencing disadvantage and homelessness through their partnership.**

**RESTORE HIS HOPE THIS CHRISTMAS.**

Thank you for your generosity, your donation will assist Vinnies to restore hope to people who need it the most.



For more information visit [vinnies.org.au/christmasappeal](http://vinnies.org.au/christmasappeal)  
VINNIES CHRISTMAS APPEAL. RESTORING HOPE.

Vinnies Christmas Appeal  
St Vincent de Paul Society  
1800 000 000

## JANSSEN STANDS STRONG

Janssen pharmaceuticals has been supporting the Society for over 25 years as one of our longest serving Corporate Partners. Janssen has recently renewed their agreement to fund the accommodation and rollout of the OLC program at Freeman House in Armidale and the SPARK program from 2015 to 2017.

**We'd like to sincerely thank our most committed Corporate Partner Janssen. Without ongoing support from organisations like Janssen Vinnies could not continue to deliver hope and restore and rebuild lives.**





## HILTON EXTENDS THEIR SUPPORT AT MARTIN PLACE

Longstanding Vinnies partner, Hilton Hotels Worldwide generously hosted a Sydney Night Patrol BBQ at Martin Place on 25th October. Hilton staff came together to feed over 200 people who access the Van Service.

Hilton also sponsored the Matthew Talbot Hostel's 50th Commemoration at the Ozanam Learning Centre providing food and service staff. Hilton Hotels will again sponsor the Hotels Have Hearts Gala Dinner in May 2016 to raise much-needed funds for the NSW Support Services and they will continue their sponsorship of Sydney Night Patrol.

**We are so grateful for the support we receive from Hilton Hotels Worldwide and look forward to working with Hilton Sydney in 2016.**





## VINNIES RECEIVES ONGOING ENERGY SUPPORT FROM AGL

Thanks to the generous financial investment from AGL Energy the St Vincent de Paul Society will receive over \$1.5 million to support the Society's work to deliver direct financial and non-financial support to people in New South Wales and South Australia.

AGL's financial contribution is used primarily in the Parramatta and Sydney Archdiocese to support customers who are struggling to pay their energy bills. AGL kindly promoted the Vinnies Winter Appeal in June, July and August 2015 through its online customer bills as well as generously sponsoring the Vinnies CEO Sleepout sound and av costs and Social Media Content Award.

**We look forward to continuing to work in partnership with AGL and would like to sincerely thank AGL's staff and customers for helping Vinnies to rebuild lives.**



Mark England from AGL and Ray Reynolds former NSW State President of Vinnies presents CEO of Sumo Salads the AGL Social Media Campaign award.



Mark England from AGL arrives at the Vinnies CEO Sleepout 2015

# SUTHERLAND SHIRE REGIONAL COUNCIL GALA DINNER AND AUCTION

FRIDAY 29 APRIL 2016 AT 6.30PM

SUTHERLAND ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE, ETON ST, SUTHERLAND



Grab your friends and enjoy a fun filled night of great food and superb prizes hosted by MC Mike Bailey with a performance by St Patrick's College School Band.

**Tickets are \$100** (tables of 8, 10, 12 and 16 seats available).

Please contact Frank Tierney 0412 844 542 or Denis O'Brien on 0407 437 797. Visit [vinnies.org.au/sutherlandgala](http://vinnies.org.au/sutherlandgala) for tickets and event details.



St Vincent de Paul Society  
*good works*



“I was so surprised the second day when they delivered a whole truck of things. They gave me a new bed for my son and one for me. I still sleep on that bed.”



# STANDING STRONG

Cai describes how her husband isolated her from the outside world, never allowing her to make any friends.

**When Cai arrived in Australia from China in 2007 she envisaged great things for her and her husband and the life they would build in their new homeland. But her dreams were soon shattered as her husband turned on her, controlling every detail of her life and subjecting her to violent outbreaks.**

A year after arriving in Australia, the couple welcomed a son and Cai hoped desperately that this would change things and bring some long overdue joy to their home. But nothing changed and the abuse continued.

Cai describes how her husband isolated her from the outside world, not even allowing her to make any friends.

"He would not let me go out with any friends, no friends at all. I had been here nearly three years and I didn't have any close friends. Nobody to turn to," she says.

After two years of living in what Cai describes as a nightmare, she built up the courage to leave her husband. She knew she had to make this bold move for her own safety as well as that of her son.

Housing NSW allocated her a home and Cai describes the mixed emotions of relief at having a roof over their head but the fear of an empty home and not knowing how she would provide for her son.

"The first night in the house I only had one blanket and one pillow. That's all we had. We slept on the floor that first night," she says.

Cai then turned to the St Vincent de Paul Society for help in connecting her electricity and providing some basic home goods. The Society swung into action and soon her power was connected and Society members were at her doorstep with food vouchers.

"I was so surprised the second day when they delivered a whole truck of things. They gave me a new bed for my son and one for me. I still sleep on that bed. They gave

me everything – a table, chairs, fridge and a lounge. The whole room was filled up. I got everything I needed and that made me feel a lot better," remembers Cai.

As things began to settle, Cai received some sad news from home that her father was seriously ill. Wanting to take her son to China to meet her parents, Cai learnt that her ex-husband had placed her son on the no-flight list claiming that he feared she would not return from China.

"I was upset and scared that my father would pass away without ever meeting my little boy and that I would never get to see my father again. In seven years I'd never been home. I cried a lot as my Mum begged us to visit," she explains.

Bewildered by the court system and not knowing what to do, Cai turned to the Society again. The Society guided her through the process, supporting Cai at every step. The fight was a difficult and emotional one but she was determined to gain the right to take her son to meet his grandparents. In the end her court case was successful and she was able to return to China and reconnect with her family after years of isolation. Cai remembers the trip as a very special moment.

"My dad got a lot better. When he saw my son he was so excited. He just sat there and looked at him," she says.

On her return to Australia, filled with new confidence and determination, Cai enrolled in TAFE and began volunteering at a Vinnies Shop.

As to her new found independence she says she is like a baby learning to walk.

"I do everything for myself. Little by little, I'm starting to walk strongly now. I'm really free and I don't want anyone to tie me up like that again."



## SPECIAL COLLABORATION (AND A \$10,000 GRANT!) FOR BUDDIES DAY IN GRAFTON

Buddies Day is a wonderful example of collaboration between St Mary's Conference and McAuley College in Grafton when they recently delivered a fantastic event for children facing hardship in the local area. Children enjoyed a baby animal farm, jumping castle, art and crafts and BBQ lunch which provided a great opportunity for buddies and kids to interact and get to know each other.

"As part of our Buddies Day program, at-risk children and young people were able to participate in supportive activities to build resilience, health, wellbeing, confidence and team work skills," said Melissa Bordin, Youth Coordinator (North) at Lismore Central Council.

The Lismore Youth Team was recently awarded a generous donation of \$10,000 by the Commonwealth Bank Community Grants Program to support Buddies Day. We would like to thank the kindness and generosity of Commonwealth Bank staff who donated to this fantastic initiative.

## SYDNEY VINNIES YOUTH TEAM IGNITES CHANGE



**The passion for social justice knows no bounds when it comes to the Sydney Vinnies Youth team! Each year, Mini Vinnies gatherings enhance students' skills, knowledge and passion through various interactive workshops.**

In 2015, 30 Catholic Primary Schools and over 240 student and staff members attended an exclusive Mini Vinnies gathering at the Australian Catholic University in Strathfield.

The students developed their skills and knowledge of social justice issues through workshops led by local change-makers and by thinking more deeply about how to be part of the change they wished to see in the world. The workshops were facilitated by Sydney Night Patrol, OzHarvest, Anti-Slavery Australia and SPARK. The students also grew their networks and broadened their perspectives by working together with Mini Vinnies from other schools.

Sydney University and UNSW Young Adult Conference members spoke about the opportunities that Vinnies offers students who wish to shape a more just and compassionate society. The students were welcomed into a community of service-oriented youth whose advocacy is truly making a difference.



## SOUP FOR THE SOUL

**Congratulations to the Year Six students of the Cathedral Primary School, Bathurst who organised a highly successful soup drive in the spirit of St Vincent de Paul.**

Motivated to help those experiencing hardship, Cathedral Primary School students gathered donations and personally boxed soup cans which were then donated to Vinnies.

The Soup for the Soul drive collected 211 cans and 119 packets of soup which was enough to serve up a warm meal to 780 people.



## MINI VINNIES AWARDED NSW COMMUNITY SERVICE & SOCIAL JUSTICE AWARD

Family Educator Ms Desiree Djundja, St Vincent de Paul Society, Mini Vinnies Coordinator Ms Claire Mercer, Religious Education Coordinator, Ms Freda Byrne and Principal Mrs Milena Colussi.



**Congratulations to our Mini Vinnies members who were awarded the Australian College of Educators' NSW "Community Service & Social Justice Award 2015".**

ACE NSW instituted this annual award in 2014 to recognise the work of individuals or organisations that best exemplify socially meaningful achievements, or play a significant role in promoting community and/or social justice in NSW.

As well as congratulating our winners, we would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the amazing Mini Vinnies coordinators who are dedicated to engaging young members in conversations about social justice issues. To the Central Councils, Youth staff and members who support, resource and encourage the Mini Vinnies groups and teachers, thank you for all your hard work and dedication.

## LISMORE ARCHDIOCESE VINNIES SCHOOL SLEEPOUT



**In the Port Macquarie region, more than 30 students from St Joseph's Primary School in Wauchope participated in the first ever Vinnies School Sleepout to raise funds for the Winter Appeal.**

Year 5 and 6 students listened to a presentation about homelessness from Sarah Mason, Youth Coordinator (South) at the Lismore Central Council, and took part in a number of fun and interesting social justice activities.

Students also constructed their own shelters on the night, with prizes awarded for the best shelters.

Many parents and teachers volunteered at the sleepout, making soup for the students, and serving dinner and breakfast.

"We are so grateful to the students for their support of the St Vincent de Paul Society – their dedication to the cause was unwavering and their community spirit was simply inspiring," said Sarah Mason, Youth Coordinator (South) at the Lismore Central Council.

## MINI VINNIES GATHERINGS IN WILCANNIA AND PARKES

**Devoted Mini Vinnies groups in the Wilcannia/Forbes Central Council were rewarded for their hard work in October at two Mini Vinnies Gatherings in Wilcannia and Parkes.**



185 students and teachers attended the gatherings and the Society would like to thank the Downer Group for their generous donation of \$1000.

Events included social justice workshops covering homelessness, bullying, migrants and refugees, poverty, mental health and overseas partnerships as well as presentations by Mini Vinnies groups on their activities and a liturgy.

## SYDNEY YOUTH SLEEP OUTS

In Sydney, two university campuses were transformed when the annual Winter Sleepouts at Sydney University and the University of New South Wales took place.

The theme of homelessness was heightened by focusing specifically on youth homelessness. Around 180 students slept out, with many others attending to listen to guest speakers, watch audio visual presentations and share in a light basic meal and quiet time reflecting on the messages of the Winter Sleep Outs.



Sydney University Quadrangle lights up at the 2015 Winter Sleep Out



University of New South Wales students at the 2015 Young Vinnies Winter Sleep Out

## SOCIAL JUSTICE ALIVE IN OUR PARISH SCHOOLS

Thanks to the generosity of the French's Forest Parish School community the Matthew Talbot Hostel has received 233 essential toiletry packs for people experiencing homelessness.



Students from St Martin de Porres, Davidson and Our Lady of Good Council kept busy collecting and packing toiletries for the disadvantaged in the community.

The packs contain everyday needs like soap, deodorant, shampoo, toothbrushes, toothpaste and combs.

The Matthew Talbot Hostel supports homeless men on the streets providing them a place to sleep and access their everyday needs.

## HELPING IN THREE WAYS



**Many rewards come from being part of the Sydney Night Patrol, but the main one is witnessing so many people doing amazing things.** One particularly flourishing partnership is the work with St Therese Mascot Primary School where teachers, students and parents all come together to make a difference. St Therese has been part of Sydney Night Patrol's regular donation roster for many years, with the school community donating and delivering food every four weeks.

Working with Sydney Night Patrol has given students at St Therese Primary School a deeper understanding of how this service operates and how they can contribute to the lives of those in need. It also gives them a true sense of advocacy that can be spread throughout their community.

Sydney Night Patrol is a Special Work of the St Vincent de Paul Society Sydney Archdiocese Central Council. Every night of the year (excluding New Year's Eve) our volunteers are on the streets of Sydney providing companionship, food and a hand-up to those experiencing homelessness.





# STEPPING IN EARLY

**The Society is more focused than ever on providing early intervention and prevention services that have been highlighted as part of the recent NSW Government's Going Home Staying Home reforms.**

This approach has always been valued by the Inner City Case Work team working with men, women and families at the Matthew Talbot Hostel and Vincentian House, as they believe that many of the people presenting as homeless could have been assisted earlier and therefore avoided their experience with homelessness altogether.

This early intervention, using more targeted case work practice, involves a greater focus on building relationships with Housing NSW offices and Community Housing providers, as well as working internally with other Society services for more streamlined referral pathways and inter-service support.

Most of the early intervention case work has been

with residents of social housing properties who are working through tenancy issues such as financial difficulties and safety and security within their properties. Case workers have been able to use their knowledge and experience of social housing policies and tenancy rights to help advocate for these clients.

Senior Operations Manager – Case Management, Brett Macklin says: "The concept of safety is perhaps one of the biggest factors required to ensure sustainable homes."

Other support provided has been to link clients with health services such as local doctors and mental health teams.

"We have also worked with people who are wanting to move from their home for various reasons. They may be on the brink of relinquishing their tenancy but have no clear plan of what they will do next. In these circumstances, the case work has focused on understanding the need to move and then helping with longer term planning and goal setting dependent on this," says Brett.

# THE WOMEN'S LOFT

**Women have gathered to talk since the beginning of time. Every day they come together around the world – in marketplaces, by rivers as they wash their clothes, or in each other's homes.**



In large cities like Sydney these connections are often hard to make and so St Vincent de Paul Society Support Services has created The Women's Loft at the Ozanam Learning Centre – a safe, supportive and inclusive space where women are invited to share their stories, challenges, hopes and dreams with other women.

Group facilitator Lisa Schouw explains how the program encourages therapeutic dialogue and respect each woman's social, mental state and emotional needs.

"I believe that therapy is not a cure for life, but rather a process in which we learn to know ourselves better. It can provide us with tools to change or soften those aspects of ourselves that undermine our ability to work, love and live rewarding lives," she says.

The women are then invited to reflect on something meaningful to them. On one occasion, the facilitator asked the question: "what is one thing you are grateful for in your life?"

50 year-old Jennifer, who had recently secured housing responded: "I am glad for a safe home, I am glad for the ability to make my life better and I am happy to be able to make good decisions for myself."



# THE TWO BIRTHS

## THE BIRTH OF CHRIST AND THE BIRTH OF A NEW YEAR

It is interesting to reflect that a year is drawn to its conclusion with two births...the birth of the Christ-child and the birth of a New Year! Both births offer us a sense of renewed hope and freedom. Although a time of transition and change it is also a time of joy and excitement.

Both events offer a chance for a change of heart too. Christmas opens us to reflect on family and friends; it draws us closer together and can be a time of real forgiveness. Christmas also opens our hearts to others not as fortunate. I know that generally Christmas hamper deliveries for Conferences are gifts in abundance!

The birth of a New Year offers us the opportunity to renew our outlook on life. However, like so many, several of the New Year resolutions which I will "commit" to will be slightly modified by mid-January! In saying this, the one resolution which I hope to remain untainted throughout this coming year is the one of seeing things a little differently...

Returning to work after holidays is never the easiest thing to do especially if you have "Christmased" and "New Yeared" to the full. Beached or pooled or basked in the sun, holidayed and partied like no tomorrow, slept in and stayed up late, rested and recreated over those weeks, coming back to the monotony and sometimes frustrations of the workplace is always a challenge! This time can be seen as the beginning of "back to the grindstone for another year" or "back to making a difference in my life and others". It is in this latter perception that I wish to share as the birth of one of my NY16 Resolutions.

The reflection below draws on the wisdom and insights of making that difference. Jean Vanier is the founder of the L'Arche communities, an international federation of communities for people with developmental disabilities. Vanier has given much of his long life to work on behalf of people institutionalised with disabilities. Here are his words about true compassionate care for those in need and making that difference.

*In a special way, for those of us called to live or work with very broken people, our purpose is to help them rise up and discover and exercise their own gifts, to discover their beauty and their capacity to love and to serve.*

*The danger for those who are serving the poor is to hold them back by doing too much for them, like parents who do too much for their child with a handicap. It is always easier to do things for people than to help them find their dignity, and self-respect, by doing things for themselves.*

*When we do too much, not helping others to grow or take responsibility for themselves, are we not just serving ourselves? To serve broken people means helping them, like a mother helps her child, to discover their own gifts and beauty, helping them to a greater independence, so that gradually we may disappear.*

Vanier expresses this compassionate love in his Christian faith and offers a challenging NY Resolution for us all...

...Jesus died on the cross, and then hid himself in the bread of the Eucharist. In the same way, those of us who are the strongest or the elders in a community, must learn to disappear, to take the last place, to become like bread, so that others may be nourished and grow.

Jean Vanier, *The Broken Body* 1999  
A Simple Prayer for our New Year's work...

**May the birth of the Christ-child and the birth of a New Year**

**Renew your hope, Inspire your faith, and fill you with eternal love. Amen**



**Leo Tucker**  
State Council Spiritual Advisor



ozanam  
i n d u s t r i e s

A Special Work of the  
St Vincent de Paul Society



**Ozanam Industries is a Special Work of the St Vincent de Paul Society and we employ over 100 Australians with a disability at our three Work Centres (in Stanmore, West Ryde and Coonamble in North Western NSW).**

We provide cost effective, reliable and on time solutions to all of our customers. Please view some of their testimonials on our website – [ozanam.org.au](http://ozanam.org.au).

We have a host of business partnerships with large Australian corporations, banks, NSW State Government departments and many small businesses.

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- All types of shrink-wrapping
- Show bag and folder assembly
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- Kit assembly
- All types of labelling
- All phases of mail fulfilment
- Database management
- Supply of all sizes of envelopes
- Warehousing of customer pallets and products

Please call Rod Silber on **0411 687 787** for an obligation free quotation or email him at [rod@ozanam.org.au](mailto:rod@ozanam.org.au)

**Looking for employment?**

If you are looking for employment and have a disability or health condition and receive a disability support pension, then give us a call to discuss it further. Contact the Program Support Officer in your area:

**West Ryde Office** 02 9126 7935

Sunitha Mohanakumaran

**Stanmore Office** 02 9126 7903

Geordie Adams

**Coonamble Office** 02 6822 1386

Gemma Jordan



St Vincent de Paul Society NSW  
Support Services *good works*

**ITS ABOUT FULLFILLMENT...**

**...YOURS AND OURS**