

2022–2023 IMPACT REPORT

CHANGE NEEDS *you*



St Vincent de Paul Society
VICTORIA

good works



\$858,557

EDUCATION

EDUCATION ASSISTANCE PROVIDED



10,641

ONE-ON-ONE EDUCATION SUPPORT HOURS



242

CONFERENCES AND ASSISTANCE CENTRES



VINCENTCARE



\$9.5m

FOOD INSECURITY

FOOD AND FOOD VOUCHERS DISTRIBUTED



4,041,654

CUSTOMERS SERVED IN VINNIES SHOPS



58.9%

OF PEOPLE CALLING OUR WELFARE LINE REQUEST FOOD



COST OF LIVING

\$6.4m

COST OF LIVING EXPENSES PROVIDED



HOMELESSNESS

\$2.6m

HOMELESSNESS SERVICES INCLUDING ACCOMMODATION AND TRANSPORT



22.6%

RISE IN MEALS SERVED BY SOUP VANS SINCE LAST YEAR



113,395

HOME VISITS MADE BY CONFERENCES



11,000+

VOLUNTEERS GIVING BACK TO THE VICTORIAN COMMUNITY



VINNIES SHOPS

\$3.8m

MATERIAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDED



10,950

ROUGH SLEEPER PACKS DISTRIBUTED



776,329
MEALS PROVIDED BY SOUP VANS

4,598

NIGHTS OF EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION PROVIDED BY VINCENTCARE



48.1%
RISE IN NUMBER OF STUDENTS ATTENDING OUR EDUCATION PROGRAMS



\$524,600
RAISED FOR THE VICTORIAN FLOOD APPEAL



VINNIES
CEO SLEEPOUT

\$1.3m

RAISED FOR
HOMELESSNESS



\$442,412
IN NO INTEREST LOANS DISTRIBUTED



60,410
WELFARE ASSISTANCE
CALLS RECEIVED

OUR *impact*

The St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria is dedicated to delivering care, compassion, and crucial assistance to thousands of vulnerable individuals in Victoria each year.

Thanks to the generous support from our donors and partners, our team of dedicated members, volunteers and employees consistently work towards transforming lives through various impactful programs and services.

Our assistance covers a wide range of essentials, including food, emergency housing, school fees, pharmacy expenses, fuel, utility bills – and beyond.

In addition to material aid, our members and volunteers offer emotional support, emphasising a holistic approach that upholds dignity, empowerment and sustainable paths to positive change.

THIS IS THE IMPACT OF YOUR SUPPORT

ABOUT *us*

OUR CALLING

“Let us do without hesitation whatever *good* lies at our hands.” Blessed Frederic Ozanam

OUR FOUNDER

The St Vincent de Paul Society was founded in 1833 in France by 20-year-old Frederic Ozanam.

He and his fellow university students helped people struggling to survive in the poorer suburbs of Paris by giving them practical assistance, such as bread and firewood. Frederic’s focus was on getting to know people and their struggles so that he could understand the causes of poverty and advocate for change.

Frederic’s vision became a worldwide movement and just two decades later, the first Australian conference was founded by Father Gerald Ward at St Francis’ Church in Melbourne on 5 March 1854.

This compassionate outlook, enthusiasm and vision continues today among the thousands of people who share their time, care and energy to make a difference in the lives of disadvantaged people all around Australia.

THE RULE

“The Society constantly strives for renewal, adapting to changing world conditions. It seeks to be ever aware of the changes that occur in human society and the new types of poverty that may be identified or anticipated.”*

*The Rule and International Statutes govern the operations of the Confederation of the St Vincent de Paul Society. The Rule – our set of founding principles – calls us to fight against suffering, take responsibility for poverty and inequality and promote human dignity. The current version was approved during the Rome Special General meeting in October 2003.

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

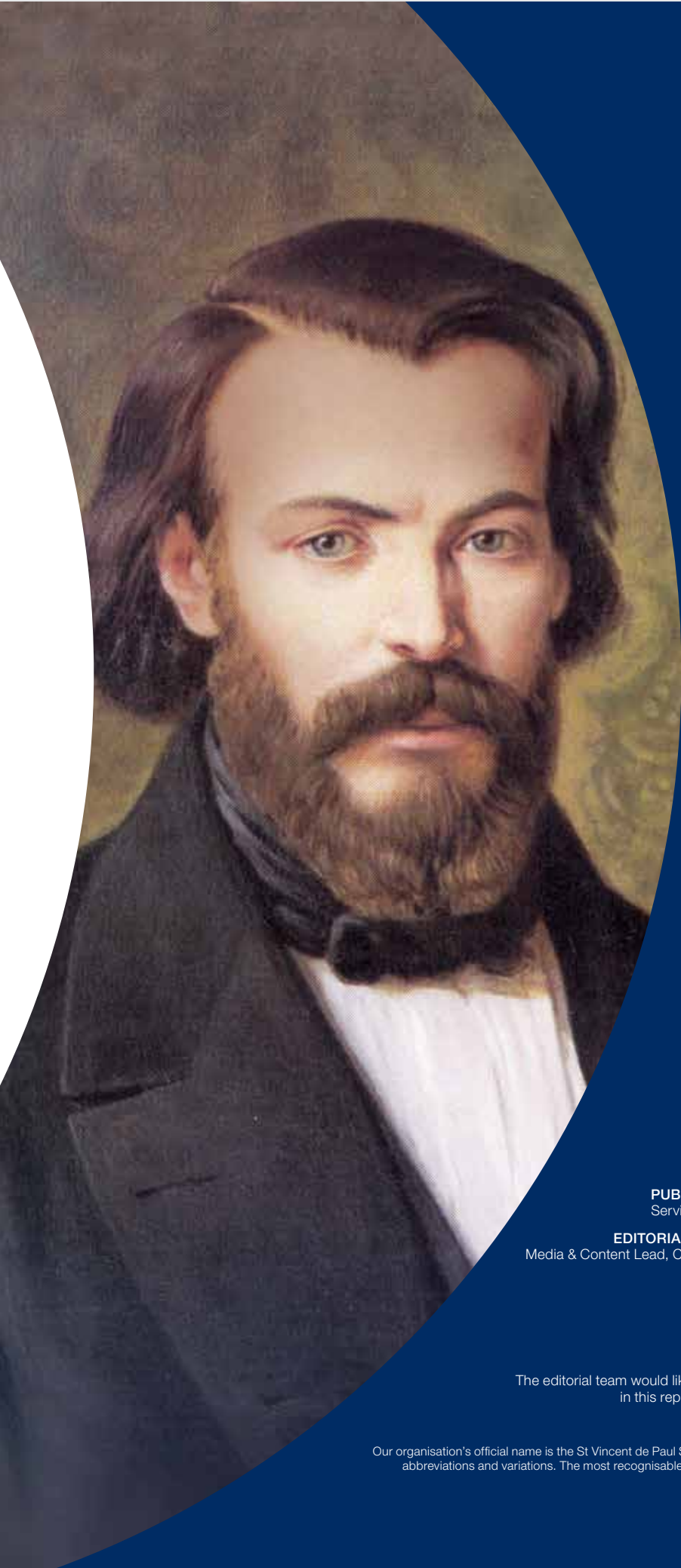


OUR INVITATION

CHANGE NEEDS

you





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Our organisation's official name is the St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria. However, over the years and throughout this document we have used abbreviations and variations. The most recognisable of these are: the St Vincent de Paul Society, the Society, Vinnies Victoria and Vinnies.



FAITHFUL TO THE *spirit*

“Faithful to the spirit of its founders, the Society constantly strives for renewal, adapting to changing world conditions. It seeks to be ever aware of the changes that occur in human society and the new types of poverty that may be identified or anticipated.”

This inspiring quote comes from *The Rule*, which is the guiding principles of the St Vincent de Paul Society.

These words guide the St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria as we try to navigate these challenging times where issues such as cost of living and homelessness are getting worse across our state.

The Rule reminds us to always be open to change and adapt in order to be more responsive, more engaging and more available to our communities.

Earlier this year, I had the privilege of visiting Wangaratta and Lakes Entrance, where we inaugurated two new assistance centres. These centres are tangible examples of our Society’s resilience and its commitment to serving our local communities with greater efficiency and effectiveness.

In the pages of this report, you will read many examples, not only of our members’ proactive and responsive approach to addressing the call of people in need, but also our volunteers and crisis teams.

Next year, the St Vincent de Paul Society celebrates 170 years in Australia, having been established at St Francis’ Church, Melbourne on 5 March 1854.

We recognise that our story is not solely ours to tell. It is a story co-written by our dedicated members, our compassionate supporters and – especially – the communities we serve.

Our membership are the dedicated hands and compassionate hearts that carry our mission forward. Yet we cannot forget that our supporters, you, and countless others, are a vital part of our story and a driving force behind our impact.

It is through your unwavering generosity, your commitment to change lives, and your belief in the power of compassion that we are able to extend our reach and make a lasting difference in the lives of people we serve.

Thank you for walking alongside the St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria as we change, adapt and continue to positively impact our communities now and well into the future.

Michael Quinn
State President



CHANGE NEEDS *you*

Welcome to our 2022–2023 Impact Report: ‘Change Needs You’. As I mark my first few months at St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria, I am struck by the compassion and solidarity driving our mission.

We are committed to helping individuals and families in dire need by providing essentials like food, clothing, shelter and healing support. Yet our purpose goes deeper – we aim to spark compassion in every heart.

St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria’s legacy, a beacon of benevolence, has paved the way for today’s humanitarian principles. Caring for the vulnerable is ingrained in our organisation’s DNA.

Australia’s beauty is juxtaposed with stark disparities. Around 3.3 million Australians grapple with poverty daily. This poverty isn’t just about a lack of financial resources; it’s a denial of fundamental human rights – access to education, healthcare and affordable housing.

In Victoria, urgency prevails. Homelessness has surged by 24% since 2016 – an alarming reality. More than just numbers, these are individuals – people who yearn for stability, security and dignity. These are stories of courage amid adversity.

We all have the responsibility, and the chance, to reshape this narrative.

St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria is uniquely poised to alleviate homelessness and poverty. Government-backed housing services and a vast network of volunteers span the state, reaching lives in almost every pocket of our communities.

Our 2022–2023 Impact Report reveals how collective efforts create real change. From home visitations to youth programs, from soup vans to assistance for asylum

seekers and refugees, our services span a spectrum that seek to uplift, empower and heal. This isn’t just about addressing immediate needs; it’s about laying the foundation for a brighter tomorrow.

As we present this Impact Report, it’s important to recognise that #ChangeNeedsYou. It needs all of us.

Every step forward, every transformed life – are testaments to caring hearts. Your involvement isn’t just a choice; it’s crucial. Those who genuinely care, stand with us.

I look forward to continuing our St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria journey together.

Dr Jennifer Fitzgerald AM
Chief Executive Officer

ADVOCACY

OUR *voice*

The St Vincent de Paul Society was founded on social justice and this legacy continues today, almost 170 years later, as we face challenges including climate change, significant energy increases and the escalating cost-of-living which makes day-to-day living more difficult. Like Frederic Ozanam bringing wood to the disadvantaged people of his time, we continue to provide practical assistance wherever we see the need.

In Australia today, dismantling barriers, challenging discrimination and promoting inclusivity to ensure no one is marginalised or deprived of their human rights is still as relevant as it was 200 years ago, when Frederic Ozanam founded the St Vincent de Paul Society in France.

These human rights include equal and fair access to resources, such as adequate food, free education, and safe and secure housing. While our conference members and volunteers in regional places like Bright or Ballarat still provide instant and practical help, such as carrying firewood into the homes of people in need like young Frederic Ozanam did, together with our Social Justice, Social Policy & Advocacy Committee, our members also take our good works to another level through advocacy.

St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria's advocacy actively works to eradicate the root cause of systemic injustices by using our voice to shape public opinion and influence decision-makers to address the cost-of-living crisis, challenge inequalities and drive positive change.

This ranges from our members reaching out to their local MPs to achieve a better outcome for people experiencing financial hardship due to health issues or contacting the Minister of Education to ease parents' and carers' burden of the cost of education for children, to lobbying the government regarding achieving fairer access to affordable energy. On a practical level, we have provided families with movie tickets so their children

could have a 'social' outing like their friends, which is also part of social justice, to providing refugees with warm clothes and emotional support.

The St Vincent de Paul Society's commitment to working in the energy space is considered as a key contribution to Victoria's community.

Each year, the St Vincent de Paul Society releases a state-based analysis of energy cost changes. With every release of our Victorian Tariff Tracker reports, we highlight the changes and impacts on households within our communities.

Due to the perils of climate change we are experiencing, we are deeply concerned that vulnerable households and communities will be left behind and unable to cope or pay for the rising costs of this once in a lifetime energy transition.

Early signals are that households without new technologies like solar can be hit by increases of up to \$4,000 per annum. Knowing this information is vital as we advocate to ensure that every Victorian is included and supported in the energy transition.

At the same time, due to high media interest in the Tariff Tracker, we amplify our voice and advocacy, speaking on behalf of the people we assist and making sure they are heard and listened to by the government.

**AS AN ORGANISATION WE ARE A VOICE FOR THE VOICELESS
AND SPEAK FOR THE PEOPLE. WE WILL CONTINUE TO DRIVE
CHANGE TO ENSURE A MORE JUST AND COMPASSIONATE SOCIETY.**

OUR *good works*

The St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria has provided \$19.4 million in assistance through our core works of homelessness, food insecurity, cost of living and education. The following is a breakdown of our core works:



HOMELESSNESS

\$2,615,331
Accommodation/
Transport

FOOD INSECURITY

\$8,108,729
Food vouchers

\$1,370,422
Food purchases

COST OF LIVING

\$3,827,972
Welfare & material aid

\$1,186,604
Goods provided

\$762,383
Other assistance

\$435,341
Utilities

\$250,410
Medical

EDUCATION

\$858,557
Education



HOMELESSNESS



FOOD INSECURITY



COST OF LIVING



EDUCATION



18.4%

**INCREASE IN MATERIAL
ASSISTANCE PROVIDED
SINCE LAST YEAR**





“I NEVER THOUGHT I’D END UP ON THE STREET IN MY 70s. IF IT COULD HAPPEN TO ME, IT COULD HAPPEN TO ANY OLDER WOMAN.”

Joan*

GOOD cares

HOW WE helped



\$2,615,331

assistance provided

\$711,861

accommodation support provided[^]



\$621,821

transport support provided[^]



\$442,412

No Interest Loans distributed



28.9%

increase in homelessness assistance provided



Having access to a safe house is a fundamental human right and lies at the heart of St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria’s mission. It ensures that everyone can live a life with dignity and security, and a refuge is offered to people experiencing disadvantages or seeking to escape harmful situations, such as family and domestic violence or homelessness.

Yet Victoria faces a homelessness crisis. On Census night 2021, the number of Victorians who counted as being without a home rose by a staggering 24% to 30,000 compared to the previous Census 2016. Particularly concerning is the number of older women experiencing homelessness. It has grown rapidly in recent years and is likely to increase.

The statistics confirm what our passionate members, volunteers and employees see every day. At the heart of all homelessness – including for older women who never expected to be homeless before – poverty is often triggered by the loss of a spouse, serious illness, rent increase or fleeing violence or elder abuse.

Helping to change lives is what motivates us day in and day out. We compassionately listen to the stories of the most vulnerable in our society and provide essentials, like food and clothing. We offer support by connecting people with the services they need or help pay for essentials, knowing it changes lives.

JOAN'S STORY

At the age of 70, Joan* faced an unexpected turn in her life, plunging into homelessness following the loss of her beloved husband. Devastatingly, her eldest daughter took her savings and claimed ownership of their home after Joan’s husband of 50 years passed away.

“I’d lost my husband, I’d lost my home, I’d lost my family. I had nothing to live for. I didn’t even have a pension,” said Joan.

Her story echoes the plight of numerous older women confronting homelessness due to financial instability, coupled with the impact of family and domestic violence.

Many women, compelled to take unpaid breaks from work to care for their families, find themselves financially disadvantaged in retirement, amplifying vulnerability in cases of separation, divorce or widowhood.

In Joan’s case, the St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria proved to be a lifeline.

Placed in crisis accommodation, Joan encountered compassionate volunteers, such as Jess and Maria. Maria assisted Joan to navigate the bureaucratic maze at Centrelink to stabilise her finances, while Jess played a pivotal role in securing a new home. Joan now has a place to call home, which she never thought she’d have again.

The support we provided is a testimony of the transformative impact on Joan’s life and the lives of many others we assist.

[^]Material assistance provided by conferences.

*Name changed for privacy reasons.

VINCENTCARE

GOOD supports

Established in 2003 by the St Vincent de Paul Society, VincentCare is committed to assisting vulnerable Victorians experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness.

VincentCare's specialist homelessness support programs, crisis accommodation, family violence services, and alcohol and other drug recovery services are delivered by highly trained employees and practitioners.

VincentCare recognises that factors leading to homelessness are multifaceted and that clients often present with a range of complex issues, and recognises that trauma and homelessness are inextricably linked.

We know that the main drivers of homelessness are family violence, financial difficulties, and alcohol and other drug misuse.

Through ongoing consultations with clients, and working from a strong evidence base, including understanding the external operating environment and global trends, VincentCare continues to be at the forefront of supporting and caring for Victoria's most vulnerable.

VINCENTCARE COMMUNITY HOUSING

Working alongside our homelessness and crisis services, VincentCare Community Housing manages 250+ properties across a number of programs. As a community housing provider, VincentCare Community Housing manages the properties under the provisions of the Residential Tenancies Act, and renters have the same rights and responsibilities of any other renter across Victoria.

In 2022–2023, more than 40 individuals including more than a few pets, have been successfully housed and had a place to call home. These include transitional and long-term housing properties for singles and families, covering all age groups.

The Transitional Housing Program has more than 165 properties with 200+ tenancies. During the year, there were 69 exits, most of these renters being made offers of public housing. This is a very successful outcome, with the program being able to support households until they receive an offer of secure, affordable long-term housing.

VincentCare Community Housing also manages 87 independent living units in North Melbourne and across regional Victoria. These are for people (singles and couples) over 50. Sunbury Gardens is a 22-bed rooming house which also houses the same cohort. Unlike the Transitional Housing Program there is very limited turnover, which is a positive outcome.

More than 100 individuals were able to maintain stable, reasonable long-term housing in these dwellings. The few vacancies that were created were due to changes in life circumstances for some and the need to move into higher care housing, such as aged or palliative care.

The Head Leasing program wound up this year, with the Victorian Department of Families, Fairness and Housing no longer providing funding. More than 40 families were housed during this time, a number of them being able to take over the lease into their own name, also a successful outcome.

We work in partnership with Jesuit Social Services managing up to 13 head leased properties at any one time. Over the year, VincentCare Community Housing was able to accommodate 20+ young people who have had contact with the juvenile justice system.

VincentCare Community Housing continues to provide quality rental accommodation to many people who would otherwise struggle to survive in the private rental market.



INNER MELBOURNE COMMUNITY HUB

The Inner Melbourne Community Hub is based in North Melbourne and Fitzroy and provides a range of services including crisis accommodation, intensive case management, drop-in support, health promotion, meals, and social inclusion activities.

The hub's services include:

Ozanam House in North Melbourne encompasses a 60-bed crisis supported accommodation, 48-bed extended stay accommodation and 26 independent living units for people experiencing homelessness. In 2022–2023 Ozanam House supported 390 residents within crisis accommodation and extended stay accommodation settings. A further 63,000 meals were served to residents and drop-in clients.

Ozanam House also offers an open-access drop-in Homelessness Resource Centre where people aged 18+ experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness can access a suite of services including drop-in support (i.e. meals, laundry facilities), case management, a health platform, and initial assessment and planning.

The Homelessness Resource Centre resumed service delivery in January 2023 after scaling back during the COVID pandemic. There are currently more than 100 client presentations each day. In 2022–2023 a total of \$91,000 was provided in emergency relief and 110 volunteers supported the site in a number of key operational functions. In addition, several co-located programs have returned or resumed the provision of health interventions, such as podiatry, a dietician, physiotherapist and dental health services.

Quin House is an abstinence-based residential service that provides drug and alcohol rehabilitation supported accommodation for 11 single people aged 18+ who identify as cis male or trans male.

Employees work in a holistic approach to recovery, and use a combination of group sessions, activities, individual counselling, life-skills training and peer support to encourage significant lifestyle changes.

In 2022–2023, the Quin House program provided 96 residents with residential drug and alcohol support. A further 76 clients were provided with an additional six months of recovery-focused counselling and case management support to assist them to maintain abstinence and re-establish their lives in the community following residential rehabilitation.

DAMIEN'S STORY

Looking for a meal was what made Damien* wander into Ozanam House several years ago, after having experienced homelessness and periods of incarceration while grappling with addiction for decades. Little did he know that this visit would transform his life. It finally led him to find a much-needed structure and provided him with the right framework to break a vicious cycle, helping him to transition into a much better physical and mental state.

How? With the wrap-around support of VincentCare's Ozanam House team, Damien was able to become a client volunteer doing breakfast shifts multiple times a week. From here, the team could also support him in finding employment in a café after more than 20 years of not having a tax-paying job.

"Volunteering with VincentCare gave me purpose and set me on a path to building a great life for myself. It has by far been one of the best, most rewarding things I've done in my life," Damien says. After six years in hospitality, he later also found a job as a peer support worker.

Damien is now once again volunteering at Ozanam House. This time as a community volunteer, giving back to the community.



HUME COMMUNITY HUB

Hume Community Hub is a one-stop-shop for people who experience family violence, financial disadvantage and social isolation. Services offered include family violence, financial counselling and assistance, emergency relief support, outreach for those in isolated communities.

The hub brings essential services together under one roof and means family violence victims and survivors no longer need to bounce from service to service without consistent support.

Safe Spaces, which offers secure emergency accommodation for victim survivors of family violence in the Goulbourn Valley region, welcomed its first clients in March this year. In addition to primary services, Safe Spaces also offers confidential consultation spaces in collaboration with agencies, such as Victoria Police’s Family Violence Investigation Unit and Goulbourn Valley Health child and maternal health nurses.

Our Financial Counselling & Capability program, a free and confidential financial counselling service for eligible clients, provides people with the strategies needed to help them manage their finances.

BILL & JOHN’S STORY

When Bill, 64, and John, 59, met VincentCare’s Hume Community Hub team they had been grappling with homelessness for years: couch surfing, sleeping in cars or sleeping rough. John hasn’t had a permanent home since 2014. Both were battling significant health issues – physically and mentally.

All they wished for was to live in safe homes in or around Shepparton. For stability and connection, it was vitally important that they found somewhere local, so they could remain within the vicinity of medical services they knew and trusted, and other support networks.

However, the lack of affordable housing for the two men relying on modest jobseeker allowances and no rental history became insurmountable hurdles.

Their worlds changed when they were referred under the Victorian Government’s From Homelessness to a Home (H2H) program in mid-2021. Through a collaborative effort, the hub’s team was able to secure stable housing and provide specifically tailored support for the two men.

The result? Bill, now on an age pension, enjoys the safety of his local residence, which – much to his delight – has a garden. John has also rebuilt his life in Shepparton. He has undertaken further studies, completed his Diploma of Community Development and now works part-time.

“They are both doing great, living independently and competently managing the challenges of increased costs,” says Marie Murfet, Hume Community Hub Manager. “What else can you wish for?”

HUME COMMUNITY HUB’S *impact*



256
clients



54.3%
identified as
having a disability



75%
identified as
female



13.7%
identified as
Aboriginal and/or
Torres Strait Islander



NORTHERN COMMUNITY HUB'S *impact*

HOMECONNECT

\$464,000

brokerage assistance provided including utilities, rent and other necessities

INITIAL ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING/PRIVATE RENTAL ACCESS PROGRAM

670

households assisted to obtain and sustain private rental

OUTREACH

345

households supported with case management in Young Adults & Outreach programs

OLIVE'S PLACE

\$63,359

total amount brokerage provided

NORTHERN COMMUNITY HUB

Behind an unassuming door at a shopping strip in the working-class suburb of Glenroy, the Northern Community Hub provides flexible and innovative responses to homelessness and housing instability for people living in Hume, Merri-Bek and local government areas in Melbourne's west.

Over the last financial year, the Support Services team provided various programs to young adults and adults with intensive case management across Melbourne's northern regions.

The teams supported 345 households with case management in the Young Adults & Outreach programs.

The Young Adults Private Rental programs supported 85 young people with establishing new private rental tenancies through Private Rental Brokerage and Young Adults Private Rental Entry Program with \$180,000 spent in direct client assistance.

The Youth Justice Homelessness Assistance programs worked alongside 45 young people in custody to link them to suitable housing support.

DEE'S STORY

In September 2022, Dee* met her support worker in our Northern Community Hub in Glenroy for the first time. It was a meeting that changed her life. Fearing for her safety, the 20 year old had arrived in Melbourne after she escaped an extremely violent relationship in rural Victoria.

Back then, Dee had no connections to friends and family, no place to stay and no financial resources. Sleeping rough, Dee found herself exposed to physical and verbal abuse.

"I lived on the streets, and from there, it's hard to get anywhere. You are constantly judged, and people tell you that you are a disgrace. Living on the streets breaks a person," Dee says.

Luckily, the Northern Community Hub employees could find accommodation for Dee. They also provided her with the support she needed in other areas, such as health and wellbeing, and connected her with services such as Centrelink.

Dee now lives in a house she has made her home with a supportive partner. She can also see her son. "VincentCare opened my eyes to see that this world still has hope. It's such a relief. Thank you," says Dee.

"You can come out of anything in life with the right support," adds her support worker. Dee is living proof of the successful #goodworks VincentCare provides.

*Name changed for privacy reasons.



“THE PANTRY IS A GIFT FROM HEAVEN. THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO GIVES GENEROUSLY TO VINNIES.”

Miriam*

GOOD feeds

HOW WE helped

\$9,479,151

assistance provided

776,329

meals served by soup vans

63,000

meals served to residents and drop-ins at Ozanam House

264 tonnes

food distributed by soup vans

58.9%

people calling the welfare line request food

Access to adequate food is a fundamental human right. However, for many Victorians, food has become an out-of-reach luxury item. St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria stands as a supportive ally, ready to assist.

With the price of necessities on an unstoppable rise, our food programs are in high demand. Our conferences (local volunteer groups) are busier than ever, as are our soup vans and mobile pantry volunteers, and our homelessness accommodation centres – all delivering groceries, vouchers, meals and comfort to Victorians in need, Victorians like Miriam*.

Miriam fled her country of origin due to conflict, violence and persecution, arriving in Victoria in 2021 with her family. Her husband works as a labourer, however, his salary barely covers rent and utilities. The couple have two daughters aged two and four and are looking forward to welcoming a new baby soon, but Miriam is worried.

During her pregnancy, Miriam developed gestational diabetes. The choice between buying her prescribed medications and providing nourishing food for her daughters is agonising because the money is not enough to cover both.

Luckily, Miriam heard about the Berwick mobile pantry, where she gets food staples for free. "A gift from heaven," Miriam smiles shyly. A visit ensures she can feed her family for four to five days.

With hygiene items also provided, Miriam is more likely to buy her medications. "Before I came to the mobile pantry, I worried about my children's health. Now, I don't lie in bed awake at night. Thank you to everyone who gives generously to Vinnies."

BERWICK MOBILE PANTRY – A LIFELINE PROVIDING FOOD

Berwick is a sought-after suburb about 45km from Melbourne's CBD. It's home to 50,000+ Victorians and popular with families. In 2022, our volunteers noticed how the financial pressure of soaring costs of living also affected Berwick. Increasingly, residents sought support from St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria – among them, many recently, arrived migrants escaping global conflict zones.

True to our commitment to reaching and supporting people in need, we sprang into action. In August 2022, we introduced the Berwick Mobile Pantry. Every fortnight, volunteers stack a Vinnies van up to the roof with essential nutritious staples such as tinned food, rice, pasta, milk, and items like nappies, toiletries, and sometimes clothing. Once that's done, the mobile pantry hits the road and stops at several Berwick locations.

Statistics reflect its success: The mobile pantry and its volunteers provided 27,100 meals to 2,700+ people last year. Since the mobile pantry's early days, there has been an increase of 235% of people waiting in line often long before it arrives. Numbers jumped from 100 to 300 people a month picking up food – predominantly for their families.

For many, the mobile pantry is even more than a lifeline providing food. It's also reliable and an opportunity to chat, laugh and pass time with volunteers who really care.

*Name changed for privacy reasons.



“WE WENT FROM BEING ABLE TO MANAGE WHEN I WAS WORKING, TO HAVING NEXT TO NOTHING WHEN I BECAME A CARER.”

Ted*

GOOD assists

HOW WE helped



\$6,462,710

assistance provided

\$529,821

utilities bill assistance[^]



\$997,976

furniture and whitegoods[^]



\$175,738

prescriptions/medications[^]



\$761,601

Vinnies cards[^]



The cost of living has risen at an excruciating rate. Over the previous financial year, we have seen rent and interest rates for mortgages skyrocketing, as well as prices going up for utilities and other necessities such as medical and education expenses, petrol and public transport.

The rise had a significant impact on everyone. We have observed changes in people approaching the St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria for assistance.

Our call centre, dedicated conference members, volunteers and employees have noticed an increase in people seeking assistance who have jobs and earn wages but still can't make ends meet.

We offer support ranging from paying utility bills and topping up petrol to easing the cost of school laptops, school uniforms or other education-related expenses and liaise with utility and credit providers if payments are in arrears.

To achieve both short- and long-term financial relief, we offer free financial counselling and capability programs, create nationally recognised tariff-tracking reports to save on energy bills and use our strong reputation and voice for advocacy and lobbying to government.

TED'S STORY

Keeping their heads above water regarding finances has been hard for 54-year-old Ted*, his wife and their four children.

Seven years ago, Ted was thrust into the roles of primary caregiver and sole income provider for his family when a workplace accident left his wife in pain and immobilised much of the time. Transitioning from a tradesman earning good money to a full-time caregiver, Ted and his wife faced a tight financial squeeze as his four kids – two teenagers in high school and two in primary school – grew and with them their needs from food to school uniforms.

Turning to St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria, Ted found financial assistance and a lifeline amid the rising costs of day-to-day living.

Our Welfare Assistance Call Centre put him in touch with a local conference member who was able to help. The support extended beyond the monetary realm, alleviating the stress accompanying unexpected children's growth spurts resulting in the need for new clothes and the constant demands of a growing family.

"Vinnies has been a massive help," Ted says. "It's a big relief ... because it affects your mental health when a bill comes in like the electricity or gas, or the kids say they need something for school, and you're always thinking 'where am I going to get the money for that?'"

In the intricate tapestry of Ted's life, St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria emerges as a thread, weaving resilience, compassion and community support into the very fabric of their journey.

[^]Material assistance provided by conferences

*Name changed for privacy reasons.



“JAMAL LOVES THE PROGRAM. YOU SEE THE JOY IN HIS EYES WHEN HE COMES HOME.”

Salma*
(Jamal's* mum)

EDUCATION

GOOD educates

HOW WE helped



\$858,557
assistance provided



6,252
students assisted across eight programs



2,565
education program volunteers



5,967
volunteer hours provided



10,641
one-on-one education support hours

Empowering children through free education support is a pivotal step in breaking the cycle of disadvantage and lifting them out of poverty. It lays the groundwork for a future where their potential knows no limitations and opportunities abound.

Over the past few years, our Learning Services team and volunteers have significantly grown our eight award-winning education support programs across Victoria. Compared to the previous year, we more than doubled our one-on-one education support hours and the number of students we assisted.

The programs are based on a well-researched framework of trauma-informed practice, ensuring our students are learning in a safe, consistent and welcoming space. Programs are built on a growth mindset and a strength-based approach, fostering inclusivity and nurturing a sense of self-worth and confidence. Our educational support volunteers are highly trained, and are often school or TAFE teachers.

Another important way we support education is through our dedicated conference members who have continued to help ease essential educational costs, such as school uniforms and fees, laptops and excursions to ensure children have the necessary resources for their education. Providing these items and supporting families helps support their children to remain at school to obtain a good education.

St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria runs programs in Dandenong, Heidelberg West, Maidstone, Melton, Noble Park, Northcote, Warrnambool west and east. The latter opened in late 2021 supported by a grant from the Centre for Multicultural Youth. The Dandenong program is our most extensive, with more than 120 students every Saturday.

JAMAL'S STORY

Jamal* was only five when his dad passed away. Missing him tremendously, he became quiet and withdrawn. When schools switched to online education during COVID, Jamal's mum Salma* noticed that her son became quieter, barely speaking a word during lessons.

Jamal's teachers told her about the education programs offered by St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria in Dandenong and suggested that he might benefit from it. Salma enrolled him immediately. It was a step that changed Jamal's life. "Jamal loves the program. You see the joy in his eyes when he comes home," she says and smiles.

"When I first went, the volunteers really helped me to understand words and feel more confident," Jamal says. "They encouraged me to read with friends. We also do lots of science experiments, solve math problems and play board games."

Jamal is now a more confident 11 year old. He delivered a solo music performance at a class concert, much to the delight of his audience and, of course, his mother.

English and maths are now his favourite subjects. Asked about his future plans, he said that he would love to become a builder. Our volunteers couldn't be happier about Jamal's change and success.

Through the two streams of support – one-on-one education support to students and the direct financial support to families to assist in paying education costs – the St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria is helping children reach their potential through education.

*Names changed for privacy reasons.



“I HAVE NO INTENTION OF SLOWING DOWN. I LOVE THE CAMARADERIE AND FRIENDLINESS OF EVERYONE AT THE SHOP.”

Lois

VINNIES SHOPS

GOOD serves

HOW WE helped



\$3,828,972

material assistance provided

113

Vinnies Shops



5,616

volunteers

120,060

electrical items repurposed through Green Sparks program



75%

monthly power bill reduced with installation of 230 solar panels at Dandenong South Warehouse



Many things have changed since our first Vinnies Shop opened in Victoria in 1926. Over the decades our much loved shops have evolved. As well as offering great value, our iconic shops, run by the Vinnies team of employees and volunteers, directly assist people experiencing disadvantage. Profits go back into local communities, helping to fund our welfare programs.

Wonderful examples of our innovative services are our Vinnies Shops in Bairnsdale and Lakes Entrance. Our Lakes Entrance shop opened in September 2019 as a unique opportunity to support the Bairnsdale Conference’s growth in East Gippsland.

Throughout COVID and natural disasters, the shop proved tremendously popular to locals looking for bargains while shopping sustainably and supporting the local community. It also attracted people looking to give back to the community through volunteering. Last financial year, the shop almost doubled its revenue, outperforming its forecast and raising even more funds to support the good works of the local conference members. Its success even earned the team ‘Shop of the Year for Eastern Victoria’ award.

In May 2023, Bairnsdale Conference opened the Lakes Entrance Assistance Centre due to the increasing need in the area. The centre gives much-needed assistance to many Lakes Entrance residents facing challenges such as the rising cost of living and homelessness due to a shortage of affordable rentals, and much more.

In the previous financial year, Bairnsdale Conference, which includes Lakes Entrance, distributed more than \$280,000 in assistance to our vulnerable community members. “This is only made possible through the enormous work done by the Vinnies Shops in Bairnsdale and Lakes Entrance. They provide the funds, and we are able to give back to people in need,” says Trish Veevers, Bairnsdale Conference President.

OUR WONDERFUL VOLUNTEERS

We are incredibly grateful for the wonderful volunteers in our Vinnies Shops. While we wish we could dedicate space here to acknowledge each and every one of them, we’re delighted to shine a light and thank these two outstanding individuals:

Shirley Gaffy turned 90 recently and looked back on a remarkable journey at ‘her’ Vinnies Shop in Ringwood which began 45 years ago. It’s been a time that Shirley has thoroughly enjoyed for several reasons: “I find when you are working at Vinnies you leave your cares and worries behind for a day. Not that I have big worries, but it takes your mind off things,” she explains. “You also feel that you are doing something worthwhile, helping others who are not as well off as you are.”

For 16 years, Lois Bracken has been at Vinnies. Lois began at Vinnies Mornington (Main Street) for a few years before settling into Vinnies Mornington-Tyabb. The 93-year-old loves the camaraderie and friendliness of everyone at the shop and the happy feeling she gets when she walks in the door.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

GOOD *gives*

For almost 170 years, St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria has been a steadfast pillar of support for people in need. Driven by a mission to combat poverty and inequity, we're dedicated to making a tangible impact in the lives of the individuals we support.

In the past financial year, our incredible donors contributed a generous \$11.5 million, with \$1.3 million coming from our corporate community during the Vinnies CEO Sleepout, \$524,600 specifically for the Victorian Flood Appeal and \$2.8 million collectively from multiple bequestors from our Gift in Wills program.

Your contributions touch the lives of countless individuals, empowering us to extend assistance to people reaching out during their times of struggle.

Last year, your generosity allowed us to transform the lives of children like Jamal*, who, through our Education programs, gained confidence in reading and writing in English while nurturing his love for music.

During winter, we crossed paths with Joan*, whose story of overcoming homelessness at age 70 deeply resonated with us.

Unfortunately, homelessness among women aged 55+ has increased by 37% over the past few years, but with your support, we stand ready to make a difference.

The pressing issue of food insecurity and the heart-wrenching choices faced by many were vividly illustrated in Miriam's* story too. No parent should face the agonising decision between providing meals for her children or affording vital medication.

The stark statistics emphasise the urgency: our dedicated volunteers supplied 776,329 meals – a 22.6% increase from the previous year.

We are extremely grateful to all our supporters including IGA, Woodards and Secon Freight Logistics for their support of our various projects during the year.

Our heartfelt thanks extend to our donors, supporters and corporate partners who have stood with us on this journey.

We are also immensely grateful to the many individuals who have generously included the St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria in their Will, ensuring that future generations will receive our vital support.

Your dedication ensures that we will persist in providing the highest quality care and assistance to all who seek it.

*Names changed for privacy reasons.

GOOD changes

\$1.3 MILLION

RAISED BY PARTICIPANTS AND SUPPORTERS FOR THE VINNIES CEO SLEEPOUT. FUNDS RAISED WILL SUPPORT OUR HOMELESSNESS PROGRAMS.



One of the coldest nights of the year – 22 June 2023 – saw 212 CEOs, executives, business and community leaders respond to the call of #ChangeNeedsYou and participated in this year’s Vinnies CEO Sleepout.

Sleeping at Port Melbourne’s The Timber Yard, on a windy, wet night, participants were provided with a sheet of cardboard for the concrete floor and a simple meal.

Opened by Elder David Tournier with a smoking ceremony and a ‘Welcome to Country’ this moving ceremony set a tone of compassion, understanding and shared commitment to addressing homelessness as a community.

The event was hosted by George Halkias, co-founder of the Big Issue Community Street Soccer Program and coach of the Australian national soccer team for the Homelessness World Cup, who reminded the audience about the pressing and alarming issue of homelessness. Here in Victoria, the numbers have increased by a staggering 24% since the last census, with the fastest-growing cohort being women – single or with children.

Lived-experience panellists Bill* and John*, bravely shared their personal experiences of homelessness and the vital support they received from the Hume Community Hub in Shepparton. Their stories highlighted the importance of wrap-around support, such as physical and mental health care, accommodation, education and employment opportunities in rebuilding lives.

The impact of the night extended beyond the panel discussion, with additional elements such as: an emotive video showcasing the journey of a young woman fleeing domestic violence; the experience of living in a car, which was curated with the assistance of Diana*, who shared her own experiences; and lastly, a thought-provoking soundscape with accompanying video footage by Melbourne Projection Artist, Eben Greaves, highlighting the disrupted sleep patterns experienced by people living on the streets.

The funds raised will support the expansion of our existing volunteer-run programs, ensuring that every Victorian has access to accommodation, meals and emergency assistance.

This collaborative effort demonstrates the commitment and generosity of everyone involved in the Vinnies CEO Sleepout, making a tangible difference in transforming the lives of individuals supported by St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria and VincentCare.

TOP INDIVIDUAL FUNDRAISER

\$122,240

raised by CEO Chris Christofi, Reventon

TOP FUNDRAISING TEAM

\$243,841

raised by Woodards, led by CEO, John Piccolo

Chris and John are long-time ambassadors for the Vinnies CEO Sleepout.



TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE EVENT, VISIT [CEOSLEEPOUT.ORG.AU](https://ceosleepout.org.au)

*Surnames withheld for privacy reasons.

OUR *services*

People are at the heart of everything we do; that's our good works in action. The St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria has 11,000+ members and volunteers providing assistance to people whose daily struggles include putting food on the table, paying energy bills and ensuring their children remain at school to obtain an education. Each person is treated with deep compassion and provided with assistance tailored to their situation.

CONFERENCES

Across Victoria, we have 242 local volunteer member groups known as 'conferences' providing personalised support to people in need. Our volunteers visit households Victoria-wide and assist with essentials like food, utility bills, and pharmacy costs, while also offering emotional support, budgeting advice, and advocacy.

VINNIES SHOPS

Our 113 shops represent one of the state's longest-standing and most respected social enterprises, dating back to the first opening in 1926. Supported by dedicated volunteers and community material donations, these shops operate to give back to local communities and fund our welfare programs.

CUSTODY CENTRE

This program, run by volunteers, provides comprehensive welfare support, learning services, and a non-judgemental listening ear to individuals held in police or corrections custody.

VINCENTCARE

Established in 2003 by the St Vincent de Paul Society, VincentCare is committed to aiding vulnerable Victorians experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Through our housing and support services, we strive to restore dignity and enhance the quality of life for people facing adversity.

VINNIES NILS

Vinnies NILS stands as our no-interest loan scheme, offering safe and interest-free credit to individuals with low incomes for purchasing household essentials.

EDUCATION

We firmly believe that education equals opportunity. Through after-school programs, we focus on fostering the social, emotional, and academic confidence of attending young individuals. Our initiatives have successfully unlocked the educational potential of numerous students.

YOUTH & SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT

We have a rich history of engaging with young people, nurturing values-based leadership skills, organising fundraisers, leading advocacy efforts, and running volunteer programs. Additionally, we've instituted Mini Vinnies programs for primary schools and College Conferences for secondary school students.

CALL CENTRES

Our call centres serve as vital first points of contact for people seeking support. Staffed predominantly by volunteers, these centres efficiently connect assistance requests to local conferences who promptly respond to the person's needs.

SOUP VANS

Our fleet of soup vans operate at various locations across metropolitan and regional Victoria. Almost entirely run by volunteers, these vans provide meals, hampers, companionship and support to people facing poverty and homelessness.



TO FIND OUT MORE VISIT VINNIES.ORG.AU/VIC



THANK *you*

Lastly, a big thank you to everyone who supported the St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria during the 2022–2023 financial year.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to individual donors and fundraisers, churches, community groups, schools, corporates, trusts and foundations, and members and volunteers who stood by the St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria throughout the year.

We acknowledge the diverse ways people contribute – be that through their time, skills, prayers, financial support and in-kind gifts (such as the generosity of Metro Trains). Every form of gift is sincerely appreciated.

At the heart of our mission lies the immense role of community generosity, fuelling our ‘good works’ that provide crucial assistance to people in need.

Your kindness over the past 12 months has left a lasting impact, and we’re especially grateful for the enduring legacy gifts through the Gift in Wills program. These contributions will shape the future needs of St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria.

A shout out, too, to our wonderful community of supporters who have shared our stories and helped amplify our advocacy, pushing for a more just and compassionate society.

YOUR SUPPORT HAS ENSURED THAT OUR SERVICES WILL CONTINUE

HOW YOU CAN *help*

The St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria relies on the generosity of individuals, groups and businesses who are committed to building compassionate communities.

MAKE A
DONATION



VOLUNTEER
YOUR TIME



FIND
HELP



St Vincent de Paul Society
VICTORIA
good works

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