

IMPACT



Your support is changing lives
in Western Australia

We thank you for your kindness.

A message from the State President and CEO

We are proud to present our Autumn Edition of Impact, our special donor magazine.

As we face simultaneous cost-of-living and housing crises, our community needs the support, understanding and generosity of the people of Western Australia more than ever.

In the Autumn edition of Impact, our special donor magazine, we hear the inspiring story of John, who became the face of our Spring Appeal.

The kindness and generosity of supporters like you enables Vinnies WA to ease the burden of some of the most vulnerable members of our community.

Thank you so much for your support – it really does change lives.

Warm regards,

David Kennedy
State President

Susan Rooney
CEO

With the support from Vinnies John is now finding joy in two volunteer roles, and has found a renewed sense of purpose.

We also meet Maria, a dedicated volunteer in our Emergency Assistance Service Centre, who embarked on volunteering after grappling with personal tragedy, and we share the important work of Vinnies WA financial counsellors who helped a grandmother after she became embroiled in a telecommunications fraud love scam which left her with thousands of dollars of debt.



Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as the Traditional Custodians of this land, with deep respect. May Elders, past and present, be blessed and honoured. May we join together and build a future based on compassion, justice, hope, faith, and reconciliation.



A farmer's renewed purpose

Spring Appeal Update

You may remember John from our Spring Appeal. John worked as a farm manager until unemployment triggered a struggle with depression.

After two years of being in and out of hospital and unsuccessful attempts at shared housing, John's path took a positive turn when he was referred to Vinnies Mental Health Services.

John was offered accommodation in one of Vinnies' Supported Community Shared Houses. He received comprehensive support from specialist support workers, fostering skill development and reconnection with his family and the community.

With the help of Vinnies staff and his daughter, John accessed a disability support pension, maintaining mental stability while working on coping strategies for re-entering the workforce. He also discovered a renewed sense of purpose, finding joy in two volunteer roles in farming and animal care organisations.

Today, John continues to work on his recovery journey with help from Vinnies' Mental Health Services staff at 'The Village', who support him every step of the way.

Your generosity means we can continue to work in partnership with people with a mental health diagnosis to build a life which offers hope, real choices and a positive sense of self.

Telco Fraud Scam

Financial Counselling

When Sally fell in love, she did not expect her boyfriend to steal her heart and her money.

Falling victim to a con, the relationship led to a telco fraud 'love scam', in which her partner amassed thousands of dollars of debt on unauthorised mobile phone plans and calls that Sally was left responsible for and could not pay back.

The 58-year-old grandmother had been living on her own, reliant on Job Seeker income support, and unable to work because she cares for her grandchildren before and after school. She was in severe financial distress, facing multiple debts due to the scam, when she sought assistance from a Vinnies WA financial counsellor.

The scam unfolded after Sally authorised a boyfriend to open one service on her mobile account. But instead of setting up one service, he opened four accounts and she did not realise until she received the bill.

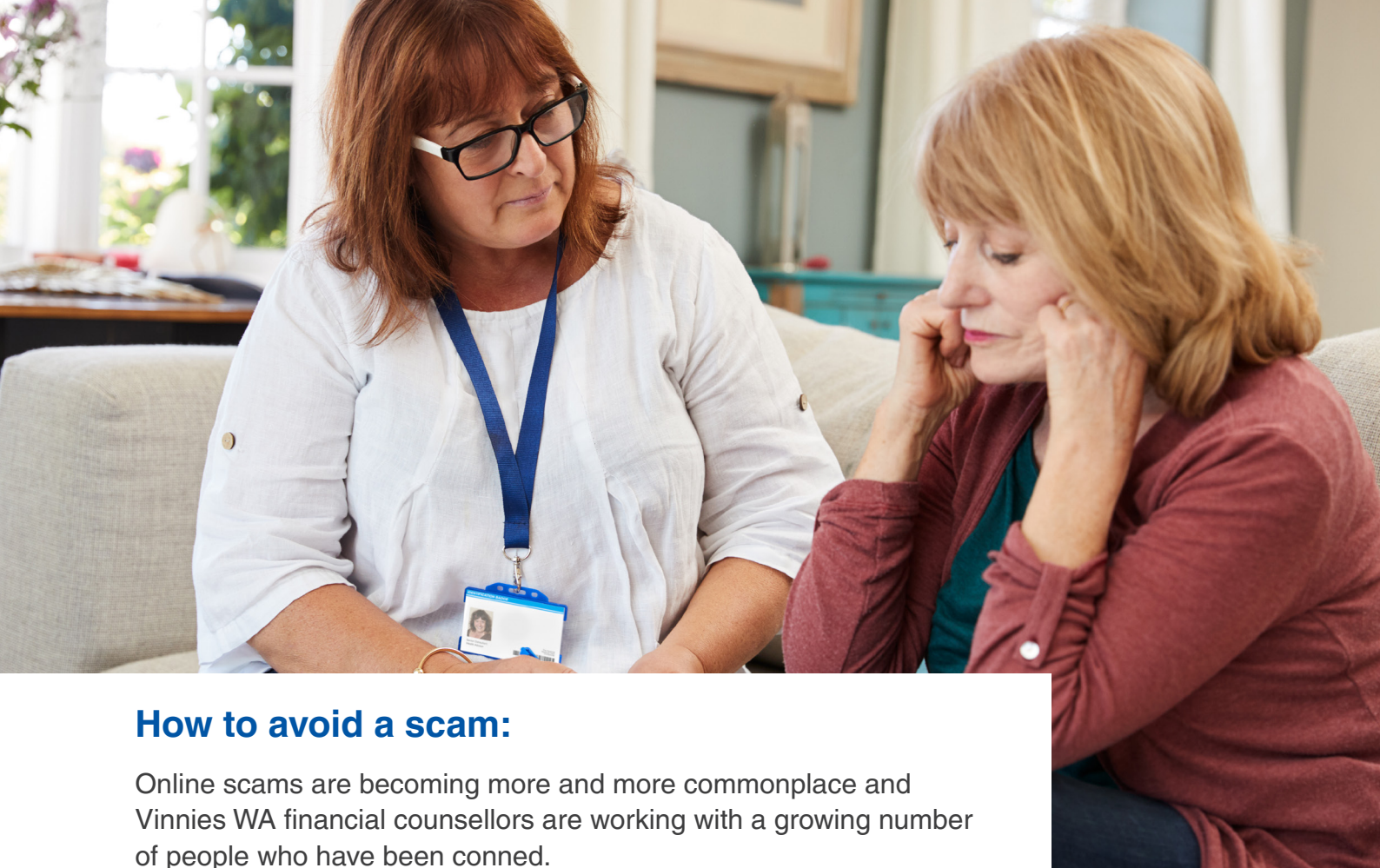
When Sally confronted her boyfriend the relationship ended and he was no longer contactable, leaving her unable to repay the debt. So, she sought help from a Vinnies WA financial counsellor who engaged with the telecommunications company.

After considerable advocacy the telecommunications company offered a reduction of the outstanding bill with a payment plan of three months for the remaining amount.

The financial counsellor worked with Sally to develop a tailored repayment plan for what was still a significant bill. Through a detailed assessment, they prioritised debts, negotiated with creditors, and crafted a realistic plan aligned with Sally's financial capacity. This process was invaluable in helping Sally to work her way out of considerable financial stress and move toward greater financial stability.

Vinnies WA offers independent advice and advocacy for people in financial difficulty with offices in Perth, Joondalup, Rockingham, Mandurah and in the South-West. Counsellors work with clients to achieve positive financial outcomes, negotiate with third parties, build capacity to avert financial crisis and reduce stress.





How to avoid a scam:

Online scams are becoming more and more commonplace and Vinnies WA financial counsellors are working with a growing number of people who have been conned.

Here are some important tips to minimise the risk of falling victim to a scam when shopping online:

- Research the seller to help you make an assessment about who you are buying from. Search online for the product or company name, plus 'complaint', 'review' or 'scam' to see what other people are saying about the seller.
- Make a judgement about the overall quality of the website you are considering purchasing through, paying particular attention to signs it might be fraudulent. Telltale signs include grammatical errors, poorly edited images or grainy photographs, and a lack of contact information like an address or phone number.
- Be wary if you are buying on online marketplaces such as Facebook or Gumtree. If an item seems a lot cheaper than you expect, it may be too good to be true.
- Be suspicious if you are asked to pay a deposit or in full by electronic funds transfer (EFT), money order, pre-loaded money card or a cryptocurrency (e.g. Bitcoin). It's rare to get back money that is sent these ways.
- Opt to pay by credit card or a secure payment method, such as PayPal. That way, there is an opportunity to get your money back if you do fall victim to a scam.

For more information about different types of scams, how to protect yourself, and how to report a scam, visit www.scamnet.wa.gov.au

Meet Cath

Cath's journey from darkness to light

When Cath walked through the doors of Tom Fisher House, her life had hit an all-time low.

A survivor of family and domestic violence, Cath had fled a harrowing lifestyle that had taken a toll on her physical and mental health, leaving her homeless and living on the streets.

Tom Fisher House offers safe accommodation and intensive intervention for people experiencing long-term homelessness, for up to seven nights between 5.30pm and 8.30am every day of the year. Up to 12 adults a night can stay at the residence in Beaufort St, Perth, which also provides room for clients' friendly pets.

Specialist staff and professional support workers are available at Tom Fisher House to provide information and referrals to support agencies, for practical needs and can link clients in to medical and legal services.

Cath's stay at Tom Fisher House allowed her to regain her strength and confidence by giving her a chance to rest and recover, fuel her body with nutritious meals and connect with essential services, including a community housing provider.

She has since transitioned into secure and stable accommodation, we are pleased to report Cath is happy, healthy and making good progress.



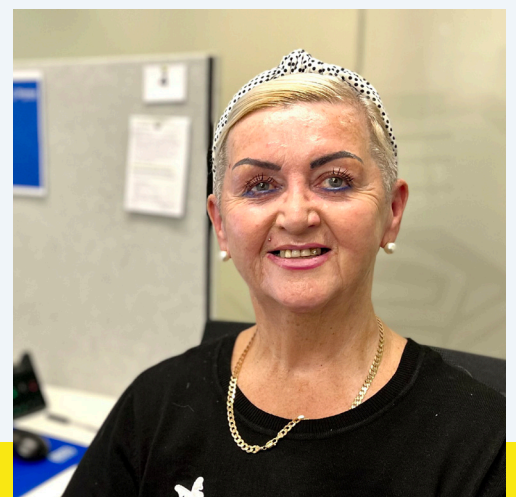
Meet Maria

Empathy in Action: Providing hope in times of crisis

A life-changing personal tragedy led to Maria deciding to make a difference in her community by becoming a Vinnies volunteer.

Maria regularly gives her time and expertise, responding to requests for emergency assistance at the Emergency Relief Service Centre whether for food or food vouchers, clothing, furniture, budget support, help with utility bills, back to school expenses or just a friendly chat.

Demand for emergency support is high in the current cost-of-living crisis, making her role critical to ensuring there is assistance for individuals, families and communities who need it most.



"I've never looked back," Maria says. "It makes such a difference to me and it is so rewarding. Once you put the phone down, you can say to yourself, at least the people I've spoken to are going to get a meal, and I've helped them."



Christmas Appeal Update

Vinnies angels provide Christmas joy, amid the cost of living crisis

Surging cost of living pressures means more families than ever struggled to put food on the table and presents under the Christmas tree last year.

But Anna and her children, who are in the midst of severe financial hardship and battling to make ends meet, were able to enjoy some festive cheer after Vinnies provided food, food vouchers and presents to help.

Anna says Christmas celebrations have always meant a lot to her family, but after a tough year she could not have made it happen if not for the support of Vinnies' volunteer, Grace, and her dedicated team.

"When I went in to see Grace, she did everything she could to make sure my kids would not miss out on experiencing some Christmas magic, which our household so desperately needed given the year we had," Anna says.

Anna also plans to seek financial counselling support from Vinnies to help with school fees in arrears and to navigate the year ahead after Centrelink provided advance payments so she could purchase art supplies, canvases, paints and printing for her daughter's end of year assessments.

"By the time Christmas came, I was more stretched than ever. Then I had to borrow money from a friend to get my son a phone. So now, with all the advance payments coming out of my pension (and the loan), it's going to be an extremely tough five months until they are paid," she said.

"My daughter is old enough now to understand that there is no way I could have afforded her the things under the tree, so I told her that it was Vinnies and the beautiful people that made it possible. She was in disbelief that such kindness existed.

"What a relief it was to go home knowing I would have vouchers to buy food and presents to put under the tree – and to be reminded of the kindness that exists in the world.

"We are so grateful for Vinnies, Grace and her amazing team, the generous companies and members of the public that open up their hearts and donate so families like mine aren't, yet again, left behind in the dark."

Consider a legacy of helping others



As demand for our services continues to grow, generous benefactors are helping Vinnies WA to respond to people in need through the charitable gift of bequests – long after death.

Bequests, or donations from a deceased person's estate, are one of the most valued and important funding sources for Vinnies WA and help to change the lives of those in need.

When you leave a bequest to Vinnies, you are helping us to meet the needs of West Australians now, and well into the future.

Last year, Vinnies WA supported 58,000 West Australians and delivered more than 68,000 emergency assistance and support services. Financial counsellors helped waive \$2.79 million in debts, there were more than 18,000 face-to-face financial counselling sessions and another 15,000 people helped via the National Debt Helpline.

Research shows that around 50% of Australians do not have a will. So, to help facilitate a smooth and clear process, Vinnies WA has partnered with Safewill, Australia's leading online will writing platform, to make the task simple and affordable. Plus, every will is reviewed by the Safewill team to ensure it has been completed correctly.

In addition, Vinnies WA partners with several reputable solicitors in WA who kindly offer simple wills free of charge to anyone who considers a gift to Vinnies in their will. Some of these solicitors are happy to meet in the comfort of your home.

For more information about leaving a bequest to Vinnies WA, call 08 6323 7535 or email bequests@svdpwa.org.au or visit www.vinnies.org.au/wa/bequests



St Vincent de Paul Society (WA) Inc

Donation line 13 18 12

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W vinnies.org.au/wa



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