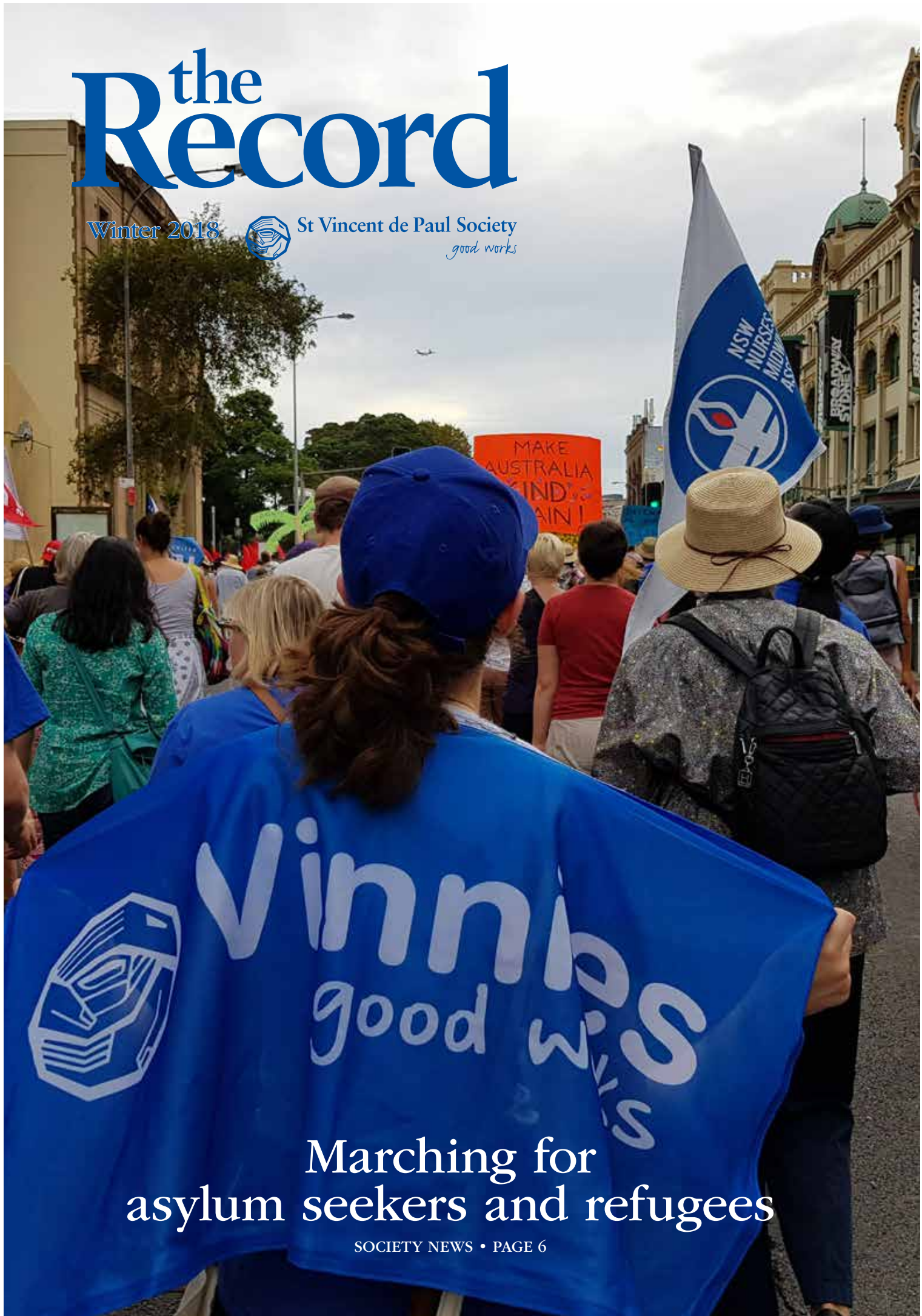


the Record

Winter 2018



St Vincent de Paul Society
good works



Marching for
asylum seekers and refugees



St Vincent de Paul Society
good works

The 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.

This logo represents the hand of Christ that blesses the cup, the hand of love that offers the cup, and the hand of suffering that receives the cup.

The Record is published four times a year by the St Vincent de Paul Society National Council of Australia.

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The St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia wishes to acknowledge that we are on Aboriginal land. We pay respects to all traditional custodians.

This publication may contain images of deceased members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. They are used with the greatest respect and appreciation.

Opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the publishers.

Available online:
www.vinnies.org.au

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Editor's note: The Record publication is available in a digital format. If you would prefer to receive The Record in electronic rather than hard form please send a short email to Donna Scheerlinck at the National Council office: donna@svdp.org.au ♦

Santa Cruz Cemetery, Dili

A small, square, treeless plot,
a jumble of whitewashed graves,
rising to a low wall and a wooded
rise,
and beyond them sharp-cut hills
arising from the sea.
Each grave tells a story:
A row of nuns mostly dead at 30,
a young mother taken by fever,
the imperial governor,
cannonballs and mortar shells edge
his grave.

No sign records the lives and deaths
of the young men, who in '91
processed from Mortael,
passed the government offices,
and, turning left past São José,
crossed to the cemetery gates.
Soldiers stood along the walls,
firing down at them.
They ran towards the wooded rise,
looking to the hills.



PHOTO: ISTOCK.COM/HIDESY

No help came.
They lay where they fell
and were later dumped in pits.

They are safely held in memory,
no sign needed:
trailing scarlet bougainvillea
along the wall
suffices. ♦

By Andrew Hamilton SJ

Austerity in Greece

*Stranger, tell the Spartans
how, faithful to their commands,
we lie.*

(Epitaph for the Greek soldiers who
held off the Persian army and were
killed at Thermopylae)

Although sold out for Persian gold,
these few preserved their pride.
As evening turned to night,
they polished swords and sharpened
spears,
and gently combed each other's hair,
and at the rising of the sun they sang,
prepared to fight and die.

Today the rich have sold us out:
our children forced abroad,
our widows beg for bread.
Last night the satraps came to watch:
to see us bow our necks beneath the
bottom line.

This morning, no one sings. ♦

By Andrew Hamilton SJ

New State President for Victoria

A Commissioning Mass was held for new Victorian State President Kevin McMabon on Sunday 29 April at St Thomas the Apostle, Greensborough North. Mass was celebrated by Fr Steven Rigo and concelebrants Fr Tony Kerin, Fr Tao Pham and Fr Dong Tran. Kevin and his wife Sue had many family members and friends in attendance along with National President Graham West. ♦



Fr Steven Rigo blesses Victorian State President Kevin McMabon during the Commissioning Mass.



St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria CEO Sue Cattermole, Victorian State President Kevin McMabon, Sue McMabon and National President Graham West.

Last words

Last words, so banal,

Before the chasm that divides
before and after.

This world and the next.

Words of glue and grace, of cliché
and mumble, and hints to other
stories in a wink or a sigh or nod.

Not clever words, or pithy or
mystic or odd,

Just the everyday shorthand of the
loved familiar.

Anointed with the watery blessing
of a slow smile,

For spending a quick half hour
with him between chores on a day
off and the load of washing and
time to read a book and catching
up with a friend and the excuses
that eat voraciously into the things
that matter.

Those last thirty minutes of love
and duty wrapped together in the
not knowing of that last time ever.

The gaps of silence and the casual
intimacy of father and daughter as
the conversation made its usual
way;

Enquiries as to daughter, husband,
siblings,

Enquiries as to work and long ago
friends,

Enquiries as to the world beyond
the 5pm dinner of mash and meat
for aged gums,

Chewing the fat.

His eighty-five good years and the
children—six little Australians and
an English honeymoon child—
loved in his distant truthful way,

The siblings knotted together in
the warm skein of shared history
and the fibs and fettlings of time
gone by.

A man who knew his God and
believed—in his way,



A man who somehow knew the
asceticism of the priestly life and
thanked the Christian Brothers for
the old days, not of strap, but of
scholarship,

A man who lived the life he
planned and was grateful for the
good that came his way.

A man who loved his children,

A man who was our deep anchor
in the sometime rambunctious,
chaotic, whirligig madness of
seven kids, and measles, and
broken hearts, and delivering
babies, and doling out pennies
for the plate and trying to get
a word in at the dinner table,
and checking my written words
to elicit meaning from the
meandering ...

A man.

Who lived his days upon the
earth,

And now lies under it.

A quick half-hour visit and the
leaving of some favourite biscuits

and an article or two cut from the
weekend paper that he never got
to read,

And the promise to see him next
week.

All the time in the world he used
to say and we would sigh as
we rushed to the next thing,
importuned by an improvised
urgency,

And now we will have all time

In the next world ...

And so I hold on gratefully to the
last words, his benediction to an
eldest child,

A thank you and a *cheerio*.

And that's enough for me. ♦

By Ann Rennie

Editor's note: The poet's parents were cared for at Vincenzapaul Hostel, a Melbourne-based aged care service formerly associated with the St Vincent de Paul Society. It continues to be run by a not-for-profit organisation and is now the mecwacare Simon Price Centre.

Drawing on each other's strengths in tough times

BY GRAHAM WEST

During winter our members witness how the environmental elements can make people's experience of poverty and homelessness particularly gruelling.

We see the damp and cold conditions endured by those attending our food vans, and during home visitations we assist individuals and families overwhelmed by sky-rocketing power bills, who face another dire choice, between heating or eating?

These are short-term and wholly practical efforts on behalf of our members to give people a hand up and to overcome the loneliness and isolation that so often permeates the experience of poverty and homelessness. They are examples of faith in action and I am immensely proud to say they are carried out by the Society's members and volunteers across Australia every day.

As Vincentians we strive to look the gloom of winter and the social ills squarely in the face and proceed with the work our founders, led by a young university student named Frédéric Ozanam encouraged by Blessed Rosalie Rendu, began in poverty-stricken Paris 185 years ago.

It is not a coincidence that the Society in Australia today is involved in such a broad range of projects, from housing services to prison visitation, after-school reading programs and much more.

Our members are guided by Blessed Frédéric Ozanam's vision so powerfully outlined for us in The Rule, where we are urged to 'seek out and find those in need and the forgotten, the victims of exclusion or



adversity', and we are reminded: 'No work of charity is foreign to the Society. It includes any form of help that alleviates suffering or deprivation, and promotes human dignity and personal integrity in all their dimensions.'

Advocacy campaigns run by the St Vincent de Paul Society aim to complement actions of those on the ground by highlighting the root causes of the social ills we work so tirelessly to address.

For instance, on Palm Sunday Vincentians joined thousands of people of all faiths and backgrounds in demonstrating their growing concern about the treatment of refugees and asylum seekers. And in June, we held our

Vinnies CEO Sleepout to bring greater community awareness to the issue of homelessness, raising approximately \$6.8 million towards our homelessness services.

With the latest statistics showing the rate of homelessness in Australia continues to grow, more than 17,000 Australian children under the age of 12 have no permanent home, there is clearly much more that needs to be done.

All Vincentians serve in hope. There is cause for hope and it has many faces.

continued on page 19 ►

Vincentians speak up for asylum seekers and refugees

Thousands of people, including members of the St Vincent de Paul Society and those representing the Catholic Alliance for People Seeking Asylum (CAPSA), attended the Palm Sunday Walk on 25 March when it was held in capital cities and towns across Australia.

People of all faith groups attended the event and the Vinnies banner was proudly displayed by members attending the events in Canberra and Sydney.

In a statement CAPSA said it was important to keep up the momentum to demonstrate the growing concern across the community about the harsh and punitive treatment of refugees and asylum seekers. 'Now more than ever Australians need to stand together for Justice for Refugees.'

In June, the Society joined other community sector organisations in celebrating the 20th anniversary of Refugee Week. The theme for Refugee Week 2018 was #WithRefugees and the event was held from 18 to 24 June.

RoofOverMyHead: maintaining essential support for asylum seekers in Australia

In this year's Refugee Week, a key focus of the Society's advocacy was preventing drastic cuts to essential services and financial support for asylum seekers living in the community.

Since last year, the government has been progressively narrowing eligibility for Status Resolution Support Services (or SRSS) program. The SRSS program provides basic income support and essential services



Left: Members of the St Vincent de Paul Society Canberra/Goulburn Territory Council attended the Palm Sunday Walk in Canberra.

Bottom left: The Society's banner was proudly displayed at the Palm Sunday Walk in Sydney.



Above: The St Vincent de Paul Society National Council of Australia's Director of Policy and Research, Corinne Dobson, seen here in the back row, third from the left, was among the civil society representatives to hold a press conference at Parliament House in Canberra during Refugee Week 2018 to bring attention to income support payment cuts affecting asylum seekers.

for asylum seekers living in the community. Further changes are planned that will mean that most of the 13,000 people currently on SRSS payments are at risk of losing all income support and will be forced to rely on charities such as the St Vincent de Paul Society for life-saving support. Many people, including families with children, will not be able to meet basic needs like rent, food, and medicine.

During Refugee Week, the Society collaborated with an alliance of community organisations to highlight the consequences of withdrawing essential support to asylum seekers, and to urge the Government to reverse its plans. This included participating in a joint delegation to Parliament House in Canberra and contributing to the release of a report highlighting the costs of cutting off support to asylum seekers.

Read the Society's briefing note on the drastic cuts proposed for the Status Resolution Support Service Payments: www.vinnies.org.au/srss

Ending offshore detention

After nearly five years of fear, violence and limbo, around 1,600 people still languish in desperate and dangerous conditions on Manus Island and Nauru.

In recent months, members of the St Vincent de Paul Society have visited Manus Island and directly witnessed the ongoing deterioration in physical and mental health due to inadequate medical attention, degrading living conditions, and perpetual uncertainty.

The Society urges the government to urgently resolve the situation and provide a safe, appropriate and permanent option for resettling those still on Manus Island and Nauru. In the interim, adequate healthcare, security and other critical services must be maintained. ♦

The Society of St Vincent de Paul in New Zealand

The year 2017 marked the 150th anniversary of the foundation of the Society of St Vincent de Paul in New Zealand. Aspects of the Society's history have been brought to light in a new book about the establishment and development of the Society in New Zealand.

The book, by long-time Christchurch Vincentian Tim O'Sullivan, chronicles the struggles of the Society to put into practice Christian charity in order to serve the poor of colonial New Zealand.

The first conference of the Society was

established in Christchurch in January 1867, when members of the Catholic parish in Barbadoes Street rallied to the call of Father Jean-Baptiste Chataigner SM to form a conference of the Society. The new Society set out to visit the poor and has been doing so ever since.

A significant feature of the history of the Society was the role of Catholic women. Although the Ladies of Charity were theoretically separate, they were still Vincentian and worked closely with the men's conference, often being even more active in Vincentian charity. The Society in New Zealand was closely connected with the Society in Australia and delegates from both countries regularly attended each other's meetings.

Much of the history of the Society in New Zealand has been forgotten until now and will interest all those enthusiastic about our Australasian Catholic heritage.

Copies of the book are available from the Society of St Vincent de Paul, Area Council of Christchurch; email: admin@svdpchch.co.nz..

Publications details:

Early history of the Society of St Vincent de Paul in New Zealand 1867–1925

Recommended retail price: \$30.00

ISBN: 978-0-473-40997-5

Published: October 2017

184 pages

Includes illustrations, bibliography, footnotes and index ♦

#RaiseTheRate campaign gathers momentum

The St Vincent de Paul Society National Council of Australia is proud to support the #RaiseTheRate campaign to increase the Newstart Allowance and independent Youth Allowance by \$75 a week.

The current payment of just \$38.99 per day is simply not enough to meet basic living costs. The Society maintains that forcing people to live below the poverty line does not help people into jobs; rather, it acts as a barrier to employment and participation.

The St Vincent de Paul Society has long campaigned for an increase to meagre income support payments and for those payments to be indexed to wages and price increases as an urgent priority. The Newstart Allowance has not been increased since 1994, and inadequate

indexation has meant that payments and allowances have fallen behind wages growth and behind the costs of essential services.

While antipoverty advocates have been calling for an increase to Newstart for over a decade, the #RaiseTheRate campaign has given added impetus to the push to raise income support payments. The campaign draws together a diverse coalition of groups, including the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS), local councils, trade unions, community groups, charities and unemployed people themselves.

Over the coming months the Society's National Council office will be rolling out a range of resource materials to support the #RaiseTheRate campaign, including fact sheets, a template letter for members to send to their local MP, case studies and links to an online animation.

The Society also encourages supporters

to sign a petition for the #RaiseTheRate campaign that has been started by the ACOSS and can be found at www.acoss.org.au/raisetherate/joinus/.

The #RaiseTheRate campaign has re-invigorated the push to increase support payments so they are accessible to those who need it and paid at a level that ensures human dignity and an adequate standard of living.

In June 2018, the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) recognised the urgent need to increase Newstart and Youth Allowance payments when it held its national assembly. The ALGA is the latest of several high-profile organisations to support an increase in payments, including the Business Council of Australia, the ACTU, and leading economists. ♦

Follow the Society's advocacy on this important topic at https://www.vinnies.org.au/page/Our_Impact/Incomes_Support_Cost_of_Living/

Update on congress projects

Since the St Vincent de Paul Society's National Congress was held in October 2017, Vincentians have been busy devising strategies to pilot for action. The strategies came out of discussions held at the congress and range from a young leaders program to an ideas innovation hub and more. A full list of the strategies and updates on their progress are available on the congress website (<https://community.vinnies.org.au/>). The following summary outlines the progress and exciting developments made in three separate projects in recent months.

Creating young leaders

Purpose: Develop a nationally recognised youth leadership program that gives young Society members a chance to be accredited in certain skills/areas.

Project sponsors: National Council Vice President, Youth & Young Adults Representative Cathryn Moore and National Treasurer Frank Brassil.

Project statement: The Emerging Young Vincentian Leaders Program aims to equip young Vincentian leaders from around Australia with the skills and confidence to undertake a broad range of leadership roles in and across Regional, Central Council, State/Territory and National Councils of the Society. In doing so, the program also seeks to build the confidence of the broader Society to appoint young members to leadership roles on councils beyond youth representative positions.



Young Vincentians at the St Vincent de Paul Society's National Congress held in Adelaide in October 2017.

Program participants will be offered development opportunities to build and enhance Vincentian values-based leadership, not-for-profit governance and change management skills. They will also be mentored by experienced Vincentian leaders.

Participants will be expected to deliver an appropriate priority project decided in conjunction with the National Council and relevant advisory committees, such as the National Mission and Membership Advisory Committee.

If successful, the program will help the Society move courageously closer to the ideal of 'One Society', and improve organisational sustainability, while ensuring mission integrity.

Project objectives:

- 10 to 15 participants representing each state and territory, to be nominated by State and Territory Councils and considered for inclusion by an assessment panel.
- The program will be piloted from July 2018 to December 2019.
- Through a mix of face-to-face and online/teleconferenced networking, the program seeks to specifically develop participants:
- skills in financial literacy and corporate governance, including the

ability to analyse board papers and prepare effective reports and meeting documents

- understanding of relevant regulatory requirements, such as those administered by the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission
- networks of Vincentian relationships, supported by current and former Vincentian leaders at State/Territory and National Council levels
- Vincentian (values-based) leadership skills
- understanding of governance bodies throughout the Society in Australia and internationally
- appreciation of the processes of cultural change in organisations.

The program will be evaluated against baseline data about diversity and skills sets at State and National Councils.

Ideas Innovation Lab

Purpose: Design a platform to promote creative ideas for us to share that will also build collaborative methods across distances and profile ways of working that have traction.

Project sponsors: President, Territory Council of Canberra-Goulburn Warwick Fulton and St Vincent de

Paul Society Queensland Manager,
Partnerships & Evaluation Nathan
Middlebrook.

Project statement: A team will design a platform that will be open to all Vincentians in Australia—members, volunteers and employees—to:

- create a space to incubate great ideas
- foster creative thinking, problem solving and collaboration between Vincentians
- engage and empower voices within the Society at all levels
- showcase the great work of Vincentians
- create a sense of ownership, show that individuals matter, improve communication and provide positive feedback
- share our strategic vision (national and state/territory-based) so that ideas to enhance this can be presented
- highlight an issue that needs to be resolved and seek input from stakeholders to find a solution.

Members, volunteers and employees will be encouraged to:

1. put forward ideas that they think will improve the way we do things in the St Vincent de Paul Society or might benefit other Vincentians in their work for the Society
2. view material on the platform to draw on the ideas put forward, comment on the ideas and build on those ideas
3. vote on ideas using a simple methodology (such as a 'like' button) for collating peer review.

Ideas placed on the platform will have an initial evaluation by a small team who will:

1. determine if the idea is relevant to the St Vincent de Paul Society
2. check whether it is a new idea or a development of an existing idea,

in which case they will link it to that idea

3. check whether the idea has national or state/territory relevance, or relevance to a particular group of Vincentians e.g., employees
4. seek comments from Vincentians or, if relevant, a group of Vincentians as to whether they like the idea or not, and why
5. provide feedback to the creator of the idea if the idea is not supported
6. set up a working group for ideas that are supported, to develop a project proposal for consideration by the relevant council (national, state/territory, special work or company) that will be called upon to fund the project

The working group will undertake to:

1. provide feedback to the creator of the idea and others who have been involved for projects that are not approved
2. complete approved projects.

At all stages Vincentians are to be kept informed of progress through the Ideas Innovation Lab. The nature of the platform is yet to be determined by the design team. It is expected that professional advice will be sought.

Project objectives: The Ideas Innovation Lab has a primary purpose to encourage and foster creative ideas from Vincentians and to make them available to all Vincentians. In doing so it will engage and empower Vincentians at all levels within the Society to put forward their ideas with the knowledge that everyone is able to contribute to the betterment of the Society and that no one has a monopoly on good ideas.

By circulating information about good ideas and seeking comment from Vincentians, the Ideas Innovation

Lab will showcase the great work of Vincentians, improve communication among Vincentians all over Australia, create a sense of ownership and show that individuals do matter regardless of their position within the Society.

Process: In the Queensland state office there is already a process for employees to put forward ideas for evaluation. It might make sense to undertake initial design of the Ideas Innovation Lab in Queensland, drawing on the experience of the state office.

A small team of perhaps four persons should be able to undertake the initial work to develop the Ideas Innovation Lab and present a detailed proposal and costing for consideration of National Council by August 2018.

At an early stage, professional advice and costings will be needed for the platform on which the Ideas Innovation Lab is to be placed. It is envisaged that the platform would be some form of cloud-based information technology system. This could be a system already developed or purpose-built for the Society.

Someone will need to run and monitor the Ideas Innovation Lab on a regular basis. In the development phase this could be a member of the development team, but in the longer term it would require a dedicated position as manager of the Lab. That position could be located anywhere there is a good internet connection.

The project is estimated to take two years to implement.

In the initial project phase the team would require access to a range of information technology platforms and a small amount of time of an information technology person (0.5 full-time equivalent) to design the platform in conjunction with the team. This would continue during the development phase. A lot depends on

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whether there is an existing IT platform that is readily adaptable to support the Ideas Innovation Lab.

In addition, from the development phase the project would require someone to run the Ideas Innovation Lab as a pilot project (1.2 FTE). In full implementation the Ideas Innovation Lab may require several persons full time (depending on the success of the project) as it has potential to significantly improve the way we operate within the Society in Australia, with good communication and empowering our people being some of the benefits. It will also require a person in each state or territory who will be responsible for the development of state/territory-based ideas and projects. Budgets will need to be set at state/territory level for any implementation of projects.

Without knowing what information technology is available, at this stage we are unable to provide any meaningful cost estimates for the project. We recommend that a team of six, consisting of the project sponsors and four additional volunteers from the members, volunteers and employees, make up the project team.

A declaration for the future (our story)

Purpose: Create a manifesto of core values, beliefs and attitudes that aligns the Society around a refreshed perspective of why people engage with it.

Project sponsors: National Council Vice President, Housing and Homelessness Bailly Pat Garcia, Chair National Marketing Committee Brian Spencer, and National Manager Strategic Marketing Anneloes de Graeff.

Project statement: Recently, the National Council participated in a series of workshops to identify the key elements of our identity. It was recognised that the Society has a vision, an identity and a personality.

National Congress recognises that the Society needs to establish a clear narrative (or story) that is principally comprised of:

- our purpose (why we are here)
- our values (what we believe in)
- our promise (how we want our companions, our church and our community to see us)
- our vision (what we want to be).

We recognise that it will be difficult to include in a single statement our purpose, values, vision and promise. It will also be difficult for so many parts of our Society to agree on a single articulation of these important elements of our Society. But we are an experiential society. The development of the Society's 'story' will allow our members and our companions to experience information as opposed to simply comprehending it.

This should not come as a surprise given that, as Christians, we are familiar with storytelling as a means of communication. The word of God is a series of stories designed to convey a message in an easily comprehensible vehicle.

Our story will articulate what we stand for, where we have come from, where we are right now and where we are going in the future. Our story is what unites our members with our volunteers, our supporters and our companions. It is what sets us apart from other organisations that seek to help those in need.

Understanding our story will help us to grow together and realise our individual and collective goals.

We can establish our story by answering questions such as:

- How does our history guide our future?
- What is our work? What lies at its centre?
- How does our faith guide our work?

- How do our community and those we serve view us?
- What is it that we are good at (that is, what are our strengths)?
- What opportunities do we offer our supporters to address?
- How can we hold onto our traditions and beliefs while also innovating for the future?
- What will we never do?

Our collective story will serve as a source of inspiration for our companions as well as for our current and prospective members, volunteers, supporters and employees. It will strengthen bonds within the Society and of how and why we conduct Vincentian work while presenting a bold call to action that crosses age, gender, culture and faith. It will help members evaluate the gap between the principles and their current reality and help prepare the Society for the 21st century.

Project objectives:

- Detailed project brief and plan
- Establish Terms of Reference and Governance
- Project team established representing all areas of the Society (Mission & Membership, Youth, Centres, Marketing & Media, Fundraising, Policy & Advocacy, Special Works)
- Communications specialist engaged to help guide the process and provide strategic advice
- Development of value proposition areas for feedback by project team
- Development of clear stances in each area for feedback by project team
- Research stage: focus groups (internal and external) and phone/internet surveying
- Early stakeholder buy-in and audience insight
- Value proposition to be fully stretched and tested in Christmas Appeal 2018
- Guidelines for use developed
- Wider stakeholder engagement
- Full roll-out completed by July 2019. ♦

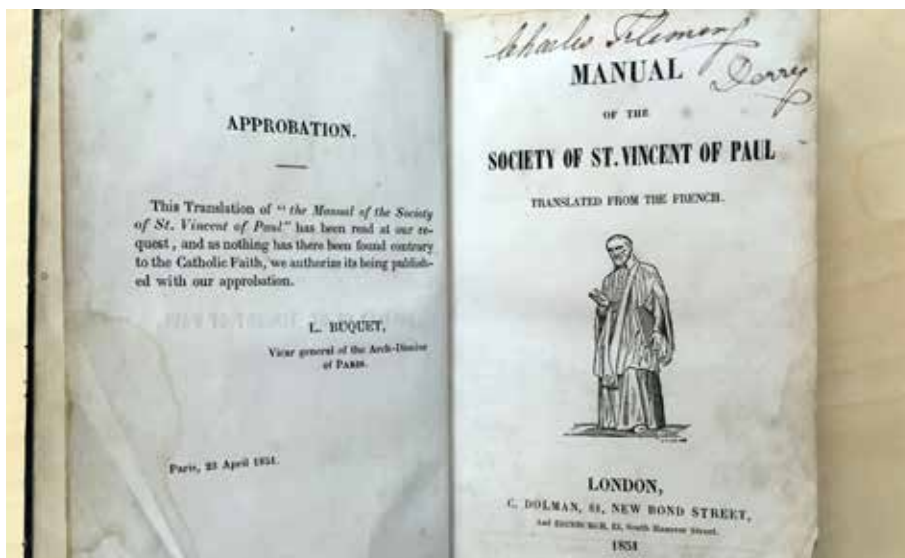
Priceless find returns home

It might be an unassuming little book, but it comes with a wealth of history and a touch of mystery. Simply titled Manual of The Society of St Vincent de Paul, the leather-bound book found its way to St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria's central office, Gerald Ward House, thanks to the generosity of Marise Henderson, a member of the East Bentleigh Conference in Victoria.

There's a very good reason its arrival was met with big expectations and even bigger smiles. Dated 1851—three years before the Society's inception in Australia—and translated from French into English, this version of the Society's reference book is one of the earliest, published in London 18 years following the establishment of the first conference or branch of the St Vincent of Paul Society in Paris.

This version, which came with the hallowed seal of approval from an 'L Buquet, the Vicar General of the Arch-Dioceses of Paris', also boasts a 'tableau' of conferences' of the time. The 'tableau' lists the Society's conferences of the time in Europe (mainly in France), Algeria, Canada and Mexico.

Touchingly, written in a fluid cursive script on the edition notice page is 'Charles Fleming, Derry', Marise's grandfather. 'Mum had a lot of old books that were my grandfather's when he was a boy,' Marise said. 'He was an avid reader and this was among his books. He grew up in Ireland and died in 1950—I think he was 78 when he died. He was an interesting man, and had his own business as a merchant tailor. My grandfather was a very principled man and a committed Vincentian.'



The Manual of The Society of St Vincent de Paul is dated 1851.



Marise Henderson, a member of the East Bentleigh Conference in Victoria and former Victorian State President Michael Liddy with the historic Manual of The Society of St Vincent de Paul.

'This is a very important find,' said former Victorian State President Michael Liddy. 'I would suspect not every member at the time would have had such a book because, of course, not everyone had the luxury of education. It evolved in Australia into what's called simply *The Manual*. Nowadays we have *The Rule*, which codifies things, but back then *The Manual* was more explanatory.'

Marise and her husband Robert have

generously donated the historical document to the Society. 'The interest from National Council has been incredible,' said Michael. 'It's a priceless find and we're extremely grateful to Marise and Robert for bequeathing us this valuable legacy.'

After conservation, this historical book will be displayed in a new cabinet in the reception area of Gerald Ward House, which is located in the Melbourne suburb of Box Hill. ♦

Young Vincentians take a lead role

BY COLLEEN O'SULLIVAN

The St Vincent de Paul Society is delighted to introduce Kate Barton and Emily Wardeiner as its Deputy National Youth Representatives. Kate and Emily were appointed to their roles by the St Vincent de Paul Society's National Council Vice President, Youth & Young Adults Representative, Cathryn Moore, in March. Kate and Emily both have their profile featured in The Record.

Kate Barton

As a dedicated young Vincentian of many years standing, Kate Barton, of Canberra, is excited to take part in the inaugural Emerging Young Vincentian Leaders Program when it commences in spring 2018.

Kate will take a lead role in the implementation of the program. Ten young people from around Australia have been selected for the 18-month program, which will be conducted primarily online but also includes three face-to-face meetings.

'There has been a huge investment from the Society's National Council, which has been really special. The Emerging Young Vincentian Leaders Program is one way the Society is giving back to youth and young members,' Kate said.

'It will cover Vincentian training, including change management and directorship training. It is targeting



Kate Barton

youth and equipping them with the skills necessary to sit on boards.'

Kate is relishing the strategic nature of her new role following many years of hands-on volunteering running children's camps. The third-year law student at the Australian National University first became involved in the Society when she was a year 11 student attending St Clare's College Canberra, when young Vincentians spoke to her class and she signed up to be a volunteer on a camp.

She was also a member of the Society's Territory Council of Canberra-Goulburn board from 2013 to 2017 and is currently a member of the St Joseph's the Carpenter Conference in Canberra. St Joe's, as it is affectionately known, is a youth conference.

Kate's efforts were recognised when she received the Individual Community Service Award at the

ACT Government's Young Canberra Citizen of the Year Awards in March 2017 and the Volunteering and Contact ACT's Young Volunteer of the Year in 2017.

'My interests are youth issues and young people facing disadvantage. I've really enjoyed the opportunities I've been given by the Society. I've been lucky that I've been allowed to continue in more of a strategic leadership capacity. The values of the Society are very important to me,' Kate said.

'To see how far the Society reaches is really phenomenal. Obviously, it reaches far and wide in Australia but also around the world.'

It is clear Kate has immense respect for those volunteers involved in children's camps when she talks about how they deal with the confronting issues that arise on camps, particularly working with 40-odd children who have often experienced trauma and display challenging behaviours.

'Nothing prepares you for camp. It is really full on and it's true, you get very little sleep.'

This aspect of the camps is an important one but can sometimes be overlooked. The way youth members give of themselves during these camps should not be underestimated and it is something older Vincentians may be familiar with in the role of home visitation. This is where the volunteers' conferences can help—in sharing and de-briefing with their members.

During her time with the Society, Kate believes young volunteers and their older counterparts have developed greater understanding of each other's roles and how they are evolving.

'I've been very pleased to see

a shift in the way youth have been treated in the Society. Young people are no longer being valued just for being youth representatives but also for the other skills they can bring to the Society,' she said.

Kate, along with the National Youth Team, has great hopes for the Emerging Young Vincentian Leaders Program and the other programs they are working on. The team meets twice a year and has decided to hold the meetings in capital cities, so they can learn more about locally-based programs. Most recently they met in Darwin in May and in Perth last October and prior to this, meetings were held at the National Council office in Canberra.

Outside of the Society, Kate is a swim teacher, plays netball and has a keen interest in travel and theatre. Most recently, in her spare time Kate produced the staging of the Oscar Wilde play, *The importance of being Earnest* at ANU. She also went on exchange to Norway last year where she studied at the University of Oslo between July and November. Following this Kate went backpacking with her sister in Europe for two months.

'I absolutely loved it. Scandinavia piqued my interest because it is very different to Australia in terms of the landscape and the people. It also helped that a lot of Norwegians speak English, so that made it a very easy place to study and live.'

It was Kate's third trip to Europe and when she completes her university studies in the middle of next year she plans to go to South America before commencing her law career.



Emily Wardeiner, at left, seen here attending the Australian Catholic Youth Ministry Convention in Adelaide in 2014 with Bishop Eugene Hurley, Benita de Vincentiis and Casmiria Pultchen.

Emily Wardeiner

The opportunity to share her expanding knowledge of Indigenous culture with other Vincentians inspired Victorian teacher Emily Wardeiner to take on the position of a Deputy National Youth Representative on the Society's National Youth Team.

Through her role, Emily aims to raise the profile of the annual National Immersion Program, which she said had a dramatic impact on her life when she attended in 2012. The intensive two-week program sees St Vincent de Paul Society volunteers and members aged from 18 to 79 live in the remote Indigenous community of Nganmariyanga (Palumpa), in the far north-west of the Northern Territory.

Emily said through the immersion program participants experience what it is like to live in a remote community and gain

a better understanding of what it means to be Indigenous in Australia today. Following her immersion experience in Nganmariyanga, Emily spent a couple of years teaching in the Indigenous community of Wadeye.

'I was lucky enough to learn some of the language, largely due to the fact it was a bilingual school and I was working alongside the teachers and community members. I'm still in contact with families in that community today,' Emily said.

Prior to this, Emily's father owned the pub in Tennant Creek and during that time she was able to do teaching placements at nearby Indigenous communities.

'I've been very blessed with what I have learned while in these communities. My goal

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for my time on the National Youth Team is to not only lift the profile of the National Immersion Program but also to build awareness throughout the Society about Indigenous culture,' she said.

It is Emily's first time on the National Youth Team and she met with fellow youth team members in Darwin in May. It was a meeting that Emily helped organise and, given her contacts in the Northern Territory, she was able to connect the team with people from Indigenous communities.

'We wanted to give the youth team a deeper cultural understanding for people wanting to know more about Indigenous culture in the Northern Territory,' Emily said.

Emily now teaches at St Augustine's in the Melbourne inner-west suburb of Yarraville, where she has taught Physical Education and in the classroom for the past two years. To assist the school, Emily also took on the position of Prep teacher for the first two terms of 2018.

Emily believes her interest in Indigenous issues works across many facets of her life; for example, she has shared her immersion experience with her students in Melbourne and recently helped them to understand the importance of Reconciliation Week.

It was in 2002 when she was completing her Bachelor of Education at the Australian Catholic University (ACU) in her hometown of Ballarat that Emily

first joined the Society's Youth Conference at the university.

'I wasn't actually Catholic before joining the Conference and that began my journey to Catholicism,' she said.

Emily received her sacraments in 2003 and she credits the Society as having played a large role in her spiritual journey.

While she has wound up some of her commitments for the Society in Victoria, which included sitting on the state youth team and the overseas development team, Emily remains Vice-President of the Roadshow Special Works for the Society. She also spent four years as the North Western Central Council Representative while attending university and assisted the Western Region in a similar manner.

Emily has volunteered with children's camps since 2002 and first became involved in the Roadshow Special Works in 2003. The Roadshow Conference meets monthly at the ACU campus in Fitzroy, Melbourne and they organise youth days in three regional centres in Victoria over the July school holidays.

'The Roadshow ties in well with the teaching year and it's great to connect with regional high schools and hopefully interest some young members to join. This helps us to gain momentum in youth conferences,' Emily said.

Hockey has been a part of Emily's life since she was a child and she has represented Victoria in the State women's hockey team several times. She is a goal keeper and currently

competes in the Premier League Hockey Competition in Victoria. A gruelling training schedule sees Emily travel to Geelong twice a week for training, where she stays with her grandmother.

Emily is clearly someone who thrives on keeping busy and giving back to her community. This year she embarked on a Masters of Social Work with Deakin University and has a strong interest in working in the policy field in the future.

'I'm not sure what that will look like at the moment but it could potentially involve policy work in the education and/or Indigenous areas. There are so many youth issues I am interested in but the stand-out ones would be employment and access to education for all,' Emily said.

Although, she was interested in social justice issues before joining the Society, Emily believes she has learned a lot more since becoming a conference member, which has put her in touch with 'like-minded people' and enabled her to 'give a voice to the voiceless' through her words and actions.

'Coming from a country lifestyle to now being able to act on the injustices I see has been very important to me. Having the support of my family and friends has enabled me to take on leadership roles and to have a balanced life,' Emily said. ♦

For more details about the National Immersion Program, visit: https://www.vinnies.org.au/page/Our_Impact/Indigenous_Australia/Immersion_Program_2018/

Must we remain so exceptionally cruel?

BY FATIMA MEASHAM

Australia has been bogged in mediocrity for some time. It has sunk in critical areas: climate action, renewable energy, wildlife protection, education, broadband and other infrastructure. But there is one area in which Australia has been remarkably exceptional: cruelty against people who came by boat to seek asylum.

If we hit pause for a moment on the moral ramifications of treating humans inhumanely, we can see clearly how innovative we have been at it. It does not matter which party is in government; neither seem to run out of ideas. The European far-right absolutely envies us for this.

Contracting private security firms to run facilities on sovereign islands. Designating a cut-off date for arrival after which no seaborne asylum seekers could ever be settled in Australia, even if found to be refugees. Criminalising public disclosure by offshore detention workers about conditions there. Keeping those conditions as humiliating as possible. Deliberately prolonging the determination of protection claims.

The driving concept has been deterrence, but this falls short in explaining why income and housing support has been cut for up to 90 asylum seekers and refugees already in the system. They are part of a group of 400 from Manus Island and Nauru who were brought to Australia for medical treatment and other critical needs. They are being shunted onto a 'final departure bridging visa E', valid for only six months and which comes with a right to work (which refugee



supporters lobby for). The catch is that they must find a job and shelter in three or six weeks.

These are people living precariously: pregnant women, families with young children, and elderly people from backgrounds of strife and encampment. A right to work does not capture all their needs, nor automatically meet them. Yet they are being 'transitioned out' of Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS) based on 'job-readiness'.

The move not only illustrates the arbitrary nature of immigration policy, which sets people up to fail; it is institutionalised sadism. As Human Rights Law Centre director Daniel Webb puts it: 'These families have endured years of suffering and abuse in offshore detention and then more years of daily uncertainty in the community. They just want to get on with rebuilding their lives. But instead our government is ripping the roof from over their heads and forcing them into destitution.'

Based on a plan revealed last year, thousands more could lose the measly allowance for which they had been eligible while waiting for the government to decide their case. SRSS is not just income support (around

\$240 per week) but help with casework and accommodation, as well as trauma counselling. Many recipients have been in the community for years, attending school or university.

A proper orientation toward such supports would recognise that they are provided to help people live. Human dignity is not conditional nor negotiable. It is not something that must be earned. It is the foundation of an honourable society.

This means that we do not let asylum seekers or refugees starve and be evicted while they wait for our capricious government to decide their fate. It means that we do not let politicians get away with distorting our values, including our sense of what life is worth and what we owe to each other.

Time on earth is short. Yet we have let one immigration minister after another squander what time asylum seekers and refugees have left—after they had left homelands, after surviving brutalities of detention. How much longer must they wait to really live? Must we remain so exceptionally cruel? ♦

Fatima Measham is a Eureka Street consulting editor. She hosts the ChatterSquare podcast, tweets as @foomeister and blogs on Medium. This article was first published on *Eureka Street*.

Grassroots commitment to our companions

BY BARNIE VAN WYK

The St Vincent de Paul Society Canberra/Goulburn has been assisting people experiencing poverty and disadvantage in our community since 1886, with our first conference established in Braidwood NSW. The Society has over 680 members in 52 conferences and, as is the case with all Vincentians, our conferences support individuals and families and run a range of support programs across the Canberra/Goulburn archdiocese. At the core of our work is a grassroots commitment to assisting our companions to break the cycle of disadvantage.

Over the past 12 months the Society launched a number of programs to improve the opportunities of our companions to achieve the best outcomes in life.

VINES

In October 2017, the St Vincent de Paul Society Canberra/Goulburn and the Scouts Association of Australia (ACT) launched VINES, a new project in the Tuggeranong Valley to support at-risk young people to rediscover their better and stronger inner selves by providing a range of activities aimed at positive outcomes; these included building new life skills, networking, social and emotional development.

The program is currently in the pilot phase and will operate for 12 months.



Attending the opening of Thread Together in May, from left: Greg Fischer, CEO of Thread Together; Erin MacArthur, Director of Volunteer Programs; Barnie van Wyk, CEO St Vincent de Paul Society Canberra/Goulburn.

The VINES acronym stands for Vinnies, Inspiring, Networking, Education and Support. The program will assist young people to learn practical living skills in a safe and fun environment.

The program operates on weekends and once a week during the school holidays. The Society and the Rover Scouts organise a mix of social and adventurous activities to foster positive risk-taking behaviours, ultimately aimed at breaking intergenerational disadvantage. The program has been supported by small grants aiding in the purchase of equipment and supporting the coordinated activities.

The Scouts Association of Australia contributes to the education of young people through the value system based on the Scout Promise and Law, where individuals are self-fulfilled and play a constructive role in the community. Currently, the program is focussing on 25 young people aged 8 to 16 years.

Thread Together

The Society has recently launched the Vinnies Thread Together clothing hub, an exciting new joint venture between St Vincent de Paul Society Canberra/Goulburn and Thread Together, a not-for-profit organisation that has arrangements with clothing manufacturers and fashion retailers to receive new and excess clothing for distribution via its charity partners to vulnerable people who are doing it tough.

The St Vincent de Paul Society is the leading charity supporting people experiencing or at risk of homelessness in the Canberra/Goulburn region by providing brand new clothes that contribute real value and dignity to the community and people in need.

The Thread Together clothing hub, operating from the Vinnies shopfront in Phillip, supports people at risk of homelessness from a wide range of backgrounds and circumstances,

including people exiting institutions, refugees and asylum seekers, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, Indigenous communities, young people and victims of domestic and family violence. The program ensures those in need receive a tailored service which reflects the current stage of their personal journey—from comfortable clothes for companions living in a crisis centre through to clothes aimed at keeping children's lives as normal as possible, to finally having clothes suitable for re-entering the work-force and regaining independence, that shape confidence and restore self-esteem.

To date, a number of asylum seekers and vulnerable companions have been assisted to stay warm during the cold Canberra winter. Within the first week of opening the Thread Together clothing hub, a companion going for job interviews was assisted with professional attire that gave them the confidence to secure full-time employment with a transport company in Canberra.

The venue that serves as the clothing hub is also a place to take a break, where members of the local community can volunteer their time for the good of their community, build friendships and enjoy companionship.

Initially, the service will operate on Tuesdays and Fridays from 10am to 2pm and will be available by appointment and referral only. Other community organisations have been invited to become referring partners, as we endeavour to make this service available to as many people as possible in need in our community.

Migrant and refugee tutoring program

During the process of settlement, migrant and refugee children are faced with unique challenges, especially in terms of negotiating their sense of identity and belonging. Experiencing positive social interactions with others in their community is crucial to enabling them to integrate successfully and to form a sense of identity. Providing them with opportunities to gain positive social interactions and experiences during the process of settlement can help them negotiate the challenges they encounter as they integrate into a new community.

These children often have had limited education opportunities and lack literacy skills in English as well as in their language of origin, so there is a need to support schools in the children's learning and development. Schools often lack the resources to provide one-to-one support, which is necessary to increase the children's skills and self-esteem.

The Society launched a new migrant and refugee tutoring program in the first week of June for primary school aged children. North Ainslie and Florey primary schools in the ACT have both engaged with the program and are offering sessions of one to two hours on a weekly basis. Eighteen volunteers were trained to staff the program to provide a positive learning environment that encourages the children to become interested in learning. The program is currently in the trial phase and is being monitored from an administration and planning perspective; but we anticipate that once it is up and running and we have

evaluated the initial outcomes, it will be moved to a conference model.

The migrant and refugee tutoring program will offer a reading program, providing one-to-one support to children in the Introductory English Centres during literacy classes, held in the morning for 90 minutes. The facilitation of cultural activities will promote positive social interactions by recognising and celebrating the children's diverse backgrounds. School teachers will be the main facilitators of these classes, and volunteers will assist with reading and activities.

The Lunchtime Club will conduct interactive activities for 30 minutes during the school's lunch time, with the aim of promoting cultural exchange. The sessions cultivate empowerment and belonging as children explore and discover their broader community in a safe and welcoming environment with their peers and mentors.

Finally, the Homework/Mentoring Club will be introduced in the future as a next phase, focussing on providing language, homework and other educational support, particularly in the areas of literacy and numeracy, while promoting personal and social confidence.

The Territory Council, conference members, volunteers and employees are all focussed on achieving the best results for those who call on our help, and to ensure that we get the best value for those who support us financially or in kind, as confirmed through our Strategic Plan. ♦

Barnie van Wyk is CEO of the St Vincent de Paul Society Territory Council of Canberra/ Goulburn.

Energy price increases: it's complicated

BY GAVIN DUFTY

There has been considerable media and water cooler conversations about rising energy costs. Some people are seeking to blame the increases on a particular aspect, such as uptake of renewables or the lack of coal; others point to the 'gold plating' of poles and wires, while some blame retailers or government green schemes. It's not that simple.

Vinnies has been tracking energy prices across the national energy market since 2008. During this time, we have found the energy story differs from state to state based on changes in the energy market. The lived experience of households also varies and is shaped by decisions that people are making 'behind the meter', such as the installation of solar panels.

What our research tells us

It is true that wholesale energy costs have increased in some places. That is to be expected, as a number of old coal plants have closed in South Australia and Victoria resulting in the shortfall in energy production being made up by more expensive forms of energy generation such as gas-fired turbines. These costs will fall when newer, cheaper forms of energy generation are built. This will occur once we have greater certainty in energy policy.

It is also correct that there has been over-investment in poles and wire. Many have argued that



this has been particularly the case in New South Wales and Queensland where government-owned companies over-invested in these assets. These increased costs are currently being stripped back though the activities of the Australian Energy Regulator.

It is also true that dispersion—that is, the difference between the best and worst retail price—has increased significantly in recent years. This means that consumers who are not actively engaged in the market are paying a higher price than those who are shopping around. This raises concerns particularly for vulnerable people who may lack the skills or opportunity to be active in the energy market. This is a major issue in Victoria, but also other states as the retail market evolves. These costs have recently been

examined through two processes: the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's (ACCC) inquiry into energy prices, which reported to the Treasurer in July; and in Victoria, an independent review that reported to the Victorian Government late last year. To read the ACCC's report calling for an overhaul of the energy sector, visit: <https://www.accc.gov.au/publications/restoring-electricity-affordability-australias-competitive-advantage>

Government interventions in the energy market have also added to the cost. This includes the smart meter roll out in Victoria; local, state and territory green schemes such as feed-in tariffs and energy efficiency schemes; and federal government green schemes such as the Renewable Energy Target.

As well as all of the above considerations, the decisions people are making about how they use

energy, the most significant being installing solar panels, also changes the end price people pay. The decision to install solar panels is a boon for both the environment and for consumers who have the means and disposable income to take up this opportunity, as they will reap significant cost reductions over time. However, in some cases, this results in increased costs for non-solar households due to system design issues.

It is clear that overall costs have changed for energy consumers. The amount people pay differs depending upon where they live, which poles and wires company services their power supply, whether they are active participants in the retail market, the type of appliance behind the meters and the fuel mix in their homes. For example, is your home electricity or a dual fuel household (gas and electricity)?

These and other issues compound cost increases in an energy market that is in rapid transition and are having a detrimental impact on many households. So what can be done?

The St Vincent de Paul Society believes government and energy policy makers need to determine the appropriate policy setting and energy market design so cost burdens do not fall disproportionately on particular groups and supports are targeted where they are needed.

This includes making sure the consumer protection frameworks

are designed to help people obtain the deals they want and the supports they need when they are struggling to pay bills. It also includes worthwhile initiatives such as effective hardship programs.

State governments also need to ensure they have the appropriate concessions in place that will support people through this energy transition. This should include appropriate emergency payments for unaffordable bills and percentage-based concessions for pension and healthcare card holders that provide reductions in bills.

Finally, we need to ensure that government and policy makers are mindful of the flow on impact of changes in the energy market. For example, the installation of solar panels and interventions such as green schemes can impose. Any inadvertent price increase that fall on other households must be taken into consideration in the overall equation.

The protections will in part assist the energy transition, ensuring supports are there for the vulnerable and costs are not being disproportionately loaded up on particular groups. ♦

For further information, there are a number of reports on the Vinnie's website at www.vinnies.org.au/energy.

Gavin Dufty is Manager of Policy and Research at the St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria.



Within the Society itself, we have made great inroads in encouraging young Vincentians—some of whom are at university just like Frédéric Ozanam and his companions were — to take a lead role, a need identified at our National Congress held last year.

It is my fervent hope that we will have the courage to listen to our founder's call in a new age and that long into the future young people will be filled with the Spirit, celebrating the changes the Society has helped make and challenging us to change again.

Vincentian prayer calls us to find even more new ways to put our calling into practice for the benefit of all. Together, let us reshape our world and share the good news in new ways, true to the vision of our founders, especially Blessed Frédéric Ozanam. ♦

Graham West is National President of the St Vincent de Paul Society National Council of Australia.

The costs of a casual job are now outweighing any pay benefits

BY JOSHUA HEALY AND DANIEL NICHOLSON

Workers aren't being compensated as much as they should be for precarious work in casual positions.

One in four Australian employees today is a casual worker. Among younger workers (15-24 year olds) the numbers are higher still: more than half of them are casuals.

These jobs come without some of the benefits of permanent employment, such as paid annual holiday leave and sick leave. In exchange for giving up these entitlements, casual workers are supposed to receive a higher hourly rate of pay – known as a casual “loading”.

But the costs of casual work are now outweighing the benefits in wages.

Costs and benefits of casual work

Casual jobs offer flexibility, but also come with costs. For workers, apart from missing out on paid leave, there are other compromises: less predictable working hours and earnings, and the prospect of dismissal without notice. Uncertainty about their future employment can hinder casual workers in other ways, such as making family arrangements, getting a mortgage, and juggling education with work.

Not surprisingly, casual workers have lower expectations about keeping their current job. For example the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) found 19% expect to leave their job within 12 months, compared to 7% of other workers. Casuals are also much less likely to get work-related training, which limits their opportunities for skills development.



The employers of casual workers also face higher costs. High staff turnover adds to recruitment costs. But perhaps the main cost is the “loading” that casual workers are supposed to be paid on top of their ordinary hourly wage.

Australia's system of minimum wage awards specifies a casual loading of 25%. So, a casual worker paid under an award should get 25% more for each hour than another worker doing the same job on a permanent basis. In enterprise agreements, the casual loading varies by sector, but tends to be between 15 and 25%.

The practice of paying a casual loading developed for two reasons. One was to provide some compensation for workers missing out on paid leave. The other, quite different, motivation was to make casual employment more expensive and discourage excessive use of it. However this disincentive has not prevented the casual sector of the workforce from growing substantially.

Casual jobs aren't much better paid

One approach in determining whether casual workers are paid more is simply to compare the hourly wages of casual and “non-casual” (permanent and fixed-term) employees in the same occupations. This can be done using data from the 2016 ABS Survey of Employee Earnings and Hours.

We compared median hourly wages for adult non-managerial employees, based on their ordinary earnings and hours of work (i.e. excluding overtime payments). If the median wage for casuals is higher than for non-casuals, there is a casual premium. If the median casual wage is lower, there is a penalty.

The 10 occupations below accounted for over half of all adult casual workers in 2016. In most of these occupations, there is a modest casual wage premium - in the order of 4-5%.

Chart 1: Casual workers (\$/hour)

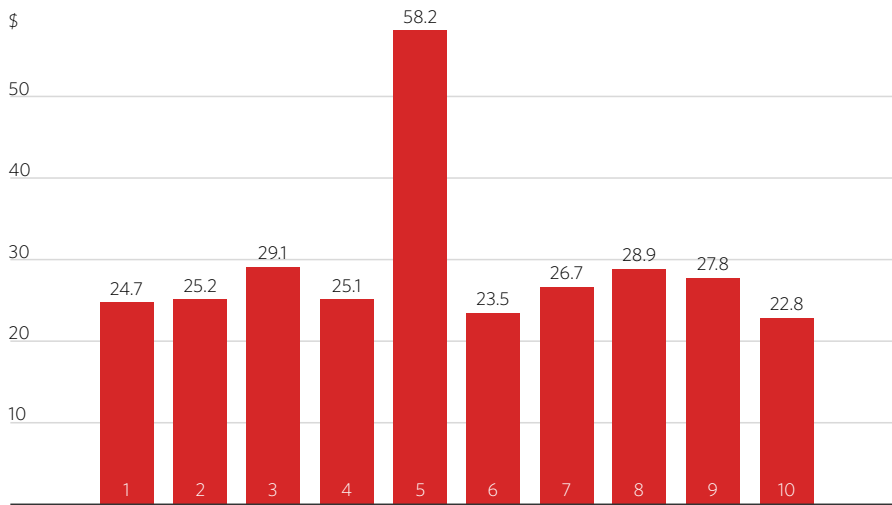


Chart 2: Non-casual workers (\$/hour)

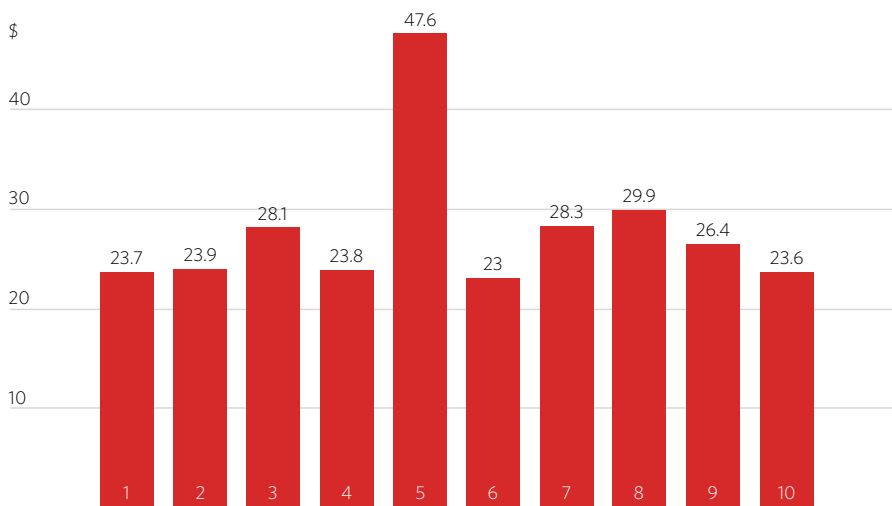
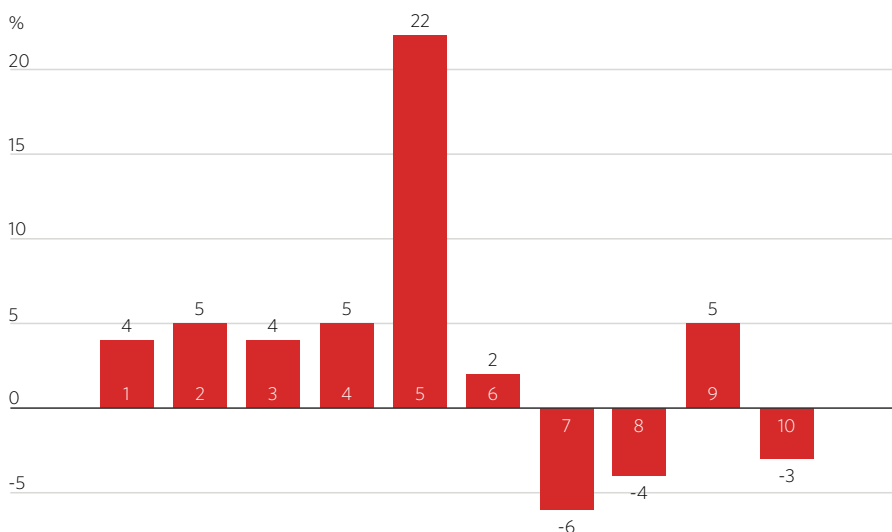


Chart 3: % premium/penalty



Comparing the wages of casual and non-casual workers

The size of the typical casual wage premium is much smaller, in most cases, than the loadings written into awards and agreements. Only one occupation (school teachers) has a premium (22%) in line with what might be expected.

Three of the 10 largest casual occupations actually penalise this sort of work. And overall for these 10 occupations there is a casual wage penalty of 5%. This method of analysis suggests that few casual workers enjoy substantially higher wages as a trade-off for paid leave.

Taking a closer look involves controlling for a wider range of differences between casual and non-casual workers. One major Australian study in 2005 compared wages after taking account of many factors other than occupation, including age, education, job location, and employer size.

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Charts legend

1. Sales Assistants and Salespersons
2. Hospitality Workers
3. Personal Carers and Assistants
4. Cleaners and Laundry Workers
5. School Teachers
6. Food Preparation Assistants
7. General Clerks
8. Sports and Fitness Workers
9. Miscellaneous Labourers
10. Packers and Product Assemblers

Justice reinvestment key to reducing Indigenous incarceration

BY PROFESSOR TOM CALMA

Crime rates are dropping, but jailing rates—particularly of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people—are sky-rocketing. A new approach is needed, and already well known, writes Professor Tom Calma.

The Australian Law Reform Commission's *Pathways to Justice* report tabled last week is one in a long line to address the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in prison and not the first to point to justice reinvestment as a solution.

Almost 10 years ago, in my role as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, I first promoted the concept of justice reinvestment. At that time, the idea was already gaining popularity in the US. Today, 31 states in the US have reformed their corrections and sentencing policies to reprioritise taxpayer dollars and eight prisons have closed in Texas in the past six years.

Savings generated by reducing imprisonment go towards alternatives to incarceration for low-level offenders that are effective in reducing reoffending. Crime rates have continued their downward trend and billions of dollars are expected to be saved.

Crime rates in Australia are decreasing too—but imprisonment is increasing. In NSW between 2011 and 2015, the number of crimes trended down in the majority of crime categories while the adult prison population increased by approximately 30 per cent. During the same period in NSW, arrests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for violent offences dropped by 37 per cent and for property crime



The St Vincent de Paul Society is one of several organisations to have supported the Maranguka Justice Reinvestment Project in Bourke, NSW. From left to right are: Executive Director Maranguka Alistair Ferguson, Chair Just Reinvest NSW and Project Director Maranguka Justice Reinvestment Project Sarah Hopkins, Senator Patrick Dodson and Activity Supervisor CDP Regional Economic Development Institute Ernest Moore.

by 33 per cent, while the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander imprisonment rose by 40 per cent.

There's a reason why justice reinvestment has gained support across the US, the UK and now Australia—it's common sense. The ongoing and increasing expenditure of public resources on imprisonment for low-level offenders is a bad investment in social, health and economic terms. Returning low-level offenders from prison to socially and economically disadvantaged communities where there is inadequate housing, low levels of participation in schooling, few training or employment opportunities, and limited or no drug and alcohol rehabilitation services doesn't make sense. We are setting people—and communities—up to fail.

What does make sense is reprioritising where our money is spent. It needs to be moved away from building new prisons and into early intervention and crime prevention to reduce the number of people being locked up in the first place.

What does make sense is reprioritising spending to invest in the services needed in those communities which

have high rates of offending, so that offending decreases and as a result, public safety increases.

This is the public policy challenge facing our governments and communities—churning large numbers of people through our prisons (and the criminal justice system as a whole) and back into the community actually decreases public safety and amenity.

Locking people up may look like the solution but it is simply a recipe for further disadvantage, inequality and public disorder. In fact, statistics indicate that more than half of the prisoners released are back inside prison within two years of release.

There is an urgent need to try evidence-informed and innovative approaches to reduce Indigenous incarceration which incorporate the elements we know to be critical for success.

We know that initiatives aimed at creating long-term positive change for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities must be *community-led*. We know that *data* is essential for identifying the causes of offending and for monitoring the effectiveness of programs in reducing offending. And we know that some communities produce higher numbers of offenders

◀ continued from page 21

than others and that the availability of services and supports in communities will impact on offending rates, so focussing on the place is important.

Justice reinvestment not only makes sense financially, it also incorporates those elements we know to be critical for success—it's *community-led, data driven* and *place-based*.

The Maranguka Justice Reinvestment Project in Bourke is the most advanced justice reinvestment initiative in the country, but there are a number of other communities and governments across Australia in the early stages of similar projects, including Port Adelaide, the ACT, Katherine and Cherbourg.

A national body is needed to support these important initiatives and to drive the implementation of Justice Reinvestment policies in line with the body proposed by the Australian Law Reform Commission.

The time for multi-partisan support for justice reinvestment is now. ♦

Tom Calma AO is a professor at the University of Sydney, Chancellor of the University of Canberra and Co-Chair of Reconciliation Australia. He is a former Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner and Race Discrimination Commissioner at the Australian Human Rights Commission.

This article was originally published on New Matilda <https://newmatilda.com/2018/04/06/justice-reinvestment-key-reducing-indigenous-incarceration-tom-calma/>

Editor's Note:

The St Vincent de Paul Society is proud to have supported the Maranguka Justice Reinvestment Project in Bourke, NSW. To find out more, visit: <http://www.justreinvest.org.au/justice-reinvestment-in-bourke/>

All else equal, it found that part-time, casual workers do receive an hourly wage premium over full-time, permanent workers. The premium is worth around 10%, on average, for men and between 4 and 7% for women.

These results imply that most casual workers (who are in part-time positions) can expect to receive higher hourly wages than comparable employees in full-time, permanent positions. However, the value of the benefit is again found to be less than would be expected, given the larger casual loadings mentioned in awards and agreements.

It seems that while there is some short-term financial benefit to being a casual worker, this advantage is worth less in practice than on paper.

A recent study, using 14 years of data from the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey (HILDA), finds no evidence of any *long-term* pay benefit for casual workers.

The study's authors estimate that, among men, there is an average casual wage penalty of 10% - the opposite of what we should see if casual loadings fully offset the foregone leave and insecurity of casual jobs. Among female casual workers, there is also a wage penalty, but this is smaller, at around 4%.

This study also finds that the size of the negative casual wage effect tends to reduce over time for individual workers, bringing them closer to equality with permanent workers. But very few casual workers out-earn permanent workers in the long-term.

Inferior jobs, but fewer alternatives

The evidence on hourly wage differences leads us to conclude that casual workers are not being adequately compensated for the lack of paid leave, or for other forms of insecurity they face. This makes casual jobs a less appealing option for workers.

This does not mean that all casual workers dislike their jobs – indeed, many are satisfied. But a clear-eyed look at what these jobs pay suggests their benefits are skewed in favour of employers.

Despite this, the choice for many workers – especially young jobseekers – is increasingly between a casual job or no job at all. Half of employed 15-24 year olds are in casual jobs.

In a labour market characterised by high underemployment and intensifying job competition, young people with little or no work experience are understandably willing to make some sacrifices to get a start in the workforce. The option of “holding out” for a permanent job looks increasingly risky as these opportunities dwindle. ♦

Joshua Healy is a Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Workplace Leadership, University of Melbourne. Co-author, Daniel Nicholson is a Research Assistant, Industrial Relations, University of Melbourne. This article was originally published on *The Conversation*.

Calls for laity to take lead role following Royal Commission findings

The following is an edited version of the speech outgoing CEO of the Truth Justice and Healing Council (TJHC), Francis Sullivan, gave to Concerned Catholics Canberra Goulburn on 22 March 2018. In this speech Francis reflects on the damning findings of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The TJHC was wound up at the end of April 2018 and there have been many developments since then regarding compensation for victims of abuse and the protection of children and vulnerable adults.

After five years, 57 case studies, 8000 private sessions and over 1300 witnesses, the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse delivered a comprehensive and confronting report in December 2017. It comprises 17 volumes, contains 189 recommendations—many of which relate to the Catholic Church—with 20 specifically dealing with the Catholic Church. Volume 16, titled Religious Institutions, is made up of three books, close to 800 pages each—one of these books is entirely focussed on the Catholic Church.

As it happens, the Commission has revealed that more than 36 per cent of all abuse victims involved with the Commission were abused in the Catholic Church. The Commission's data survey reveals that 4445 individuals alleged abuse within the Church in the period 1950 to 2010. One thousand eight hundred and eighty priests and religious were accused of abuse over that time. No wonder the Commission paid so much attention to the Church. What did the



Francis Sullivan

Commission find about the incidence and the response of the Church to child sexual abuse?

In short, children were abused because they could be abused. These were crimes, not just failures of character or sinful behaviour as some have suggested. Perpetrating priests and religious brothers targeted, groomed and exploited vulnerable children wherever and whenever it was possible. Let's make no mistake—they were criminals. Church leaders and their officials gravely mismanaged cases of abuse. At times, they did not believe the victims or even their families. Often, they didn't inform the police. They concealed information and protected perpetrators.

The Church as an institution acted just like any other institution. It risk-managed and protected itself, including its assets. It deployed rigorous, legal defences and hard ball negotiations. It used its might to prevail over victims, even when they knew that the abuse had occurred. This has become a familiar and tragic refrain.

The Commission's findings come as no surprise, even though they are shocking and a terrible indictment on our religious organisation. Throughout

the course of the five years we learned much but unfortunately are still left with many questions. This is because most of the case studies involving the Church were about abuse that happened in the 1970s and 1980s. A time when clericalism and the dysfunction of the clericalist culture was stronger than it is today. A time when the power imbalance between clerics and the lay community was still played out in unquestioning compliance because 'father knows best'. A time when the authority of bishops and religious leaders was more strident. A time when secrecy, tribalism and the bulwark mentality of the Church warded off critics and threats alike in a self-serving belief that the Church's future demanded it.

Many of the key players of those times were not able to give evidence to the Commission. They had died or were too incapacitated. So we were left to surmise, and in the end wonder, why leaders and others acted the way they did. That said, we do have a pretty good handle on the culture in which these administrators operated.

Our Council laid out a comprehensive submission to the Commission along these lines. Much of what we outlined was taken up by the Commission in its description of the factors that led to the abysmal institutional response by the Church to incidents of abuse, including:

- clericalism,
- structure and governance issues,
- leadership failures,
- Canon law, and
- celibacy, to name just a few.

And let's remember, all sexual abuse is an abuse of power. So too is its cover up. The leadership of an organisation, including our own, shapes the assumptions, values, beliefs and norms of its culture. This in turn influences how individuals behave, particularly with vulnerable people, and it sets a standard of what is, or isn't, acceptable.

The stark findings of the Commission paint the picture of an arrogant and hypocritical Church. Too often the safety and welfare of children were not the number one priority. It is hard not to conclude that the dignity and worth of an abused child or even that of children at risk was far less important than the reputation of a priest or brother. The Commission made many recommendations that relate to the future administration and child protection policies of all institutions.

Interestingly, they did not find any significant problems with how Catholic Church schools, welfare or other social services operate today. There were no adverse findings against how these organisations deal with abuse allegations, complaints or how they educate staff in prevention and protection measures. In fact, the Commission made the point that the Church leadership could learn from the way these services are run. This is a direct result of the effort that the Church has gone to over the past 20 years to get its act together on the welfare and protection of children.

The Commission made much of the decision-making and accountabilities that functioned in the Church throughout the period it examined. It maintains that a lot of that dysfunction still exists today in the Church.

As a consequence, the Commission has called on Church leaders to instigate a major review of diocesan structures and governance. This is important. As a Church we need governance that best reflects the pastoral needs of our community. The track record of leaders throughout the abuse scandal fell well short of best practice governance. In so many ways leaders failed to respond as pastors to those who were abused.

Whether the culture of the Church prohibited bishops and leaders is one thing but more importantly it shows that unless the Church is clear about what is important and essential, things can go very badly wrong. This

means governance must reflect the identity, ethos and purpose of what a Church is about. It must not fall into the trap of maintaining a rigid and defensive organisational focus where its mission, as articulated by the Gospel, is undermined by expediency and self-preservation. So, in short, we need governance and decision-making processes that reflect the lived experience of those being governed.

Whether it is more women in governance roles, or others who for too long have been isolated from participation, the continuity between how decisions are made and the needs of those being governed needs to be seamless and strong. As I said before, the Commission went out of its way to affirm the more recent Church structures that have deployed the best practices of corporate governance in the arrangements for ministries across education, health and welfare services. One glaring feature of these structures is their lay leadership.

Even more notable is that these structures are legitimate Church companies that have the same status in the Church as any diocese or religious order. Clearly, there is much the rest of the institution can learn from how lay-led canonical structures are responding to the pastoral and ministerial needs of local communities. In essence, we are talking about lay participation in the decisions made about the way the Church operates, how dioceses and parishes operate, how priests and religious engage with the rest of us; and in turn, how lay involvement can shape our doctrine. These are all decisions that for 2000 years have been made by a handful of men, relatively speaking, on behalf of the entire Church. Maybe at this time, there should at least be some consideration given to a different approach.

The majority of the recommendations made by the Royal Commission called on the Australian bishops to address universal Church issues with the Vatican. Interestingly, the Royal

Commission pulled back from making any definitive policy recommendations around issues like celibacy but certainly made it clear that the Church needs to carefully examine the role of celibacy in the unfolding sex abuse scandal.

The Royal Commission's recommendations on the seal of confession are far more problematic. Some have wondered whether this recommendation was included to test the Church's capacity to examine some of the issues at the very core of its teachings. At best, the evidence before the Royal Commission about abuse of the seal was selective and patchy. It was hard to see any systemic abuse of the sacrament but it does beg the question, how are priests instructed to administer the seal when abuse is disclosed?

A litmus test for the Church leadership will be the degree to which they act on the recommendations of the Commission. For the past 18 months our Council has called for a substantial implementation strategy to be established, resourced and charged with an independent brief to get things going. As they say, watch this space! In that context I was heartened by our own Archbishop, Christopher Prowse's statement recognising that the Church needs to respond to the scandal with even better protection and prevention measures and a review of its governance. He's already instigated his own practical measures.

Apart from the devastation the abuse has had, and in many cases continues to have on survivors, the scandal has left ordinary Catholics appalled. Across the last five years I have heard their despair, disenchantment and, for too many others, their decision to disengage. A quick analysis of the 2016 National Church Life Survey, which was released in part earlier this year, makes the situation very plain. Nearly three out of five church

continued on page 26 ►

goers (57 per cent) agreed that their confidence in Church authorities has been damaged by the cases of sex abuse by priests and religious. More than one-third of church goers (35 per cent) agreed that their respect for priests and religious has declined as a result of these offences. Nearly two-thirds of church goers (64 per cent) agreed that the response of Church authorities to incidents of child sexual abuse had been inadequate and showed a complete failure of responsibility.

This visceral reaction within the Catholic community is succinctly reflected in one of the Commission's overarching findings on the Catholic Church, and I quote from the report:

We have concluded that there were catastrophic failures of leadership of Catholic Church authorities over many decades, particularly before the 1990s. Those failures led to the suffering of a great number of children, their families and wider communities.

For many, the harm was irreparable. In numerous cases, that harm could have been avoided had Catholic Church authorities acted in the interests of children rather than in their own interests.

This division, born of mistrust in our leadership, needs healing. I think that can only occur if we are moving as a faith community along an agreed pathway. The alternative is too divisive, even schismatic. Already too many have left and far too many others are wavering. In our contemporary context that agreed path requires us all to 'get with the program'. In my mind that could start with listening to Pope Francis. He famously has said that we are not living in an era of change. Rather, we are living in a change of era. He means that we must wake up to the paradigm shift. The days of Christendom are over. So too are the days where young people

are socialised into their religion in a society that prizes religious belief and practice. On the contrary, religious affiliation is on the decline in Australia and in some quarters actively disparaged. Now everything is contestable and even disposable. So, faith needs to be understood more as a personal journey of self-discovery and divine revelation with other like-minded folk—let's call it a movement—than primarily a tribal allegiance held together by rules and group identification.

The attitude of the Church in today's world is far removed from the triumphant and doctrinaire approach of times past. The engagement of the Church in the modern world cannot be about imposing a blueprint on how life should be lived. Rather, Pope Francis calls us to be a missionary Church, walking alongside our fellow citizens, being far less dogmatic and rule-focussed. A Church that risks involvement and even compromise as it seeks to be pastoral, responsive, inclusive and merciful. And let me emphasise, here that means walking along-side our leaders, not undermining their capacity to make changes by so marginalising them that the 'us and them' divide becomes unbridgeable.

If you were to speak to someone who was abused by a priest or a religious you might hear that the Church has learned nothing. Just this week we received an email from an abuse survivor accusing the Church of disgracefully under-paying him and point-blank refusing to do what is right. He accused us—the Church—of being 'sick paedophile sympathisers', that he is 'sick to the bone' and that we 'should be ashamed' of ourselves. And I, for one, believe that he honestly and sincerely believes what he says and that his rage, for many different and unknown and perhaps unknowable reasons, is well justified. We spent years trying to disprove the

truth of abuse victims. A couple of weeks ago I was in Melbourne at a senate redress hearing. The animosity and hostility I felt from some of the people in the room was not much different to the reception we received the first time we appeared before the Royal Commission on 9 December 2013. That was the day when a dozen survivors walked out in disgust at how we presented the Church's position before the Royal Commission. It doesn't really matter, regardless of what was said, whether they were going to walk out or not. What was clear was the level of disgust and mistrust they held for the Church.

So, for many people nothing has changed. For many survivors the Church is still hard. Many feel they still face lawyers rather than pastors. They face accountants rather than companions. They face bureaucrats rather than a loving and caring Church ready to do whatever is needed to right the wrongs and hack some sort of path out of darkness.

If you were to talk to people within the Church, particularly some leaders, they will say we have learned much. They say there is now a much greater understanding of the true impact of child sexual abuse. They say that while the Church has led the way in putting in place survivor focus support services, like Towards Healing and The Melbourne Response, more needs to be done. Many Church leaders now recognise that the culture of clericalism within the Church, on balance, is a bad thing rather than something to be supported. Most leaders are now prepared to accept—as indicated by their support for a national redress scheme, the Church's new standards setting and auditing body, and other reforms—that things had to change.

Importantly, they now accept that Church leaders in the past got it wrong. Most, if not all, are now prepared to call the abuse crisis for

what it is. They accept that crimes were committed, that reputation was put ahead of thousands of children who were in real and present danger, and that the Church used its might and power to silence and crush survivors. It now seems unbelievable that some Church leaders have only come to these positions over the past five years, but the facts are that at the start of the Commission many could not accept this as the way it was.

For many leaders there has been an awakening. For the people in the pews, for people like you, it is relatively easy to see what has been learned. We all now have a much clearer understanding of the shocking

and pervasive extent of the abuse crisis. We have learned, with disgust and disgrace, the appalling way in which it was handled by past leaders. We have learned the true extent of the way in which the crisis has corroded the trust in our leaders and eaten away at our faith. The people in the pews know that the worst is not over, that there is no climbing out of the very dark hole we find ourselves in any time soon. The answers to ‘what have we learned?’, as I said, are complicated.

And I think we will only know some time in the next few years—when we see how the Church leadership responds to the Royal Commission’s

recommendations; when we see if there are any real and sustained changes, particularly within the Church’s culture—if the upper reaches of the Church become more accountable and transparent and if the leadership becomes more open, more accepting of alternative views and prepared to listen, not just pay lip service.

And while I’m not yet prepared to call this, I think there is hope. ♦

To read the speech in full, please visit:
www.tjhcouncil.org.au/media/145796/180322-SPEECH-Concerned-Catholics-Public-Forum-ACCC-Canberra-Francis-Sullivan.pdf

The latest statistics on homelessness

The release of the 2016 Census of Population and Housing in March found there has been a 20 per cent increase in the number of people sleeping rough since 2011.

While the number of people experiencing homelessness has grown, funding to create affordable housing and support people has remained inadequate.

The St Vincent de Paul Society has been lobbying the federal and state and territory governments to double the amount of money made available to build more social housing. Without a home, having or finding a job, maintaining a family, and getting an education are nearly impossible.

‘Charities like St Vincent de Paul will always continue to support those experiencing homelessness,

but the government must also pull its weight in contributing to a fairer society in which no one gets left out,’ said Dr Falzon, CEO of Vinnies National Council.

A break down on the statistics

- The 2016 Census found 116,427 people are homeless on any given night in Australia. This is up from 102,439 in the 2011 Census. This means the rate of homelessness in Australia has grown by 13.7 per cent.
- There has been a 20 per cent increase in the number of people sleeping rough since 2011. That’s 8200 people living on the streets, in tents or improvised dwellings.
- Most of the increase in homelessness between 2011 and 2016 was reflected in people living in ‘severely’ crowded dwellings, up from 41,370 in 2011 to 51,088 in 2016.
- People who were born overseas and arrived in Australia in the last

five years accounted for 15 per cent (17,749 persons) of all persons who were homeless on Census night in 2016.

- The rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians who were homeless was 361 persons for every 10,000 of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population, a decrease from 487 in 2011.
- Homeless youth (aged 12 to 24) made up 32 per cent of total homeless persons living in ‘severely’ crowded dwellings.
- Nearly 60 per cent of homeless people in 2016 were aged under 35 years, and 42 per cent of the increase in homelessness was in the 25 to 34 years age group.
- The number of homeless persons aged 55 years and above has steadily increased over the past three Censuses, from 12,461 in 2006, to 14,581 in 2011 and 18,625 in 2016. ♦

An outcast's journey of hope

BY ANDREW HAMILTON SJ

The shepherd's hut

Tim Winton

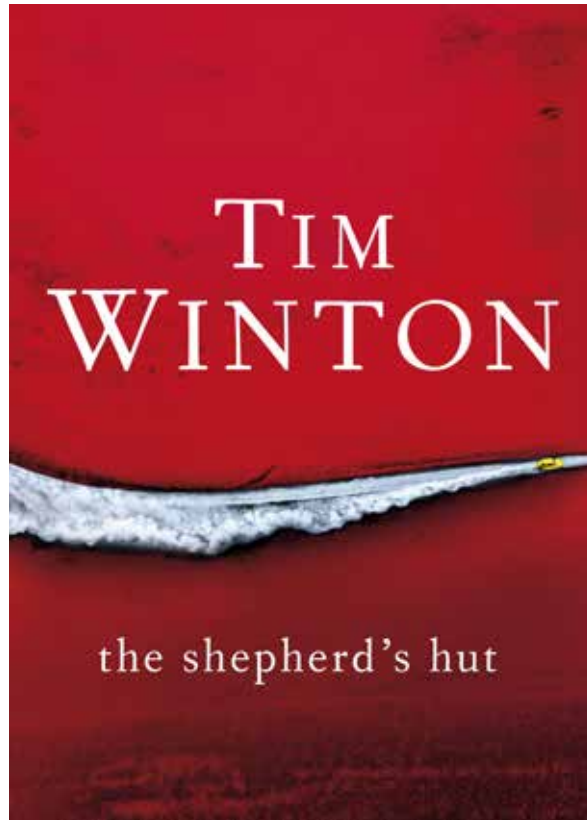
Hamish Hamilton, 2018

Seen from outside, Jackson (Jaxi) Claxton, the narrator of *The shepherd's hut*, is tabloid fodder—raised in a small farming settlement, with a brutal father, friendless and violent at school, a drop-out, foul-mouthed, caught having sex with his cousin Lee, he discovers his father crushed by a fallen jacked car, leaves traces of himself all around the scene and runs away into the bush with little drink or food, and a rifle. At the end of the book he is driving a stolen car, with a shotgun in the boot, heading to see his cousin to begin a new life with her. One can imagine the media joining the dots and moralising a week or two later on a born loser.

The genius of Tim Winton in this enchanting novel is to give Jaxi a voice that is brutal, limited and obscene in parts, but also open to self-questioning and observation. Jaxi is resourceful, courageous in facing his fears, faithful in his love for Lee, and honest in knowing what he does not know. In the course of the story he discovers where he is, who he is and what he is. He also finds words to describe himself and aspects of the world he had excluded. Throughout the book the lyrical runs alongside the crude, promising to transform it. At a critical point in his relationship with Fintan, an old Irish hermit living in the shepherd's hut, he realises that Fintan has searched his phone:

He'd had half the fricken day to scroll through me pics and messages. His eyes and fingers had been all over Lee, across me whole bloody life.

Barely controlling his rage, Jaxi storms out down to the windmill, and describes the scene:



The easterly was petering out to nothing when I went down the mill in them slope-sided boots of his, the blades of the thing was hardly turning. The lake was gone pink with the evening un and a mob of birds stretched across the sky like a scratch. I felt so flat. And stupid.

The transition from anger to observation with its exact simile brings home the poignancy of a young man's life, poised between the brutal and the angelic, the crude and the refined, both mixed and occasionally transcended. In the words, many thousands of miles away from Jaxi's, of Gerald Manly Hopkins:

This Jack, joke, poor potsherd, patch, matchwood, immortal diamond, Is immortal diamond.

The key to Jaxi's growth in self-understanding and self-possession

lies in his three-month stay with Fintan. Their relationship is inevitably edgy because both are trapped there, both have a past that they are in flight from and want concealed. For that reason they fear for one another. Jaxi repels questions by taciturnity, Fintan by volubility—after eight years alone in the hut he speaks to himself constantly, quoting from poetry and the Bible to construct a world that is bearable.

Both Fintan and Jaxi explore questions of meaning, pressing each other in their vulnerability, alternately resisting and responding. When Jaxi recognises that Fintan is a Catholic priest who has been exiled by his superiors to the hut, he responds violently, assuming that he must be a paedophile. After Fintan assures him that his crime was far worse than that, Jaxi probes the oddity

of a priest who is angry with the Church and ambivalent about faith in God.

In their encounters Jaxi tests the possibility of finding personal meaning while Fintan explores the viability of inherited meaning. It is done partly through conversation but more through the everyday bodily rituals of going to the edge of the lake at sunset, of cooking damper and killing animals for meat, of washing, disposing of human waste, sharpening knives, using tools and of making relationships. Jaxi confronts Fintan with the oddity of a priest who does not seem to believe in God. He in turn is confronted by a person who cares for him and who constantly points to the something more that lies in nature and in human beings: in the mirages on the lake that bear human history, in the deaths of mothers that linger, and the possibility of being an instrument of God by doing good to others.

This sifting of meaning is done through basic human realities that are also symbols. Jaxi's journey has revolved around simple things become central to survival, like water, finding and killing kangaroos and wild goats and hanging them up to dry, looking into the eye of a kangaroo you have killed, sharing damper, shedding blood, using trees for shelter and cover, dreaming of the

beloved as she waits at the end of the journey, and above all making the human choices about facing or evading death.

For readers, many of these symbolic actions may deepen into myth: the goat as the symbol of evil, as beast of sacrifice and as scapegoat that atones for people's sins; the blinded eye of Jaxi's father and his own damaged eye recalling the blinded Polyphemus, a symbol of monstrous violence; the water, bread, food, sacrifice and vicarious death that are bound in the Christian story.

At the closing of the novel both Fintan and Jaxi have come to know that they have been instruments of God to one another. Jaxi has come to the firm grasp of who, what and where he is, which enables him to journey on with sureness, come what may.

For people with many words to express the meaning of their lives, and also for people who feel no need of words, this is a challenging book. In focussing on the mystery and the possibility of Jaxi's outwardly unattractive life, it makes a claim for the high value of all human beings.

But the book also makes clear that no words to do with meaning and no symbols of religious faith can function as answers. They must be charged with meaning in the messiness and dirt of human

living, and tested by the depth at which they are lived by those who proclaim them. They must be put to the test. Jaxi is not alone in his instinctive distrust of Catholics as human beings, let alone as sources of wisdom. The symbols of faith come alive only when they are explored under stress.

From this perspective *The shepherd's hut* retraces the ground of Matthew Arnold's 19th century poem, 'On Dover Beach', with its recognition that, as the overarching belief in a God who cares for the world withers, meaning has to be sought in personal love:

*Ab, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world,
which seems
To lie before us like a land of
dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love,
nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help
for pain;*

In the poem, the collapse of larger meanings makes the narrator withdraw to relationships. In *The shepherd's hut* the starting point is Jaxi's relationship with Lee. From that he is drawn to find within the world inklings of light, peace and help for pain. It is a journey to hope. ♦

Andrew Hamilton SJ is Chaplain to the St Vincent de Paul Society of Victoria's Young Vinnies.

ADVENTURE & GOOD WORKS

Opportunities for holidaying & volunteering in the Northern Territory

Are you a Vincentian, volunteer or employee of the Society travelling to the Northern Territory?

Would you like to have more than a tourist experience?

The Society in the Northern Territory is regularly seeking volunteers to support its good works.

TYPES OF ACTIVITIES

- Conference & project work
- Event preparation & entertainment
- Retail sales & sorting – learn about bush bags!
- Prison visitation (women only)
- Meal services
- Offering fellowship at our service hubs
- Emergency relief
- Administrative support.

WHAT WE CAN OFFER

An opportunity to:

- get to know the locals & share experiences
- learn something new
- use your skills & help the local community
- learn more about the local environment
- learn about the Society in the Northern Territory.

WHAT YOU CAN OFFER

To those we assist:

- an understanding of the Society's mission and ethos
- ability to understand & emphasise with the problems of others
- broadening of our local Society's knowledge base & skill sets leading to the enhancement of our good works.

To other volunteers:

- an understanding of the Society's mission & ethos by being part of the Australian Vincentian family
- sharing of your skills & experiences
- opportunities to undertake projects or tasks for which there was not the necessary knowledge, skills or resources.

CONTACT US

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www.vinnies.org.au



WHAT YOU NEED

Vincentians, volunteers and staff of the Society in the Diocese of Darwin must have a Working with Children Clearance and a Criminal History Check. Please contact us at least five weeks prior to submitting your application

*"Yours must be a work
of love, of kindness,
you must give your time,
your talents, yourselves."*

- Blessed Frédéric Ozanam



St Vincent de Paul Society
(NT) Inc.
good works

Prayer for Youth

The national Year of Youth is being held by the Catholic Church in 2018 and the following prayer is intended to mark this occasion. The St Vincent de Paul Society's National Youth Team are continuing to mark the Year of Youth by incorporating this prayer and other reflections into their work for the Society.

Prayer for Youth

Come Holy Spirit of this Great Southland

Inspire our entire faith community,
as we prayerfully discern new horizons for spreading joy
in the lives and communities of the People of God.

Come Holy Spirit of Youth

Fill the hearts of young people with the hope and love of
Jesus Christ;
enliven our community with the creativity, energy and joy
of youth;
guide us together, as we strive to offer God's mercy
to those who feel abandoned or outcast.

Come Holy Spirit of Faith

Empower our community to be courageous;
unite your people as witnesses of love.
Walk with us, as we blaze new trails of discipleship;
accompanying young people as we renew the Church
together.

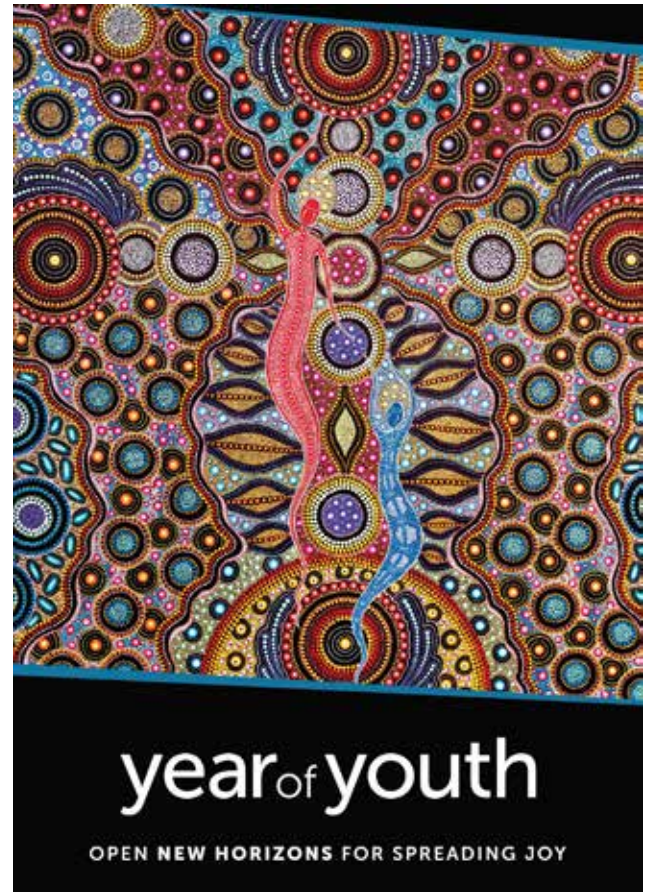
Come Holy Spirit of Vocation

Stir within young people an awareness of God's call;
reveal to us the graces of young people;
guide us all, in finding our place and raising our voices
To build a civilisation of love.

Amen

Our Lady of the Southern Cross, Help of Christians, pray for
us.

St Mary of the Cross MacKillop, friend of the young, pray
for us. ♦



Painted by Amunda Gorey. Copyright: Australian Catholic Bishops Conference.

Source: <http://www.youth.catholic.org.au/year-of-youth>

Assist a Student

An education support program aimed at breaking the cycle of poverty.



Where we assist...

Assist a Student is a program of the St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia.

Donations from Australians are used to provide education support for students across partner countries in Asia and the Pacific.

Throughout partner countries, local St Vincent de Paul Society members select students from families in need to be supported by the program. They receive support for one year and the money donated contributes to their education needs.

The program includes students at all levels—from primary, secondary and post-secondary. Funds are allocated across the countries to ensure fair distribution. One of the program's strongest and most attractive features is that administration costs, funded by the Society, are kept at an absolute minimum.

No administration cost is deducted from your donation. 100% goes towards the students' education needs for one year.

100% of your donation goes to the students' education needs for one year.

It is a common belief that education improves a young person's opportunity of gaining useful employment, thereby increasing their ability to support themselves and their families in the future. It is a means of empowering an individual to break out of the cycle of poverty.

One of the most positive ways of helping families in need throughout Asia and the Pacific to become self sufficient is through education. The Assist a Student program gives you the opportunity to support the education of students in Asia and the Pacific. The students supported by this program may not be able to attend school without this assistance.

In choosing to donate money to the Assist a Student program, you are taking the opportunity to provide education support to overseas students in need throughout their education.

As well as this you will receive:

- A certificate with the student name, country and course of study for each \$70 donation.
- A complimentary copy of *The Record* with an Assist a Student insert will be sent annually.

NB: To protect the privacy and dignity of the student, and in accordance with The Rule of the St Vincent de Paul Society, photographs and addresses of the students are not provided.

Yes, I want to Assist a Student today!

To donate online please visit www.vinnies.org.au/aas

- I am an individual assisting a student; OR
 I am assisting a student on behalf of a group

NAME (group or individual): _____

CONTACT NAME (for group): _____

TELEPHONE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

SUBURB: _____

STATE: _____ POSTCODE: _____

EMAIL: _____

- I would like to receive a certificate for this donation.

I would like to donate (Donations over \$2 are tax deductible):

\$70 \$140 \$210 OR \$ _____

Payment method:

EFT: BSB 062-000 Acc 16047336

Debit my credit card (details below)

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Mastercard Visa Card Expiry: ____ / ____

NAME ON CARD: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

Please post coupon to: St Vincent de Paul Society National Council Office, PO Box 243, Deakin West, ACT 2600