

# The Record

Winter 2022



St Vincent de Paul Society  
NATIONAL COUNCIL of AUSTRALIA Inc. *good works*



## Inside this issue...

Homelessness & pets

Federal Election  
wrap-up

Jimi Hendrix & the  
Lismore floods

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.

**Our Strategic Goals:** Spirituality and Membership, Our Advocacy, Our Governance and Leadership, Our Work Together, Our Sustainability

The Record is published regularly each year by the National Council of the St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia.

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The St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia acknowledges 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.

ISSN 2652-8894

The St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia consists of 60,000 members and volunteers who operate on the ground through over 1,000 groups located in local communities across the country.



Available online:  
[record.vinnies.org.au](http://record.vinnies.org.au)

## POETRY

### To the Call Centre

When you call I'll be in Bethany  
I'll go trotting down the track  
To Jerusalem from Bethany  
With Jesus on my back

Like a little donkey  
With even tread and sure  
I'll take His love so lovingly  
To His beloved poor

I'll take His love so lovingly  
To the houses of the poor  
When I knock it's Him they'll see  
In their open door

And I will be so gracious  
For I must gracious be  
He will cure my blindness  
Lord, that I might see

That I might see your kindly  
smile  
In those I go to meet  
When I see your eyes in theirs  
I'll kneel and wash their  
feet. **R**

**Pat Cunneen**  
Whitfords Conference  
Western Australia



**On the cover...** [Pets in the Park](#) is a national charity focusing on the health and welfare of companion animals and owners experiencing homelessness. Their dedicated volunteers include Launceston vet Dr Kim Barrett (pictured left) and Bernadette Ulbrich-Hooper, a qualified vet nurse and the Fundraising & Marketing Advisor with St Vincent de Paul Society Tasmania.

They are shown giving a health check to Bernadette's five-year-old rescue dog Penny Royal, adopted from Brightside Farm Sanctuary, who suffers from epilepsy.

Key to the group's success is partnering with human service providers such as Vinnies to improve the lives of homeless people and their pets.

See story on page 32.

# Hope on the horizon for Australians in need

BY CLAIRE VICTORY

The federal election is now behind us and the winners, whether parties or individuals, are to be congratulated.

The election campaign was a drawn-out process featuring diverse messages and outcomes. On the one hand, the 'teal' independents, mostly women, conducted themselves with dignity and reaped the rewards. Not so those who relied on fear and hatred in the hope that discrimination might attract votes – the reverse was true, and such tactics should never be repeated.

For millions of Australians the big-ticket election promises meant very little.

The idea of an upgraded footy oval or an expanded car park was far less important than putting food on the table for themselves and their families. More pressing is the need to send their kids to school in proper uniforms with a full lunchbox, to cover the week's rent and the power bills that always rise over winter. The surge in Australia's annual inflation rate to 5.1 per cent brought more bad news for people already struggling with the cost of living.

These Australians live in all our cities and regional towns, often in sub-standard yet costly housing. They struggle to survive week to week on low wages or inadequate government assistance.

Every day of each year St Vincent de Paul Society members around the country meet with these people, so often hidden in plain sight, to hear their stories and discuss how we might help them through the coming week. It is humbling to see how these Australians manage to survive on such low incomes and without savings to fall back on.



*Claire Victory*

## **'We sincerely hope the incoming government delivers on its promise of 'A Better Future' for Australians'**

While every circumstance is different, each visit shows the challenges so many people face.

Even those with secure homes face the rising cost of food bills, electricity and gas, medical expenses, transport – petrol is expensive, and public transport isn't always available, reliable or even particularly cheap – as well as clothing and other essentials.

For these Australians, election promises such as government support to fund a house purchase were meaningless. Using superannuation for a deposit is impossible if you have little if any super to draw on.

So they battle on, making the most of what they have, and

turning to charities such as Vinnies to help them get by. Governments should not rely on the charity sector to provide the bare necessities that everyone in our community is entitled to expect.

Stories like this are happening right around Australia. Many of those affected never expected to be in such dire circumstances. Some have lost their job or suffered an accident or unexpected illness, while others have experienced a relationship breakdown, taken on carer responsibilities, or have had to deal with family and domestic violence.

Those awaiting their refugee status determination have limited access to income support, health services and housing and are waiting years for resolution. They are often active members of our communities, holding down jobs and paying taxes, but forced to live for years with uncertainty.

In the past year, the Society has spent millions of dollars on assistance to struggling families and individuals, as well as accommodation for people facing homelessness, food vans and other services.

This support work is made possible through the efforts of the many volunteer members who help our companions and serve in Vinnies shops. Yet much more needs to be done by government to make Australia a fairer country.

We sincerely hope the incoming government delivers on its promise of 'A Better Future' for Australians.

Our blueprint for progress was described in the pre-election policies grouped under 'A Fairer

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Australia'. They were developed in accordance with the needs raised regularly with members and draw on Catholic Social Teachings which place the dignity of people at the centre of public policy.

Australia's capacity to cover the costs of delivering these practical actions was shown in the research paper *A Fairer Tax and Welfare System for Australia*, developed for us by the Australian National University. Implementing several affordable changes could lift up to one million people out of poverty.

The report's title highlights one of this election campaign's unmentionables – taxation. Neither of the two major parties would go near it. Despite numerous reviews and inquiries, scant attention has been paid to creating a progressive taxation system that would enable greater social justice across the board.

The newly-elected Australian

Government's policy mandate commits to addressing almost 60 per cent of the Society's policy asks in our Federal Election Statement. Of the 28 policy asks, 10 will be fully addressed and six partially addressed. Four of the five key policy areas include some form of commitment to change.

This is heartening, although gaps remain in three key policy areas: Income Support, Secure Work, and Housing and Homelessness.

During the new Government's first 100 days the National Council Secretariate will issue correspondence to key Ministers and departing Ministers and, where possible, schedule meetings. The National Council Social Justice Advisory Committee and Vincentian Refugee Network will also meet to review their 2022 workplans.

Finally, on behalf of National Council, I would like to extend

our gratitude to members (including families and friends) around Australia who supported the Society's advocacy campaign during the federal election.

Bringing our policies to the attention of sitting MPs and candidates, often through face-to-face meetings, has further enhanced our reputation for supporting social justice and offering a hand-up in life to those in need. It was a grand effort all round, and I thank everyone for their support.

We can be proud that St Vincent de Paul Society is one of Australia's most trusted and respected charities as we continue to walk in the footsteps of our blessed founders and undertake many good works, large and small. **R**

Claire Victory is the National President of the St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia. She is a Member of the Plenary Council.

# Australia's new government congratulated

*'I want to find that common ground where together we can plant our dreams. To unite around our shared love of this country, our shared faith in Australia's future, our shared values of fairness and opportunity, and hard work and kindness to those in need.'*

- Anthony Albanese,  
election night, 21 May 2022

The St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia has congratulated the Australian Labor Party on being elected as the next government for Australia and looks forward to working with the Albanese Government to support people in need and to address the challenges we face as a country.

National President Claire Victory said the Society welcomed the commitment by Anthony Albanese that his government would 'leave no one behind as it brings Australians together around our shared values of fairness and opportunity.'

Ms Victory added that it would be critical under Anthony Albanese's leadership for the new government to unite all Australians and support structural reform to end disadvantage in Australia to avoid a continual ballooning of poverty and social crisis.

'More than three million people, including one-in-six children, live in poverty in Australia and find it increasingly tough to make ends meet. We know a growing number face difficulties to find secure, affordable housing as the cost-of-living skyrockets,' Ms Victory said.

'We welcome the commitment to adopt the 2017 Uluru Statement from the Heart by supporting Constitutional Recognition of First Nations people and implementing a voice to Parliament. At the same time our members express



PHOTO: IAN CHEN ON UNSPLASH

increasing concern for the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people because they continue to face poorer outcomes than non-Indigenous Australians.

'We will work alongside the Albanese Government to ensure Australians in need are placed at the heart of their public policy agenda for the coming term and will be protected during the process of budget repair,' Ms Victory added.

The St Vincent de Paul Society especially welcomed Labor's election commitment to develop a National Housing and Homelessness Plan and establish a National Housing Supply and Affordability Council.

'We recognise that only a concerted national reform program led by the

Albanese Government that brings all stakeholders—government, business, the charitable sector and the community—together will be able to tackle structural issues in a manner that ends disadvantage in Australia.'

Before the federal election, the Society outlined core priorities across a range of policy areas that would lift Australians out of poverty and create A Fairer Australia.

'A Fairer Australia sets out compassionate, affordable policies to lift millions of Australians out of poverty. The cost of implementing these policies involves modest reforms to superannuation and taxation, asking only the most well-off and able to afford it, to pay a little more.'

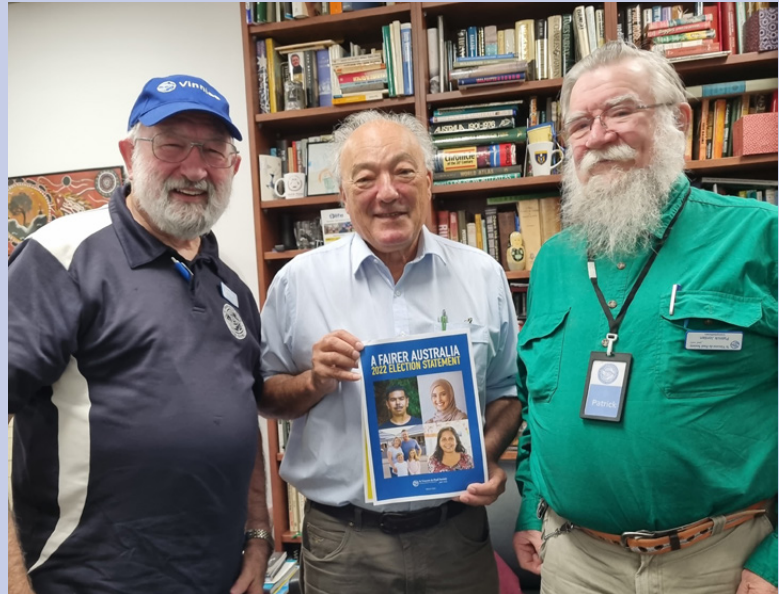
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## The campaign for *A Fairer Australia*

St Vincent de Paul Society members around the country joined our [campaign](#) to promote policies in key areas of social justice. Many wrote to their sitting MPs and candidates, attended candidate forums and met one-on-one to discuss our suite of policies and the work of the Society.

Copies of the *A Fairer Australia* kit was given to candidates, a number of whom agreed to meet again after the election if they were successful. **R**



Members meeting with the Member for Macarthur, Dr Mike Freelander were Social Justice Rep for Wollongong, Tom Gersbach, and Patrick Jordan.



Des Stapleton and Wayne Broadbridge, members of the Stirling SA Conference, with Independent MP Rebekha Sharkie, the Federal Member for Mayo. 'Many thanks for meeting with Rebekha and me to discuss the St Vincent de Paul Society call for *A Fairer Australia*,' said Sue Rudall, Legislation and Policy Advisor.

'It was a pleasure to meet you both and to see the alignment between the Society's and Rebekha's priorities on issues including affordable housing, refugees, an Indigenous Voice in the Constitution, and the need and means to better address poverty and inequity.'



Members meeting with the Member for Whitlam, Stephen Jones were Social Justice Rep for Bowral, Ed Gilchrist, Peter Doris and Kerrie Butson.

# A life on the move...

NSW State Council President, **Paul Burton**, has been a member of the St Vincent de Paul Society for nearly 40 years.

**P**aul Burton was raised in a small farming community in New England in northern NSW but his transport and logistics career kept him mobile, working out of Sydney, Canberra, Adelaide, and Tamworth, before retirement in Manilla.

Crediting his grandfather's legacy as a Vincentian for inspiration to join the Society, he did so in the 1980s while living in southwestern Sydney.

'In our parish, at the time, we found that there were people coming from the northern side of Sydney and doing what they could to help out people in that neighbouring suburb,' Mr Burton said.

'And then I got to understand that we were surrounded by a lot of public housing estates,' he said.

Collaborating with another Vincentian, Eddie Solarz, the two men established the momentum for the founding of the conference of St Thomas More at Ruse in Campbelltown.

'It was a real eye-opener for us and there was real passion in that newly-formed conference to get out and try and make a difference,' he said.

Mr Burton said he has stayed with the Society because of the people, the mission, the spirituality, and the Society's heritage.

'When you're with a group of Vincentians you're always in good company.

'The main thing that spurs my spirituality with the Society is learning about those that have gone before us.



National President Claire Victory (centre) with (l-r) Queensland State President Patricia McMahon, National Vice President Warwick Fulton, Victoria State Council President Michael Quinn and NSW State Council President Paul Burton.

'Reading Frederic Ozanam's letters, he was a great letter-writer and a great communicator.

'And what he did in those few short years of his life was immense and the worldwide organisation that he has created is something that is really exceptional and from such humble beginnings.

'I think that's particularly inspired me,' he said.

A more recent source of inspiration is the Society's response to the floods in the Northern Rivers.

'Our members and the people that have been involved in coordinating the response to that have been absolutely exceptional and inspirational,' he said.

'And the membership really has to know what they're part of and this is a tremendous example.

'Part of my agenda going forward as the State Council President is to make sure that that knowledge and access to that knowledge and appreciation of all of that is out there for membership,' he said.

Mr Burton said he nominated

as a presidential candidate on the advice of a colleague who told him: 'You are a grassroots Vincentian with a business background and this is what we need.'

'And I took that to heart a bit and I looked at all the grassroots involvement of my whole history up to now,' Mr Burton said.

'And it's been pretty much that way with my involvement with the Society, even as Central Council President, I still get involved right at grassroots levels,' he said.

Asked what his message to members in NSW is, his answer is simple: 'I'm available'.

'If anybody feels that they need to talk to me about any particular issue – and I don't care what time of the week it is, what time of the day it is – I will make sure that I give them the time.

'If it means that we're going to enhance the mission of the Society in any way, they have my attention straight away,' he said. **R**

Lachlan Jones, Media Manager, SVDP NSW

# Man of many hats to head SVDP Victoria

**Michael Quinn** is the new State Council President of St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria.

**M**ichael Quinn's involvement with the Society began in 1992 when he joined the Langwarrin Conference in Melbourne's south-east. Most recently, Mr Quinn has been Victoria's Deputy State President.

As Mr Quinn said: 'Having been in the role of Deputy State President on State Council for the previous four years, I knew that taking on the role of State President would be a big challenge. Ours is a complex organisation that works together to achieve our mission with 13,000 members, volunteers and employees, combined with our 168-year legacy of offering a 'hand up to people in need'.'

Mr Quinn has worn many hats in the Society. In addition to his local volunteer work, he chairs the Retail Advisory Committee, is a member of the SVDP Victoria Board, VincentCare Victoria, VincentCare Community Housing and was previously the Bendigo Regional President.

He is an active member of his community and believes in engaging young people and harnessing the youthful spirit of the Society's Mini Vinnies and College Conferences. He passionately believes that young people are the future of the Society in Australia.

'We are an organisation that values our people, culture and mission and proudly upholds our faith-based, lay Catholic status. This is why we start and end our meetings with prayer, while always being forward-thinking, open to challenging ourselves and bravely looking to the future. That is why I'm very proud to lead a membership-based, membership-



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**'Do not be afraid of new beginnings. Be creative. Be inventive' - Blessed Frederic Ozanam**

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led, staff-supported organisation,' he added.

One instructive quote of Blessed Frederic Ozanam that clearly resonates with Mr Quinn is: 'Do not be afraid of new beginnings. Be creative. Be inventive.'

'Our aim as a State Council is to continue to attract and retain increased numbers and greater diversity of members and volunteers and improve our engagement. We understand that young people are the future of the Society in Australia, and we believe in engaging young people and harnessing the youthful spirit of the Society's Mini Vinnies and College Conferences.'

Michael is quick to thank and acknowledge former State President Kevin McMahon and his contribution in leading the Society in Victoria through the last four years.

'These have been very difficult years for Victorians, with droughts, bushfires and the pandemic needing to be addressed – and Kevin has done this admirably. I have been pleased to be his deputy

and to be involved in the journey closely over these years. I wish Kevin and Sue all the very best in their future and look forward to their continued involvement within the Society.'

When asked what will drive him in the role over the next four years, Mr Quinn is quick to iterate the words of another former President, Michael Liddy: 'It's not about us; it's about those we serve.'

'It is an honour to be elected to the role of State President for the next four years to focus on those people in our communities who need the support that, together, we help deliver,' Mr Quinn said.

'I am looking forward to working with everyone – members, volunteers and employees – as we can only be the St Vincent de Paul Society in Victoria when we walk the long journey together of addressing the needs of people facing poverty.

'Together, we will continue to evolve during these coming years, particularly striving to find new and better ways of responding to those people in need.' **R**



# ‘The Vincentian mission is in my blood ...’

Queensland’s incoming State Council President **Patricia McMahon** is a self-proclaimed ‘country girl’ of many talents and a passion for helping those whom the Society assists.

It is exhausting just to read Patricia (Trish) McMahon’s list of achievements and commitments, let alone to consider how one might fit them into a day, or even a lifetime. Recently she added State Council President of St Vincent de Paul Society Queensland to her portfolio.

By way of background, Trish is a ‘country girl’ who grew up in Warwick and went on to become a mother of three and a grandmother of six. But there’s much more, for she has a long career in business administration as a financial advisor, holding an Advanced Diploma in Financial Services, is a Civil Celebrant, and has played a leading role in Toastmasters.

To relax, as surely she must need to, she travels and camps. Underpinning all is her spiritual commitment and her passion for helping others.

‘My father was a Vincentian in both Warwick and Toowoomba - a leader who inspired me,’ Trish tells us.

‘I started with St Stephen’s Conference – there were three Members at the time. I have served as Conference President, Regional Council, BDCC Secretary and Treasurer and currently Diocesan Council President and on State Council.

‘The Vincentian mission is in my blood. I love and am committed to the St Vincent de Paul Society and the work carried out for those less fortunate in our community. I want to ensure that this work continues.’

Outlining her vision for the Society



she stresses the importance of being ‘true to our Mission, faith tradition and identity as a lay, Catholic fraternity...’

‘I would like to develop and grow the quality of collaboration between members, volunteers and staff, ensuring we are all on the same page and support each other to bring about the very best outcomes for our Society and those we assist.

‘It is my belief that we need to nurture the spiritual welfare of our members, volunteers and staff by sharing their skills and talents to enhance the richness of our Society. We are truly blessed with an enormous number of committed individuals to our Society and what we stand for.

‘A Society whose objectives are to live the Gospel and draw inspiration from our Founder, Blessed Frederic Ozanam,’ Trish said.

The importance of encouraging youth involvement is uppermost

in Trish’s thoughts: ‘I believe our future membership is in great hands with our Youth Teams. The Ozanam Leadership Program is but one testament to that! 26 Graduates this year all joining us to pack Christmas Hampers in December.’

Addressing homelessness and providing safety for those vulnerable to domestic and family violence are among the main priorities for her term as State Council President.

‘I am open to God’s guidance in all I do and therefore I would want to be sure that I have the humility to ensure I am carrying out God’s will and carrying on Blessed Frederic Ozanam’s vision and Mission for our Society,’ Trish said, adding, ‘Many years ago I uncovered that “People are my Passion” and I endeavour to ensure that I live my life to bring about the best outcomes for those I encounter.’

There is no doubt Patricia McMahon has the commitment and ability to serve that cause. **R**

# Render unto Caesar

BY SR THERESE  
HAYWOOD DC

We are all very familiar with the words of scripture – ‘Very well, pay Caesar what belongs to Caesar and God what belongs to God.’ (Matt 22:21). But what does this mean for us today? How can we reflect upon the balance between our faith and our practical obligations in the world?

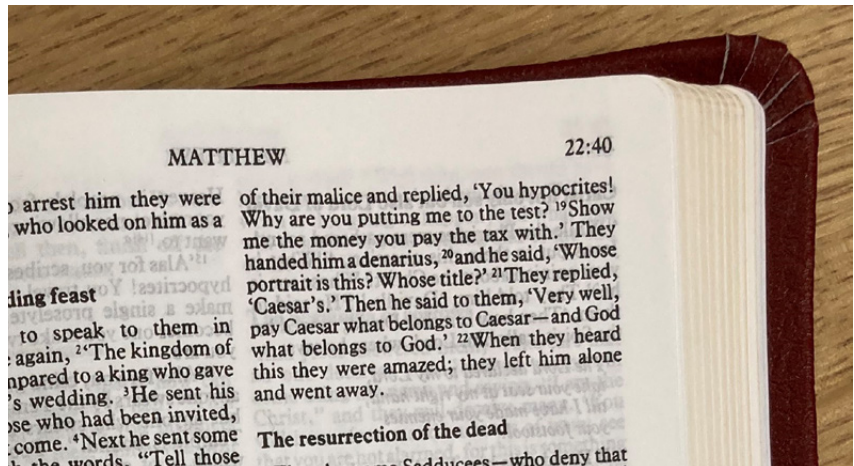
Saint Vincent’s advice to the Daughters of Charity comes to mind:

*To leave God for God is not leaving God at all, that is, to leave one work of God to do another, either of greater obligation or of greater merit. You leave prayer or spiritual reading or you break the Rule of silence in order to help a poor person. Keep in mind, Sisters, that doing all this is to serve Him. CCD IX p252*

Saint Vincent was encouraging the early Daughters to see that their obligations to spiritual practices were of equal importance as serving people in need. If I think about these words, I can also apply them to the Society today. We are called upon to exercise our ministry of love in our service of people in need but also to engage with civil society to advocate for them.

Saint Vincent was someone who was very good at balancing the spiritual and the temporal. He recognised that these obligations are both very important.

*Far from being a bad thing to seek advice, you must, on the contrary, do so when the matter is of any importance, or when we cannot come to a clear decision on our own. For temporal affairs, we consult a lawyer or some lay persons who are knowledgeable about them; for internal affairs,*



*we discuss matters with the consultors and other members of the Company when we think it appropriate. I often consult even the Brothers and ask their advice on questions involving their duties. When this is done with the necessary prudence, the authority of God, which resides in the person of Superiors and those who represent them, is in no way disadvantaged. On the contrary, the good order which ensues makes it more worthy of love and respect. CCD IV, 41*

He reminds us that we need to engage with the world because we don't have all the answers. He saw the value of secular wisdom alongside the wisdom of the Church.

Frederic Ozanam also balanced the responsibilities of faith with those engagements with civil society. He reminds us that it is our call to walk a central path between the sacred and the secular, in the following words:

*For, if the question which disturbs the world around us today is neither a question of political modalities, but a social question; if it is the struggle between those who have nothing and those who have too much; if it is the violent clash of opulence and poverty which shakes the earth*

*under it, our duty to ourselves as Christians is to throw ourselves between these two irreconcilable enemies, and to make the ones divest themselves so as to fulfill a law, and the others accept as a benefit; to make the ones cease to demand, and the others to refuse; to make equality as operative as is possible among men; to make voluntary community replace imposition and brute force; to make charity accomplish what justice alone cannot do. It is then good to be placed by Providence on neutral ground between the two belligerents, to have paths and minds open to both, without being forced in order to mediate to ascend too high or to descend too low. (A life in Letters, 91-92)*

Frederic saw the place of the Society was in between people in need and the structures of the world. This fits with our approach to social justice in which we use what we learn from our companions to help us to advocate for them with people in power and with politicians. Let us also remember that we do this in union with God, as St Vincent says, 'Only the Spirit of God, dwelling in your sacred person, could unite justice with charity.' (CCD IV:178). **R**

Sr Therese Haywood DC is the National Council's Spiritual Adviser

# Membership and Conferences



*Gail Gaudron, Lismore Central Conference President, and Beth Carlton are pictured at St Louise's Conference Woolgoolga, north coast NSW, meeting with one of the local people we help.*

*The Society has 1055 active conferences Australia-wide and 13,246 members. As it has since the time of Frederic Ozanam and his confrères in Paris, Conference work lies at the heart of Vincentian commitment. Members meet as brothers and sisters with Christ in the midst of them, in conferences that are genuine communities of faith and love, of prayer and action. Spiritual bonds and friendships between members are essential, as is the common mission to help the poor and marginalised. The entire Society is a true and unique worldwide community of Vincentian friends (The Rule, Part 1: 3.3).*

## Membership

There are three categories of membership of the Society. **Conference members** are those who belong to the grassroots groups within the Society known as conferences. They live their Catholic faith in action through the spirit of Christian charity. **Associate members** are those who are committed to the ethos, mission, aims and objects of the Society and who assist the work of the Society, but do not attend conference meetings. **Volunteer members** are those who respect the ethos, mission, aims and objects of the Society and who volunteer in any of the Society's works. Associate and Volunteer members are registered by procedures established by the relevant State or Territory Council. Please visit the [Become a Member](#) section of this website for more information.

## Conferences

A conference can be established within any community such as a parish, town, suburb, school, university, workplace, ethnic or social group providing they are endorsed by an appropriate Council within the Society. Conference members meet regularly, usually weekly but at least fortnightly and no work of charity is foreign to them. Together they visit people in their homes, in hospitals, institutions or wherever else they may be found needing aid or comfort. Conference work is not limited to home visitation; members also meet and pray together at other times. To read more about the role of prayer in conferences please visit [Spirituality of the Society](#). **R**

### Meet the National Council Board

NATIONAL PRESIDENT

**Claire Victory**

NATIONAL DEPUTY PRESIDENT

**Warwick Fulton**

SPIRITUAL ADVISER

**Sr Therese Haywood DC**

VICE PRESIDENT

**Maurie Ryan**

VICE PRESIDENT

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**Ryan Erlandsen**

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**John Feint**

NSW STATE PRESIDENT

**Paul Burton**

NT PRESIDENT

**Jocelyn Cull**

QLD STATE PRESIDENT

**Patricia McMahon**

SA STATE PRESIDENT

**Brad Hocking**

TAS STATE PRESIDENT

**Mark Gaetani**

VIC STATE PRESIDENT

**Michael Quinn**

WA STATE REPRESENTATIVE

**David Kennedy**

Read more [here](#). **R**

# Much loved Vincentian led by example

Vale Ray Reynolds

12 January 1939 – 5 March 2022

On 2 March 2013, the Canterbury-Bankstown Express ran a story about the recent commissioning of Ray Reynolds as the State President of the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW at St Luke's Catholic Church in the Sydney suburb of Revesby.

Nine years later, at the same church, a Funeral Mass would be held to farewell Mr Reynolds and celebrate his long and dedicated service to the Society, which he had joined as a member even before leaving Dubbo for the wider world at the age of eighteen.

The 2013 article outlined Mr Reynolds' then 58 years of service and membership of the Revesby Conference. It noted his previous career with Telstra and the ABC, and as the director of broadcast telecommunications for the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games Organising Committee. He continued to be the chairman of the St Vincent de Paul Housing Company.

Feeling 'honoured' by his appointment, Mr Reynolds said, 'I have been blessed to be a member of this incredible Society for so long. I can say that I have never seen such a united and coordinated response to addressing poverty. It is very rewarding to be a part of.'

Prior to his appointment, Mr Reynolds had been chair of the Society's aged care division and played a leading role in the sale of those operations when it decided to exit that field of work.

The heading in the Express was an apt summary of his years of selfless commitment: 'Ray Reynolds leads by example...'



At the Funeral Mass for Mr Reynolds on 18 March 2022, Denis Walsh, who was elected to the State Presidency in 2015 when Mr Reynolds' term of office was completed, offered condolences on behalf of the Society to Maria Reynolds and the immediate and extended Reynolds family.

In his eulogy, one of three delivered at the Mass, Mr Walsh noted that the late Vincentian had been a member of the Society for nearly seventy years and had continued his involvement with the Revesby conference.

'The vocation of Society members is to follow Christ through service to those in need and so to bear witness to his compassionate and liberating love. Members show their commitment through person-to-person contact. We serve in hope,' Mr Walsh said.

'Ray most certainly strove to live up to that vocation in his everyday life, both inside and outside of the Society.'

For many years, even during his term as NSW State President, Ray Reynolds managed the NSW Police community computer centre in Parramatta on a voluntary basis. His duties included directing officers to locations of concern after residents reported neighbours not having been recently sighted. The large number of mourners at the service included a dozen or so uniformed officers who had taken time off duty to provide a police escort and guard of honour for the deceased.

Ray Reynolds also found the time – and energy – to serve as a community bus driver.

**‘I have been blessed to be a member of this incredible Society for so long. I can say that I have never seen such a united and coordinated response to addressing poverty. It is very rewarding to be a part of.’**

At the time he became State President the Commonwealth Government had just announced the creation of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission, which was to introduce changes in the way charities in Australia would work and be regulated.

‘Ray, with his business background, was able to lead the Society through a number of positive and very important governance, care and assistance and financial matters so as to ensure the financial sustainability of the organisation, including its shops, its special works

and services,’ Denis Walsh told the congregation.

‘At the end of his four-year term as State President he described how he was most proud of knowing that for each and every day of his term, the Society made a profound difference in the lives of men, women and children across towns and cities in NSW.

Mr Reynold’s extraordinary dedication to the Society continued to the very end of his life. From his hospital bed, at 6.54 am on the day before he

died, he emailed from his phone to the SVDP company secretary advising that he had ‘no problem’ with a certain alteration, signing off with ‘Kind regards Ray Reynolds’.

As Denis Walsh told the gathering, ‘He joined the Society in service of the poor as a young man and remained a loyal member to the very end’.

As the newspaper had put it, ‘Ray Reynolds led by example’, and long may he rest in peace. **R**

Robin Osborne

## Vince Brannigan receives OAM for community service

Vince Brannigan, who served for four years as president of St Vincent de Paul Society’s Benalla Conference (Vic.) was honoured with the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the 2022 Australia Day Honours.

Accompanied by his daughter Bridget, pictured, he received the award from the Governor of Victoria, the Hon Linda Dessau AC, on 27 April 2022. Mr Brannigan was honoured for his service to the community of Benalla where he has volunteered for many years with various organisations, including the St Vincent de Paul Society, and the Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club.

He is a long-serving teacher at secondary colleges and technical schools, and received the ‘Teacher Who Matters’ award from the Victorian Institute of Teaching in 2011. **R**



# Night Patrol volunteers recognised for their service



Night Patrol volunteer managers Mansour Buges and Sean Curtis received the 2021 Volunteer Manager of the Year award.

Two men who helped St Vincent de Paul keep the Canberra/Goulburn Night Patrol on the road through a year of lockdowns and disruptions have been named winners of the Volunteering ACT 2021 Volunteer Manager of the Year Award.

Mansour Buges and Sean Curtis worked seven nights a week for several months, delivering food and clothes to people who needed them and providing as much support as they could, despite the pandemic.

Mansour, 31, who has been working as a Night Patrol program manager for almost a year, said he originally became involved because he wanted to help his community. Sean, 22, became a manager for SVDP in July 2021 and decided to become involved with the Night

Patrol because it provided support and ongoing assistance for people in need.

‘The Night Patrol is very much centred on connectivity,’ Sean said.

‘Going out there and checking in on people in a sort of laidback atmosphere, where you provide them with light refreshments and you’re able to chat to them and offer support and give that genuine connection that everybody needs.’

During lockdown, the Night Patrol was one of the few services that remained open, making extra hours for the pair.

‘By September, we experienced a high demand for our services,’ Sean said. ‘People coming to the vans didn’t have other services to fall back on, so we were just trying to

do what we could to keep as much going to those people as possible.’

Mansour said they never missed a single day of operating.

‘People were isolated already during this time, so it was extremely important for us to keep the service going and help however we could,’ Mansour added.

‘Being one of the only services open during this time, we never felt alone as an organisation as we had the community behind us.’

Sean said that as they couldn’t have volunteers on-call, he and Mansour had to cover these duties on top of their jobs, going out every night to keep at least one van running and ensure people who needed it had access to food and warm clothing during those COVID months.



*Night Patrol volunteer Peter Sutton recently retired after being one of the team's original volunteers, 21 years ago.*

'In winter it's very cold in Canberra, so we had to make sure that the people in need had access to warm coats, sleeping bags, gloves, socks, scarves and beanies to keep them warm.'

In normal times, Mansour and Sean said their responsibilities involved overseeing more than 400 volunteers, making sure they restocked materials for the vans going out every night and ensuring things ran smoothly and the volunteers were well supported.

They also look over the logistics of the program, manage Vinnies sponsorship deals, as well as managing material donations such as jumpers, jackets and other clothes to make sure they're in a useable condition for the people they provide for.

The Night Patrol managers are thankful for the support of the community and the organisations that helped them continue running last year, such as OzHarvest, which provided snacks and drinks and Origin Bakery, which supplied them with bread.

'It was a really good experience to go out during the lockdown every night...'

'It enriched life just to be able to talk to people every single night and really develop some personal connections with our companions.'

'We have a lot of people to thank for their support because it was a team effort and it's just really great to be recognised,' Sean said

Vinnies Special Works community program manager Mandy Larsson

said Mansour and Sean were real leaders in the community and were always the first ones to put their hands up to help when other programs needed support.

'It's so great to see that it's not just a job for these two, it's beyond that and as a Society we are unbelievably proud of them both, as well as being proud of our Vinnies Phillip retail centre manager Kathy Morris, who was a finalist in this award as well,' she said.

The Night Patrol comes of age soon and a month-long celebration of its 21 years of service by hundreds of volunteers, supporters, sponsors and team members will be held throughout August 2022. **R**

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Thanks to Evelyn Karzas of Riotact for her work on this story.

# The smiles say it all... Seton Villa opens new purpose-built homes

Seton Villa has officially opened its two newest purpose-built homes for women with intellectual disabilities – part of its \$11 million investment to develop Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) to support independence, participation and choice.

Seton Villa, founded by the Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul, has long been a trailblazer in providing housing and supported independent living to people with disabilities. The first two homes were opened in early 2021 and the newest architect-designed homes – Lavender Cottage and Leia's Place – within the Ryde (NSW) local government area, are the third and fourth residences, with three more (SDA) homes to be constructed this year and next.

For Peter Gardiner, Seton Villa CEO, 'the smiles say it all'.

'The joy of our residents in their new homes really vindicates what we're aiming to achieve. The homes reinforce our commitment to providing residents with greater quality of life, independence, choice and control. Seton Villa has been providing housing and supported independent living for 56 years.

'Although cultural and societal norms have changed, the key principles of Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac (founders of the Daughters of Charity) underpin Seton Villa. This isn't just about bricks and mortar, it's also about helping enhance our residents' confidence and independence. The homes are also the springboard to further strategic growth to support others in our community.'

The homes were officially opened on April 20 by Victor Dominello, the Member for Ryde and NSW Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, and Natasha Maclaren-Jones, Minister for Families



PHOTO: KEITH SAUNDERS

Official opening of Lavender Cottage - April 2022.

and Communities, and Minister for Disability Services.

A special guest was Sr Ellen Flynn, Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul, Province of Rosalie Rendu, who is in Australia to connect with the Daughters.

'I'm humbled to be part of this momentous occasion,' Sr Ellen said. 'As a work of the Daughters of Charity, Seton Villa continues the spirit of our founders: St Vincent de Paul and St Louise de Marillac.'

'The homes are not institutional. They cater to the genuine needs and real quality care of each resident, assisting them to reach their full potential to live productive and rewarding lives and making

their own unique contribution to society. Accordingly, Seton Villa has listening, consultation, shared decision making and subsidiarity central to its servant model.

'These beautiful purpose-built homes together with the model of care are demonstrative of the Daughters' spirit and values today, which is shared by the greater community that have contributed to the vision. We are very grateful for the benefactors and donors who have assisted us.'

Designed by Kennedy Associate Architects, a leader in SDA design, the Seton Villa homes are built in line with Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) Improved





*The Hon Natasha Maclaren-Jones gets a bug from Leia's Place resident Julie*



*Leia's House opening - Sr Therese Haywood (DC), the Hon Natasha Maclaren-Jones, Sr Ellen (DC), Peter Gardiner*



*Michelle Spratt, Clr Jordan Lane, Vanessa Adams, the Hon Victor Dominello.*

PHOTO: KEITH SAUNDERS

Liveability design standards. These houses have been specifically designed with a 4-bedroom home (Lavender Cottage), and a 5-bedroom home (Leia's Place) that incorporates a semi-independent 2-bedroom apartment. Each home is beautifully fitted out to suit the specific needs of its residents, including specialist equipment such as electric hoists in the fully accessible bathrooms.

Valerie Adams, mother of Vanessa, one of the Lavender Cottage residents, said, 'It's a house you'd be pleased to call home. I'm very impressed by the thought that has gone into it, the way that it's configured so the ladies can be together or independent.' **R**



*Stephanie and Michelle*

# From Carnaby Street to Coraki... every picture tells a story

**R**ob Crosby, St Vincent de Paul Society NSW communications coordinator, came across Colin Beard in the disaster recovery centre in Lismore a few days after the regional city and much of the surrounding area was inundated by floodwaters.

Like thousands of evacuees in the Northern Rivers, Colin, who is 83, had plenty of stories to tell, not least about courage and kindness of those who had rescued him from his flooded home downriver in Coraki and taken him into their home and hearts.

'I realised the water was starting to come up and thought I better get out of here, but I couldn't find my cat Sweetie,' Colin told Rob.

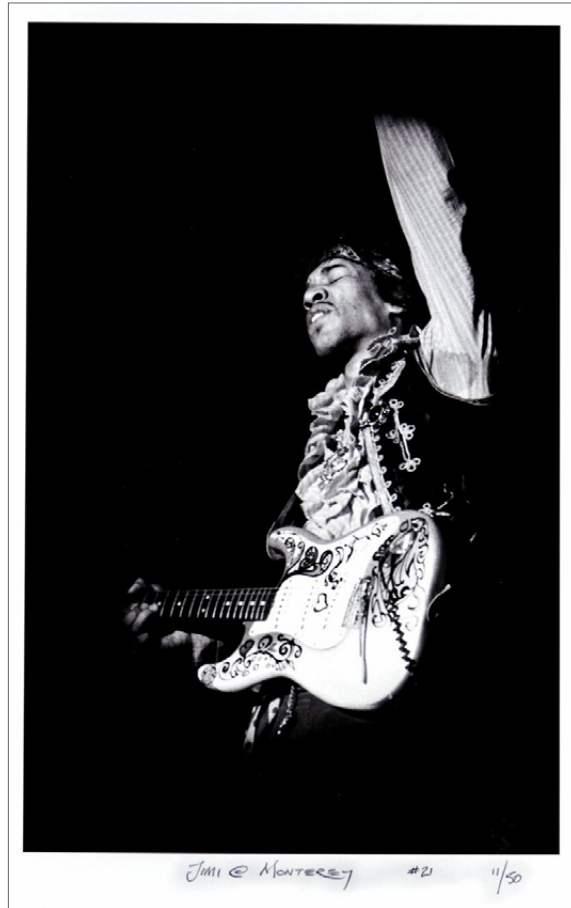
He found his cat and put her in a box but was less lucky with his car, which was destroyed – and uninsured because as a pensioner he could not afford the premium.

Trapped in his house, he rang the police and six hours later was rescued by two men in a tinnie. Later, in a safer place, a young girl named Asia introduced Colin to her family and he was 'adopted'.

'Asia came and said she'd put a chair in the shade for me. I became part of the family, they'd lost their house, which moved 10 feet. They're a beautiful family. They have relatives here [in Goonellabah, Lismore's elevated suburb] and they brought me with them. I have a little room with Sweetie, who's my only family.'

When the waters subsided Coraki residents began returning to survey what was left of their homes. This was when details of Colin's previous life started to emerge.

'The Fire Brigade came to clean up, and one bloke put down a camp chair and said you sit there, we'll handle this. When one of the younger blokes came out he had



*Rock legend the late Jimi Hendrix photographed by Colin Beard at the Monterey Pop Festival in California in 1967. Signed print number 3/25 was listed for sale on eBay this year for AUD1432.00*

one of my photos from the 60s, a shot of Jimi Hendrix,' Colin said.

'Wow, did you take this?'

'Yeah, a long time ago.'

'It's a really good photograph...'

'It's yours,' I said, 'I insist...'

Colin suggested the Firey get the photo framed and put it up in the station.

For years the English born photographer had travelled the world with his cameras, focusing on rock icons like The Beatles, Rolling Stones, Janis Joplin, The Who, Cat Stevens, The Kinks... and Jimi Hendrix. Colin's work appeared in international newspapers, magazines and Australian Geographic.

According to an ABC profile, 'Colin Beard followed the sixties rock'n'roll

revolution from behind the lens when he became the founding photographer for Australia's first iconic pop music magazine called Go-Set.'

In 1966, at the age of 26, he had given up his desk job as an engineer and launched Go-Set Magazine with two other mates. What ensued were three extraordinary years travelling the world photographing the major rock stars of the era. In the radio interview Colin recounted how it all began...

'We all got caught up in Beatles fever; and we were in this Melbourne disco and I'd just bought a camera and I was trying to take some photos of a local pop group – and they said, 'look we want to start a popular music magazine... why don't you come and join us'.

His first job was to photograph Tom Jones at the Palais Theatre in St Kilda.

'I remember walking in on Tom Jones in his hotel room in his jockettes surrounded by adoring girls; and I thought, what do they see in him, he's a bit flabby!'

Later, he would bluff his way into the Stones' hotel room in Sydney, be given bottles of Kahlua and Benedictine by Mick Jagger, and when the photos were published, be told they were the best ones of the group that the singer had seen.

He recalls photographing Jimi Hendrix at the Monterey Pop Festival in 1967.

'I turned around and there he was... the wild guitar man and now he looked so human... Booker T and the MGs were playing... he had played with them once before he left for England.'

An interesting shoot was Cat Stevens on the famously trend-setting Carnaby Street, London in 1967.

'A wailing chant, like the undulating cries of the wartime air-raid sirens wafted across the street from a boutique... Let me take you dwwwwn – 'cause we're going toooo – Strawberry Fields – nothing is real – there's nothing to get hung about – Strawberry Fields forever.'

'I lined up Cat Stevens against a Carnaby Street sign and took his picture. This darkly mysterious man, this English Mullah in his Flamenco dancer's suit cocked his hat back cheekily from his forehead and he smiled and he became a 'pop' star again.'

In more recent times, Colin shared his experience and skills with university students before settling down for what he hoped would be the quiet life in Coraki, a lovely spot that also happens to be at the confluence of the historically

flood-prone Richmond and Wilsons Rivers.

Fortunately, most of his negatives were saved, stored with other photographic memorabilia in a friend's studio and a garage on higher ground.

Staying with his adoptive family whilst planning his next steps, Colin received assistance from Vinnies Flood Appeal whose prompt response to the disaster, helped by local members and volunteers, impressed him greatly.

'I'm amazed at the generosity, money's been put in my account, which is going to help me pay new bonds, it's incredible,' he said.

Considerable uncertainty surrounds the future of many Northern Rivers residents, especially those living and running businesses on the Lismore floodplain. Many were uninsured, others fear more floods, whether next month or next year... September is the only month that Lismore has not experienced a major flood, although none has been as catastrophic as the February-March event.

Some have vowed to stay and rebuild, others see no choice but to leave. Colin Beard is among their number and was preparing to move to Sydney where a friend had been looking for an affordable rental.

'I wish I was younger, but at my age, and without a car, I need to settle down somewhere.'

With Sweetie the cat, of course, and his boxes of incredible photographic memorabilia.

Pleased to have given Jimi Hendrix to the fire brigade, he only wished he could leave something for the children at his adoptive family... 'They don't have any toys you know... they lost everything... I'll see what I can do.' **R**



*Top: Lismore's St Carthage's Cathedral had a metre of water through it after the February-March 2022 flood event. Photo: Janet Grist*

*Above: Photographer Colin Beard photographed by Rob Crosby.*

# The night is far spent, the day is at hand (Romans 13:12)

BY TOBY O'CONNOR

As we go to print, the Albanese Government is being sworn into office by the Governor-General. The Australian people have spoken and we have a change of government just like that. Democratic. Calm. Transparent. Compared to many other bodies politick around the world, we are indeed a lucky country.

Australia truly is a wonderful country of opportunity when a boy living in public housing with his mum can realise his dream of a fairer Australia and become our 31st Prime Minister.

National Council on behalf of the Society in Australia looks forward to working with the Albanese Government to address a number of public policy challenges that, if delivered, will bring about a fairer Australia for some of our disadvantaged citizens.

There are exciting times ahead. We will continue to advocate and to work with government to address areas of long-term disadvantage. We remain committed to reflecting the views of Society members about the real hardships, adversity and poverty people receiving a social wage have to face every day because they are out of work or sick or have a disability.

Along with a growing number of ordinary Australians we will agitate passionately to Raise the Rate. And we want a long-term practical plan to address homelessness and affordable housing.

We will continue to work with other like-minded, church-related and civil society peak bodies to maintain a united voice to the new Ministers with responsibilities in these areas.

In this edition, Cassandra Bull covers three recent meetings of different groups within the Society

drawn from across the states and territories. Our Spirit of Youth, our Membership and our Mission and Spirituality teams are critical to the Society's mission. In addition, our Overseas Development Program area holds regular network meetings with our Australian Twinning Officers and ODP members, as well as our overseas partners.

These were lively, exciting and enthusiastic meetings. Many new ideas were raised and there was a real sense of commitment to try new approaches to connect with our members, especially our younger members, and to respond to some of the findings of the membership survey undertaken over the past six months.

On behalf of National Council, and also on behalf of the state and territory councils, I encourage the participants of these three groupings to continue to forge strong networks between each other for the purposes of personal support, sharing new ideas and addressing any unnecessary duplication of efforts that occurs across geographical boundaries.

While recognising the challenges of acting as One Society, the benefits of working together outweigh perceptions of disadvantages. There are other positive collaborative initiatives quietly being worked on across the Society.

There has been an increase in family and domestic violence incidents during the COVID-19 lockdowns and recent initiatives. Our CEOs asked for advice on how the Society and our members might respond to local notifications of family and domestic violence. A small working group drawn from across the country has been working on providing advice to the CEOs and then to National Council on these matters.

Last week the Society's National

Redress Scheme company convened a workshop involving representatives from each jurisdiction to discuss best practice and to explore developing a victim-centred response for persons who have been subject to sexual abuse in a Society institution.

This approach to providing a single point for claimants reflects the Society's desire to make a victim's pathway to seeking redress as straightforward as possible. The support of all Councils for bringing a pastoral and compassionate response to those who approach the Society seeking redress is at the forefront of this collaborative initiative.

National Council's most recent collaboration has involved forming a Brand Stewardship, Marketing and Fundraising Standing Committee. This committee provides advice to National Council on matters that relate to the Society's brand in Australia and will work closely with state and territory councils and our marketing teams.

The Society brand is everything that identifies the Society in the public domain. One of the pieces of work this committee is focusing on is the Society's website redesign program which will see the launch of a new-look website towards the end of 2022.

These examples of collaborative and collegial initiatives continue to reflect the Vincentian approach to giving a hand up through coming together to express our mission. Nowhere was this better demonstrated than through the National Council's A Fairer Election campaign which saw our members push candidates on what they will do to address poverty in our country.

Together we can advocate as the voice of our companions. **R**

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Toby oConnor is CEO St Vincent de Paul Society National Council.

# National Network Meetings

BY CASSANDRA BULL

During May 2022, three National Networks gathered to discuss their current realities and to move forward strategically together.

## Spirit of Youth Network

On May 7, the Society's Spirit of Youth (SoY) Committee met in Brisbane, joined by National President Claire Victory and National Council CEO Toby oConnor as well as some of the State and Territory Youth Representatives from around the country.

Over the course of the meeting, the SoY recommitted to their strategic action items, received updates from each of the Youth focus areas, and the works of the States and Territories as well as embarking on some fruitful conversations around Leadership, Schools engagement strategies, National Immersion, World Youth Day, Review of The Rule Part III, and the direction in which SoY would like to be heading.

Time was also spent learning about what is happening within the Oceania region. A youth representative has been appointed to the newly formed Brand Stewardship Committee and the SoY are soon to circulate an expression of interest through the States and Territories to assist filling some of the current vacant committee seats.

Recommendations were made via SoY for changes to the Society Prayer card to ensure more inclusivity, asking for consideration that all present at conference meetings, regardless of faith, can participate in the prayer. A request was also made to consider placing wording for Acknowledgment of Country on the Society prayer cards.



At the Spirit of Youth Network meeting were CEO Toby oConnor, National President Claire Victory, Stephanie Veitech (Queensland Youth Rep), Maria Nguyen (SoY), Luke Brouwer (Oceania Youth Rep/SoY), Wina Zhu (SoY Chair), Stephanie Reed (SoY) and John Feint (State President, Canberra/Goulburn).

**‘Do not be afraid of new beginnings. Be creative. Be inventive. Organise new works of love in the service of the poor’ – Frederic Ozanam**

## National Membership Network

Whilst preparations are underway to reinstate a renewed version of the National Membership Advisory Committee there is a strong informal Membership Support Network already in place nationally, and on May 16, the National Membership Support Network met in Canberra, supported by the National Council Secretariate.

Members of National Council, Warwick Fulton and Trish McMahon, attended parts of the meeting, demonstrating National Council's support for the work of the network, which was well received.

Consisting of representatives from each State and Territory, with a mix of Members and Staff, the Network discussed the current

membership focus within the States and Territories, and held robust discussions around the restrictions of The Rule Part III and suggestions of where amendments may assist future membership recruitment and retention initiatives.

Broad conversations around the Guidelines for data collection were had, as well as consideration around making movement of members between States and Territories easier.

There is a need for further conversation around Article 6 of The Rule, Part III, specifically around our language with volunteers, associate members, members, and staff. Consideration included highlighting that in most States and Territories volunteers report through the operational structure, yet members and

*continued over page* ►

◀ *continued from previous page*

associates report via State Council, causing a difference in how volunteers, associates and members are counted – including the possibility that some members who also volunteer are counted twice in current National data.

There was a consensus that “Vincentian” should apply to all representatives of the Society doing Society work.

The Network has committed to undertaking an audit of Leadership programs currently being offered nationally and will then meet to discuss what training and leadership formation could look like through a national lens.

A national recruitment resource has also been requested and will be explored as part of the National Membership Support project.

Resource sharing will continue to happen within the Membership Support Network, with a particular upcoming focus on:

- Member/Volunteer Exit Surveys
- Documented process for how to create a new conference
- Leadership formation/training for members
- Recruitment Resources
- National Website Content
- Creating a space for non-active members to stay connected to Vincentian spirituality and community gatherings
- Membership CRMSs and consistently applied guidelines regarding membership.

Overall, there is a strong sense of combined vision and strategic focus across the network, and state/territory efforts continue to be strengthened by the sharing of ideas, resources and solutions at this national level.

## **National Spirituality and Mission Network**

For many years the National Spirituality and Mission Network has been a small cohort of dedicated Mission and Spirituality staff, accompanied by some of the Society’s Spiritual Advisor network. Excitedly, on May 17, representatives from each of the States and Territories gathered in Canberra, discussing national priorities for the advancement of the Society’s spirituality and mission focused goals.

Like the other Network gatherings, a sharing of information and current works occurred, followed by a robust discussion of the Society’s prayer card, and some suggestions for enhancement coming from the group. A small working group has been established to workshop the current prayer card, including consideration of the recommendations made by SoY.

Overall, there were some exciting conversations around the role of Spiritual Advisor, and how members can be better accompanied to step into such Spiritual Advisor roles. Resource sharing was discussed, and there was a renewed commitment from the group to share resources online.

The National Mission and Spirituality Network noted that content creation, including ensuring that resources were diverse and contemporary, was a particular struggle for each jurisdiction. There was a sense of a national team effort from each jurisdiction and a desire to ensure that there weren’t eight jurisdictions all working on the same materials and same formation works.

It was noted that the Spiritual Advisor Network would find value in meeting and providing formation and support to each other, particularly in relation to the strategic focus on improving the support of the role of Spiritual Advisors across the country.

There was also a strong recommendation that the Society in Australia needs to be on the front foot of any discussions around Catholic Identity, and who we say we are, particularly as the Religious Discrimination bill discourse gains further commentary and attention.

The Spirituality and Mission Network believe it is wise for a statement to be prepared for members, current and prospective, outlining “What being a Lay Catholic organisation” means in today’s contemporary Society.

All committees found value and reward in coming together face to face, and despite having regular zoom meetings online, have requested continued support to gather biannually in person, to not only advance work plans but to foster a likeminded Vincentian community and to support each other. The support of the National Council members and the National CEO at all three meetings was noted and deeply appreciated. **R**

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Cassandra Bull is St Vincent de Paul Society National Project Manager - Membership Support

# National Sorry Day and Reconciliation Week

# HISTORY IS CALLING

The St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia marked National Sorry Day (26 May) and Reconciliation Week (27 May to 3 June) by calling on Australians to voice their support of a National Indigenous Voice to Parliament enshrined in the Constitution and a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making and truth-telling.

‘As Australia marks its 24th National Sorry Day, it is timely to reflect on the history and continued effect of the forced removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from their land, families, communities and culture,’ National President Ms Claire Victory said.

‘It is shameful that in a country as wealthy as Australia, First Nations peoples continue to face entrenched inequality and poorer life outcomes in such key areas as health, education, economic development and justice,’ Ms Victory said.

The St Vincent de Paul Society

has a long history of partnering with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Australia to support the provision of food relief, material assistance and social services.

‘While the Society is not a First Nations organisation and cannot speak on behalf of First Nations people, we stand in respectful solidarity,’ Ms Victory said.

‘We honour First Nations cultures, lands, waters, histories and rights to live in a society free of economic, social and cultural oppression.

‘As set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, improved outcomes will only be achieved when First Nations people are able to “live in dignity, to maintain and strengthen their own institutions, cultures and traditions and to pursue their self-determined development, in keeping with their own needs and aspirations”,’ Ms Victory said.

The theme for this year’s National

Reconciliation Week, ‘Be Brave. Make Change’, is a challenge to all Australians to commit to ending injustice towards Indigenous Australians and to finishing the work of reconciliation.

‘We welcome the commitment of the incoming Albanese Government to adopt the 2017 Uluru Statement from the Heart by supporting Constitutional Recognition of First Nations peoples and implementing a Voice to Parliament,’ Ms Victory said.

‘A National Voice must be enshrined in The Australian Constitution, followed by the passage of enabling legislation for the Voice through Parliament. Only this approach will optimise empowerment, self-determination, and subsidiarity,’ Ms Victory said.

‘We also restate our call for the federal parliament to increase funding and support for Aboriginal-controlled organisations to meet the 17 targets contained in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. **R**

# ULURU STATEMENT FROM THE HEART

**We, gathered at the 2017 National Constitutional Convention, coming from all points of the southern sky, make this statement from the heart:**

Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tribes were the first sovereign Nations of the Australian continent and its adjacent islands, and possessed it under our own laws and customs.

This our ancestors did, according to the reckoning of our culture, from the Creation, according to the common law from 'time immemorial', and according to science more than 60,000 years ago.

This sovereignty is *a spiritual notion: the ancestral tie between the land, or 'mother nature', and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who were born therefrom, remain attached thereto, and must one day return thither to be united with our ancestors. This link is the basis of the ownership of the soil, or better, of sovereignty.* It has never been ceded or extinguished, and co-exists with the sovereignty of the Crown.

How could it be otherwise? That peoples possessed a land for sixty millennia and this sacred link disappears from world history in merely the last two hundred years?

With substantive constitutional change and structural reform, we believe this ancient sovereignty can shine through as a fuller expression of Australia's nationhood.

Proportionally, we are the most incarcerated people on the planet. We are not an innately criminal people. Our children are alienated from their families at unprecedented rates. This cannot be because we have

no love for them. And our youth languish in detention in obscene numbers. They should be our hope for the future.

These dimensions of our crisis tell plainly the structural nature of our problem. This is *the torment of our powerlessness.* We seek constitutional reforms to empower our people and take a rightful place in our own country.

When we have power over our destiny our children will flourish. They will walk in two worlds and their culture will be a gift to their country.

We call for the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution.

Makarrata is the culmination of our agenda: *the coming together after a struggle.* It captures our aspirations for a fair and truthful relationship with the people of Australia and a better future for our children based on justice and self-determination.

We seek a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making between governments and First Nations and truth-telling about our history.

In 1967 we were counted, in 2017 we seek to be heard. We leave base camp and start our trek across this vast country. We invite you to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future. **R**



# It's a RAP: SVDP Canberra/Goulburn launches Reconciliation Action Plan



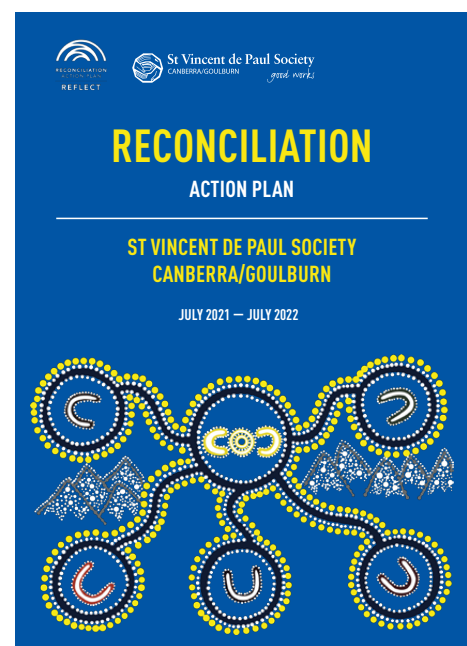
On 6 April 2022, the St Vincent de Paul Society Canberra/Goulburn launched its first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), marking the start of an important journey of understanding for the Society.

Ngunnawal Elder, Aunty Violet Sheridan, opened the event, reflecting on the history of the Ngunnawal people in the Canberra region, and her own family's resilience in standing up to a changing world.

Vinnies Canberra/Goulburn Acting CEO Michelle Colefax spoke of the Society's history, expressing our deep sorrow and regret for past injustices experienced by First Nations peoples. She also noted the incredible reach of the organisation today, working across six unique Aboriginal countries within the Canberra/Goulburn Diocese.

Dallas Tautu, a young Warramungu woman and case worker with the Oaks Estate Community Inclusion Program, drew attention to the importance of a workplace respecting the place and identity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The journey of Reconciliation is the hope of a better future. It is now our responsibility to lay the foundations for a better way forward. The [Canberra/Goulburn RAP](#) can be viewed online. **R**



Top: At the Canberra/Goulburn RAP launch were (l-r) Chaydin Reid, Michelle Colefax, Aunty Violet Sheridan, Patrice Soward and Dallas Tautu.

Above: The RAP cover artwork.

# Winter's cold welcome for the Vinnies Sleepouts



Winter marks the season for St Vincent de Paul Society's annual series of fundraising [CEO Sleepouts](#). This year's national goal is \$9,054,000, of which nearly \$7,500,000 had been raised at the time *The Record* went to press.

The theme for the 23 June 2022 sleepouts is 'Everyone deserves a safe place to call home' and Vinnies is raising money to provide people experiencing homelessness and people at risk of homelessness with vital access to food and accommodation. We also provide education, counselling, employment and health services to help people overcome poverty in the long term.

In 2021, despite a number of COVID-19 restrictions, participants raised \$9.3 million and made a huge impact.

The NSW sleepouts (Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong) were launched at the Matthew Talbot Hostel, Woolloomooloo, with a group of participants in the Vinnies

CEO Sleepout doing a guided tour through the facility to see firsthand the good the money they raise does.

'The Vinnies CEO Sleepout is our biggest annual fundraising event and it helps people experiencing disadvantage,' said NSW State Council President, Paul Burton.

'The CEOs who participate bring their influence to bear to enable change as well as raise critical funds. I encourage all CEOs or executive business leaders to register today and make a real difference in their community.'

The Canberra/Goulburn CEO Sleepout, to be held on the chilly concrete forecourt of the National Portrait Gallery, has a target of \$800,000 and a number of its regular supporters lined up. One is Martin Fisk, Menslink CEO, who will take his discomfort to another level by sleeping out in the snow in Perisher without a tent. It will be his 12th CEO Sleepout.

In South Australia, the recently elected Premier Peter Malinauskas will be donning the blanket and

beanie for his seventh sleepout in a row, saying just because he had a new job title, it wouldn't stop him from doing it again.

The father-of-three took to social media to announce he would get on board with the event, to be held at the South Australian Museum.

The Premier recalls the shock of his first sleepout, saying, 'It was just one night of the year, but I can't imagine what it's like to be sleeping in the cold every single night. The fact that there are people in our state who do is just heartbreaking.'

Mr Malinauskas has a target of raising \$20,000 for his good deed. Given his popularity there seems every chance he will exceed his goal.

Last year's Vinnies CEO Sleepout in South Australia raised more than \$934,000 – a record for the state. For 2022, Vinnies has set the bar even higher and is aiming to raise more than \$1million to support homelessness services in the state. **R**



The 2022 Vinnies CEO Sleepout in Canberra/Goulburn will be held on 23 June at the National Portrait Gallery. Attending the launch on 27 April were (l-r) L-R Richard Faulks (Managing Director, Snedden Hall & Gallop), Antonia Marzulli (CEO, Synergy Group), Michelle Colefax (CEO, SVDP Canberra/Goulburn), Sebida Frauley (Chief Operating Officer, Cloud Success Services SAP APJ) and Neville Tomkins (Chief Commissioner, Scouts Australia (NSW Branch)).

## Tasmania's sleepout to have broader appeal

The St Vincent de Paul Society in Tasmania has launched its annual sleepout event under a new name. Vinnies Community Sleepout is the more inclusive name for the CEO Sleepout, which Vinnies has run across the State since 2011.

St Vincent de Paul Society (Tas) State President, Mr Mark Gaetani, said that since its inception in western Sydney in 2005, the annual Sleepout event has raised more than \$30 million to assist the homeless and those at risk of homelessness across Australia, including over \$100,000 in Tasmania in 2021. **R**



Gearing up for Tasmania's 2022 Vinnies' Community Sleepout on the night of Friday 24 June... (l-r) Abby Doyle (RACT), Bernadette Ulbrich-Hooper (Vinnies) Mark Gaetani (Vinnies), Mark Mugnaioni (RACT), Dean Harris (RACT).

# Palm Sunday rallies for refugee justice



Attending the Palm Sunday rally in Canberra were (l-r) Werner Padarin, Caritas Christi Migrant and Refugee Conference Warwick Fulton, Deputy President, St Vincent de Paul Society National Council of Australia and Kevin Condon, a member of St Thomas the Apostle conference, Kambah ACT.



St Vincent de Paul Society National President, Claire Victory, attended the Palm Sunday rally in Adelaide.

St Vincent de Paul Society members, volunteers and employees joined people from a range of church, union, political and other community groups at Palm Sunday rallies around Australia on 10 April 2022 to press for fairer treatment of asylum seekers and refugees.

‘With the world in considerable turmoil there has never been a greater need for a more compassionate approach to refugee policy,’ said National Council President Claire Victory.

‘The Society has a long history of assisting vulnerable people such as refugees and asylum seekers, and Palm Sunday was the perfect time to highlight the community’s concerns. It was on this day that Jesus entered Jerusalem to

complete his mission “to bring good news to the poor and to set captives free”, through his suffering, death and resurrection.’

The Society has urged the scrapping of the unjust ‘fast-track’ processing of people seeking asylum under the ‘Legacy Caseload Act’, ensuring people seeking asylum should have access to adequate levels of support, and providing access to family reunion for all refugees.

The Catholic Alliance for People Seeking Asylum (CAPSA), co-convened by Jesuit Social Services and Jesuit Refugee Service Australia, shares the Society’s concerns that nearly 20,000 refugees in Australia are still on temporary visas after a decade. Thousands seeking asylum are

enduring the fast-track refugee assessment process, condemned as unfair by the Australian Human Rights Commission.

CAPSA Co-Chair Julie Edwards has called for the immediate release of all remaining people in onshore detention who were medically transferred to Australia from PNG and Nauru: ‘This system is hugely detrimental to the mental and physical health of refugees and has received international condemnation.

‘This will forever be remembered as a shameful period in our nation’s history.’

CAPSA voiced concern about the previous Government’s allocation of \$1.28 billion to onshore detention, an increase of \$20.6



*Clockwise from top left: Former Socceroos star and refugee rights advocate, Craig Foster.*

*Iranian singer Mostafa Azimitabar ('Moz Azimi'), a refugee who spent 2737 days in Australian immigration detention.*

*Hasiba Ebrahimi, an Afghan woman, actress and refugee.*

*Carol Wagner, Assistant Bishop of the Anglican diocese of Canberra-Goulburn*

million compared to the previous Federal Budget:

‘This is critical funding which could be used to safeguard and protect the human rights and dignity of people, including by investing in our settlement and employment support services and ensuring that people seeking asylum have adequate support in the community whilst their claims for protection are adjudicated.’

Attending the Canberra rally was Zaki Haidari, an ethnic Hazara man from Afghanistan, who fled his country in 2012 after threats from the Taliban, which persecutes the Hazara minority. He was found to be a refugee, but he must reapply for refugee status and his temporary visa every five years.

Zaki works for the Jesuit Refugee Service which, with Vinnies, supports the [Christians United for Refugees](#) Campaign.

Bipartisan support for resettlement of a further 16,500 Afghans, in this year’s Federal Budget, was the first win for the Campaign. Two further calls, permanent protection for all Afghans already here and bringing their families in Afghanistan to Australia, are issues of great concern to Zaki and the 5000 Afghans already here on temporary visas.

Zaki told Tim McKenna, President of Vinnies Canberra Conference Supporting Refugees, that the [danger](#) for Hazaras in Afghanistan continues: ‘My friends and I fear for our families

in Afghanistan. They should come to safety here. But the Government won’t let us sponsor them. More than 10 members of my community have taken their own lives. I despair for us if this cruel policy denying us permanent protection is not changed.’

‘This fear, together with no prospect of permanent settlement here or anywhere else, is a heavy burden for Zaki and his friends,’ Tim said.

The Society’s policy on refugees and asylum seekers was an important part of the [A Fairer Australia](#) document developed for the 2022 Federal Election. It calls for permanent protection and family reunion for all refugees in Australia. **R**

# Volunteers are our heart and soul

**S**t Vincent de Paul Society proudly recognised the contribution of 60,000 members and volunteers across the country during National Volunteer Week, 16-22 May 2022.

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the involvement of Vinnies members and volunteers has been remarkably strong, according to National President Claire Victory, who said the demand to assist people experiencing hardship across Australia has never been higher.

‘Over the past year, our members and volunteers have helped Australians face drought, bushfires, floods, the COVID-19 pandemic, the ongoing challenges of the higher cost-of-living and a lack of available secure and affordable housing,’ Ms Victory said.

‘The Society is a large volunteer-based organisation. Without the dedication of our many volunteers, we could never undertake the work we do with families and individuals doing it tough.’

The Society’s 60,000 volunteers include Conference members who provide support to local people in need, others who work on food vans and in housing facilities for those who face homelessness and the volunteers who run the Vinnies Shops around the country.

‘Our members and volunteers are our communities’ unsung heroes. We are celebrating their efforts to coincide with National Volunteer Week, Australia’s largest annual celebration of volunteering.

‘Our members and volunteers range from childhood to ninety-plus, and work throughout the country, from the cities to regional centres to the small country towns.

‘Drawing on the funds raised through our shops and major appeals, our members meet local



people and listen to their needs, often hearing harrowing stories about poverty, and help out with food, clothing, housing assistance and advice about accessing a range of support services,’ Ms Victory said.

‘This can be personally distressing, especially when young children are involved, but our members and volunteers hang in there and provide practical help and companionship.

‘We know from feedback that our members and volunteers find helping their community and being of service to be deeply enriching, and research shows that volunteering improves social inclusion as well as personal wellbeing. Volunteering really is a win-win all round.’ **R**

*SVDP volunteers in Launceston, Sungjoon Yoon (Sunny), Kerry Ball and Philomena Portsmouth, were among those recognised for their efforts Australia-wide during National Volunteer Week in May.*

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For information about volunteering with the St Vincent de Paul Society visit [www.vinnies.org.au](http://www.vinnies.org.au)

# Vinnies Victoria launches new ‘super kitchen’

In early May 2022, the St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria celebrated the launch of its innovative new Inner City Soup Van hub in Kensington, Melbourne.

The facility is believed to be the first of its kind fitted out inside two reconditioned shipping crates, one housing a commercial-size cooker and oven, and the other holding a cool room and storage areas.

The state-of-the-art cooking facilities are able to produce 60 litres of soup or pasta in minutes. To meet an increased demand due to rising costs of living, the hub will be serving hot food throughout Winter to people in need in the CBD and on the streets of the inner city.

News reports of surging food prices and rising rental stress among low-income earners reflect the growing need that Vinnies has seen on the street for some time. The demand for Soup Vans doubled during COVID-19 to 550,000 meals a year across all eight hubs – and is still rising.

‘We’re not aware of another organisation running facilities for vulnerable communities on this scale.’

The Inner City Soup Van hub will serve 400,000 meals annually to thousands of individuals and families experiencing homelessness or struggling to afford food.

Sarah Cromie, General Manager Membership and Special Works who oversaw the project, said, ‘This is a new concept. We’re not aware of another organisation running facilities for vulnerable communities on this scale.’

At Vinnies, we’re focused on sustainable solutions and in terms of our Soup Vans, this is it.

‘The new “super kitchen” facilities are going to make a huge difference to the amount of hot,



Melissa Walton, Soup Van Manager, St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria

nutritious food we are able to get out to those communities quickly and efficiently.

‘The event was also an opportunity to remember Leo Holt, our late State Soup Van President, Leo – who set up the Collingwood run in 1998 and tragically died suddenly during a volunteer shift in 2021 – first proposed the project to me in 2020.’

‘It was exciting to launch the hub after two years of planning and production and, of course, Leo’s sad death. He would have been so proud of what we’ve achieved.’

‘That’s why we called the cooking facility “Leo’s Kitchen”.’

The hub amalgamates the former Collingwood and Fitzroy services and was primarily funded from a generous bequest (whose family wishes to remain anonymous). Vinnies hopes to expand the shipping crate model so that facilities can also be transported at short notice to an emergency, such as a bushfire or flood.

Ms Cromie said, ‘It was wonderful

to mark the event and welcome our volunteers and corporate supporters, including the Cities of Melbourne and Yarra, IGA, Woodards Foundation, Talaria Capital and Grill’d – as well as a number of our Vinnies CEO Sleepout participants and ambassadors.’

‘We know there is an increased need. We’re seeing people come to us who are really desperate for food. We’re seeing young families and older women coming to us for food who are experiencing homelessness, or at risk of homelessness, due to the rising cost of living.’

‘What I’m really proud of is that the hub will provide the buffer many people currently struggling so desperately need to get through another day.’

This year, roughly a third of the \$1.5 million hopefully to be raised during the Vinnies CEO Sleepout in Victoria will help support the sustainability of the Soup Van Hub. **R**

# Helping homeless people's best friends

Established a decade ago, [Pets in the Park](#) (PITP) is a national charity focusing on the health and welfare of companion animals and owners who are experiencing homelessness. PITP's dedicated volunteers include vets and vet nurses who run a free monthly clinic to assist people struggling with homelessness care for their much-loved animal companions.

Key to the group's success is partnering with human service providers such as Vinnies to improve the lives of homeless people and their pets, according to Bernadette Ulbrich-Hooper, Fundraising & Marketing Advisor with St Vincent de Paul Society Tasmania.

Bernadette, a qualified lawyer and a former vet nurse who served on the Veterinary Board of Tasmania, was active in the campaign to get funding and local government support for establishing PIPT in Launceston nearly two years ago. The charity was already operating clinics in Hobart and is well established nationally.

'Many people who are experiencing homelessness own pets that play a significant role in their lives,' Bernadette says.

'These pets offer unconditional love, companionship, emotional support, and security – basic human needs that are often not met elsewhere. For those who are living with companion animals, pet welfare and the human-animal bond has a significantly important role in both the owners and their pets lives.'

The problem for pet owners experiencing homelessness, or those seeking to get into the private rental market, is that many emergency shelters do not permit animals, mostly because of physical limitations, while rental contracts often have 'no pets' clauses.



*PITP volunteer vet Dr Kim Barrett attending to a patient living on the streets with its owner.*

'Pet ownership greatly enriches the lives of those who are homeless', Bernadette adds, 'but it comes at a significant financial cost. With the need for vaccinations, flea treatment, food, blankets, routine worming, de-sexing and microchipping, keeping an animal costs hundreds of dollars a year.'

The group estimates that the cost of basic veterinary care for one pet runs to \$10.00 per month.

'Pets in the Park is a growing national community that is being built on volunteerism, public donations, and corporate support, delivering its program and services independently and without any reliance on government funding,' Bernadette explains.

The organisation is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC), the Australian Investments and Securities Commission (ASIC), and is endorsed as a Deductible Gift Recipient with Charitable

Fundraising Authority in each state of its operations.

'The Launceston committee held its first clinic in November 2020, starting in the year of a worldwide pandemic, which was going to be a little rough, but with the support and guidance from our southern team in Hobart we were able to provide the free services that were very much needed in the north of the State.'

People unable to donate financially are encouraged to consider giving pet items such as new blankets, pet food and treats, dog harnesses and winter jackets, pet toys and tennis balls.

A resource kit *Improving Outcomes in Homelessness - Keeping People and Pets Together* from a US coalition of the National Alliance to End Homelessness and Pet Smart Charities noted, 'The human-animal bond is so strong that many people experiencing homelessness will not live





*PTIP veterinary volunteers (l-r top row) Bernadette Ulbrich-Hooper, Jenny Barns, Karen Atkins, Kay Hobenbaus, Mario Lezzi, Tammy, Louise Couen, Mary New, and (l-r lower) Jaye Lee, Dr Kate Marsden and Dr Kim Barrett.*

separated from their pet, and consequently cannot or do not access services like emergency shelter if their pets cannot accompany them.'

It added, 'The idea of keeping people and pets together, regardless of living situation, is a

recent thought-model in animal welfare, a field that traditionally created extremely high expectations for pet ownership.

'Advances in the study of the human-animal bond and the relationship with the human homeless populations have led

to collaborative programming aimed at keeping people and pets together. These larger, coordinated systems provide outreach, shelter, and temporary housing for people with pets, and in doing so improve outcomes for all involved.' **R**

## Marillac House helps local health care

*Launceston's Marillac House is raising funds to refurbish bathrooms.*

**W**hile the demand for specialist health services continues to rise, many are not available in regional Australian centres. Launceston is a major health hub in Tasmania, but accommodation for visiting patients and families is either limited or costly. Marillac House, located in a charming heritage building in Brisbane Street, is a much-valued health crisis accommodation service.

Run by St Vincent de Paul Society Tasmania for the past 15 years, the service provides low-cost rooms and support to Tasmanians needing to travel to the city. The need for the facility was identified by Society members and the community as being vital for hospital patients, families, and carers.

People travelling long distances to access health services are the greatest affected, with those living on King and Flinders Islands, the far west coast, northwest and east coast of Tasmania, being impacted the most.

Marillac House has nine rooms and fundraising is now under way for the upgrading of two bathrooms.

The service is located in the Launceston CBD, close to amenities, and a short drive to local hospitals. It is close to the city centre, restaurants, shopping and City Park, one of Australia's oldest parks, established in 1820. **R**

For more information or to help fund the upgrade of bathrooms please visit the [website](#).



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