

A 'HAND-UP' TO ANYONE IN NEED

DONOR REPORT
2017-18



St Vincent de Paul Society
CANBERRA/GOULBURN

good works



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*Warwick Fulton, President,
St Vincent de Paul Society Canberra/Goulburn*

Welcome to the 2017-18 edition of our donor report, a special publication designed to celebrate our supporters, volunteers and members.

The 2017-18 financial year has been a very busy one for all of us in the St Vincent de Paul Society in Canberra/Goulburn.

We have continued to expand our services to provide greater support for those who are homeless and those who are at risk of homelessness. Fortunately we have had the funds to do so thanks to the generosity of our donors and supporters, and increased contributions from both ACT and federal governments.

In the last year we have opened additional Vinnies shops at Kippax and Weston and have refurbished eight of our existing shops to give them a modern look, and make them as appealing as any other retail shop. We have started a new joint venture with Thread Together to make end of line fashion clothes available to our companions in need, and piloted a joint venture with the Scouts to give disadvantaged children life skills, confidence and resilience. Our Night Patrol has an additional van, thanks to Canberra Toyota, which enables us to go out to six locations in Canberra and Queanbeyan on seven nights a week.

I would like to thank our 693 members, 1500 volunteers and 147 employees for the great work they have done in representing the Society in our communities, and in providing financial, material and emotional support to our companions.

I have greatly enjoyed working with our CEO, Bernie van Wyk, who has proven to be a real dynamo – working hard to fulfil the Society's mission, build new community and supporter relationships, and in finding new ways of serving the needs of our companions including in partnership with other organisations. This year he attracted an impressive 140 CEOs to the CEO Sleepout and raised a record \$150k over the target.

Our donors have been most generous in responding to our various appeals giving us a large source of funds that we can place where it is most needed, independently of government constraints. The response to our Tathra Bushfire Appeal was simply amazing. Over \$160,000 was raised in just a few weeks enabling our conference volunteers on the ground to respond to a wide range of needs of the fire victims as the needs emerged.

We could not do the range of things we do in Canberra/Goulburn without the generosity of our many supporters, who have provided us with the goods and funds that are essential to our work.

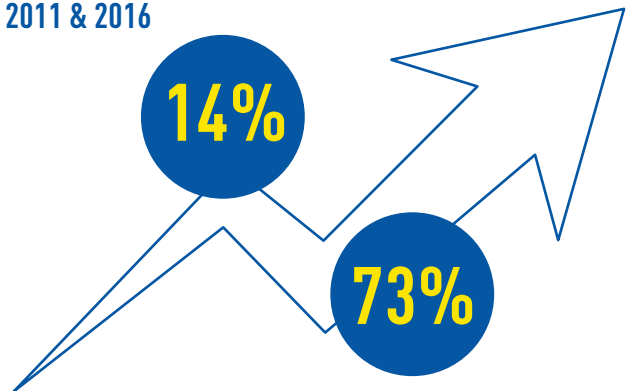
Thank you for taking the time to read the following pages. I hope you will be inspired, and in closing I thank you in anticipation for your continued support.

*Warwick Fulton, President
St Vincent de Paul Society Canberra/Goulburn*

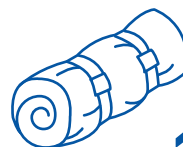
WHY WE HELP

39,311 people experiencing homelessness across ACT & NSW

increase of all homeless people in Australia between 2011 & 2016



increase in number of people in overcrowded dwellings in ACT & NSW between 2011 & 2016



1596 Canberrans are experiencing homelessness



OUR PEOPLE

People are the core of our good works and the manner in which we operate. Over the past year the Society has relied on the support of 693 members, 1500 volunteers and 147 employees.

Our members

Our 693 members are the backbone of the Society, operating through local conferences at the grassroots level by visiting people in need in their homes. Our members determine the strategic direction of the Society and how best to provide our programs and services to people in need.

Our volunteers

The St Vincent de Paul Society is a member and volunteer based organisation. Motivated by Catholic values, each volunteer offers unique life experiences, backgrounds and interests; yet at the core of each character is one distinct commonality: the willingness to give so readily their talents and time to make the work of the Society great.

Our volunteers extend their skills and abilities across the works of our conferences, 14 specialised homelessness services and 27 centres. Volunteering empowers the Society to meet people's immediate needs, foster personal growth, and, above all else, make a long lasting and meaningful impact in the lives of our companions, and a considered social movement within our communities.

Our donors

We have over 3300 donors. We wouldn't be able to continue our vital work without their support. On behalf of everyone at the Society, thank you!

Our employees

Our paid employee base is kept to a minimum, to allow our resources to be directed at people in need. We acknowledge the expertise of our 147 employees which complements the good works of our members and volunteers.



CASE STUDY: RESPITE, RECREATION AND

WRAP-AROUND SERVICES

*Sarah Clifton,
Director of Youth and Young Adults*

Jessica* is a protective older sister for Amber and Joshua. Two weeks prior to St Joe's September camp their mum attempted suicide after a family violence incident with her ex-partner. He had come to the house at night while the kids were in bed and assaulted their mum. The kids were not due to attend camp; however an urgent call from their mum meant space was made for the three of them. While they came to camp their mum checked into the adult mental health unit at Canberra Hospital. The family have no extended family in Canberra, and, due to the high needs of the youngest two children, family friends weren't able to care for them.

Amber, 8, and Joshua, 6, are both developmentally delayed. Jessica, 11, is carer for her mum and siblings, so she accesses our St Nick's Young Carers Program as well as St Joe's. All three children were distressed coming into camp after their recent family disruptions.

The youngest two were terrified that their mum's ex-partner was going to come back, and refused to go outside at night for the camp fire or to play Spotlight games. Jessica was extremely anxious about her mum, as she is her mum's main emotional support and knew the entire situation. She asked to call home several times a day to check on her mum.

We limited calls to once every second day and diverted her attention to writing a warm and fuzzy book for her mum filled with all her favourite family memories, and a letter to her mum that she could give her after camp. All three children settled into camp by the second day and were participating in activities and making friends. They spent their free time each day practicing an acrobatic routine that they performed at the Talent Show on the last night of camp.

We were able to give the children a week of respite and wonderful memories, and their mum an opportunity to seek help knowing that the kids were safe and happy. All three children are now accessing counselling through school. The family attended our Christmas party in December with 120 other children, and each received a huge present from Santa. Their mum broke down in tears when she saw the presents, and told one of our volunteers that she hadn't been able to buy presents this year, as she had a debt to Housing ACT for property damage caused by her ex-partner. We arranged for the local Vinnies volunteers to drop a Christmas hamper with food and presents off to the family two days before Christmas. Our Family Services team are providing advice and support to the family about the Housing ACT debt.

*All names have been changed

CASE STUDY: RETURNING TO EDUCATION AFTER LIFE FORCED HER IN ANOTHER DIRECTION

After a series of car accidents, Assunta was no longer physically able to work. "I live with pain every day," she said.

Assunta became isolated and her mental health suffered. "Being a career girl, and then no longer being at that level, the depression built up," she said.

Wanting to re-engage with her community, and with education, Assunta entered the Clemente program. She originally completed the winter program, and really enjoyed it.

The Clemente program is a free university education program, run in partnership with Australian Catholic University, that supports marginalised and disadvantaged adults to reconnect with education to support personal growth, potential job opportunities and further study. It is designed to support learning by building self-esteem, communication skills and

social skills. There are currently 40 people enrolled. Students are supported by teaching staff and volunteer mentors to develop a range of soft skills for success in the program and outside.

For Assunta it has been a great opportunity to leave the house, and meet other people, though, after more than ten years since she was last in a classroom, she was originally a bit intimidated by the idea.

"I was scared. I think it scares people thinking 'oh it's uni' and I think that's why, before, I was really scared to come and do it. But now that I've started, I really love it,"

"The people here are just wonderful; they couldn't do enough for you to keep you coming, and the people in the class themselves are so nice,"

After completing the initial 'Pathways' program which helps students learn generic skills and relearn what it means to be a student, Assunta intends to complete Clemente's Certificate program which would allow her to graduate with a Certificate in Liberal Studies. She would

also like to apply what she's learned in the classroom by offering her skills as a volunteer.



To learn more about the St Nick's Young Carers program, St Joe's or the Clemente program, please visit <https://www.vinnies.org.au>



CONFERENCES

2017-18 proved to be another busy year for the 51 conferences of the Canberra/Goulburn region. These conferences are made up of 693 dedicated volunteer members.

In summary:



Support was provided to **42,556** people in need

The vast majority of people assisted are on government assistance and in public housing

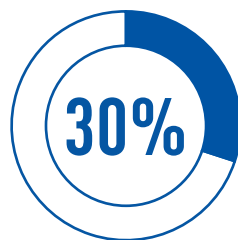


The total value of assistance was over **\$2 million**



Single persons or sole parents are the dominant household composition

More than **17%** of our companions are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders



Of people assisted were new companions

About two thirds of assistance sought is from females



The bulk of requests for assistance is provided in the form of food parcels and packs or food vouchers. The second highest request for assistance is for help with utility bills.

The total value of services provided outside the ACT is increasing, particularly in the Far South Coast region which is experiencing a marked increase in demand.

CASE STUDY:

CONFERENCE

WORK

Evatt Conference

Evatt Conference has been providing support to a single man in his mid-twenties for some years. He has had a difficult life, as have so many of the vulnerable persons we assist.

He receives Newstart benefits and lives in a unit in public housing.

He was a ward of the state up to the age of eighteen and has been looking after himself ever since. He suffers from mental illness and has minimal contact with and no support from family members, most of whom are also living in difficult circumstances. He has been exploited by some friends over the years who have incurred debts in his name. He has applied for numerous jobs but for the most part has been unsuccessful. He was accepted into the 'Green Army' program but due to his mental illness was not able to continue. However, despite withdrawing from the program, payments continued for a period and he incurred a substantial debt. During periods of severe mental health episodes, he didn't keep up with utilities payments and that added to his debt.

During 2017 he sought emergency food assistance more regularly and was starting to 'build Vinnies into his budget management'. As a result, and with his agreement, we referred him to Care Inc. for financial planning assistance. Since then he has taken more responsibility for managing his budget. He also undertook some short courses to make him more job ready and also did some voluntary work to, in his words, "improve the look of my CV".

Pleasingly in late 2017 he was advised he was successful for one of his job applications. In spite of some delay in the commencement of the job, he has recently been working full-time in garden maintenance. In some follow up contact, he told us he is so happy to be working. He said it has improved his self-esteem and made him feel really good about himself. In addition, he has reduced his outstanding debts by over fifty percent. He said he is much more confident about the future.



V.I.N.E.S.

VINNIES, INSPIRING, NETWORKING, EDUCATION AND SUPPORT



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

The program is currently in the pilot phase and will operate for 12 months. The VINES acronym stands for Vinnies, Inspiring, Networking, Education and Support. The program will assist young people to learn practical living skills in a safe and fun environment.

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

Twenty-two children between the ages of 8 and 16 have been enrolled in the VINES program over the last year. Some of the activities during the year have included visits to the Botanical Gardens Easter Egg Hunt, indoor rock climbing with PCYC, Canberra Hunt, geocaching at Mt Taylor, learning how to snorkel at the Tuggeranong pool, and a visit to the National Gallery of Australia where the children immersed themselves in the gallery's virtual reality collection, Terminus.



THREAD TOGETHER

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

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

The Thread Together Clothing Hub @ Vinnies, operating from the Vinnies shopfront in Phillip, supports people from a wide range of backgrounds and circumstances. The program ensures those in need receive a tailored service which reflects the current stage of their personal journey—from comfortable clothes for companions living in a crisis centre, through to clothes aimed at keeping children’s lives as normal as possible, and providing clothes suitable for re-entering the workforce to regain independence, shape confidence and restore self-esteem.

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

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



Money raised from shops and fundraising provided **\$5,410** to fund Thread Together

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



Left to right: Andie Halas, Founder of Thread Together, Josh Frydenberg, Minister for the Environment and Energy, and Bernie van Wyk, CEO of the St Vincent de Paul Society Canberra/Goulburn at the opening of the Thread Together Clothing Hub @ Vinnies.



MIGRANT AND REFUGEE YOUTH PROGRAM

During the process of settlement, migrant and refugee children are faced with unique challenges, especially in terms of negotiating their sense of identity and belonging.

Providing them with opportunities to gain positive social interactions and experiences can help them negotiate the challenges they encounter as they integrate into a new community.

These children often lack confidence in their English literacy skills, so there is a need to support schools in the children's learning and development. Schools often lack the resources to provide one-to-one support, which is necessary to increase the children's skills and self-esteem.

In June the Society launched a new migrant and refugee program for primary school aged children. North Ainslie and Florey primary schools in the ACT both now offer weekly sessions of one to two hours. Eighteen volunteers were trained to staff the program, providing a positive learning environment that encourages the children to become interested in learning. The program is currently in the trial phase and being monitored from an administrative and planning perspective. Once the initial outcomes have been evaluated, it will likely move to a conference model.

In North Ainslie, the migrant and refugee program offers a reading program, providing support to children in the Introductory English Centres during literacy classes, held in the morning for two hours. The facilitation of cultural activities promote positive social interactions by recognising and celebrating the children's diverse backgrounds. School teachers are the main facilitators of these classes, and volunteers assist with reading and activities.

At Florey, the Vinnies Lunchtime Club conducts interactive activities for 50 minutes during school lunch times, with the aim of improving self-esteem, and social and emotional skills. The sessions cultivate empowerment and belonging as children explore and discover their broader community in a safe and welcoming environment with their peers and mentors.





NIGHT PATROL

With the launch of the second Night Patrol van in October 2017 during Anti-Poverty week, the service has been able to expand services and now operates seven nights a week, increasing support to greater regions of Canberra and Queanbeyan.

Over the past year Night Patrol has provided;

A total of 15 nights were missed during this reporting period due to unforeseen circumstances such as volunteer cancellations or volunteer illness.

The Night Patrol service attended and supported many meaningful events this year to increase awareness about homelessness across the Canberra/Goulburn Archdiocese, and to promote social justice.

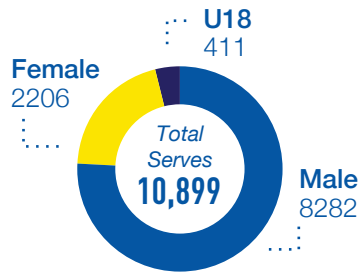
These included:

- The media launch for the CEO Sleepout
- The first ACT Reconciliation Day public holiday event
- Mini Vinnies Social Justice days with the Youth team
- Information sessions at local schools in collaboration with the Youth team.

City Van:



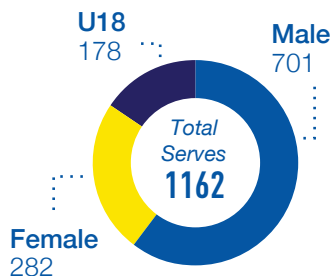
instances of material aid



Southern Van:



instances of material aid



During the 2017-18 year the vans visited these locations:

- Woden
- Queanbeyan
- Tuggeranong
- Dickson
- Canberra Centre
- Civic



Money raised from shops and fundraising provided **\$119,784** to fund Night Patrol

VOLUNTEER IN THE SPOTLIGHT



NATALIE WRIGHT

Natalie Wright was awarded ACT Volunteer of the Year at the 2018 Volunteering Awards run by Volunteering and Contact ACT.

Natalie was recognised for her outstanding coordination of both St Vincent de Paul's Mini Vinnies and Team Leader of two Night Patrol teams.

Ms Wright was described as a prominent leader in the Canberra community and an influential role model for hundreds of Canberra school students through her volunteer work with the St Vincent de Paul Society. She coordinated the largest Mini Vinnies group in Australia, a social justice group for primary school children which grew to a group of 120 students.

We are extremely grateful for Natalie's ongoing contributions to the work of the Society and for her positive influence on the next generation of Vincentians.



NATILIEAN SEERS

Natiliean Seers, who passed away in February 2018, was nominated for the NSW Volunteering Awards in recognition of her outstanding volunteer contributions across the Bega region.

Nat gave 40 years of service to Vinnies Bega, where she would often volunteer her time five days a week. At the age of 92 she gave endless hours to the Vinnies Centre in Bega. Nat worked both in the centre and as a conference member over her 45 years of service to the community. Her voluntary work is a testament to her kindness and dedication to helping those in need.

Nat touched many lives in our community and afield. She had such a strong faith and was dedicated, hardworking, compassionate, proud and very independent. Nat always put others first without asking for anything in return.

A GIFT IN YOUR WILL CAN RESTORE LIVES.

Find out more by calling 02 6234 7344 or email giving@svdp-cg.au

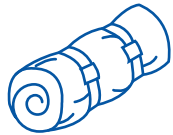
SPECIAL WORKS AT A GLANCE



80 students enrolled in Clemente

150 participants assisted at Samaritan House

NDIS Mental Health Services have 34 participants with 16 participants on the waiting list.



72 Street to Home case managed rough sleepers and assisted approximately **180** participants with outreach services



The combined total of adults and children assisted by Family and Youth Homelessness Services was 652

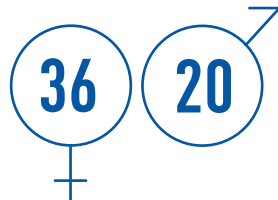
22 children have been enrolled in the VINES program



Long term secured housing was obtained for



56 Compeer participants



The Actsmart Home Energy Efficiency Program contract was due to finalise on 30 September 2018, however the ACT Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) has extended the contract to finish on 30 June 2019.



Breakfasts and lunches served by Blue Door

240 participants supported by Blue Door

VINNIES CENTRES 2017-2018



Lindsay Rae, Director of Centres

The focus for this financial year was to undertake the first stage of a four year program of upgrading the centres.

The reasons for this being: to safeguard the future income stream from centres for the work of the Society; to improve the working conditions in the centres for the members, volunteers and employees; to enhance the shopping experience for both those that we assist, and our customers from who we generate the funds; and to make all the stakeholders proud to be associated with the Society.

Upgrades were carried out at 17 of our centres. Ten centres had their heating and cooling systems upgraded, eight centres had major refurbishments, and two had the first stage of their refurbishments carried out. During the year the opportunity arose in two of our targeted areas to introduce new centres. Beautiful new centres were opened in Kippax and Weston Creek.

Goulburn Centre was also relocated back to the Auburn Street premises which were rebuilt following last year's fire.

Sales in our centres rose by 9.8% and surplus by 8.9% for the year. Centres volunteer numbers also increased by 5.5%. Clothing donations continued to increase, but the quality continued to decrease. This increases the workload as more donations have to be sorted to produce the same amount of stock.

Notable events for the year included the Batemans Bay Vinnies Fashion Show in September organised by the Centre Manager, Glenda Bishop. This was a very professional event organised and choreographed by Glenda. Dozens of invited individuals and local organisations took part in an event that Vinnies can be very proud of.

Archbishop Prowse conducted the Blessings of both the new centres at lovely functions that were attended by a number of Territory Council members and local politicians.

The first Centres Congress was held at the Deakin office and centre managers travelled in from all over our region to attend. It was a major success creating multiple learning opportunities for all the centre managers to be brought up to the same level on a wide range of issues. A strong focus of this Congress was the mission and values of the Society.

The centre managers participated in discussions and were introduced to a far more holistic view of the Society and its works over the two and a half days. Immediate impact could be seen in the centres following the Congress. In a number of cases, managers began to see their centre as part of the works of the Society and not a means unto itself.

There was also a much better understanding of the work done by conferences and their impact on the lives of our companions and their families.



CASE STUDY: CEO SLEEPOUT

This year marked the 9th Vinnies CEO Sleepout for Canberra, seeing 140 local business and community leaders participate in the event on 21 June and more than 4680 supporters donate over \$629,700 – a record breaking result for Canberra.

The event was held at National Museum of Australia (NMA), which is where Canberra's first CEO Sleepout was held in 2010 and again in 2011.

During their cup of soup and bread roll dinner, CEOs took part in a workshop led by PwC Canberra to identify practical ways in which they could assist in breaking the cycle of poverty beyond their participation. Vinnies program coordinators including Clemente, Compeer and St Nick's Young Carers Program, were involved to offer their expertise and guidance.

This year's official Master of Ceremonies was Jolene Laverty, broadcaster with ABC Canberra, who did an incredible job. Jolene introduced formalities which started with a Welcome to Country by Selina Walker, the granddaughter of Aunty Agnes. This was followed by a live cross to John Paul II College where students were participating in their own School Sleepout. Catherine Rey, JPC Principal and long-time CEO Sleepout

participant, spoke to the students about their sleepout efforts with the students then asking questions of some of our CEOs.

The video presentation from sponsor Southern Cross Austereo showcased a number of Vinnies programs that benefit from CEO Sleepout funds – St Nick's Young Carers Program, Clemente and the Night Patrol vans.

As is frequently the case, participants were most engaged with the panel discussion. This year's guest speakers were 2018 ACT Volunteer of the Year, Natalie Wright (longstanding Night Patrol volunteer) and 2018 ACT Young Australian of the Year, Zack Bryers. Zack shared his story of having experienced homelessness in his youth which really struck a chord with CEOs. MC Jolene had recently accompanied Natalie on Night Patrol and the two were able to relate stories of the people they met in the community.

Barnie van Wyk announced the top fundraisers with the top individual fundraiser awarded to Nick McDonald Crowley from Capital Estate Developments, who raised \$38,393. Nick shared his motivation for participating – and displayed his Pink Panther onesie which had earned him a \$5,000 donation. The top fundraising team honours went to team Canberra Toyota, who are always such strong supporters of Vinnies Canberra/Goulburn.

After formalities concluded, a group photo was taken and CEOs then bedded down in the Garden of Australian Dreams – a symbolic landscape depicting a map of central Australia with the word 'home' repeated on the surface in 100 different languages - reminding CEOs that everyone deserves a safe and secure place to call home.

At 5.00 am, participants were woken by a kookaburra call and quickly went inside for a warm breakfast. In Warwick Fulton's absence, Regional President of the Tuggeranong/Monaro region, John Feint, concluded the event by thanking all for their contribution. The feedback from all CEOs was very positive with many saying they would be back for Canberra's 10th anniversary of the CEO Sleepout next year.

The success of the 2018 Vinnies CEO Sleepout would not have been possible without the amazing support and contribution from local sponsors including the National Museum of Australia, Broadbean Catering, Southern Cross Austereo, Steve Keough Photography, Mox Productions, Australian Transport Safety Bureau, Jolene Laverty and the team at ABC Canberra for the exposure they gave to the issue of homelessness in Canberra throughout the month of June.

Thank you for your valuable contribution – together with your generosity we can continue to combat the injustice of disadvantage in our society.



St Vincent de Paul Society
CANBERRA/GOULBURN
good works