

Vinnies News

More and more new people turn to Vinnies for help

The number of West Australians seeking help from Vinnies for the first time has increased by almost 50 per cent as the cost-of-living crisis puts increased pressure on household budgets.

New data shows that in February this year, the number of new clients seeking assistance with basic necessities like food, petrol and clothing increased by 45 per cent compared to the same month last year.

“It’s a worrying trend,” says Executive Manager for Community Engagement Services, Andrew York.

“It shows us that people are really struggling with increases in the cost of living, mortgage and rental stress. They just don’t have money left for other essential needs like food, transport and clothing.”

In February, Vinnies assisted more than 2,500 families with 2,300 food hampers as well as with food vouchers and other types of emergency relief.

The Vinnies Emergency Relief line received more than 4,800 calls, exceeding the capacity of the assistance Vinnies can provide.

Andrew York predicts 2023 will only get tougher. “We are seeing more and more low- and middle-income families being pushed to the limit.”

Around 60 per cent of our clients are in housing stress, which means they are spending more than 30 per cent of their disposable income on mortgages or rent. “Any further increases in interest rates will likely lead to further arrears, and place people at risk of losing homes,” he says.



Vinnies Emergency Relief line fielded 4,800 calls in February.

Autumn Appeal 2023 launched

Vinnies WA has launched its annual Autumn Appeal, calling on the community to help people who are in crisis because of the rising cost of living.

The Appeal features the story of Peter, a father raising his two children on his own after he tragically lost his wife. While he was dealing with his grief, the bills continued to pile up. When he realised the situation was beyond his control, Peter reached out to Vinnies for support.

Vinnies volunteers provided him with practical and financial help, and with companionship during a difficult time. “I’m very thankful to Vinnies,” he says. “If they had not been there, I don’t know what I would have done.”

It’s hard enough for families to deal with life’s many challenges, but the increasing cost of living is making it even more difficult.

To make a donation to the Vinnies Autumn Appeal, **visit www.vinnieswa.org.au or call 13 18 12.**

By donating to our regular appeals, you’ll be supporting WA families in need, and also be among the first to receive our donor magazine Impact, in which you can read about the difference you’re making.

Vinnies support for Ukrainians in WA

Just a year ago, Stanislav Khomich thought of Australia as a distant land he would probably never visit. Now the 35-year-old Ukrainian calls Perth home, far away from the horrors of war and occupation.

'Stas', as his friends and family call him, worked as a legal assistant in the city of Cherkasy, about 150 kilometres southeast of the capital, Kyiv.

When Russian forces invaded his homeland on 24 February 2022, he helped his community organise supplies.

But when the situation got worse, he fled to Romania, then to Germany. He heard that some friends had come to Australia, and on an early morning in July last year, he stepped off the plane in Perth.

"It was a very different feeling," he recalls. "Being in Romania and in Germany before, it felt like home, but Australia is just so different."

Since his arrival, he has been supported by a partnership between Vinnies and the Ukrainian Association of WA, and it's made a real difference.

"This is not a holiday for me and for other Ukrainians who have fled the war. The support is very meaningful to me, to us," Stas says.

Vinnies considers the needs of individuals and families, and then provides them with the assistance they require. To date, almost 50 Ukrainians have received help with things like food and clothing.

Ukrainian Association President Mykola Mowczan is proud of the partnership with Vinnies.

"It's been so important to the Ukrainian community here in WA," he says. "It just gives people that little bit extra to help get them by."

Stas now attends English classes at TAFE, and he loves exploring his new home by visiting places like Yanchep National Park and Elizabeth Quay.

Thanks to donors and supporters like you, Stas is safe and can plan for a future when the war and the occupation in Ukraine ends. He's taking each day as it comes, but he's committed to giving back when he can.



Stas Khomich with Mykola Mowczan.

"Right now, there's no sense in worrying. We just have to deal with things as they happen," he says.

"But when the war ends and there is peace, I'd like to work in human rights."

Eagles land at Passages Peel

Passages Peel clients and staff were flying high when a group of West Coast Eagles players dropped in for a visit in February.



The players took time out of their busy pre-season training to meet and chat to clients, sign merchandise, and fry up a few snags on the BBQ.

The group included premiership players Jack Darling and Elliot Yeo as well as 2022 recruit Jai Culley.

The visit was part of the Eagles' Mandurah community camp.

For Jai Culley and his team mates, the visits in the community are about more than just playing football.

"Being in a position to give back, I'm loving it. I think they are as well," Culley said afterwards.

Vinnies and Ishar lead **Community Food Centre project in WA**

Vinnies WA and Ishar Multicultural Women’s Health Services are conducting research for an innovative approach to addressing food insecurity in Western Australia through the development of Community Food Centres (CFCs).

CFCs provide a supportive space where people can access fresh and culturally appropriate food, grow produce, cook and share meals and become advocates for themselves and their community.

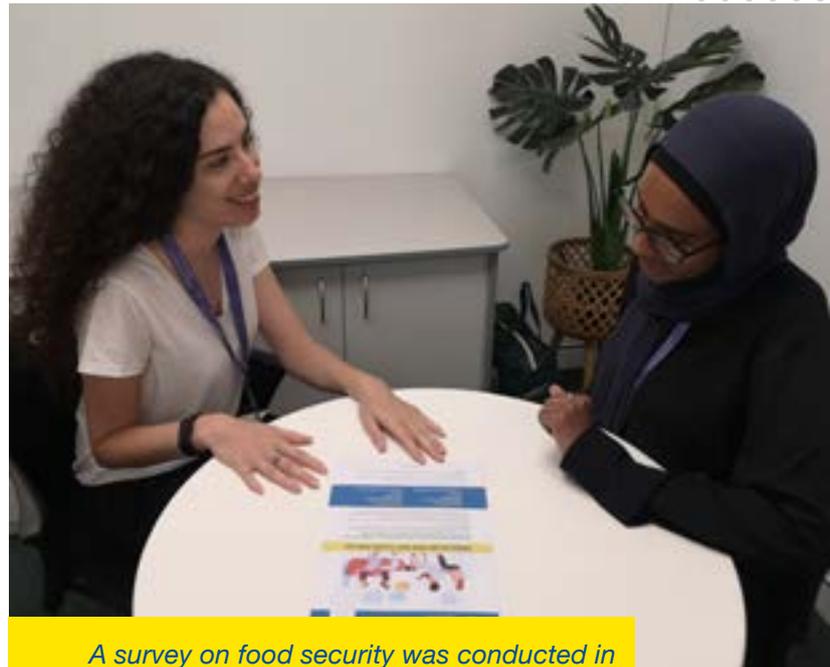
The development of new skills and knowledge through workshops and education aims to empower community members and build their capacity to break the cycle of household food insecurity.

“CFCs can remove the stigma that is sometimes associated with accessing traditional food relief, especially among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) communities,” Maija Hildebrand, Manager of Service Development at Vinnies WA, explains.

Instead, food is used to bring the community together to share meals and stories, and support and learn from each other. The endless social enterprise opportunities that stem from CFCs contribute to the sustainability of the model, and empower people to develop their own micro-enterprise.

Canada provides a strong blueprint for the development of CFCs, with 15 in place across the country. People engaging with Canadian CFCs report having better access to healthy foods and eat an increased amount of fruits and vegetables. Accessing supplemented meals stretch food budgets further, and increase feelings of belonging to a community.

Vinnies Research and Community Engagement Officer Rebecca Ward is leading this project until early April. We are looking forward to seeing the results of the research.



A survey on food security was conducted in the Mirabooka area.



Support Vinnies in the HBF Run for a Reason 2023



Join Team Vinnies at this year's HBF Run for a Reason on Sunday, 21 May, and help us raise funds for our mental health services.

Last year, Vinnies provided 13,489 bed nights through our recovery-focused Mental Health Service, and we are looking for keen walkers and runners to help us raise vital funds for this critical service.

Over the past decade, HBF Run for a Reason participants have raised over \$10 million for more than 190 WA health charities. This year, the aim is to reach \$1.1 million and make even more of an impact on the lives of West Australians.

Courses include 4km, 12km or a half marathon (21km).



Runners line up for the 2019 HBF Run for a Reason.



Vinnies collected over 2,500 kilos of clothing in 2019.

At this year's event, Vinnies WA will also be running our Flick Your Kit initiative again to support event participants of the HBF Run for a Reason.

With early morning temperatures in late May expected to be cool, event participants will have the option of donating their warm clothing to Vinnies just prior to starting.

Jackets, jumpers and other items of clothing can be dropped in designated Vinnies collection bins or given to Vinnies volunteers onsite.

In 2019, Vinnies collected over 2,500 kilograms of clothing which was then distributed to people in need and sold via Vinnies retail shops.

To join Team Vinnies or to make donations to our team members, please visit:

<https://runforareason23.grassrootz.com/vinnies-wa>



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Acknowledgement of Country

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

To respect the privacy of the people we assist, some of the names and images may have been changed.