



St Vincent de Paul Society  
*good works*

## What is this?

A nifty guide to get you up to speed on what social justice issues are affecting our community, what Vinnies does to help people across Australia, and how you can get involved.

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## A 20 YEAR OLD GUY WHO DID SOMETHING



**A 20 year old uni student, Frederic, started Vinnies way back in 1833.** Responding to the great poverty in the Paris of his day, Blessed Frederic Ozanam and some mates began visiting the homes of those in need, bringing food and firewood.

Soon they formed a Society to sustain them in this person-to-person work and named it after the great apostle of charity, Saint Vincent de Paul. Today there are over one million members in over 149 countries across the globe.

Volunteer groups called Conferences continue this work in the spirit of Frederic Ozanam to help make a difference in their community. They offer material, financial and emotional support, advice on local services, and advocate on the behalf of those in need.

There's also professional Support Services across Australia that support people experiencing disadvantage, which you can learn more about in this booklet and online.

Today, many schools and universities across Australia have their own Conferences who come together in the name of social justice to reach out to those in need.

*"Charity is the Samaritan who pours oil on the wounds of the traveller who has been attacked. It is justice's role to prevent the attack."*

*- Blessed Frederic Ozanam -*

**NEARLY 1,200 CONFERENCES ACROSS AUSTRALIA  
ASSIST OVER 2.25 MILLION PEOPLE EVERY YEAR.**

**1 IN 10 PEOPLE RECEIVE HELP FROM VINNIES.**

## VINNIES SHOPS



**Vinnies shops are a beloved part of the Australian landscape, and they're doing more for our community than you might realise.**

By using profits from the sale of pre-loved goods in our shops, we're able to provide crucial material and financial support to people experiencing disadvantage. People who shop with us are from all walks of life and by shopping at Vinnies, you know that every dollar spent in store is used to fund our programs and services, giving something back to your community.

These shops are also exemplary models of recycling, reducing and reusing; giving a second life to clothing and other items that might otherwise go to landfill. Shops may sort through 1.5 tonnes of donations each day. Every effort is made to send unsaleable items overseas or to cut the fabric into repurposed rag.

**THERE ARE OVER  
650 VINNIES  
SHOPS IN  
AUSTRALIA** 

**NEARLY 40,000  
SHOP VOLUNTEERS  
HELPING TO  
RAISE MONEY** 

## WHERE DOES THE MONEY GO?



## HOMELESSNESS IN AUSTRALIA

**Homelessness doesn't have a postcode.** Different communities require different support, which Vinnies provides through local level Conferences and a large number of professional services to assist individuals and families who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

List some activities that are part of your morning routine. Think about the barriers you would face and the things you would have to go without if you were experiencing homelessness. Cross out the things you might have to go without. How would this affect your day: your health, productivity, education and relationships? The small hardships add up.

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e.g. have breakfast

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Here's some quick stats so you know it's a real issue:



**OVER 105,000 PEOPLE EXPERIENCE  
HOMELESSNESS EVERY NIGHT  
ACROSS AUSTRALIA**



**60%**  
OF THE HOMELESS  
POPULATION IS  
UNDER THE AGE  
OF 35.



**1 IN 10 AUSTRALIAN HOUSEHOLDS  
ARE AFFECTED BY HOUSING STRESS.**

## HOMELESSNESS SUPPORT SERVICES

Vinnies is the leading provider of specialist homelessness services across Australia including transitional and crisis accommodation as well as case management, health services and educational and vocational programs.

### SLEEPOUTS



Vinnies Sleepouts give you a small glimpse into the realities of homelessness by 'sleeping rough' for a night in the middle of winter whilst raising awareness and funds to provide crucial assistance to people experiencing homelessness. Schools and unis across Australia host Sleepouts, as well as the hundreds of community groups and CEOs who Sleepout each year.

### FOOD VANS

We offer a reliable service that provides people who are sleeping rough with a meal, warm drink and conversation, helping break through the barriers of loneliness and isolation that many living on the fringe of society suffer. Volunteers are able to show people experiencing homelessness that people do care, creating a genuine community of friends from all walks of life, and offering information on other available services.

Check online to see how you can get involved at a local level.

## ASSISTING PEOPLE EXPERIENCING DISADVANTAGE

Vinnies assists people who are experiencing disadvantage and poverty by conducting home visits, and providing company and assistance with food and utility bills. It saddens us to see people living on the Newstart Allowance forced into poverty rather than helped back in to the workforce. There are around 1.5 million unemployed or underemployed people competing for 150,000 job vacancies.

Vinnies calls on the Government to implement a Jobs Plan to cut poverty, and address the structural drivers of unemployment and improve the pathways to employment through training. This includes an immediate increase to the Newstart Allowance payment by a minimum of \$50 a week, to ease the increasing cost of living pressures.



Kate lives in Brisbane with her daughter and receives a Newstart payment of \$582.80 each fortnight to cover their living expenses. Kate works as a receptionist at the local hospital when there are shifts available, however the work is unreliable so she is often only able to round their income up to around \$1000 a fortnight.

Estimate the living expenses Kate would have each fortnight, and fill in the thermometer as you go. Even when people are working, it's easy to see how the cost of living pressure can quickly heat up!

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## ADVOCATING FOR CHANGE

Vinnies provides emergency relief in the short term, and financial counselling for people, but we maintain the problem lies in greater structural issues.

You can find an extensive list of articles and publications on our website that can help you get clued up on this and other issues. Advocating to your local council, state and federal representatives is a great way for your concerns to be heard. Join our petitions or write an email.

## CHRISTMAS APPEAL

Across Australia every year in the lead-up to Christmas Vinnies groups collect donations for food hampers, presents, and donations. It's a chance to share hope with people like Kate, who would otherwise have to go without. Families who receive these presents and food hampers are so grateful – the relief and joy is contagious – they're able to give their family a sense of normalcy and dignity.

Write a list of things you would love, then choose one of those things to give to someone else.

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Go here for a quick clip on why people donate  
[bit.ly/whydonatevinnies](http://bit.ly/whydonatevinnies)

## REFUGEES & ASYLUM SEEKERS



*Image from the awesome Just Art advocacy through art competition by Vinnies Victoria!*

### **National CEO of St Vincent de Paul Society Australia, Dr John Falzon shares a few pearls of wisdom:**

“How is it OK to deny people, including children, a place where they can love and be loved, where they can connect with each other instead of being cut off and, sometimes literally, locked out?”

“We can afford to line the pockets of corporations that manage offshore concentration camps in our name, a highly expensive exercise in cruelty and barbarism; carefully constructing limbos to which we consign people

who, as it happens, believe so strongly in Australia that they risk life and limb to come here as they flee the cruelty and barbarism that has sadly overtaken their countries of origin.

“If we want to be clever, if we want to be innovative, these are the very people we should welcome with open arms – people who believe in us, who believe in and desperately want to build a different future with us.”

The St Vincent de Paul Society is a vocal advocate for the rights of refugees and asylum seekers at the local and national level.

Across Australia, we also offer a range of services and programs for newly arrived families of migrant, refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds across Australia. These programs hope to enable newly settled families and communities to become self-reliant, to participate in the broader Australian community, and to develop a shared purpose and a sense of identity and belonging. We also aim to create opportunities to engage with local community.

These services include accommodation and material support, counselling and referrals, and education scholarships, amongst others. Many programs also run such as homework help clubs, learn to swim or drive programs, and social community events.



Go here to see more about our refugee tutoring support programs:

NSW SPARK Program - [bit.ly/nswtutor](https://bit.ly/nswtutor)

QLD VORTCS Program - [bit.ly/qldtutor](https://bit.ly/qldtutor)

VIC Dandenong Program – [bit.ly/victutor](https://bit.ly/victutor)

## HEALTH MATTERS

**Our health can severely impact the way we relate to and contribute to our society.** Experiencing health concerns can make maintaining employment and undertaking day-to-day activities difficult.

Mental health impacts us all. Approximately 45% of Australians aged 16 to 85 are predicted to experience mental health issues such as anxiety, depression or substance abuse at some point in their lifetime.



## OUR HEALTH SERVICES

Every day Vinnies volunteer and professional services help thousands of people experiencing mental health problems. We offer a wide-range of programs and support including home, hospital and prison visitation, social inclusion for people with disabilities, friendship programs, counselling, early intervention youth programs, and much more.

### COMPEER FRIENDSHIP PROGRAM

Since its inception in the USA in 1973, Compeer has become internationally recognised as a valuable adjunct to traditional medical and rehabilitation treatment.

Compeer matches volunteers in one-on-one friendships with people who have become socially isolated due to mental illness. These pairs spend time together enjoying activities like chatting over a coffee, or going to the beach, with the goal of improving the quality of life and self-esteem of adults with a diagnosed mental illness. Compeer promotes social inclusion and the reduction of stigma through friendship which is built around mutual trust, respect and understanding.

*"My world had fallen apart and I felt deserted. My Compeer volunteer was a sudden light in a seemingly endless dark tunnel."*

*True story from a person assisted by Compeer.*



## CHILDREN & EDUCATION

**Many children experiencing disadvantage will continue to experience the hardship of unmet needs, exclusion and limited opportunities into their youth and adulthood.** We're helping young people and their families to try and stop this cycle in its tracks.

Across Australia, our services for children and youth come in many forms, but can include kids' camps, respite programs and homework tutoring. In doing this, Vinnies provides the children and their families a fun outlet or much needed break from the hardships they may be experiencing.

Vinnies is also engaged in early intervention work around the country, to give young children the best start in life. We help families who may be in need of parenting support to assist their children's development. This assistance can take many forms: home visits, parent education and training programs, or broad-based family support.

Our advocacy on education has recently focused on opposition to plans to cut TAFE funding in Australia. We believe that tertiary and vocational training is an important path out of disadvantage, and should be accessible to all. We have written a submission to government on this issue and in support of the Gonski reforms for fairer school funding.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP



**Vinnies has strong connections to hundreds of towns and cities across Australia.** This means we have people in your region that can connect with you through your school/university, share local volunteering opportunities, and link you with our latest campaigns and ways to support our initiatives.

We offer real opportunities for you to make a difference for those within your community, and to advocate on behalf of the broader community. The opportunities are different in every area, because they're designed to support the specific needs of that community, but there's always a way you can help!



Visit [www.vinnies.org.au](http://www.vinnies.org.au) to find out how

731,300 CHILDREN LIVING IN FAMILIES  
BELOW THE POVERTY LINE



There was a 2% increase in children living in families below the poverty line from 2004 to 2014, to 17.4% of all children (ACOSS Report 2016). That's 731,300 children. To help you visualise this figure, let's say the average classroom has 30 kids in it. These kids would make up over 24,000 full classrooms.



## INTERNATIONAL IMPACT

Though our main impact is within our local communities and advocating on behalf of the broader Australian community, we also run various programs to help neighbouring countries within our region. Project planning and fundraising activities typically take place in Australia and are then implemented in countries without our assigned region, which encompasses several countries in Asia and the Asia-Pacific region such as Pakistan, India, Myanmar, Indonesia and the Philippines, plus Vanuatu and Fiji to name just a few.

## OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Australia is twinned in partnership with 14 countries. Our Conferences (the volunteer groups that offer direct assistance to those in their community) support their overseas Conference through spiritual and financial support. The object of the partnership is to assist our twinned countries to move towards self-sufficiency, as we join them in prayer, contact and material support.

These Conferences may, from time to time, receive a project application request from their twinned Conference. These projects are generally under \$2000 and are a project that will serve as an income for the entire Conference.

Projects may include cow and goat banks, water systems, tailoring and other small livelihood projects. They might also be developmental projects to provide technical skills through education and training, or support small enterprises in areas such as garment making, fishing, and food production through farming.

## ASSIST A STUDENT PROGRAM



**This is a national Vinnies initiative that gives you the opportunity to provide funding for an education scholarship to train and educate a student in one of our partner countries in Asia and the Pacific for one year.**

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

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

Anyone can lead this fundraising initiative and contribute your donation online. There are posters, brochures and more information to help you encourage others to get involved. With \$70 you could get a meat pie each month for 12 months, or you could help a child through school. Your call.



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## CONTACT YOUR LOCAL VINNIES TEAM TO GET INVOLVED

ACT: [youth@svdp-cg.org.au](mailto:youth@svdp-cg.org.au)

NSW: [youth@vinnies.org.au](mailto:youth@vinnies.org.au)

NT: [youth@svdpnt.org.au](mailto:youth@svdpnt.org.au)

QLD: [youth@svdpqld.org.au](mailto:youth@svdpqld.org.au)

SA: [youth@svdpsa.org.au](mailto:youth@svdpsa.org.au)

TAS: [admin@vinniestas.org.au](mailto:admin@vinniestas.org.au)

VIC: [youth@svdp-vic.org.au](mailto:youth@svdp-vic.org.au)

WA: [youth@svdpwa.org.au](mailto:youth@svdpwa.org.au)

[vinnies.org.au](http://vinnies.org.au) // [@VinniesAU](https://www.instagram.com/VinniesAU)