



Vinnies
Service Medallion

PROGRAM INFORMATION



WHAT IS THE VINNIES SERVICE MEDALLION (VSM) PROGRAM?

The Vinnies Service Medallion (VSM) is a statewide initiative by the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW that recognises and celebrates the contributions of secondary school students (Years 7–12) to community service, social justice, leadership, advocacy, and fundraising.

The program fosters a culture of civic responsibility and compassion by engaging students in meaningful, real world issues such as poverty, inequality, and community resilience. Through practical volunteering, reflection, and values based initiatives, students are empowered to become leaders of positive change within their schools and communities.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE?

The VSM program is open to all secondary students in Years 7–12 across New South Wales. While many participants engage through a school partnership with Vinnies NSW, students may also participate independently or as part of other community based groups, such as parish youth groups, homeschooling networks, or local service clubs, provided they have a suitable adult supervisor.

The program is intentionally inclusive and accessible. Participation is free of charge, and all students are welcomed regardless of religious, geographic, financial, or academic background.

HOW IS THE VSM PROGRAM STRUCTURED?

The VSM program offers a flexible, tiered model of engagement. Students can begin at any point during high school and progress at a pace that suits them:



Bronze Certificate – Introductory engagement (e.g. group fundraising, awareness campaigns)



Bronze Medallion – Continued participation and reflection through additional initiatives



Silver Certificate – Volunteering with Vinnies, plus school based leadership for Vinnies initiatives or appeals



Silver Medallion – Demonstrated initiative, time commitment and peer support/mentorship



Gold Level – A student led project and advocacy effort reflecting sustained impact and commitment

Accelerated or mid year entry pathways are available. The VSM team and Vinnies School Engagement Officers can tailor plans to ensure equitable recognition.

WHAT DO STUDENTS GAIN FROM PARTICIPATING?



Skills: Leadership, teamwork, communication, initiative



Experience: Real world engagement with community needs and social justice issues



Recognition: Certificates, medallions, and school acknowledgment



Pathways: Evidence for scholarship applications, employment readiness, and tertiary entrance



Impact: A chance to make meaningful change in your community and beyond

WHAT TYPES OF OPPORTUNITIES ARE AVAILABLE?

Students can take part in a diverse range of VSM approved initiatives aligned with social justice themes. These may include:

- Preparing snack packs, hampers, or toiletry kits for people in need
- Fundraising for Vinnies appeals or emergency relief efforts
- Volunteering in Vinnies Retail or local support centres
- Participating in awareness campaigns, school sleepouts, or advocacy projects
- Supporting community events, drives, or peer engagement activities

Initiatives can be completed individually or in groups and are designed to reflect student interests and community needs. Activities are scalable and flexible, allowing participation across school types and regional contexts.



WHAT IS REQUIRED OF A VSM FACILITATOR?

Each participating school, individual or community group is asked to nominate a VSM facilitator to help coordinate student engagement. This person can be any staff member, youth worker, or adult supervisor, there are no formal teaching or leadership requirements.

- In a school setting, this could be a Well-being Coordinator, Religious Education Teacher, or any interested Staff Member.
- In a parish or community setting, it may be a Youth Worker or local group leader.
- For independent students, a parent or guardian may act as the supervisor.

Facilitators are supported by the VSM team and are primarily responsible for:

- Being the main point of contact for their group/ student
- Encouraging student engagement with initiatives
- Confirming completion and participation for recognition purposes
- Liaising with the VSM team and Engagement Officers if support or clarification is needed

The role is intentionally low burden – facilitators do not need to run lessons or assess student work. Engagement is what matters most.



HOW IS THE VSM PROGRAM DELIVERED?

The VSM is designed to be flexible and adaptable to different school or community contexts. It is not a formal subject or curriculum - it is a recognition based framework that acknowledges existing service and encourages engagement.

Program delivery typically includes:

- **Student-led participation** in approved VSM initiatives (e.g. drives, volunteering, awareness activities)
- **Online evidence submission** by students with a brief description and photo evidence
- **Facilitator sign-off** confirming engagement (no grading or marking required)
- **Mid- and end-of-year reminders** from the VSM team to support recognition timelines
- **Optional reflection tools** (e.g. journals, guided questions) to deepen learning and personal growth

This delivery model ensures the program remains accessible for busy schools and flexible enough to suit different learning environments.

OUR VISION AND COMMITMENT

The Vinnies Service Medallion is more than a recognition program, it is a pathway for students to live out their values, stand up for justice, and make a lasting impact in their communities.

Whether participating through school, parish, or independently, every student brings unique strengths to the table. We are committed to making this program accessible, meaningful, and empowering for all young people, no matter where they come from or how they participate.

Together, we are nurturing a generation of changemakers grounded in compassion, courage, and community. **Change starts here!**

HOW CAN SCHOOLS SIGN UP OR LEARN MORE?

Schools or community groups interested in participating, or students looking to join independently, can register online: youthnsw.vinnies.org.au/vinnies-service-medallion or contact the VSM team at vsm@vinnies.org.au for more information. The VSM team provides full support including onboarding materials, initiative guides, facilitator tools, and flexible rollout options.



Vinnies
good works



Vinnies
Service Medallion

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT

Maggie Lipu
Service Medallion Coordinator
Email: vsm@vinnies.org.au