



170 *years* *of* GOOD WORKS



St Vincent de Paul Society
VICTORIA
good works

IMPACT REPORT

2023–2024

OUR *impact*



\$20,540,739

GOOD WORKS

Assistance provided



5.8%

INCREASE

In assistance provided



115,076

CONFERENCES

Home visits



809,299

SOUP VANS

Meals provided



65,305

CALL CENTRE

Welfare calls



11,955

EDUCATION

Student contact hours

OUR EDITORIAL TEAM

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The editorial team would like to thank the community of writers and photographers who are captured in this report, as well as the people who have graciously shared their stories with us.

DESIGN: Bite Visual Communications Group

PRINTING: Doran Printing

PROOFREADER: Anne Findlay

PHOTOGRAPHY: Multiple contributors, including iStockphotos. Consent is required to reproduce images within this report.

The St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria is dedicated to delivering care, compassion and crucial assistance to thousands of vulnerable individuals in Victoria each year.

With the generous support from our donors and partners, our team of dedicated members, volunteers and employees consistently work towards transforming lives through various programs and services.

Our assistance covers a range of essential support, including food, emergency housing, school equipment, pharmacy expenses, fuel, utility bills – and beyond.

In addition to material aid, members and volunteers offer emotional support, emphasising a holistic approach that upholds dignity, empowerment and sustainable paths to positive change.

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OUR PATRON

Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Margaret Gardner AC, Governor of Victoria

Our organisation's official name is the St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria. However, over the years and throughout this document we have used abbreviations and variations. The most recognisable of these are: the St Vincent de Paul Society, the Society, Vinnies Victoria and Vinnies.

ABOUT *us*

The St Vincent de Paul Society was founded in 1833 in France by 20-year-old Frederic Ozanam.

He and his fellow university students helped people struggling to survive in the poorer suburbs of Paris by giving them practical assistance. Frederic's focus was on getting to know people and their struggles so that he could understand the causes of poverty and advocate for change.

Frederic's vision became a worldwide movement and just two decades later, the first Australian conference was founded by Father Gerald Ward at St Francis' Church in Melbourne on 5 March 1854.

This year, 5 March 2024, marked the 170th anniversary of the St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia. Our 170-year history has witnessed and recognises that there have been many common threads over the decades including: cost-of-living pressures, lack of secure and affordable housing, the impact of inhumane practices and natural disasters.

The one constant has always been the St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria's readiness to respond to human distress, poverty and disadvantage in its many guises. We respond with compassion and non-judgement.

This year we celebrated our milestone with specific events: the Ozanam Oration with guest speaker Age Discrimination Commissioner Robert Fitzgerald AM and a commemorative Anniversary Mass at St Francis' Church in March. In May, we held the Good Works Exhibition at Xavier College that featured an interactive timeline from 1854 to 2024, four representative portraits of the Society's work and support provided as well as a banner of hope created with artwork by our Mini Vinnies and College Conferences.

As stated in *The Rule*, '...the Society constantly strives for renewal, adapting to changing world conditions. It seeks to be ever aware of the changes that occur in human society and the new types of poverty that may be identified or anticipated*.'

This is our mission and our promise to fellow Victorians.

EVERYONE'S SOCIETY JOURNEY IS DIFFERENT, MEET...



MARGARET
OATS AO



FRANK
MULLINS



DIANA
CONNELL



GARRY
LIAKOUREAS

* *The Rule, Part 1, Article 1.6. The Rule and International Statutes govern the operations of the Confederation of the St Vincent de Paul Society. The Rule – our set of founding principles – calls us to fight against suffering, take responsibility for poverty and inequality and promote human dignity. The current version was approved during a Rome Special general meeting in October 2003.*



OUR MISSION

The St Vincent de Paul 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.

OUR VISION

The St Vincent de Paul Society aspires to be recognised as a caring Catholic charity offering a 'hand up' to people in need. We do this by respecting their dignity, sharing our hope and encouraging them to take control of their own destiny.

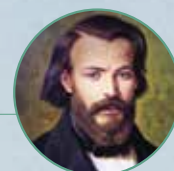
OUR VALUES



ST VINCENT DE PAUL
SOCIETY ESTABLISHED
IN PARIS, FRANCE

St Vincent de Paul Society
is founded by Frederic Ozanam
in Paris on 23 April.

1833





**CELEBRATING
170 YEARS OF
OUR GOOD WORKS**



In Australia, St Vincent de Paul Society begins on 5 March at St Francis' Church, Melbourne and founded by Father Gerald Ward.

1854



STATE PRESIDENT'S message



This year marked the 170th anniversary of the St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia.

While the world has changed dramatically over this time, sadly, the challenges faced by people in need within our community remain. In response to this ever-present need, we, as Vincentians, remain steadfast in our call to serve and to put our faith into action.

In the last year alone, we received more than 65,000 requests for help through our volunteer-led Welfare Assistance Call Centre. In response, our members visited more than 115,000 homes and, during the year, we provided \$20.5 million in assistance to individuals and families in need of a hand up.

This incredible outreach reflects the courage and dedication of our members, volunteers and employees, who carry forward the spirit and values our founders established nearly two centuries ago.

As we look to the future, *The Rule* reminds us that '...the Society constantly strives for renewal, adapting to changing world conditions'*.

While the needs of our community may change over time, our mission to uplift, to empower and to provide companionship to people facing challenges remains constant. Each call answered, every visit made and every meal provided reinforces our commitment to fostering dignity and respect for all. The personal connections we make are more than just acts of charity; they are affirmations of our shared humanity and the embodiment of Christ's love for us.

At the Anniversary Mass on 5 March at St Francis' Church, I took a moment to reflect on the incredible impact the Vincentian movement continues to have in Victoria. It was truly humbling to stand on the very site where Father Gerard Ward and his fellow founders began their mission to alleviate suffering all those years ago. Thanks to his vision and their collective faith in action, we've grown from that first small conference into a vibrant community of 267 conferences, dedicated to upholding our guiding Vincentian principles – serving anyone in need 'regardless of creed, ethnic or social background, gender or political opinion'^.

As we honour our 170-year legacy, I would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to every member, volunteer, supporter and partner who has helped us this past year. Your commitment not only drives our work but also brings hope to the people we serve. Together, let's continue to build a fairer, kinder society and ensure the spirit of Vincentian service shines brightly both now and into the future.

Michael Quinn
State President



* *The Rule, Part 1, Article 1.6*
^ *The Rule, Part 1, Article 1.4*

St Vincent de Paul Orphanage foundation stone is laid in October and opens in 1857. This is the first special work of the Society.



1855

St Mary's Conference (Geelong) begins on 18 July and is the first women's conference in Victoria.



1874

CEO'S message



For over 170 years, the spirit of the Vincentian movement has been a constant and compassionate companion to the most vulnerable in our community.

Every day, we stay true to our mission, putting our faith into action by providing practical support in times of crisis and developing long-term solutions that help individuals get back on their feet and restore their hope for the future.

This year, we've faced a staggering increase in demand for our services due to the ongoing cost-of-living crisis. Our Welfare Assistance Call Centre alone has seen a significant rise in requests for support compared to last year, with many individuals seeking help for the first time.

In response, we quickly increased our soup van runs and special works programs, delivering 800,000+ meals across Victoria. We also expanded our services in the Western and South Eastern suburbs, establishing a new stop in Richmond to meet the growing needs in these areas.

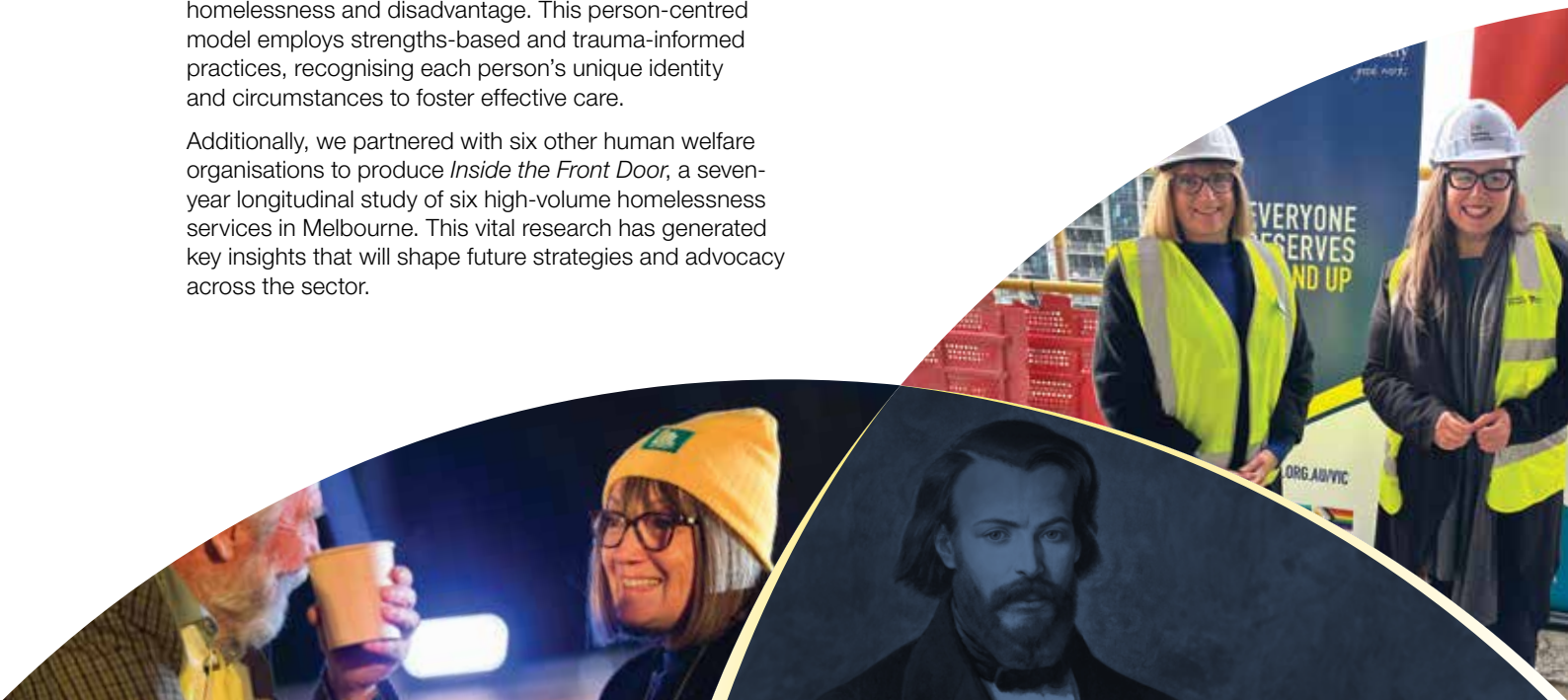
In early 2024, we published the *VincentCare Recovery Model*, an innovative framework that outlines our unique approach to supporting individuals experiencing homelessness and disadvantage. This person-centred model employs strengths-based and trauma-informed practices, recognising each person's unique identity and circumstances to foster effective care.

Additionally, we partnered with six other human welfare organisations to produce *Inside the Front Door*, a seven-year longitudinal study of six high-volume homelessness services in Melbourne. This vital research has generated key insights that will shape future strategies and advocacy across the sector.

In alignment with our commitment to address systemic issues related to homelessness and intergenerational poverty, our housing agency, VincentCare Community Housing, secured funding for three housing developments in Footscray, Wollert and Bendigo through the Big Housing Build partnership with the Victorian Government. These developments will provide 185 homes for vulnerable Victorians, many of whom have never experienced the safety and stability of a place to call home.

In closing, I want to express my gratitude to our dedicated members, volunteers and employees who have tirelessly supported our mission this year. As we look to the future, we remain a united force for good, resolute in our commitment to making a positive difference in the lives of the people we serve.

Dr Jennifer Fitzgerald
Chief Executive Officer



Night refuge for men commences in August. The refuge, housing 20–30 men, is established in Collingwood. It stops operation in 1904.



1887

Port visitation commences providing support to sailors arriving on ships docked in Port Melbourne, Williamstown and Geelong.



1889

OUR *voice*

For 170 years, the St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria has been a steadfast advocate championing social justice, fairness and equality. Our commitment to Victorians remains strong and true to Frederic Ozanam's legacy of delivering tangible, life-changing support while advocating for positive systemic change through providing essential resources or amplifying the voices of people that go unheard.

Over the decades, we have made a profound, positive impact, helping individuals and families through times of crisis, economic and personal hardship and social injustice. Today, as we continue to face new challenges like an escalating cost-of-living and a dire affordable-housing crisis, climate change consequences and soaring energy costs, our work has evolved to adapt to these changes.

Our advocacy work ensures that no one is deprived of their human rights, has equal and fair access to fundamental resources, such as sufficient and adequate food, education, safe and secure housing and access to healthcare.

Our work this year has expanded, engaging more people and reaching more communities than ever before. Much like Frederic Ozanam carrying firewood into the homes of people who needed it, we are continuing to support vulnerable households.

Through the release of our energy cost changes in the Victorian Tariff Tracker reports, we highlight the shifting energy landscape and help people navigate rising costs while advocating for fairer access to affordable energy. An online forum chaired by our Manager Policy & Research, Gavin Dufty, about available utility assistance drew wide attendance from conference members across Victoria. In a time when energy costs are skyrocketing, these discussions are vital in helping our members and volunteers support vulnerable households.

We also intensified our efforts in addressing domestic violence through our continued involvement with Catholic Social Services Victoria's Family & Domestic Violence Working Party. This

initiative saw the organisation of two highly successful online information sessions, providing critical resources to members.

Our advocacy extends far beyond immediate relief. Our involvement in the University of Melbourne's research project, which included interviews in Morwell with companions and members, has helped us better understand the complexities of poverty and housing insecurity. The insights gained from these interviews and the research will inform future efforts to address the root causes of homelessness and disadvantage.

Beyond our strategic initiatives, we continue to offer direct impactful support to Victorians in need. Our partnership with AUSNET resulted in the donation of 200 laptops, which were distributed to families who otherwise could not afford them. By providing these laptops we secured educational opportunities for the families, assisting children to do their schoolwork and parents to gain access to professional development, helping them to secure job opportunities, but also giving the families a sense of connection and hope for the future.

Through our continued representation on the Network of Asylum Seekers Agencies in Victoria, we remain at the forefront of supporting refugees and asylum seekers. By sharing critical information such as medical and legal consultation, we ensure that the most marginalised members of society receive the care and support they deserve.

By continuing and strengthening our advocacy work, we carry on Frederic Ozanam's mission – providing relief today and advocating for systemic change that will protect our communities tomorrow.

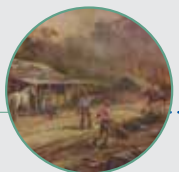
St Vincent de Paul Society in Victoria appoints first president, Francis Healy.



1890



Red Tuesday Bushfires on 1 February is the first disaster relief appeal where support is provided to people affected by the fires.



1898

OUR works

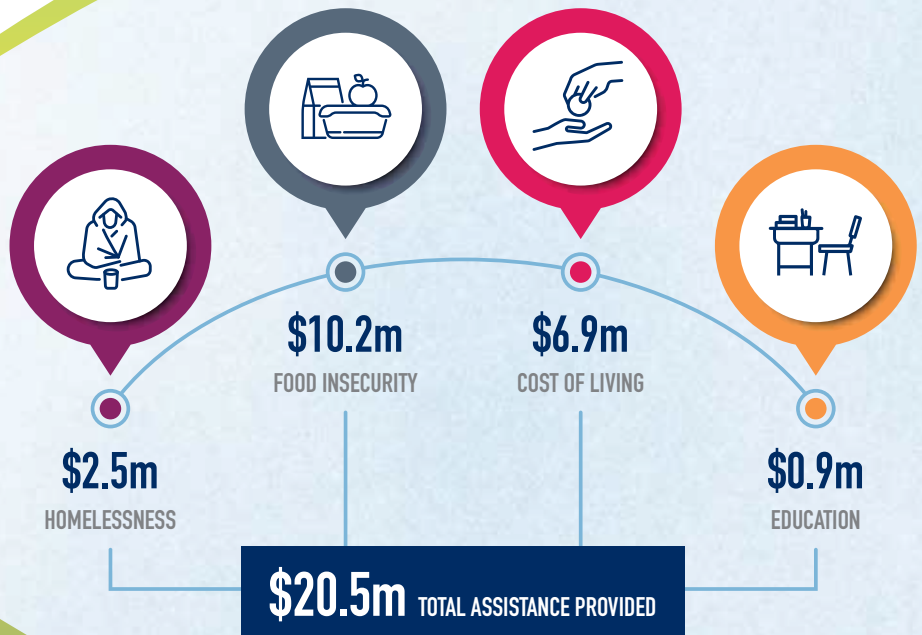
The St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria has provided \$20.5 million in assistance through our core works of homelessness, food insecurity, cost of living and education.



5.8%

INCREASE

In assistance provided since last year



St Augustine's Sailors' Conference is a special works conference and officially begins to visit ships in port and provide assistance to seamen.

1902



50 years of St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia.

1904

GOOD shelters

As far back as the mid-1850s, the founder of the St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia, Father Gerald Ward, recognised that homelessness was not only the absence of shelter but also a lack of community connection.

Our members, volunteers and crisis teams understand that a safe roof overhead is often the first step toward a life of new possibilities. Through their daily interactions with the people we assist, they listen, acknowledge the problems and provide comprehensive 'wrap-around' support that addresses the root causes of homelessness, while offering ongoing care to help individuals rebuild their lives.

At heart, every person we house brings us one step closer to creating a stronger, more compassionate community for all.

LUKE'S STORY

Luke* is part of a group known as the working homeless – people with jobs, yet unable to secure a place to live and spend their nights in cars, tents or relying on the goodwill of others.

Luke works full-time at a bakery and supports his elderly father, Colin*, who suffers from a variety of health issues.

Luke's current situation began when the owner of the home he lived in opted to sell, leaving him and his father to stay with a family member.

What was meant to be a temporary stay, while he looked for a new home, became a disheartening cycle of rejection made worse by an untenable living situation.

Moving into a boarding house and subsequently sleeping in a vacant building, the pair were abruptly moved on by an owner, who threatened to call the police. Finally having no other choice, Luke and Colin had to face the reality of living in a tent.

The circumstances faced by Luke are tough and, sadly, increasingly familiar to the St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria as housing becomes less secure.

Currently staying in crisis accommodation provided by our organisation, Luke has seen immediate improvements from having more stable housing. Our volunteers have also helped by providing food and assistance to get Colin admitted to hospital for treatment.

"Getting all the food and eating healthy – I was losing a lot of weight and now I'm eating healthy, which I'm happy about."

The Society is continuing to support Luke and Colin, including paying for a service to look after their dog, as Luke continues to look for a secure place to call home.

"I'm doing a bit better at the moment," says Luke. "I've got the right people around us and what I'm hoping for is long-term housing after this."

**Names and images changed for privacy reasons.*

Our Lady's Hospital Mission is a special work where hospital visitation is formalised.

1905



Xavier College begins on 16 August and is the first school conference established.

1908



\$2,914,723

assistance
provided



CLICK TO WATCH



The first Vinnies Shop in Victoria opens on King Street, Melbourne. In 1927 the shop moves to its present site in Ascot Vale.

1926



GOOD supports

Established in 2003 by the St Vincent de Paul Society, VincentCare is committed to assisting vulnerable Victorians experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness.

VincentCare's specialist homelessness support programs, crisis accommodation, family violence services, financial counselling and capability services and alcohol and other drug recovery services are delivered by highly trained employees and practitioners.

VincentCare recognises that factors leading to homelessness are multifaceted and that clients often present with a range of complex issues including trauma, that is inextricably linked to homelessness.

We know that the main drivers of homelessness are family violence, financial difficulties and alcohol and other drug misuse.

Through ongoing consultations with clients, and working from a strong evidence base, including understanding the external operating environment and global trends, VincentCare continues to be at the forefront of supporting and caring for Victoria's most vulnerable.

INNER MELBOURNE COMMUNITY HUB

The Inner Melbourne Community Hub is based in North Melbourne and Fitzroy and provides a range of services including crisis accommodation, intensive case management, drop-in support, health promotion, meals and social inclusion activities.

GINO'S STORY

Gino* walked into VincentCare's Ozanam House at a time when his life had taken a devastating turn. Having lost his job, his home and cutting family ties, he had been wandering the streets of Melbourne, experiencing homelessness, feeling alone, isolated and grappling with despair.

Initially his visit to Ozanam House was simply to get a meal but Gino soon realised Ozanam House was also a safe place, where he could quietly sit at a table reading, away from the noises of the outside world. The atmosphere, created by VincentCare's support team, allowed him to breathe again.

Gino returned daily and, over time, the support team began to sit with him, engaging in gentle conversations that acknowledged his struggles. They listened as he shared his feelings of isolation and longing for his estranged family, which he admitted was the hardest part to cope with.

With time, Gino became receptive to the team's suggestions to connect him to a range of services available at Ozanam House, including physical and mental health care, financial counselling and legal assistance.

Gino was also supported in his search for transitional housing to help him rebuild the foundations of his life. Today, Gino is giving back to his community being a client volunteer supporting others and has reconnected with his family.

"When I was homeless, I felt like I was trapped in a crushing dark. I didn't want to talk because I had forgotten how to, and I was full of shame. Ozanam House pulled me out of the darkness. For that, I will always love them."

*Names and images changed for privacy reasons.

Prison Visitation program begins on 31 May at Pentridge Gaol.



1936

Men's Night Shelter purchase of land in Flemington Road, North Melbourne to build Ozanam House.



1948



HUME COMMUNITY HUB

Hume Community Hub is a one-stop-shop for people who experience family violence, financial disadvantage and social isolation. Services offered include family violence crisis support and case management, financial counselling and assistance, emergency relief support and outreach for people in isolated communities.

LARISSA'S STORY

When Larissa* reached out to VincentCare's Hume Community Hub, she had barely escaped a living nightmare. One that threatened her life and shattered her hope for a peaceful future with her husband and newborn child.

Little did she know that with the approval of her husband's visa, the beautiful life she had envisioned became an escalating situation of violence that culminated in a terrifying attempt on her life.

Larissa was forced to escape the family home she had rented and lovingly furnished with her own savings.

VincentCare's Marian Community provided Larissa with 24/7 specialist family violence support and the team stepped in when she needed it most. They helped her escape and manage the dangerous situation while also connecting her with the Financial Counselling & Capability team, developing strategies to help her manage her finances and build her capacity.

Although employed, finding a new home proved difficult for Larissa, who had to move in with her mother, sharing a tiny apartment.

"Landlords often turned me away, wary of renting to someone with a history of domestic violence, fearing potential damage or fights," she says.

Despite these challenges and thanks to the support of VincentCare's team, Larissa is beginning to rebuild her life and create a safe, loving environment for her baby girl while also becoming an advocate for other domestic violence survivors.

NORTHERN COMMUNITY HUB

Behind an unassuming door at a shopping strip in the working-class suburb of Glenroy, the Northern Community Hub provides flexible and innovative responses to homelessness and housing instability for people living in Hume, Merri-bek and local government areas in Melbourne's west.

ARI'S STORY

The journey to safe and stable housing, has been longer and harder for Ari*, a young trans man. His struggles to find a home began with a non-accepting environment of his true identity.

Ari faced the harsh reality of homelessness: couch surfing, sleeping in precarious situations and spending numerous nights in his car with his only friend, Nibbles*, the cat. He was also worried about losing his job due to his fluctuating circumstances.

However, when Ari connected with our Northern Community Hub in Glenroy, he finally didn't have to navigate these challenges alone and, with our VincentCare team offering and linking him to the right support systems, his path began to change.

Ari's support worker found an interim caring solution for Nibbles and secured a spot for Ari in transitional housing accommodation – a much-needed respite from the constant stress of not knowing where he would sleep next.

The challenges didn't stop though. As Ari continued his housing journey, he encountered significant difficulties in applying for private rental due to the discrepancies between his identity documents from before and after his transition – a process that can take a long time.

VincentCare stepped in with tailored, rainbow-friendly accredited support. His support workers helped him navigate these complexities, providing guidance and understanding. He also completed a Certificate III in Business.

Today, Ari has a place to call home – an apartment where he is reunited with Nibbles and can finally build a new life.

CLICK TO WATCH



Maribyrnong Migrant Hut a committee of special works begins on 25 May to assist arriving migrants displaced by the war with accommodation and advice.

1952



100 years of St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia.

1954

GOOD *builds*

At the heart of the St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria's mission '...to promote human dignity and personal integrity in all their dimensions'* lies the recognition that safe and secure housing is essential for achieving these goals.

In alignment with it, since our early days in Victoria, helping the most vulnerable find stable housing has been central to our mission. Facing today's pressing housing crisis in Victoria, we continue this vital work and are more dedicated than ever to addressing the growing challenges of our client and companions in the housing sector.

VincentCare Community Housing is a subsidiary of VincentCare and a respected community housing provider. It currently manages 270+ properties, working closely with our homelessness and crisis services. All properties are managed under the provisions of the Residential Tenancies Act and renters have the same rights and responsibilities as any other renter across Victoria.

We are also standing at the forefront of initiatives like the \$5.3 billion Big Housing Build in partnership with Homes Victoria and the Victorian Government. They will ensure that Victorians in need – adults and children – have access to 185 safe, secure and affordable homes.

These initiatives are not just about building homes; they are about building communities and offering hope to people in need. They will provide individuals and families with stability and the foundation they need to live with autonomy, rebuild their lives and fully engage in society

Our three projects are well underway.

FOOTSCRAY

Reaching its topping out milestone this year, the Footscray project now has its 18 levels completed, marking a significant achievement in the construction timeline. This residential social build will comprise 92 units including 28 one-bedroom, 58 two-bedroom and six three-bedroom homes alongside ground floor office space and parking facilities.

The project celebrated this milestone with a special event attended by the Victorian Minister for Housing, Harriet Shing, who acknowledged the importance of the initiative in addressing the housing needs of the community.

The Footscray project is now in its final fitout stage of construction including installation of windows. Completion of this project is anticipated for early 2025.

WOLLERT

The groundbreaking ceremony for the Wollert project was held in April 2024, marking the official commencement of the construction of nine new homes. This project will consist of four two-bedroom and five three-bedroom townhouses and is well underway. Victorian Minister for Housing, Harriet Shing, attended the groundbreaking.

BENDIGO

Planning for the work on the redevelopment of our 30 independent living units in Bendigo has officially commenced. The Bendigo project will be executed in stages to minimise disruption to our current residents. Initially we will build new homes on the vacant land and, once completed, existing residents will transition into brand-new accommodation. Subsequently, the existing units will be demolished and replaced with additional new dwellings.

This project will deliver 84 new properties including 64 one-bedroom and 20 two-bedroom homes.

* The Rule, Part 1, Article 1.3

CLICK TO WATCH



Ozanam House opens on 4 September and is the only free night shelter in the city providing beds, meals and lunches to homeless men.

1955



Prison visitation begins on 7 October at Geelong Training Prison.

1956





WOLLERT



BENDIGO



FOOTSCRAY

Twinning partnerships begin as 'a fraternal network of conferences in developed and developing countries in which Victoria was to play a part'.

1960



Fitzroy Mobile Conference begins providing support and visits by members to families and individuals needing assistance in the surrounding flats, boarding houses and homes.

1971



GOOD nourishes

When we think of food insecurity, we often think of developing countries, but it is a reality here in Victoria for many people, including families with young children, who have been stretched by rising costs.

Volunteers with the St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria see people every day who cannot afford that most basic of needs – nourishing food – and our statistics indicate that food insecurity is growing. That is why ensuring all people have access to healthy, nutritious and appropriate food is one of our top priorities.

The St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria has various services in place to assist people in need such as our soup vans which deliver meals, hampers, rough sleeper packs and, just as important, friendship to people struggling.

LINDA'S STORY

Linda's* daughter, a single mother, faced severe personal challenges and health issues, leaving Linda to care for her two grandchildren, Lily, aged four and Jack, six.

As a grandmother, she didn't hesitate to step in to help but it has been a struggle for her on a small pension. Even with her efforts to teach English for a small fee, it is hard to make ends meet.

Linda walks Jack to school while carrying Lily because she refuses to use the stroller which is just one of the many challenges she faces.

Linda's income is stretched thin covering rent, utilities and medication for herself and for Lily who has eczema.

She also wants only the best for Lily and Jack and the hardest part is knowing that her grandchildren might miss out on a joyful, carefree childhood due to the financial constraints she encounters.

With the support of the St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria, Linda is now able to provide fresh fruit, vegetables and healthy food to put on the table that she wouldn't otherwise be able to afford.

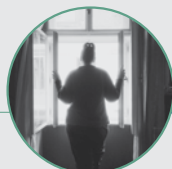
"This ensures Lily and Jack have the nutrition they need to grow and thrive," says Linda, pointing out that the recent increase in food prices has made it even harder for families on tight budgets. "Seeing the joy on Jack or Lily's faces when they enjoy the hot chocolate, they get from the soup van volunteer is so special. That little bit extra from Vinnies has made a big difference."

Linda is grateful for the Vinnies Soup Vans who have been a lifeline. She was hesitant to queue up at first, but the volunteers quickly made the family feel welcome. "The volunteers are angels in disguise," she says, "ensuring my grandkids don't go hungry and I always have someone to talk to."

**Names and images changed for privacy reasons.*

Cortona, our first emergency accommodation for women, begins on 22 February.

1974



Fitzroy Soup Van begins on 26 June. It is the first soup van service.

1975





\$10,239,512

assistance
provided



Quin House begins providing a 12-week supported accommodation program for adult males with a substance dependency.

1975



First independent living units open in Bendigo and on land donated by the Diocese of Sandhurst.

1979



GOOD *assists*

More and more people are struggling to keep a roof over their heads and put food on the table as the cost of living continues to rise.

People on low incomes are finding it harder than ever to make ends meet as rent, mortgage rates, utility bills and the cost of essential services escalate.

Our cost-of-living programs cover a wide range of services, including advocating to utility or credit providers and assistance to access utility discounts; emergency financial support; paying pharmacy costs; and advocacy.

For the people who are doing it tough, our assistance provides hope and takes the pressure off individuals and families who are struggling.

PEDI & AMEERA'S STORY

The journey of Pedi* and Ameera* is a story of hope and resilience. It illustrates how our members and volunteers initially provide essential assistance and then go further to offer educational and emotional support, empowering people to rebuild their lives.

Pedi arrived in Australia as a refugee seeking safety and a fresh start. He met his wife, Ameera, in Victoria, and the couple now have two young children. Pedi is unable to work due to his visa status and, in addition, he is battling severe health issues.

Having sold their belongings to cover rent and necessities, the couple were struggling to make ends meet and turned to their local conference for help. Conference members have provided ongoing support including food, financial assistance, essential items and much needed emotional support during the tough times.

One conference member, Sarah, who is a teacher, began tutoring Ameera in English, helping her gain confidence and improve her chances of finding employment. She also accompanied Ameera when she began job hunting, walking from business to business to distribute her CV. Moved by Ameera's determination, a local business offered her a casual position.

Although the job is a crucial step towards financial independence, it does not provide a stable income and so the conference continues to support the family with basic needs.

The St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria's involvement in their journey is part of its larger mission to support migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, driven by the commitment to achieve fairness, social justice and access to human rights for everyone.

**Names and images changed for privacy reasons.*

CLICK TO WATCH



Marian House begins providing emergency accommodation for women and their children escaping domestic violence.

1980



Pope John Paul II visits Ozanam House on 28 November.

1986





\$6,930,452

assistance provided

Kids camps begin as an initiative by Vinnies Youth providing respite and activities for kids.



1993

First Thanksgiving Mass event held on 12 November remembering the Vincentians who had passed away over the previous 12 months.



1996

GOOD *educates*

Every child has the right to education. It's a Human Right. However, young people from families experiencing social and economic disadvantage or who are refugees often need support to get the best outcomes.

St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria provides that support by helping with education costs, such as books, uniforms and any essential course-related items required.

We also offer free education programs, providing students with tutoring that makes a world of difference and can truly transform the course of a young person's life. We firmly believe that access to education is the most empowering pathway out of disadvantage.

LINH & MAI'S STORY

Linh*, a dedicated single mother in her mid-30s, runs a milk bar while caring for two children, her 15-year-old daughter and son, five. She arrived in Australia with her husband and children in 2015, and the couple established the family business, which quickly became cherished by the community.

However, Linh's husband found the challenges of adapting to a new culture and an expanding family, as well as managing a new business, overwhelming and left her to cope alone. Linh took on the responsibility of running the milk bar and caring for the children, but without family support it quickly took its toll.

Mai* is a gifted student with a promising academic future but, witnessing her mother's struggles, she decided she would leave school to support her mum. Linh refused. She did not want Mai's dreams of attending university to slip away.

However, when the booklist for the next school year arrived and new bills piled up, Linh realised they couldn't afford the

school fees – although modest – nor the required uniform and laptop.

When the financial strain became too much Linh shared her worries with one of her regular customers, who contacted the local conference.

They were able to support Linh and provided Mai with the essential educational resources and ensured she had a laptop, books and the proper uniform. This support enabled Mai to continue her education and relieved Linh of a significant burden.

The St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria continues to make a profound impact, providing hope and opportunities for families like Linh and Mai's. Their journey showcases the transformative effect of community support and the belief that education is a powerful tool for breaking the cycle of poverty.

**Names and images changed for privacy reasons.*

The inaugural Roadshow went to Sale, Traralgon and Warragul for a week-long program during the July school holidays, providing recreational activities for regional children aged between six and 12.



2003



150 years of St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia a week of celebrations 19-23 May.

2004



\$883,459

assistance
provided



Mini Vinnies program begins at Resurrection Primary School, Keysborough.



2005

Olive's Place joins the St Vincent de Paul Society's programs supporting women and children escaping family violence.



2007

GOOD *serves*

Cost-of-living pressures and an increase in demand for our services has resulted in a very busy year for our Vinnies Shops with the opening of four new shops as well as a new initiative called PopUP by Vinnies.

Our first PopUP shop, launched in March 2024, was located at Docklands for four-weeks and offered a wide range of pre-loved goods, brand-new products and corporate donations that were collected over the past year.

Vinnies Shops are the preferred choice for buying second hand goods in Victoria*. Our ability to serve the community relies solely on the kindness and generosity of the people and businesses who donate items to us. The funds raised through our shops support our programs and services and are a direct result of need in the community.

LACHLAN'S STORY

Fuelled by a desire to make a difference and help others, Lachlan, at 23, has already made significant strides.

Lachlan, who graduated from Balwyn High School in 2019 and has recently worked as a support worker, embarked on a new journey that would open pathways that would lead him to the St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria.

Drawn to the organisation's commitment to supporting people in need with the money raised through Vinnies Shops, Lachlan applied to become a volunteer.

"One of the main reasons I applied to volunteer at Vinnies is because I can directly see how the revenue I help raise translates into tangible assistance for vulnerable people in our community. It's incredibly fulfilling to witness the impact of my efforts in real-time," he shares.

Lachlan quickly found his way the moment he stepped into Vinnies Kew. With a warm greeting from the team, he then found his niche in the media section of the shop.

Movies, music, CDs, records and cassettes are Lachlan's passion. He says that it's an absolute joy for him to sort through the donated items, price them and uncover hidden treasures with each new batch that comes through the door. Lachlan's passion has revitalised the media section and resulted in increasing customers' interest.

"Working alongside a diverse group of volunteers and interacting with customers from various backgrounds has helped me develop better communication skills and a greater understanding," he said.

Lachlan has also been chosen to participate in the charity's Future Leaders program – a free program designed to equip selected volunteers with specific workplace training. Through this initiative he has also been offered part-time employment, which Lachlan is very happy about.

Lachlan's story serves as a testament to the power of volunteering and the profound impact it can have on individuals and communities alike. With his unwavering dedication and commitment to service, Lachlan exemplifies the spirit of Vinnies.

*Wallis Social, Customer Research Report, August 2024.

CLICK TO WATCH



Education programs begin with tutoring and reading club programs in Dandenong (7 April) and Heidelberg West (22 July).

2008



Black Saturday bushfires on 7 February sees the mobilisation of conferences to assist areas impacted.

2009



\$4,346,875

assistance
provided



Vinnies CEO Sleepout is held nationally for the first year to raise much-needed funds as well as awareness.



2010

GOOD *gives*

This year, the St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria celebrates 170 years of service to people in need, driven by our mission to combat poverty and inequity within our community.

Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, including participants in the 2024 Vinnies CEO Sleepout, we continue to make a profound difference in the lives of people facing hardship.

Funds raised from the 2024 Vinnies CEO Sleepout have been instrumental in the redevelopment and refurbishment of the Ozanam House kitchen facility, the development of a Vinnies Soup Van Hub in Dandenong – an area of great need – and in providing vital support for our conference work.

In the past financial year, our donors contributed an incredible \$10 million, with \$1.4 million raised during the Vinnies CEO Sleepout and \$2.7 million from our Gift in Wills program. Every donation allows us to provide assistance to individuals and families during their times of struggle and empowers us to offer that little bit extra.

Last year, your generosity directly supported individuals like:

- » Ted*, a father of four, who struggled with school expenses and the rising cost of living. Through his local conference, he received critical support at the right time.
- » Luke* and Colin*, who lived in a tent after losing their rented home despite Luke working full-time. Our generous contributors enabled us to step in to provide assistance with food, medication and temporary accommodation.
- » Linda*, a grandmother caring for her two grandchildren on a small pension, who receives healthy food and fresh vegetables through our soup vans. Thanks to the kindness of our supporters for helping us keep the wheels of our soup vans running.

**Names and images changed for privacy reasons.*

This year's Vinnies CEO Sleepout was a powerful event with 6,000+ supporters for the 250+ CEOs braving one of Melbourne's coldest nights at The Timber Yard.

The theme, #TimeForChange, highlighted the urgent need to address the housing crisis. With over 67,000 applications on Victoria's social housing waitlist – including 37,000 priority cases – an estimated 60,000 new social housing properties are needed in the next decade.

We extend special thanks to Chris Christofi, who raised \$137,447, making him the top individual fundraiser this year and to Woodards, the highest fundraising team with an incredible \$150,036.

We are immensely grateful to our donors, corporate partners and individuals who have included us in their Wills, ensuring future generations receive the support they need. Together, we are making an impact that will resonate for years to come.

Thank you for standing with us on this journey. Every contribution brings us closer to a community where no one is left behind.

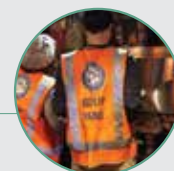
A Call to Serve is held on 23 April honouring contributions of past and present Vincentians.

2013



Fitzroy Soup Van celebrates its 40th anniversary of operation on 26 June.

2015





\$1,425,712

raised by participants
and supporters



Black Summer bushfires in Victoria see regional conference members provide continuous support as part of 'We are here' campaign.



2019-2020

The redeveloped Ozanam House officially reopens on 28 June as a homeless hub and resource centre.



2019

OUR *good works*

People are at the heart of everything we do; that's our good works in action. The St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria has 10,500+ members and volunteers providing assistance to people whose daily struggles include putting food on the table, paying energy bills and ensuring their children remain at school to obtain an education. Each person is treated with deep compassion and provided with assistance tailored to their situation.

CONFERENCES

Across Victoria, we have 267 local volunteer member groups known as 'conferences' providing personalised support to people in need. Our volunteers visit households Victoria-wide and assist with essentials like food, utility bills and pharmacy costs, while also offering emotional support, budgeting advice and advocacy.

VINCENTCARE COMMUNITY HOUSING

VincentCare Community Housing manages 270+ properties across several homelessness and crisis services. As a community housing provider, properties are managed under the provisions of the Residential Tenancies Act and renters have the same rights and responsibilities of any other renter across Victoria.

VINCENTCARE

Established in 2003 by the St Vincent de Paul Society, VincentCare is committed to assisting vulnerable Victorians experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Through our housing and support services, we strive to restore dignity and enhance the quality of life for people facing adversity.

VINNIES NILS

Vinnies NILS stands for our no-interest loan scheme, offering safe and interest-free credit to individuals with low incomes for purchasing household essentials.

EDUCATION

We firmly believe that education equals opportunity. Through after-school programs, we focus on fostering the social, emotional, and academic confidence of attending young individuals. Our initiatives have successfully unlocked the educational potential of numerous students.

YOUTH & SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT

We have a rich history of engaging with young people, nurturing values-based leadership skills, organising fundraisers, leading advocacy efforts and running volunteer programs. Additionally, we've instituted Mini Vinnies programs for primary schools and College Conferences for secondary school students.

VINNIES SHOPS

Our 116 shops represent one of the state's longest-standing and most respected social enterprise, dating back to the first shop opening in 1926. Supported by dedicated volunteers and community donations, these shops operate to give back to local communities and fund our welfare programs.

CALL CENTRES

Our call centres serve as vital first points of contact for people seeking support. Staffed predominantly by volunteers, these centres efficiently connect assistance requests to local conferences who promptly respond to the person's needs.

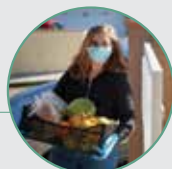
SOUP VANS

Our fleet of soup vans operate at various locations across metropolitan and regional Victoria. Almost entirely run by volunteers, these vans provide meals, hampers, companionship and support to people facing poverty and homelessness.



TO FIND OUT MORE VISIT VINNIES.ORG.AU/VIC

COVID pandemic initiates the revision of all programs ensuring all works continue safely. Vinnies Youth begins a program for international students left stranded in Victoria without support.



Vinnies Shops begins the rollout of solar panels across our retail network, starting at Vinnies Oakleigh on 25 June.



2020

2021

THANK *you*

Lastly, we sincerely thank everyone who supported the St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria during the 2023–2024 financial year.

Our heartfelt thanks is extended to individual donors and fundraisers, churches, community groups, schools, corporates, trusts and foundations, and members and volunteers who supported us throughout the year.

We acknowledge the diverse ways people contribute – be that through their time, skills, prayers, financial support and in-kind gifts. Every gift, no matter how big or how small or what form it takes, is sincerely appreciated.

At the heart of our mission lies the immense role of community generosity, fuelling our ‘good works’ that provide crucial assistance to people in need.

Your kindness over the past 12 months has left a lasting impact and we are especially grateful for the enduring legacy gifts through the Gift in Wills program. These contributions will shape the future needs of St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria.

Thank you to our wonderful community of supporters who have shared our stories and helped amplify our advocacy, pushing for a more just and compassionate society.

YOUR SUPPORT HAS ENSURED THAT OUR SERVICES WILL CONTINUE



Big Housing Build – Turning the sod in Footscray, at the site of the first of three social housing builds.



2022



170 years of St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia.

2024

CLICK TO WATCH





HOW *you* CAN HELP

The St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria relies on the generosity of individuals, groups and businesses who are committed to building compassionate communities.

DONATE



VOLUNTEER



FIND HELP



St Vincent de Paul Society
VICTORIA
good works

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