

# IMPACT



**YOUR SUPPORT IS CHANGING LIVES**

**IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

We thank you for your kindness and ongoing support.

# A MESSAGE FROM

# THE STATE PRESIDENT AND CEO

**It's with great pleasure that we present to you the first edition of our Impact magazine for 2023.**

Over the coming pages, you will read about the difference your donations and support have made to the lives of West Australians doing it tough, and to people who have come to our shores seeking safety.

We revisit our recent Christmas Appeal and take a look at a family that has turned a corner with your help. With cost-of-living pressures, rental and mortgage stress expected to increase even more this year, you can help more families who face these headwinds.

We also visit regional WA, where a community partnership between Vinnies and other local support services helped spread much-needed Christmas joy to families. We speak to a young Ukrainian man, who, with your help, is making a life for himself far from the horrors of war.

Finally, we hear from one of our shop managers, who, through volunteering with Vinnies, overcame significant life challenges to find happiness.

As a Vinnies supporter, you can be confident that you have made an impact not only for people in our suburbs and in the regions, but also for those who have escaped conflict overseas.

With gratitude,

**Susan Rooney**  
CEO

**David Kennedy**  
State President



.....

## 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.



# SPRING APPEAL UPDATE:

## WILLOW

**With the help of a new program at our Passages Youth Engagement Hubs, young people like Willow are following their dreams.**

Willow is a young woman, who began engaging with Passages five years ago when she experienced homelessness due to overcrowding in her home.

Thanks to the Passages team, Willow has since secured a small one-bedroom place to call home. She has been involved in workplace training, and has recently obtained her drivers licence.

Willow is now engaged in Passages' new Compass Program, which helps young people pursue their dreams in education, employment and training.

Her goal is to become a nail artist, and she is well on her way to achieving it.

Thanks to donors and supporters like you, Vinnies is able to help young people who have experienced homelessness dream big and achieve their goals.

Vinnies' two Passages Youth Engagement Hubs in Perth and Mandurah provide services to young people experiencing homelessness. They are a joint venture between Vinnies WA and the Rotary Club of Perth and Mandurah.

**PASSAGES**  
YOUTH ENGAGEMENT HUB

Perth  
Rotary



**Vinnies**  
good works

# 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 early one 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.





*Stas Khomich and Mykola Mowczan*

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.



“Right now, there’s no sense in worrying. We just have to deal with things as they happen,” Stas says.

“But when the war ends and there is peace, I’d like to work in human rights.”

# CHRISTMAS APPEAL

## UPDATE

**You may remember Kelly's story, which we featured in our 2022 Christmas Appeal. With cost-of-living pressures increasing, she was forced to make some tough choices, but thanks to Vinnies, her family has turned a corner.**

Kelly had often faced impossible decisions. Should she pay the bills or use the money to buy medicine? Should she buy food for her kids or pay rent to keep a roof over their heads? More and more often, she couldn't do both.

Bills, medications, broken furniture, and unavoidable home repairs were taking their toll on the family, so they reached out to Vinnies for help.

Thanks to your generosity, things are looking up for Kelly and her family.

After receiving food and furniture from Vinnies, the family has found new comfort in their home, which is now being repaired.

Kelly says that life is looking a lot better now. To her family's great relief, her daughter's health has improved. Kelly is even looking for volunteer work where she is able to sit, as a medical condition stops her from being able to stand for long periods

Just before Christmas, Vinnies members visited Kelly and her family and surprised her with a hamper and gifts for the children.

"We had a good Christmas at my niece's. We had lots for lunch, and Santa was there for all the children. I was so full, I could not eat dessert," Kelly recalls.

Thanks to you, the family celebrated Christmas in the way so many of us take for granted.





Words of kindness from supporters like you.

## Messages of hope

Here are some of the kind messages of support you sent to Kelly and her family.

- ♥ “We went through the same as you 60 years ago and we made it - so will you. A lot of people are thinking of you.”
- ♥ “We have read your sad story. As pensioners, we want to help with a small donation. We know that is not much, just remember there is always a light at the end of the tunnel. Merry Christmas to you all and God bless.”
- ♥ “Please know that I’m thinking of you and your family, and I will share in my heart every hope and love that you will see, to be able to enjoy Christmas.”
- ♥ “Don’t lose hope - when the sun goes down, the stars come out.”
- ♥ “I hope this year will be the end of all your troubles, and that 2023 will be a positive and happy year for all of you. Have a peace-filled Christmas.”



# HANDS ON THE WHEEL

## IN REGIONAL WA

**In the lead-up to Christmas, residents of the Harvey area in the Southwest dug deep to help community members in need.**

To support the Christmas Appeal, a partnership was formed between Vinnies in Harvey, the Harvey Community Resource Centre (CRC) and the Harvey Family Support Service.

Harvey Vinnies President Leanne Pronk said the groups already had a history of working together to support locals in need.

“Over the past year our three organisations have worked together to provide emergency assistance in our community and have now decided to do the same to distribute Christmas hampers to people in our community in need,” she says.

“We have used the motto ‘Communities stay stronger together’ to reinforce our strong network and collaboration.”

She explained that food donation bins were placed at several locations throughout town and donations were also received from the Harvey Catholic Parish and St Anne’s Primary School.

“We are so fortunate to live in such a generous and supportive community,” she said.

Harvey CRC manager Tracey-Ann Davis said their town had one of the strongest support networks in any of the country towns.



*“We’re so grateful that we have a community that is so generous and willing to put their hand in their pocket and help wherever they can.”*



# MEET LEANNE

When Leanne started volunteering at Vinnies, she was in a dark place. But her role gave her a purpose, joy, and eventually full-time work. She has a big heart for her volunteers, and she even found love through Vinnies.

*How did you become involved with Vinnies?*

I was on my own with two kids. I didn't have anything on my CV, and I struggled to find work. There were lots of negative things going on. I got really down and depressed. I wasn't in a good mental place.

Then I saw an ad on Facebook looking for volunteers, and I thought I'd give it a go. It wasn't like I was getting a job - I was only giving up my time. I was excited to get up and do something. I really fell in love with the role. I loved the diversity of it. First, I became a keyholder at the Clarkson store, and then I became a team leader. I worked part-time at the Clarkson store, and now I'm a full-time manager of the Osborne Park store.

*What do you enjoy the most about your role?*

The volunteering side of things is still really important to me. I pay attention to the volunteers' own journeys and their stories. That's why I invite them over on Christmas Day, and I remember their birthdays. One young woman in particular comes to mind. She has special needs and came to volunteer with a support worker.

Since then, she's come leaps and bounds, and now she works on her own and performs all the different roles around the store.

*What do you get back from volunteering?*

Volunteering with Vinnies really turned my life around.

It gave me a purpose and a goal. Things are really good now. I even met someone at Vinnies... we've moved in together!



*Former volunteer Leanne now manages a Vinnies store*

# “YOU JUST HAVE TO REACH THE LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL.”

**In our first edition of Impact, we shared a letter Stacey had written to Vinnies, expressing her gratitude for the support she'd received. We have since caught up with her, her husband Chris, and their children to see how they are going.**

Stacey and Chris know what it's like to go through a tough time, but with a little help from Vinnies supporters like you, they and their children are doing well.

The couple have been together for more than 17 years and married for seven; their seven children, a source of pride and joy. Tragically, the couple lost an eighth child in infancy, which left them heartbroken.

A few years ago, the Perth family was in a good spot. Stacey worked as an education assistant and Chris was working FIFO. But when someone from Stacey's past contacted her and triggered her childhood trauma, the family entered a challenging period.

Dealing with anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, Stacey was no longer able to work. Chris soon resigned from his job to care for her and their children.

“I've been here ever since, trying to help my wife heal, and trying to heal myself from having our life torn apart through no fault of our own,” Chris says.

“We've struggled through, and we've managed to hold on to most of what we've had while we've been FIFO. It's been hard trying to maintain the lifestyle and not upheave the kids out of private school.”

The family connected with local Vinnies volunteers, who supported them with vouchers, food hampers and school lunches. When the couple couldn't afford to pay their utility bills, Vinnies was there to help.

The family was deeply touched when local Vinnies volunteers unexpectedly brought something special to their home around Christmas time. “They dropped off Christmas presents for the kids with schoolbags and stationery. I was blown away. Both my girls are very arty, so that helped get them set up,” Stacey said.

While things are still tough at times, Stacey and Chris know they can get through anything.

“It's a slow, hard road, but we're slowly getting there. There's a light at the end of the tunnel. You just have to reach it,” Stacey says.



*A look back at our Autumn 2022 issue.*



*Stacey and her children made a painting to say thank you*



# YOU CAN CHANGE A LIFE

# BY MAKING A BEQUEST



How would you like to be remembered? For many people, it is leaving a legacy of love in the form of a charitable gift in will that has a significant impact on the lives of people experiencing poverty, disadvantage and homelessness.

Your will reflects your wishes and your beliefs, and a gift as little as 1 per cent of your residual estate has the potential to make a significant impact on the most vulnerable people in our community.

The demand for our services continues to grow as a result of unemployment, rising costs of living, homelessness and lack of access to affordable housing and mental health and support for women escaping domestic violence. We have been fortunate to receive generous

bequests that have funded life-changing initiatives, and assisted us in carrying out our core work of emergency relief and specialist programs and services.

If you would like help to write or update your will, we offer several services to suit your needs. We are proud to partner with a number of solicitors in Western Australia who are happy to provide simple wills free of charge to anyone who is considering a gift to Vinnies in their will.

If writing your will online from the comfort of home appeals to you, we have partnered with Australia's leading online will writing platform Safewill.

For a limited time, Safewill are offering **free wills from the 20- 26 March 2023.**

To take advantage of this offer visit <https://safewill.com/svdpwa>

For more information about leaving a gift in your will, Safewill or to be put in touch with solicitor in your area please contact Natasha at [bequests@svdpwa.org.au](mailto:bequests@svdpwa.org.au) or call 08 6323 7535.



**St Vincent de Paul Society (WA) Inc**

**Donation line 13 18 12**

P 08 6323 7500

W [vinnieswa.org.au](http://vinnieswa.org.au)

Share your Vinnies experience to social media and be sure to follow us.

 [facebook.com/VinniesWA](https://www.facebook.com/VinniesWA)

 [@vinnieswa](https://www.instagram.com/vinnieswa)



Printed on recycled paper.