

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## St Vincent de Paul Society chooses its next National President

The St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia has chosen its next National President to head the charity after the incumbent Ms Claire Victory steps down in March 2023.

The National President elected for a four-year term is Mr Mark Gaetani, President of the Society's Tasmanian State Council. Based in Launceston, Mr Gaetani had a long career in the banking and finance sectors before becoming Treasurer of the Tasmanian State Council in 2016. Two years later he was elected State President of the Society in Tasmania.

In an election held by the Society's National Council in Canberra last weekend he was chosen by his peers to lead the Society nationally. Like most roles within the St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia, including the member-based conferences and many of the retail shops, the position of National President is a voluntary one.

Mark Gaetani and his wife Mary are active members of the Catholic Parish of Launceston. Mark is a member of the Society's Apostles Conference and in 2021 he was one of 12 Catholics to be awarded the inaugural Guilford Young Medal by Archbishop Julian Porteous for his outstanding contributions to both the Society and the Church in Tasmania.

'Mark Gaetani has given great service to the St Vincent de Paul Society in his home state and beyond,' Ms Victory said. 'Mark's understanding of how the Society assists Australians in need, along with his dedication to our work, will be important in the increasingly challenging times we face.'

'On behalf of our National Council and the Society's conference members around the country, I congratulate him on his appointment. Until the handover takes place next March, I will be working closely with Mark to ensure a smooth transition to his leadership,' Ms Victory said.

Mr Gaetani said he was honoured to receive the endorsement of his State and Territory Council colleagues and looked forward to leading the Society at a time of great challenge for Australians.

'Many people are struggling with homelessness and the shortage of affordable housing, rising food prices and power bills, and inadequate incomes,' he said. 'Never has the work of the Society been so important.'

'Since the Society's founding in Paris in 1833 our members have been dedicated to serving people in need in the spirit of Jesus Christ. I am proud to be able to further contribute to the tradition of Vincentian spirituality, which encompasses compassion and a commitment to the democratic ideals of seeking truth, reform, and social justice. The St Vincent de Paul Society is a grass-roots organisation and it gives me comfort to know I will be well supported by our membership throughout Australia.'

Ms Victory endorsed Mr Gaetani's comments, adding: 'The success of both our welfare and our advocacy efforts depends on working as an effective and harmonious team across all the States and Territories as well as at the local level where membership is all important. National Council plays a key role in this and I am confident that Mark will serve Council well in his new role. I would like to thank my National Council colleagues for their valuable and unflagging support over the past three-plus years. I feel privileged to have been part of such a wonderful team,' Ms Victory said.

*The St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia consists of 45,000 members who operate on the ground through over 1,000 groups located in local communities across the country.*

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