

ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY NSW WELCOMES NEW STATE COUNCIL PRESIDENT

The St Vincent de Paul Society NSW has elected a new NSW State Council President, Mr Peter Houweling.

Mr Houweling has been an active member of St John the Evangelist Parish Conference Dapto since being posted to Wollongong as a primary teacher in the 1970s, where he raised his family, and later served as a school principal.

Over many years of service to the St Vincent de Paul Society, Mr Houweling has served as NSW Vice-President - Membership, President's Vice-President, Wollongong Central Council President, and Central Illawarra Regional Council President.

"I am honoured and grateful to have been elected as the new State Council President and I look forward to serving and fostering a spirit of humility, simplicity and charity that is at the heart of our mission," Mr Houweling said.

"The Society's unique strength to make a difference lies in the unwavering commitment and collaboration of our members, volunteers and employees," he said.

Mr Houweling believes that the Society's future is in increasing the work of the Society in community to help more people, building on the strength of collaboration that exists for all our people – members, volunteers and employees, supporting Conference Presidents and an increased focus on local parishes and youth engagement.

"Our focus must be on increasing the number of aggregated Conferences, particularly special, social justice, and youth conferences, where younger members feel valued and can become our next generation of leaders," he said.

Mr Houweling says that it is also important to him that the Society's actions align with the Vincentian mission of cultivating the strength, compassion and purpose of the Society through servant leadership at all levels.

"Growing inequality, the cost-of-living challenges, housing crisis, and rental unaffordability are making it harder for many to make ends meet.

"Under this pressure, initiatives like our chaplaincy program, providing homes for the marginalised, establishing shelters and safe homes for families affected by domestic and family violence, protecting refugees and addressing growing inequality are imperative.

"These actions reflect our commitment to the values of equality and compassion that our Society holds so dearly," says Mr Houweling.

Richard Stewart, Board Chair of the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW, welcomed Peter Houweling as NSW State Council President, "I look forward to working with Peter in his role as State Council President to deliver on the mission of the organisation to provide care to people experiencing disadvantage and poverty."

Mr Houweling begins his term following the passing of Mr Paul Burton earlier in the year. Mr Houweling will lead the State Council of the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW for a four-year term.

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